For Professor Christian Sandvig’s students, active learning means more than just showing up for class and writing papers. In all four of his communication and technology courses, Professor Sandvig requires students to create and maintain their own blogs. The blogs act like online diaries in which students relate the course material to their own lives. “One problem I run into is trying to convince students that technologies are important,” Sandvig notes, “The blogs change that.”

In his Introduction to Communication Technologies and Society course, Professor Sandvig’s first assignment requires students to go on a communication technology “treasure hunt.” Students choose from a list of local communication technology sites, such as the transmitter tower for the local community radio station 90.1 WEFT. They then go to the site, learn about it and photograph it, and then blog-post their discoveries. The assignment acquaints students with the ubiquity of communication technology. Another assignment, called the “misguided archeologist,” connects students to communication technologies of the past. Students pretend they are archeologists who have found an artifact from another civilization. After carefully examining the pieces of technology and even taking them apart, students post their notes on their blogs. Some students get so excited by the projects that they actually do extra assignments. After deconstructing a Nintendo console and describing it as an ancient BlackBerry, one student then examined the archaic science of cup phones. And he did not even ask for extra credit! Professor Sandvig’s courses are giving students a firsthand look at the impact of communication technologies in our society.

Speech Communication Website Gets Facelift This Winter

The department’s web site is undergoing a redesign process. Starting this fall, the web page (www.spcomm.uiuc.edu) will receive an overdue facelift and reorganization to make it easy to use, more helpful, and more professional. We have hired a professional graphic designer and a photographer to spruce up the site, and to create a page that better reflects our top-ranked communication program.

The updated site will feature a new resource page for alumni, including an easy way to keep in touch with us and each other. The front page will also be made into a portal to attract new students, and so it will feature recruiting information, a slide show, quick links to the faculty, class offerings, and admissions steps. The main page will also feature listings of current events, news, and announcements about the department.

Watch for our newly remodeled website in the next few months.
Department Ranked Sixth in the Nation

The Department of Speech Communication ranks sixth in the nation in the overall quality of its doctoral program, according to a study conducted by the National Communication Association. The study was released in October 2005 and is based on a survey of 376 graduate faculty members who teach in communication programs in the U.S. Respondents were asked to evaluate programs in terms of the scholarly quality of the faculty, effectiveness in educating researchers, and quality change in the last five years (“better”, “little or no change,” or “poorer” than five years ago).

Departments designated which of nine specialty areas they wished to be rated in, so some departments were rated in only one or two areas whereas others were rated in more. In all, 64 doctoral programs were evaluated. The University of Illinois’ Department of Speech Communication ranked sixth in overall quality among comprehensive departments that offer training in at least five of the nine specialties. These comprehensive departments tied for first place: the University of California at Santa Barbara, Michigan State University, and Pennsylvania State University. The University of Texas at Austin and USC were ranked fourth and fifth respectively.

In separate rankings of each specialty, our department ranked second in the area of interpersonal communication, third in communication technology, fourth in health communication, and fifth in organizational communication. “In recent years we have reallocated resources to the areas of communication technologies and to health communication, so it is gratifying to see that these investments are paying off,” said Barbara Wilson, Head of the U. of I. Speech Communication Department. She also pointed out that the department has a large number of newly hired assistant professors. “Doing this well in a reputational study is a mark of distinction for such a young faculty,” she said.

In summer 2006, the National Research Council will begin a new national study of university programs, which will be based primarily on research productivity rather than reputational data.

David Swanson

1944-2004

It has been more than a year now since we were saddened by the sudden death of colleague and friend, Professor David Swanson. The campus has seemed somewhat smaller in the year since. Many may remember David for his outstanding leadership in the department. He served as Associate Head from 1983-1994 and Department Head from 1994-2001. Others will recall him as the popular instructor of SPCM 177 (The Art of Public Discourse). Still others were fortunate to have him as an advisor and mentor.

Some alumni may not have known him at all. Nevertheless, David’s influence can still be felt all around Lincoln Hall.

David worked tirelessly in several roles over the years to make the Department of Speech Communication a better place. In the words of Professor Emeritus Joe Wendzel, David’s “selfless commitment to preserving the best of a strong department and working to make it even better began the renaissance that has brought our department to its present eminence in the field.”

David taught people what it meant to be truly loyal to the University. At a campus memorial service, David’s life long friend and colleague Acting Provost Jesse Delia said, “David was a person whose life was deeply woven into the fabric of the Urbana-Champaign campus.” David was the epitome of “Illinois Loyalty.” Richard Wheeler, Dean of the Graduate College, wrote for a memorial booklet, “Most comfortably himself —Barbara I. Hall
Dale Brashers Receives Prestigious Campus Award

Professor Dale E. Brashers was named a University Scholar in 2005. The award is the highest honor given to faculty at the University of Illinois. Brashers was one of only six scholars named in 2005 at U. of 1. The award, which was established two decades ago, recognizes the most talented teachers, scholars, and researchers on campus. Brashers is the first Speech Communication faculty member to receive this honor.

In the eyes of those who know him, the recognition is well earned. Brashers joined the department in 1998 and was already well on his way to becoming one of the field’s foremost scholars in health communication. His research focuses on how people manage and cope with illness.

He has concentrated on the experience of persons living with HIV/AIDS. He is currently conducting studies in outpatient clinics to test interventions that teach newly diagnosed HIV/AIDS patients a range of communication skills for better managing their illness. His research has been recognized as creative, programmatic, and of great social importance. In 2001 he received the Golden Anniversary Monograph Award from the National Communication Association, honoring the most outstanding scholarly article or monograph published during the previous calendar year. That same year he received the Young Scholar Award for outstanding early career research from the International Communication Association.

In addition to Brashers’ exceptional talents as a researcher, he is also an outstanding teacher. His infectious sense of humor and wicked one-liners in the classroom are near legendary; yet amidst the antics, the keen eye will detect the formidable skill Brashers uses in making learning at once thoroughly enjoyable and undeniably effective.

This combination of talents is what draws so many students to work with Professor Brashers. Dr. Lance Rintamaki, a recent graduate of the PhD program and one of Brashers’ former advisees, had this to say:

“Dale is one-in-a-million. I was so fortunate to have Dale as my advisor. He helped shape my academic interests, honed my teaching skills, and provided me with the finest of professional role models. For that and so much more, I’ll be forever grateful.”

A Fond Farewell to a Dear Colleague: Dan O’Keefe

Professor Daniel O’Keefe left us this year to take a faculty position at Northwestern University. O’Keefe’s long association with the University of Illinois began with his AB (1972), AN (1974), and PhD (1976) degrees in Speech Communication. After holding assistant professor positions at the University of Michigan and Pennsylvania State University, he returned to Illinois in 1988 to begin a 25-year career. During that time, he became known as an outstanding teacher, exceptional graduate mentor, and internationally acclaimed scholar.

O’Keefe was named to the “Incom- plete List of Teachers Rated as Excellent” every year he taught. He also built Communication 102 (Introduction to Communication Theory and Research) and 421 (Persuasion Theory and Research) into student favorites. His book Persuasion: Theory and Research (Sage Publications, 2002), is one of the most popular persuasion texts currently available.

O’Keefe’s research has won the most prestigious awards from the National Communication Association, International Communication Association, and International Society for the Study of Argumentation. More recently, he has become the guru of meta-analysis, a complex statistical procedure for accumulating evidence across studies of a phenomenon. He is continuing work on a project with Professors Dale Brashers and Daena Goldsmith on the effects of social support on mental and physical health of people living with HIV.

In addition to all of his fame and fortune, he is an amazing colleague. His laughter and quick wit (“And why are you telling me this?”) are missed greatly in Lincoln Hall. But we know that he is happy to live in the same city as his wife, Carolyn, after commuting for seven years. Barbara O’Keefe, former faculty member in Speech Communication at U. of I., is the Dean of the College of Communication at Northwestern. We all wish Dan the best as he embarks on a new journey “up north!”

SUSAN THOMAS RETIRES

Susan Thomas retired last spring after 25 years of teaching and service in the department. She was known to many as the instructor of Speech Communication 251, Public Information Management. Susan and her husband, Stafford (emeritus faculty member, 1989), have left Champaign and moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan, to be closer to their daughter Ginny and her husband. In fact, they built a house right next door to their daughter’s home. We wish them well in their new surroundings.

New Computer Software System In Place

After years of being SPCOM, the department is now SPCM. Most of the courses in the department have been renumbered too. SPCM 177 is now SPCM 277, and so on. All of these changes are part of a new data system that now manages all of the major functions of the University. Gone are the days of scheduling classes by hand or registering with data processing cards at the Armory. Even U1 Direct, the former computer registration system, has been put to rest.

The new system is called Banner. Students can use the system to view their registration information and even their financial accounts. Banner has taken time to get used to and the system still has some quirks. To make the transition, the new software has required a lot of staff training time and patience. But all three campuses are now linked into one large data system, and students now have more control over their own registration, records, and financial information.

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Debbie Hawhee Assistant Professor Speech Communication

Can sports inform academia? Talk to Assistant Professor Debbie Hawhee and it becomes clear that the answer is yes. Hawhee played basketball for the University of Tennessee as an undergraduate. She played small forward before her senior two-year career. She was still eligible to play ball when she began a Master's program in English, so she stayed on the team. This combination of sports and graduate school was pivotal. While studying the history of rhetoric, Hawhee witnessed the overlaps between public discourse and the body. For her, Socrates’ orders and training became tangible during ball practice.

Hawhee’s book Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece (University of Texas Press, 2004) explores rhetoric’s junction with the body by arguing that sports such as wrestling and boxing informed the emerging form of rhetoric. In fall semester, she brought her interests to the classroom with two new courses, “The Rhetoric of Gesture” and “Scape of the Dead Aristotle and Rhetorical Studies.” Hawhee finds Speech Communication a particularly fruitful site in which to explore such questions. She can apply theory in class by having students produce what they learn when they do speeches. With her newly created joint position in Speech Communication and English, Hawhee claims that this is “my dream teaching job.” Along with teaching, she is working on a new book about Ken- neth Burke’s theories of the body. In 2004 Hawhee left U. of I. to take a faculty position at the University of Pittsburgh. But after one year she was back. “I missed the vibrant intellectual community that the University offers, the talks and the events,” she said. Always the ath- letic, Hawhee spends her free time off-road bik- ing at Kickapoo Park and, of course, playing basketball.

Ned O’Gorman Associate Professor Speech Communication

In some ways, Assistant Professor Ned O’Gorman’s research could not come at a better or worse time, depending on how one looks at current events. O’Gorman studies national catastrophes. His book in progress, Catastrophic Vistas: Discours- es of an American Disaster, 1932 to 2002, looks at how catastrophes are represented and commented on rhetorically and aesthetically. Traditionally catastro- phes undermine democratic freedoms—Ned’s work asks how democratic societies can deal effec- tively with catastrophes. O’Gorman comes to the Department of Speech Communication after completing a PhD at Penn State University. During his graduate work, he found Aristotle and Socrates fascinating. Theoretical and philosophical applied to the aesthetic offered the perfect combination for understanding art and artifice. As much as he takes pleasure in studying the esoteric, O’Gorman appreciates the practical importance of rhetoric: It allows for public discussion and debate. “Public debate is a big deal—noted to be taken for granted. There are so many cultures missing this,” he emphatically noted.

Professor O’Gorman did not teach classes in fall semester, but he is anxious to do so. He misses learning about student culture. Although new to this campus, he has noticed some interesting differences between University of Illinois students and those at Penn State: our students like to be outside. This spring he will teach two undergraduate courses, The Rhetorical Tradition and Rhetorical Criticism. Expressing his enthusi- asm for this subject matter, O’Gorman said, “In many ways teaching rhetoric is teaching what we already know—we make what is implicit, explicit.”

Keeping in line with his appreciation of concretizing the abstract, O’Gorman is an ama- teur carpenter. He likes the challenge of cre- ation as well as the satisfaction of using the finished product. Since moving to Champaign, he has made several bookshelves and a bed set. So far, none of his woodworking projects have been catastrophes.

Scott Althaus has been on leave from teaching this past year to research his book project on the U.S. government’s strategic communica- tions to the American public during war times during our history. Questioning assumptions about the efficiency of the government’s strate- gies, Althaus suggests that the impact of gov- ernment spin during wartime is quite limited.

Dale Brasher is investigating the role of communication in the management of health and illness for persons living with HIV or AIDS. One of the areas he is exploring is how catastrophes don’t occur in academic or government settings as often as in the community. This combination of sports and graduate school was pivotal. While studying the history of rhetoric, Hawhee witnessed the overlaps between public discourse and the body. For her, Socrates’ orders and training became tangible during ball practice.
recently published an article that explores the intersections in changing our views among other media outlets. Dreher has an appointment in the Studies Communication and helped research mate- rials. She continues his chief volunteer speaking of...communication center for Research in the Humanities (joint with Bruce Williams of the Institute of Communications Research). She served as a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study for the 2005-2006 academic year and serves on a board that raises funds to continue and extend her NSF research. Camed-Stengrim studies communication technology and public policy. Her research investigates the ways that new communication infrastructure is configured in a current project fund- ed by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Sandvig is studying the grassroots develop- ment of new wireless Internet technology (such as “Wi-Fi”). Sandvig’s previous work included the ethnographic study of state-funded university centers.

Andrea Poole received funding in 2004 from the National Science Foundation (NSF) for a proj- ect titled “Changing Private to the Public: New Information Technologies and the Future of Public Life” (joint with Bruce Williams of the Institute of Communications Research). She was appointed as a Faculty Fellow to the Center for Advanced Study for the 2005-2006 academic year and serves on a board that raises funds to continue and extend her NSF research.

David Teckwbury recently received the LAS Dean’s Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Campus Award for Excel- lence in Undergraduate Teaching. His research looks at how news audiences choose and interpret stories and news sources. One cur- rent project studies how audiences evaluate television news organizations when they learn that the content of TV news often originates with governments, corporations, and special interest groups. Dmitri Williams’ research on the uses and effects of playing video games was featured in The New York Times, The Economist, and the Chicago Sun-Times, among other media out- lets. He has also been teaching a class on video games, conducting research on the social impact of voice-over IP networks, and helping to revamp the department’s website.

Barbara Wilson’s research focuses on devel- opmental differences in how children respond to the media. In the past year, she has worked on projects with graduate students involving children’s attraction to cartoon violence, preschoolers’ attachment to popular media characters, and how parents talk to children about frightening stories in the news. She is currently co-editing the Handbook of Child Development and the Media with Sandra Calvert (Georgetown University). In 2005, she was appointed as the Paul Friedland Professor- ial Scholar by the College of Liberal Arts & Sci- ences, an award recognizing outstanding achieve- ments in research. In her spare time, she watches TV and goes to movies with her two daughters so she can be a better mother, teacher, and researcher.

Trina Wright studies the interactions between gender, race, and class in organiza- tions. Her recent work includes a study funded by the William T. Grant Foundation that explores the communication factors that influ- ence high school students in career decision-making.

EMERITI FACULTY

Ken Andersen holds an appointment in the Office of the Vice President for Administration, serving as the campus representative to the Faculty Advisory Council of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. He also serves on the Sen- ate Executive Committee as senate parliamen- tant and as the senate as one of our depart- ment’s senators. Along with these duties, Andersen is the co-author of a book on communication ethics.

Chonis Krumova is currently a section editor of the Handbook of Achieving Gender Equity Through Education. In March 2005, she partici- pated in “Mutid Group Theory—Past, Present and Future: A Colloquium” at George Mason University. Chonis and husband Dale Kramer live in Eugene, Oregon, where Chonis is a Visi- ting Professor in the Center for Study of Women in Society.

Joanna Muscyl has run for office in her own right. She has performed with the Shattered Globe Theatre Company and the Remy Bumpo Theatre Company at the Victory Gardens in Chicago, at the Milan Smoke- square Company, and at the highly regarded Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. She and husband, Howard, share their time between Chicago and Champaign along with lengthy visits with their kids and grandkids.

Joe Wendel continues his chief volunteer activity as faculty coach of the U of I under- graduate mock trial team. He plans to cut back on that and other academic pursuits, however, in order to spend more time in traveling with his wife Patricia. Visits to their daughter and son- in-law in Chicago and to their son’s family, who live near Geneva, Illinois, provide a nice change of pace.

Laura Stengrim Graduate Student in Rhetoric Speech Communication doctoral candidate Laura Stengrim was not even born when President Jimmy Carter addressed the nation in his legendary cardigan sweater, but now she has met him! After putting the final touches on her forthcoming book Globalization and Empire (University of Alabama Press, 2006) with Professor Stephen Harnett, Laura felt she needed a break from school last summer. So she applied for an internship at the Carter Cen- ter in Atlanta, Georgia. As the only research intern, she worked for Steven Hochman, assis- tant to President Carter. Laura served as a fact- checker on President Carter’s new book, Our Endangered Values, and helped research mate- rial for his speaking engagements by digging into the Center’s archives. She also applied her research skills to his book, “The Future of Georgia: Dr. Hochman’s Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Public Policy” course at Emory Uni- versity. And she produced the Center’s weekly updates on international news, internal democracy pro- grams, and the constitutional processes in over 50 countries. Describing that trip as a labor of love, Laura noted, “I learned a lot about other countries, especially about life and poverty in Africa.”

As a rhetoric student who focuses on globalization and NGOs, Laura found her work at the Carter Center to be extremely beneficial. President Carter offers two sets of human rights programs: health initiatives and peace programs. Through its peace programs, the Carter Center concen- trates on Conflict Resolution, Global Develop- ment, Human Rights initiatives, Latin America, and the China Village and Economic Development Project, which advises local villagers on electoral reform. Laura, who believes in the value of the demo- cratic process, said, “I think there’s something beautiful about all the different protests, the dif- ferent opinions and voices.” Laura also found the Carters to be affable people. “Jimmy Carter is incredible; he travels and writes his own speeches….he’s a forward looking person.” During her internship, Laura not only got to know President Carter, but she also got to see his legendary sweater which is displayed in a glass case in the presidential museum.

Robin Jensen Doctoral Student in Rhetoric When the Illinois Pro- gram for Research in the Humanities (IPHR) announced “Belief” as its 2005 theme, Speech Communication doctoral student Robin Jensen knew she should apply for a fellowship. As a rhetoric student, Robin studies how women dis- cuss, understand, and navigate their own health. She is particularly interested in public discourse about sexuality and sex education through the Progressive Age.

The dawn of the 20th century was rife with hostility toward immigrants and their children. Lies and misinformation about sex kept working class women ignorant and poor. Mau- erick women such as Margaret Sanger, Rochelle Yarrors, and Dr. Ela Flagg Young responded by disseminating information on birth control and hygiene. Robin studies how these women got the word out through pamphlets, books, lectures, and classes. Robin believes in changing our views about women and sex. With her focus on women speaking to women, she uses her research to explore how past and present (and future) cultural changes affect how we communicate. Robin got the grant and a couple more last summer. “I wasn’t expecting this,” Emily reflected, “but seeing that the fifty people who made dance their career were normal people just like me encouraged me to pursue my artist dream.”

“I always wavered on what dance was for me. After this internship I decided to give dance a chance,” said Emily, who will graduate in December with a double major in Dance and Business Communication.

Robin Jensen

With her minor in Dance, Emily Withenbury loved studying dance and was convinced she would pursue dance as a career. When she entered at The Joffrey Ballet Company in Chicago. She worked as an administrative assistant in the ticket office, but she couldn’t help sharing her dreams with the artistic staff. As the intern- ship was wrapping up, Emily was invited to take one week of dance classes. Despite an injured knee and lack of practice, she was grateful she let her work be a “defacto dancer.”

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Even though her major did not dir ectly affect her career choices, Emily notes that Speech Communication gave her the practi- cality that led her to pursue the internship that changed her life. "It sounds corny, but I am now a big advocate for internships,” she said. “It opened my eyes to the real world and helped me see that I’ll never know unless I try.”

Emily Withenbury

The Joffrey Internship, Summer 2005

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Homecoming 2005 Brings Alums Back
About 40 people enjoyed the department's 2005 Homecoming reception on October 22 in the Lincoln Hall foyer. Alums renewed acquaintances with faculty and former classmates prior to the Illini/Penn State football game. Chicken and bean chilli, hot hors d'oeuvres, and drinks helped fans prepare for the cool evening game.

Paul Linnell (AB '88, MA '91, and PhB '96) came back to campus as part of the Homecoming festivities to be honored by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He received the 2005 LAS Dean's Quadrangle Award, which recognizes achievement and exceptional service to the college. Paul has given generously to the Department of Speech Communication over the years, and has helped to support the department's mock trial team. Before receiving the LAS award, Paul stopped by the department to talk with undergraduate and graduate students about his work as a jury consultant.

Please plan to join us for next year's Homecoming reception on October 7, 2006, two hours prior to kickoff, in the foyer of Lincoln Hall.

2005 Winners of the Illinois Tradition Awards

Joshua Barbour was the recipient of the Ruth S. and Charles H. Bowman Award, which honors the department's most outstanding graduate student in terms of scholarship, teaching, and service. In addition to planning his upcoming wedding, Josh is working on his doctoral dissertation, "Health Care Institutions, Medical Organization, and Physicians: A Multilevel Analysis."

Jeremy Engels received the Karl R. Wallace Award for distinguished scholarship as a graduate student. Jeremy recently published a refereed-authored essay in The Quarterly Journal of Speech and in Rhetoric and Public Affairs. He is working on his PhD dissertation, "America's Enemies and the Contested Rhetorics of Nationhood, 1776-1812."

Jennifer Bute was presented the Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award, which recognizes the department's most outstanding veteran graduate teaching assistant. Jennifer teaches Speech Communication 230, Introduction to Interpersonal Communication. She has served as lead instructor in the course, and she has helped to improve and refine course materials. She is also working on her dissertation research in interpersonal communication and health.

Kevin Cee received the Henry L. Mueller Award, recognizing exceptional service to the department by a graduate student. Kevin has been a TA in Speech Communication 277 and will take over as lead instructor of that course for one semester this year. In addition to teaching, Kevin is publishing two essays this year on contemporary U.S. politics.

Nicole Evans was chosen for the Stafford H. Thomas Award, recognizing exceptional service to the department by a graduate student. Nicole was honored for her work in helping students with their formal speeches. She was particularly helpful in assisting Professor Brashear with the recruitment activities for new graduate students.

Seniors Christopher Follans and Ryan Spain were both honored for their outstanding academic records, based on GPA. Chris, recipient of the Wayland Maxfield Parrish Award, is now working for the advertising firm Leo Burnett. Ryan was the recipient of the King Bradrick Allen Award, and is currently working for The Heartland Partnership, doing economic and community development work for the Peoria area. He has been admitted to the Masters for Public Administration program at Syracuse University for Fall 2006.

Laura Elkayed and Laura Wendel were co-recipients of the Richard Murphy Award. The award recognizes undergraduates who have authored outstanding scholarly papers in the preceding 12 months. Laura Elkayed's paper (written for a class taught by Professor James Hay) analyzed the video monitors installed in exercise facilities and how their arrangement strategies employed in over 250 years of debates about capital punishment.

Katelon Leticia received the Otto A. L. Dieter Award for her exceptional service as an undergraduate. Katelon was honored for her hard work and dedication in support of the department's mock trial team. She continues to be an enthusiastic member of the team and hopes they advance to national competition this year.

Allison Faetz was awarded the Bonita M. Whitlock Scholarship. The award is given to a junior majoring in Speech Communication based on an outstanding academic and service record on campus. The scholarship funding is to be applied to the student's senior year of study. Allison will graduate in December 2006.

Invest in Our Department's Future
Your support for the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will ensure continued excellence in teaching, research, and public engagement.

YES! I would like to support the Department of Speech Communication with a gift of:

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I wish to designate my gift this year to:

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Rachel Arnold (AB '94) moved to Los Angeles for an entry level management position with American Airlines in Cargo Sales. Rachel tells us there is a lot more baggage in the belly of an airplane. She has seen everything from monkeys and asparagus to cut-rate motorcycles and slot machines! In July, Rachel was promoted to a level 3 management position in the operations side of LAX Cargo. Now Rachel is in charge of making sure all the cargo she used to sell, now moves!

Chris Folkes (AB '92), producer of It s a Cult film, Toxic, landed an Associate Producer’s position with Leo Burnett Production Company in Chicago. Chris now makes television and radio commercials for Kellogg’s and Boor’s beer. In his spare time, Chris is developing and raising funds for another short film that he will shoot on our campus and in the surrounding Champaign-Urbana area next year.

Melissa (Dr.) Leebele (AB ‘91) job as a Travel Account Manager for Midwest Living Magazine has convinced her of the Midwest’s natural beauty and historical significance. She has visited the stunning waterfalls, yawning canyons, historical villages, and stretching cityscapes of the Midwest. Melissa recently married Jim Leebele on the University of Illinois campus at St. John’s Catholic Church.

Jennifer Jenkins (AB ‘98) owns and operates C. Jenkins Necktie Chemical Company, which develops fabric, paper, and chemicals for the textile and fabric industry. Jennifer is responsible for product development, international distribution, and strategic planning with companies such as Mattel, Hasbro, Pacard, and Crayola. This coming summer, C. Jenkins will host the opening of its first retail-operated warehouse of all types as our create our own coarse in its new 7,200 square-foot facility. Married for 16 years, Jennifer has three children and hopes at least one will attend the U of I, because, as he says, he still “bleeds” blue/orange and likes.

J.D. Miller, AB ‘91, MA ‘93, PhD ‘90 works for Vistage Corporation as a Senior Sales Executive for their Collaboration, Knowledge Management, and e-Business product lines. He also teaches Speech Communication at Wright College. J.D. lives in downtown Chicago. Still committed to marathons and tradition training, J.D. is currently training for a half-marathon in June 2006.


Chris McParland (AB ’86) is working as a builder of single-family homes in the western suburbs of Chicago. Chris still enjoys sports, though he claims his participation is restricted to that of a spectator, unless it is golf.

Ryan McParland (AB ’07) is a professional actor in Hollywood where he lives with his wife, Danielle. You can catch Ryan playing Riley Martin on WB’s sitcom Living Free. Soap opera fans may recall seeing Ryan playing Hank Bennet on Passions.

Peter Hochmuth (AB '94) was delivered the recipient of the Hochmuth Nichols Award, which recognizes the department’s most outstanding student in terms of scholarship, teaching, and service. In addition to planning his upcoming wedding, Peter is working on his doctoral dissertation, “Health Care Institutions, Medical Organization, and Physicians: A Multilevel Analysis.”

Jeremy Engels received the Karl R. Wallace Award for distinguished scholarship as a graduate student. Jeremy recently published a refereed-authored essay in The Quarterly Journal of Speech and in Rhetoric and Public Affairs. He is working on his PhD dissertation, “America’s Enemies and the Contested Rhetorics of Nationhood, 1776-1812.”

Jennifer Bute was presented the Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award, which recognizes the department’s most outstanding graduate teaching assistant. Jennifer teaches Speech Communication 230, Introduction to Interpersonal Communication. She has served as lead instructor in the course, and she has helped to improve and refine course materials. She is also working on her dissertation research in inter-personal communication and health.

Kevin Cee received the Henry L. Mueller Award, recognizing exceptional service to the department by a graduate student. Kevin has been a TA in Speech Communication 277 and will take over as lead instructor of that course for one semester this year. In addition to teaching, Kevin is publishing two essays this year on contemporary U.S. politics.

Nicole Evans was chosen for the Stafford H. Thomas Award, recognizing exceptional service to the department by a graduate student. Nicole was honored for her work in helping students with their formal speeches. She was particularly helpful in assisting Professor Brashear with the recruitment activities for new graduate students.

Senior Christopher Follans and Ryan Spain were both honored for their outstanding academic records, based on GPA. Chris, recipient of the Wayland Maxfield Parrish Award, is now working for the advertising firm Leo Burnett. Ryan was the recipient of the King Bradrick Allen Award, and is currently working for The Heartland Partnership, doing economic and community development work for the Peoria area. He has been admitted to the Masters for Public Administration program at Syracuse University for Fall 2006.

Laura Elkayed and Laura Wendel were co-recipients of the Richard Murphy Award. The award recognizes undergraduates who have authored outstanding scholarly papers in the preceding 12 months. Laura Elkayed’s paper (written for a class taught by Professor James Hay) analyzed the video monitors installed in exercise facilities and how their arrangement strategies employed in over 250 years of debates about capital punishment.

Katelon Leticia received the Otto A. L. Dieter Award for her exceptional service as an undergraduate. Katelon was honored for her hard work and dedication in support of the department’s mock trial team. She continues to be an enthusiastic member of the team and hopes they advance to national competition this year.

Allison Faetz was awarded the Bonita M. Whitlock Scholarship. The award is given to a junior majoring in Speech Communication based on an outstanding academic and service record on campus. The scholarship funding is to be applied to the student’s senior year of study. Allison will graduate in December 2006.
Speech Communication Alums: Let Us Know What You Are Doing

Mail to:
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University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign
244 Lincoln Hall
702 S. Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801

or email to:
spcomm@uiuc.edu

Name

Address

Email

Please indicate all U. of I. degrees
AB year MA year PhD year

Current position and employer (if retired, indicate last position prior to retirement):

List accomplishments/publications/personal news for the past year: