

# THE CONNECTION

College of Communication and Information at Florida State University

Fall 2018 Alumni Newsletter • Volume X, Issue II



Florida State's mission includes education, research and service. Discussions of the role of universities often focus solely on education and research with service going unmentioned. This edition of *The Connection* highlights some of the many ways our students, faculty and alumni engage with communities, help others, and gain valuable insights about people, organizations and society.

Working within a community is the best way to discover the importance and scope of problems and solutions that work in real life. Engaging faculty and students in community problems enables them to test what they think they know from courses and research and to identify the most pressing and fundamental problems.

Because of the impact engagement has on student retention and academic success, the College faculty have made it a key component of the education experience we provide our students. As a result we use 19 student organizations directly related with our College to help students develop professional and leadership skills in their field. These student organizations, all sponsored by a CCI faculty or staff members, engage approximately 500 students each semester.

The stories in this newsletter document just a few of the ways CCI has integrated education with community engagement through classes, student organizations, research and service learning projects. Whether it be the filmmakers' workshop working with high school students in the Mississippi Delta, teaching assistive technology to a human trafficking victim, or providing technology training via a summer camp for high school students; all of these activities impact both those being served and the faculty and staff who create those opportunities.

I am regularly encouraged and inspired by the energy and effort that students, faculty and alumni provide through community engagement, but just as grateful that community engagement improves their experience at Florida State.



*Larry Dennis*

Dean and Professor

*Lawrence C Dennis*



# SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

## ALUMNA CHANGES STUDENT LIVES AS ADMINISTRATOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN KINGSTON, JAMAICA

**Neleen Leslie** ('15 Ph.D. Mass Communication) is the Program Director of Graduate Studies in the School of Advanced Management at The University of Technology, Jamaica (UTech) in Kingston, Jamaica.

As Program Director, Neleen is responsible for managing the masters and doctoral programs offered in the College of Business and Management. This includes curriculum development, recruitment, brand building, assisting students, teaching marketing courses and supervising student research in the undergraduate BBA program in the School of Business Administration and graduate programs in the School of Advanced Management.



## COMMUNICATION STUDENTS CREATE IMPACTFUL SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN ABROAD

For the second year in a row Firenze Turismo, the official tourism page of the Municipality of Florence and the Metropolitan City of Florence, collaborated with **School of Communication students** in Florida State University International Programs in Florence. FSU students contributed by creating social media posts promoting keeping the city clean, respecting historical sites, and recycling through the #EnjoyRespectFirenze campaign.



## PROFESSOR'S CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY BASED THEATRE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

Professor **Donna Marie Nudd** is the co-founder of the Mickee Faust Club. Priding itself on being supportive of people with disabilities and of the queer community, the Mickee Faust Club is a Tallahassee-based community theater established in 1987. The Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) honored the Mickee Faust Club with the award for "Leadership in Community Based Theatre and Civic Engagement."



## PROFESSOR, ALUM, STUDENT BRING MEDIA PRODUCTION PROGRAM TO MS DELTA

Professor **Davis Houck**, doctoral student **Pablo Correa**, and alumnus **Joe Davenport** inspired high school students in the Mississippi Delta in the Summer of 2018 with the "Find Your Voice" Young Filmmakers Workshop.



## WORKING CLASS CONDITIONS IN HAITI DOCUMENTED BY PROFESSOR

Assistant Professor **Malia Bruker** traveled to Haiti to film her documentary 'Batay La.' This film looks at Batay Ouvriye, a group that has been organizing the working class in Haiti, and their recent campaign to increase minimum wage.





# SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCE & DISORDERS



Bob Self/Florida Times-Union

## ALUMNA AND STUDENT TRANSFORM THE LIFE OF 13-YEAR-OLD ERITREAN REFUGEE

**Isabel Lawton** ('13 M.S. Speech Language Pathology), pediatric speech language pathologist and student intern **Laura Gomez** are transforming the life of a 13-year-old Eritrean refugee, Surur Ali, in Jacksonville, Florida. When Surur was 7, he and his family were kidnapped and tortured by human traffickers in Ethiopia. During that time, Surur sustained a brain injury that made him lose the ability to speak or use his hands or arms. At Brooks Rehabilitation, Lawton and Gomez are teaching him how to use an augmentative and alternative communication speech generating device to communicate with others.

## RESEARCHER IMPROVES CHILDHOOD LITERACY

Dr. **Lisa Fitton** currently works as a researcher at the Florida Center for Reading Research, specifically on the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, *Reach Every Reader*, a five-year initiative made possible by the collaboration of Harvard, MIT, and FSU that aims to help children thrive as readers. Their goal is to make the reading test as valid as possible for as many children as possible, including children from different backgrounds.

## PROFESSOR GETS FEDERAL FUNDS FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WRITING RESEARCH

Professor **Carla Wood** received federal funding in partnership with Hillsborough County Public School District to evaluate students' writing outcomes in approximately 44 elementary schools. The research grant from the National Center for Education Research of the Institute of Education Sciences will provide the research team and Hillsborough County personnel with funding to examine writing outcomes of over 3,000 students.

## DISTANCE LEARNING GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTS AUTISM RESEARCH

First-year speech language pathology distance learning student **Natasha Quinonez** shared her passion for increasing communication of those with autism during a presentation at the 2018 HISPA Autismo conference in Orlando, Florida. Done entirely in Spanish (her second language), Natasha's presentation focused on the use of visual supports which are methods for helping children with autism improve communication skills.



## RESEARCH ON EMBEDDED INTERVENTIONS FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS EARNS IES GRANT

Assistant Professor **Mollie Romano** is the Assistant Director of the Communication in Early Childhood Research and Practice Center and she engages in research and teaching on embedded interventions for infants and toddlers in home and community settings. Most recently, she's the principal investigator and recipient of a \$213,464 research grant awarded from the Institute of Education Sciences which will allow funding for the research she has passionately been exploring with her team members Melissa Schnurr, Susie Rensch, Angie Green, and Kim Johnson.



# SCHOOL OF INFORMATION

## STUDENTS RUN SEMESTER LONG TECH PROGRAM



In Spring 2018, **STARS Alliance** students led a weekly after school program at R. Frank Nims Middle School to introduce children to basic coding and new technology. The program has continued through the Fall 2018 semester.

## ALUMNUS REVOLUTIONIZES AGRICULTURE



**Darren Raj** ('09 B.S. Information Technology) founded Agribugs, a drone service provider that identifies crop stress from nutrient deficiencies. The company has helped commercial farmers and researchers.



## ALUMNUS JOINS PEACE CORPS ON ISLAND IN THE PACIFIC

**Connor Griffin** ('17 B.S. Information Technology) joined the Peace Corps and started working at Amelvet Primary School located in northeast Malekula, a group of islands in the Pacific Ocean region of Melanesia. Within three weeks of his arrival, he began teaching English to teachers and students. Connor's on-site training included learning Bislama (one of the official languages of Vanuatu), Vanuata culture, English literacy teaching, and healthy behavior change. He plans to go further in his service there by setting up functioning computer labs.

## STUDENT PRESENTS RESEARCH ON CANCER CLINICAL TRIALS

Ph.D. student **Lynette Hammond Gerido** presented her research at the International Conference on Healthcare Informatics in New York. Her study with iSchool Assistant Professor Zhe He identifies strategies to increase patient participation in cancer clinical trials. This qualitative study is intended to explore what foundational actions are being carried out at a rudimentary level to support future advances in patient-centered decision support to increase participation in cancer clinical trials.



## PROFESSOR SERVES AS VISITING LECTURER IN GERMANY

Professor **Nancy Everhart** spent Summer 2018 as a Visiting Lecturer at the Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences Media Campus in Dieburg, Germany. Everhart delivered guest lectures about school libraries in two courses – Digital Libraries and Information Literacy – in the Library and Information Science bachelor's program. The aim of the Visiting Lecturer program is to improve the international teaching program by teaching in a foreign language and teaching with an international focus.



## DEVELOPMENT NEWS



*Mafé Brooks*

Director of Development

Florida State University embarked on its most ambitious \$1B fundraising campaign in its history eight years ago. On June 30th this year, we successfully concluded the Raise the Torch Campaign and received a total of \$1,158,665,865 in gifts! The generous support from alumni created 1,304 scholarships and 94 professorships across FSU.

At our recent scholarship and donor recognition reception held on November 1, we awarded three new scholarships for the first time—the **Curtis and Jo Ellen Hicks Falany Fund** to support our speech language pathology students, the **Joel and**

**Cheryl Rosenfield Endowment** to support student leaders in our Women in IT Sharing Experiences (WISE program/women leaders) and the **Ashley Nugent Endowed Scholarship Fund** (established by the **Cavallaro and Nugent families**) to support communication students with a focus on media/media communication studies, public relations and advertising. The students who received these scholarships are impressive and all of them are involved in making a difference in our community and beyond.

**Claire Seefried, Leslie Novakovic, Merrie Grace Harding and Hannah Park**, recipients of the Curtis & Jo Ellen Hicks Falany Scholarship are graduate student speech language pathology clinicians who are engaged in clinical practicums and externships located in Florida and Georgia. They are providing much needed care and therapy for adults in acute care rehabilitation settings, pediatric populations in outpatient settings and adults with neurological disorders.

**Rhiannon Jacobson and Bridget Kabacinski**, recipients of the Joel and Cheryl Rosenfield scholarship are actively engaged in recruiting the next generation of women leaders in the field of Information Technology in their respective roles as presidents of STARS and WISE. Their leadership is a testament to their commitment to the mission of these programs to increase the participation of women, under-represented minorities, and persons with disabilities in IT/computing disciplines.



**Samantha Nuñez**, a first generation student majoring in Media Communication is the first recipient of the Ashley Elizabeth Nugent Endowed Scholarship. The scholarship was established by the Cavallaro and Nugent families in memory of Ashley (daughter of the Nugents and friend of FSU student Michael Cavallaro) who passed away in 2014. The endowment serves as a tribute to her amazing spirit, kindness and generosity. Through this scholarship, Ashley's Seminole spirit, love, commitment and enthusiasm for Florida State will live on and help others to realize their

potential and live their dream in the Communication field.

It's evident that our students are committed not only to their academic success but also to making a difference in the lives of others. I am confident that through the exemplary work of our students and the generosity of our donors, the future of our College and Florida State University will continue to shine brighter. Thank you to our donors for ensuring a better tomorrow not only in our FSU community but in our society for many more generations to come!



Raise the Torch Campaign  
FY 2010 - FY 2016  
Goal Reached:  
102%

**\$12,143,056** » RAISED  
**\$12,000,000** » GOAL

For year-end charitable tax deductible donations to support student success, please contact: [mafe.brooks@cci.fsu.edu](mailto:mafe.brooks@cci.fsu.edu) or (850) 645-8312



# CLASS NOTES / COLLEGE HAPPENINGS

## CLASS NOTES

**Amelia Anderson** (Ph.D. '16) is an assistant professor at Old Dominion University.

**Rachel Bayles** (M.S. '15) is an Information System Security Officer at LASP.

**Joaquin Coston** (B.S. '13) is an IT Specialist for the Navy Department of Defense.

**Omar Sayem Ismail** (B.A. '17) is a consultant for Oculus Group LLC.

**Erin Lisch** (B.A. '14) is a multi-media journalist/reporter at WRTV in Indianapolis.

**Harrison Minchew** (B.S. '14) is a Software Engineer at Mad Mobile.

**Abigail Phillips** (Ph.D. '16) is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

**Stephanie Plucinsky** (B.S. '15) is the Social Media and Content Manager at the Kennedy Space Center's Visitor Complex.

**Ginger Reichl** (B.A. '93) is the founder of Pinstripe Marketing and CEO of Parvus House.

**Julia Skinner** (Ph.D. '15) is the founder and director of Root.

**Christopher Truncer** (B.S. '08) is the co-founder of FortyNorth Security.

**Jacqueline Ortiz Ramsay** (M.A. '08) oversees media relations and communications for NAFCU.

**Christian Sanders** (M.S. '11) is the Director of Sales for Stacked Sports, specifically for RecruitSuite.

**Danielle Skeen** (B.A. '09) is a nominee for the ADCOLOR Change Agent award.

### SHARE YOUR CLASS NOTE

Send your update, class year and degree to:  
[hello@cci.fsu.edu](mailto:hello@cci.fsu.edu).

Please note not all updates may be printed.

## COLLEGE HAPPENINGS



The Tallahassee Student Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association took their annual networking trip to Boston, Massachusetts in early November.



Leadership Board member Eduardo Perez visited Sindy Chapa's Account Planning class.



The Fall 2018 CCI Career and Internship Fair connected students with over 30 companies.



Students, faculty, and staff donated over 3 carts full of items for the FSU Food for Thought Pantry to boost the supply following Hurricane Michael.



School of Communication Science and Disorders welcomed the newest class of graduate students.

## FACULTY OF THE FUTURE

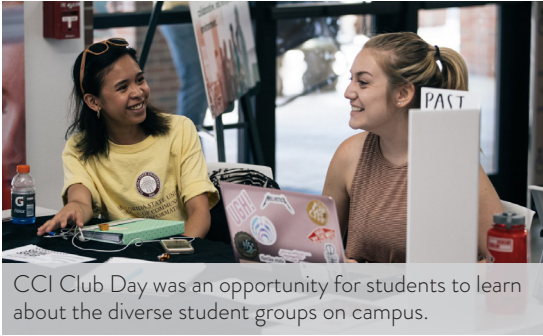


**Faculty of the Future** is a college-wide initiative to recognize the forward thinking work of our faculty to prepare students for the future.

School of Information Director, **Dr. Lorri Mon**, and School of Communication Science and Disorders Professor, **Susan Brosnan-Maddox**, received the Fall 2018 CCI Leadership Board awards for outstanding faculty. Watch their Faculty of the Future videos at [bit.ly/fofcci](http://bit.ly/fofcci)



# COLLEGE HAPPENINGS



CCI Club Day was an opportunity for students to learn about the diverse student groups on campus.



The annual CCI Scholarship and Awards Reception and Program recognizes the generosity of donors, outstanding faculty and staff, and honors students with a scholarship presentation.



CCI offered free professional headshots for students.



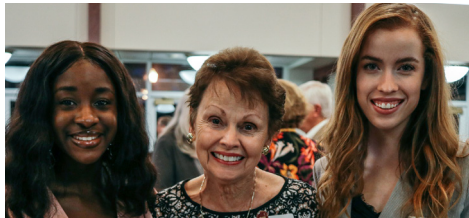
Dr. Lorri Mon with iSchool scholarship winners.



Russell Clayton was honored with the Graduate Faculty Teaching Award.



The CCI Student Leadership Council hosted the annual Fall BBQ for students, faculty, staff and alumni.



Eloise Mills with Mills scholarship recipients.



The Center for Hispanic Marketing Communication hosted a panel discussion with industry experts about multicultural marketing.



CCI received a grant from the US Army to host a six-week FSU iCamp over the summer for high school students to learn coding, web design, and more.



STARS Alliance students spoke with high school students in Orlando about life at FSU and CCI.



The My CCI Summer Instagram account featured students in their summer internships.



The Tally Job Hop Tech Edition helped students learn about great Tallahassee tech companies.



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## *Welcoming our newest Leadership Board Members*



**WALT BOWER**  
M.S. '10



**JESSICA CLARK**  
B.S. '10



**MARGIE DRISCOLL**  
B.S. '92



**ED GRUBER**  
B.S. '02



**GREGORY MARTINI**  
B.S. '77



**KATHLEEN MOELLER-PEIFFER**  
M.S. '77

## *CONNECT WITH YOUR COLLEGE*

Greetings from your CCI Leadership Board. I assumed the Chair of the Leadership Board in September. This is a wonderful group of alumni who truly love CCI and willingly volunteer their time and treasures to help it prosper. As a 1972 grad of the old "Library School," I have been around long enough to have seen great things happen at CCI and FSU. I love attending the Leadership Board meetings because there's always something new to learn about CCI's students and faculty.

One of the Board goals this year is to increase the number of alumni donors. Giving strengthens the bond between alums and the college and university so I'd like to encourage our alumni to give back, to stay connected and develop a life-long relationship that helps set the stage for CCI's continued success. We are trying to come out with strategies to reach out to more of you and welcome your ideas on ways to keep the connection strong. I invite you to keep your contact information updated and to make an annual gift of any amount. In the meantime, I'll keep on searching for the October Mega Million \$1.6 billion winner from my home state of South Carolina and ask for a gift of \$100 million so we can move into a new building!

More about this year's Board goals and the progress we are making towards achieving them in the coming months.

In 'Nole spirit,  
Diane Ervin



*Diane Ervin*  
M.S. '72  
Chair, Leadership Board



CCI has 25,833 alumni, 1,637 undergraduate students, 605 graduate students and 91 faculty members.

CCI has FSU's highest graduation rate after entering our undergraduate majors (96.5%) and FSU's highest employment and graduate school rate at the time of graduation (86.0%).

CCI is the #1 producer of graduate degrees that meet State of Florida job needs.

Our programs rank as some of the best nationally:

- #1 School of Information, School Library Media Program - US News and World Report, 2018.
- #5 School of Information, Services for Children and Youth Program - US News and World Report, 2016.
- #7 Information Technology, Online Graduate Program - US News and World Report, 2018.