

COMMUNICATOR

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20

**FASCINATING
STUDENT
STORIES**



**INSPIRING
ALUMNI
CAREER PATHS**

44



but only

1 SEMINOLE NATION



School of Communication Student News

Doctoral candidate presents at Hurricane Conference



On May 11-16 in Orlando, the state of Florida hosted the annual Governor's Hurricane Conference (GHC). Doctoral candidate **Mariam Shaikh** attended as a scholarship recipient, student volunteer and presenter.

The annual hurricane season in the Atlantic begins June 1 and ends November 30. In preparation, the Governor's office coordinates a gathering of emergency managers and agencies to integrate their efforts of communicating better before, during, and after emergencies in Florida especially the hurricane season.

Shaikh's topic for the workshop was "Visiting Florida! Has the Hurricane Risk been communicated on the Internet?" She was one of only three students selected to present at the session. Shaikh's working dissertation is on use of media innovations for disaster preparedness in low-income nations.

"I am fortunate to have been able to attend, volunteer and present at the GHC2014 annual convention and represent the College of Communication & Information," Shaikh said. "To have your ideas exchanged among the large audience of professionals and academics standing to make the world a safer place was an awesome experience."

Cook awarded MECLABS Scholarship

Recipient of the MECLABS Scholarship, **Katherine Cook** (on left), was honored at the Scholarship and Awards Reception on October 2nd, 2014.

The scholarship is funded by MECLABS, the world's largest research institute which is dedicated to discovering how people make choices. MECLABS, based in Jacksonville, is a science lab that uses real-world research to help business leaders get better use out of sales and marketing technology and resources, including Internet marketing, website optimization, and lead generation and nurturing. MECLABS has been involved in direct research partnerships with companies throughout Europe and North America since 2001.

The MECLABS Fellowship was established in 2014 to support full time students that are currently enrolled in the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) graduate program with a 3.0 GPA or higher. Currently, MECLABS employs 17 Florida State graduates, making up 12% of the MECLABS team.



Student presents at Going Global Showcase

Jasmine Crane, an undergraduate student in her junior year of Media Communication Studies, presented on "Finding Home in Traveling Abroad." Her study abroad experience in Paris, France was made possible through the FSU International Programs. This past summer Jasmine traveled to Paris for a month, studying Intensive French.

"Ever since I came back to the states, I've been eager to tell anyone who will listen about my trip," she shared. Her presentation for the Going Global Showcase talked about her experience in France that sparked her interest in traveling and french culture. "My main goal was to get people interested," said Jasmine. "I had a really great time at the showcase!"

School of Communication Student News

Undergrad's research awarded



Shauna Gillooly, a second-year sophomore at Florida State University, was given the Best Undergraduate Paper award at the 84th Annual Convention of the Florida Communication Association in Orlando on October 16-18. Shauna's paper, 'A Media Framing

Analysis: The Coverage of Rape in Indian and Western News Sources' examines the framing techniques news sources used in representing India's "rape epidemic" after the widely publicized New Delhi gang-rape case of December 2012.

Her research interests center around Human Security & International Policy, though she doesn't want to limit herself to just that. Her research on India's media coverage is a perfect marriage of her interests. "I originally began the project as a result of being in the UROP program," shared Gillooly. UROP is the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program, an initiative of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Academic Engagement. Since its inception in 2012, UROP offers a rare opportunity for first and second-year students to partner with faculty as research assistants. Shauna participated in UROP her first year at Florida State, but her research didn't end with the year-long program. "As the year progressed, Dr. McDowell encouraged me to write a paper about it," said Gillooly.



Christopher Waldeck, Media Communication Studies graduate student, is working for iHeartMedia as an account executive for the Tallahassee area. Before his position with IHM, Waldeck worked for College Social Magazine, Republican Party of Florida, and Disability Rights Florida.

He is also actively involved with the Center for Leadership & Social Change as well as the Garnet and Gold Society, and is a brother of Alpha Phi Omega Iota Rho.

Through his consistent productivity he has been afforded incredible opportunities that Christopher says he's eternally grateful.

Butler researches at ComicCon

Johnathan Butler, graduate student in the College of Communication & Information's School of Communication, spent a week this summer in San Diego studying interactions at one of the biggest conventions in the country.

In July, Johnathan traveled to San Diego to conduct research at Comic Con. Comic Con began in 1970 and has become the most well-known convention of its kind. Sprouted from a love of comic books, the convention now covers larger aspects of culture including films, sci-fi and



fiction/fantasy literature. Attendance has hit 130,000+ in recent years.

Butler attended the conference to conduct an ethnographic field study about the intersection of fan practice. He attended the conference from July 23rd to the 28th.

He presented his findings during Conference #16: The Culture of Comic-Con. During his time, he observed how fans reacted towards character when their race/ethnicity changed. "I gathered that there is a spectrum of fans: 1. Those who are purist and absolutely do not like changes. 2. Those who like changes, but advocate for stronger minority characters. 3. Those who welcome the changes wholeheartedly," said Butler.

Next year's Comic Con will be held July 9-12, 2015, where Butler has been invited back to conduct his research.

Grad student works for iHeartMedia

School of Communication Student News



Student saves a life with donation

Earlier this year, **Breanna Amborn** got a call that changed her life. The call came from an organization, Be the Match, the national registry for stem cell and bone marrow donors. The organization is active on Florida State's campus, running awareness drives on campus and through the Marching Chiefs. Now in her third season in the color guard, Breanna signed up as a willing donor during a color guard practice. Just before spring break this year, she received a call telling her she was a potential donor match.

Contrary to popular belief, 85% of donors donate stem cells through a process similar to giving plasma, instead of a lumbar puncture. Breanna was one of the 85% who donated stem cells through this procedure: "You have a needle hooked up in each arm and you just sit there. They take your blood, cycle out the cells, and put the blood back into your other arm," she shared

With a 1 in 500 chance of being a potential match and a 1 in 38,000 chance of donating: Bree's story is unique. Now an advocate and volunteer for Be the Match, she says the experience was one of the most rewarding ones she's had. The ten minutes of paperwork and a quick cheek swab during a color guard practice turned into a life changing moment for Bree and a life-saving donation for someone else.

Students represent FSU at NCA in Chicago

Doctoral students and faculty from the College of Communication and Information attended the National Communication Association (NCA) Conference in Chicago, Illinois November 20-23, 2014. COMM students presented their research alongside top students and industry leaders from across the nation.

Faculty included:

Dr. Gary Heald, "Effects of Absolute and Comparative Risk Information on Individuals' Precautionary Actions against Skin Cancer"

Dr. Marilyn Young, "Connecting Argument and Archival History: Responses to Robert P. Newman's Inevitable Ignorance in American Foreign Policy"

Students included:

B.J. Bae, "Effects of Absolute and Comparative Risk Information of Individuals' Precautionary Actions against Skin Cancer"

Martha McKay Canter, "Tea Time: Eighteenth-Century English Women's Economic Agency and the Rhetoric of Home Display"

Michael S. Chouinard, "Selling the Swamp: The Commodification of Cajun Culture in Swamp People"

Qihao Ji, "The Bigger the Data the Harder the Fall? Opportunities, Methodologies, and Challenges to Big Data Analysis"

Azmat Rasul and Arthur Raney, "Politically entertained: The effects of movies on political attitudes of female audiences"

Zihan Wang, "Single and educated: A study of women's self-presentations on one Chinese online dating site"



School of Communication Student News



Houck's students study lynching case

Davis W. Houck, Ph.D., Professor at Florida State University's School of Communication, took his class on a field trip to Jackson County on Friday, November 7th. "We were there to visit several sites associated with the lynching of Claude Neal," said Houck. The lynching, recognized nationwide for its brutality, caught the attention of anti-lynching activists and Congress. The case was the catalyst

for the ending of lynching in the United States.

"More than half the class gave up a big part of their Friday to go, so it was a most educational and memorable trip," said Houck.

During the trip, Dale Cox, author and researcher for the case, shared his knowledge with the students. Cox will be working with FSU on a documentary on the Neal Case and is considering donating his lynching-themed papers to FSU's special collections.

Sorority under leadership of COMM student

If there was one word to describe Savannah Strayer, it'd be motivated. The Florida State junior is studying Media and Communication Studies in the School of Communication. She's received the Torch Night Award, been a regular on the Dean's List, ran for Student Senate and spent a summer in Croatia with Project Life International. "The missionaries who started the ministry were from my hometown," she shared.

Her most recent accomplishment? Strayer was named the President of Kappa Delta (KD) Sorority for the 2015-2016 year. The position comes after serving as the Vice President of Operations, External Philanthropy Chair, SET Leader, and co-founding the KD Bible Study. Kappa Delta was the first sorority chartered at Florida State in 1904. Within the College of Communication and Information, there are over 20 students who are sisters of KD. Philanthropy is an essential part of the sorority and KD recently held an event for Children's Home Society of Tallahassee.



The event, Bump It Like BECKHAM, was held November 9th at the new intramural fields. Children's Home Society is an organization focused on protecting the lives of and promoting healthy relationships with children and their families. The event was a soccer tournament reimagined – players surrounded themselves in an inflated bubble and played soccer. On their GoFundMe alone, the sorority raised \$4,340 in a month for Children's Home Society.

"I'm looking forward to being able to give back to KD more than what has already been given to me," said Strayer.

School of Information Student News



Grad student awarded ALA Spectrum Scholarship

Graduate student **Camille Thomas** received a 2014-15 Spectrum Scholarship awarded by the American Library Association's Office of Diversity on June 24. Thomas, a Master of Science in Library & Information Studies (MLIS) student, is one of 50 exceptional library and information graduate students to earn the award.

Last fall, Thomas was selected as a fellow by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) Career Enhancement Program, which gives MLIS students from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic groups an opportunity to jump-start their careers in research libraries by providing a robust fellowship experience that includes an internship in an ARL member library.

Katy Comellas defends Master's Thesis

Writing a thesis in your Master's degree is an uncommon thing to do - **Katy Comellas** took on the unusual feat with an unusual topic: instances of death in children's books. She investigated the Ralph Caldecott Medal, a children's book award, and its counterpart in Europe, Australia, and Canada. She found that Australia has the most mentions of death in children's books and the United States had the least.

Katy's thesis delves into death education, why the subject is taboo for children, and benefits of death education. On November 4th, she successfully defended her thesis, "A Less than Perfect World: Representation of Death in Award-winning Picture Books." Katy's thesis is available in the Goldstein Library.



FSU STARS trains Middle/High School students at TSA Conference

Florida State University STARS Alliance students recently spent three days in Orlando partnering with Florida's chapter of the Technology Student Association (TSA), an organization of high school and middle school students interested in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

While the STARS Alliance is a national organization, Florida State is the only STARS chapter in the state that has formed a partnership with Florida TSA for STEM outreach. In that role, FSU STARS attended and led sessions at TSA's annual State Leadership Conference and presented five workshops: How to interview and get the position, Public Speaking 101, Marketing your chapter using Social Media, and Digital Footprint.

Students who attended TSA Conference:

Danielle Cuccaro (ICT)
Michael Helfrich (IT)
Russ Hill, Jr. (IT)
Courtney Lisenbee (MCS)

Kelby Mahoney (IT)
Milton Ramer (IT)
Chelsea Schneider (ICT)
Marissa Monivis (alum - ICT)

School of Information Student News

Doctoral student earns NSF internship



Dong Joon Lee, doctoral candidate in the School of Information interned this summer at Research Data Alliance. Lee was one of eight selected for the highly coveted internship, which is provided by the Research Data Alliance (RDA) and funded by a National Science Foundation grant.

He was mentored by Michael Witt from the Distributed Data Curation Center (D2C2) at Purdue University Libraries and by Beth Plale from Indiana University.

During his time with RDA, Lee helped identify the need to formalize an understanding of the metadata managed by the ORCID registry of researcher identifiers. He was able to work with ORCID to draft a Dublin Core Application Profile for this need.

STARS Alliance wins Award



In August, the STARS Alliance traveled to Washington DC for the annual STARS conference.

The annual conference highlights each college chapter's achievements. 42 STARS chapters gathered in Washington DC, from August 14-16th. "The weekend overall was a great experience," said Michael Helfrich, STARS member. "We had the opportunity to highlight some of our 119 projects completed this year."

STARS Computing Corps is a community of practice for student-led regional engagement as a means to broaden participation in computing. Students collaborate with regional K-12 schools, industry and community partners to inform and prepare upcoming students for entry and success in college computing programs.

The 13 FSU students that attended were: Rachel Bryson, Melissa Ehster, Michael Helfrich, Russ Hill Jr., Luisa Laitano, Courtney Lisenbee, Kelby Mahoney, Marissa Monivis, Milton Ramer, Shelby Schlembach, Chelsea Schneider, and Kelsey Styles.

iSchool doc student returns to FL

Aisha Johnson is a career Seminole with two degrees under her belt and another in the works. She earned her B.S. in Political Science, M.S. in Library & Information Studies from Florida State University and is working towards her Doctorate in Information Studies.



The faithful Seminole took to Nashville, Tennessee in 2013 to begin work at Fisk University, taking a position as a Special Collections Librarian. Her hard work at the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library has paid off and Aisha is returning to the Sunshine State.

Her new position will be at University of North Florida as a Special Collections Librarian.

Recently, Johnson was awarded the Eugene Garfield Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship. It is given through Beta Phi Mu, an international Library & Information Studies Honor Society. If the \$3,000 award is a harbinger of things to come for Johnson, the future seems very, very bright.

Doc students receive alum's scholarship

Two iSchool doctoral students, **Julia Skinner and Aisha Johnson**, were awarded the Sol Hirsch Scholarship. Sol Hirsch is a graduate of the School of Information with his Master's in Library Science. His contribution of the Sol and Beverly Hirsch Scholarship is in honor of his parents, both Nazi concentration camp survivors. The endowment provides scholarships for master's and doctoral pursuing library degrees. Johnson and Skinner investigate diversity in different library settings.

SCSD student serves, leads, succeeds



Meghan Hemstreet is a leader among her peers in the School of Communication Science and Disorders. She volunteers at her church's afterschool program and teaches Sunday school to the 4-5 year old children. Her passion is watching children improve and succeed with speech disorders. Her time at Florida State has set her up for success, "FSU has helped instill the significance of community in life," she shared.

She will graduate from Florida State in the next year and go onto graduate school. Before she goes onto graduate school, she seeks to diversify her experience as an ESE paraprofessional at a local school for children with special needs. Ten years from now, she wants to be a certified SLP in Florida with young children.

Student signs Frozen's 'Let It Go' for deaf

Tatiana Nicole Perez is a motivated student, using what she learns in the classroom to change the lives of those around her. As a student pursuing disorders in human communication, she became fluent in sign language to better treat her future patients.

Though she has some schooling left, she has already begun to make a difference. Recently, Tatiana combined her passion for Disney and sign language into a video: signing the 2013 Disney movie 'Frozen.' The famous song from the movie, "Let it Go" is on YouTube. In the future, Tatiana hopes to have earned her doctoral degree and be working as a Speech Pathologist in a school or clinic.



Grad student wins AAUW grant

First-year graduate student **Stephanie Brown** received a Career Development Grant of \$11,000 from the American Association of University Women (AAUW) for the upcoming academic year.

Brown is pursuing a master of science in speech-language pathology. The AAUW Career Development Grants are designated to offer "encouragement" funding to members seeking to renew or resume academic work for credit toward career or employment advancement.



Student presents at Going Global Showcase

Maya Callender, doctoral student in the School of Communication Science and Disorders, also presented at the showcase. Her work was made possible through the Moellership Scholarship and the Center for Leadership and Social Change. While in South Africa, Maya studied the interactions between caregivers and orphans in institutions. Issues like high child-to-caregiver ratios, poverty and limited interactions can be risk factors for children in these situations. In her research, caregivers were recorded while interacting with the children during mealtimes. During the intervention, she coached caregivers to use more facilitative language with the children.



School of Communication Alumni News



Guy Stephens: VP at Fry Hammond Barr

Guy Stephens ('88) directs client experiences for popular brands like Stein Mart, McDonald's and ABC Fine Wine & Spirits. He shapes the Niagara Falls brand, and other brands like: Hardee's, Sprint and Cracker Barrel. This regular, BBQ-eating guy is the senior VP of Strategic Planning at Fry Hammond Barr.

Stephens earned his BS in Advertising/Marketing Communication from the College of Communications in 1988 and his MS in Mass Communications with specialty in Marketing Communication/Information Technologies in 1989. Earning the magna cum laude

distinction for both degrees. In addition to his education background, Stephens has worked the gamut of ad jobs. After graduation from Florida State in 1989, he tackled the ad world in full force, and from multiple angles. Guy managed the Sherwin Williams brand regionally and later owned and ran his own advertising and printing business in Jacksonville.

Today Stephens helps companies decide on the research methods most appropriate to assess marketing decisions. Processes may involve conducting nation wide research, or advising a quick turnaround web-based survey. "Guy is adept at sizing up the situation, evaluating the best options and collaborating on a recommendation. End of day, everyone involved gets the data needed to execute the right campaign in the right way at the right time," said Stephens' colleague.

Despite juggling his busy career and a family, Stephens often reflects on the first time he stepped foot on FSU's campus. "It felt like home and I was in love," said Stephens. "My decision was made – I was a Nole. I called UF and said no thank you and that turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life. Call it a gut feeling that was triggered by the one big thing that sold me on FSU – the people here seemed to be more caring. Coupled with the casual vibe of the campus and culture made it feel like a perfect fit – and it was. Trust your gut."

Sorensen: VP of Corporate Communications @ Firehouse Subs

Cecily Sorensen (BA '99, MS '00) set foot on Florida State University's campus in 1995 when she started her undergraduate career.

Cecily wasn't 100% sure what she wanted to pursue, initially electing English as her major. Eventually, she found the field of Communications and in 1999, she graduated with her Bachelor's in Communication and went on to pursue her Master's in Mass Communication and Marketing/Media Research. Shortly after graduating in 2000, she started as a Junior Account Executive at the McCormick Agency Public Relations. Four years and a promotion later, Cecily left the firm to join Firehouse Subs as a Manager of Corporate Communications.

Since 2005, she has built a communications department from the ground up. Overseeing internal communications, public relations, social media, guest services and event planning. "During my tenure, the brand has garnered billions of PR impressions and been named a top 10 brand in social media within the restaurant industry."

In 2013, Cecily was promoted to Vice President of Corporate Communications after eight years with Firehouse Subs. Part of her job includes event planning – Firehouse Subs hosted a private concert with Foreigner and Lonestar at the Hard Rock in Orlando this past May. During the franchise conference, Tallahassee-based The Zimmerman Agency was named Vendor of the Year, celebrating 1.6 billion media impressions for 2013 under Cecily's leadership. "I am successful because of Florida State and its investment in helping me find my way," she recalls. "I can't imagine having been in any other major."



School of Communication Alumni News

Alumnus flourishes as one of nation's top lawyers

Eric Policastro ('06) arrived at Florida State University's School of Communication with the goal of attending law school one day. What he didn't know was what kind of law he wanted to practice. Then, Policastro took a Persuasion class with Professor Davis Houck, who piqued his interest in trial law. Houck certainly pushed Policastro in the right direction. At just 28 years old and only five years following graduation from Baylor University Law School, Policastro has recovered over 100 million dollars in verdicts and settlements in complex civil lawsuits involving fraud, death, significant personal injury and breach of various legal duties.



Last October, Policastro and his trial team were recognized in the National Law Journal's Big Money Wins publication for the ninth largest verdict in the nation in 2013—a near \$49 million jury verdict in a complex civil trial involving issues of breach of contract, conversion, gross negligence and fraud. The National Trial Lawyers named Policastro on the association's Top 100 Trial Lawyers list in both 2013 and 2014, and they honored him as one of the Top 40 Under 40 Trial Lawyers in 2014.

"I've been lucky that I have been put in a position where I've had a lot of trial experience, which doesn't happen a lot anymore," Policastro said. "I've had some pretty good success with it. The big verdict last year was awesome. It's been pretty great to be recognized by the National Trial Lawyers twice now as one of the best in the nation."

Alum consults with non-profs



Alyce Lee Stansbury ('87) has used her communication background to help her launch a lengthy career in non-profits and fundraising.

Stansbury is currently the president of Stansbury Consulting, a leading fundraising firm, headquartered in Tallahassee, which she founded in 2006. The firm helps nonprofit organizations build robust, sustainable fundraising programs.

Stansbury Consulting is a finalist in the service category for the 2014 Chamber Awards, organized by the Greater Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce.

"It's been great to take what I learned and what I know about non-profits and fundraising and help other organizations build successful fundraising programs and sustainable organizations," Stansbury said.

In addition to being a Chamber Award finalist, she also received the North Florida Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration's Civic Leadership Award this year and was a nominee for Tallahassee Woman Magazine's Tallahassee Women Who Mean Business.

Alum educates media students



After graduating in 2011, **Kevin Patterson** switched roles from student to teacher of a subject he's had a longtime passion for: television production — at a high school in Seminole County.

But once he was standing at the front of the classroom, Patterson realized how difficult teaching could be, especially in such a specialized field.

"I had experience in TV production dating back to when I was in elementary school, but teaching can be very difficult," Patterson said. "It's especially difficult when you're the only one at your school that teaches your subject."

Patterson grew up in Polk County, where there was a department dedicated to school television production and an annual awards program that has been in existence for 22 years. In hopes of replicating this structure in Seminole County, Patterson took the initiative and started a network and competition last year.

The idea resulted in the Seminole County School Television Awards, a district-wide program that recognizes middle and high school students in the areas of broadcasting, film and video production. In just two years, participation in the program increased by 80 percent and attendance of the awards ceremony quadrupled.

School of Communication Alumni News

Bryant creates app for snacks

Any seasoned sports fan knows the art of navigating a stadium. Perhaps rule #1... avoid the concession stand during halftime, unless you're a fan of long lines.

Bryant Joseph, ('14), is here to fix your need for snacks and distaste for long lines. Enter: Stadium Runner. The app uses your smartphone to play the middleman between sports fans and the concession stand.

Bryant Joseph and his co-partner Connor Grady tested the app last spring during Florida State baseball games with great success. Since then, the app was advertised via word-of-mouth and offered at the Citadel, Clemson and Wake Forest games this season. The app's biggest test to date was the sold-out Notre Dame game.

The app is free for iPhones and Android and offers a streamlined ordering process, customers enter their seat number and their food order. Check out with their credit card, similar to an Amazon check-out process, and their food appears in 10-15 minutes. Stadium Runner works with concession stands, equipping them with iPads that handle orders and print receipts for runners. Inside Doak Campbell, 20 of the 34 concession stands are outfitted to handle Stadium Runner orders.

The success of the app is a harbinger of great things to come for Bryant. "Our goal now is to continue to getting out the word about this enhancement to the game-day fan experience."



Sanderford rocks healthcare

Sherry Sanderford ('89) graduated magna cum laude from Florida State with her Bachelor of Science in Communications. In the last twenty five years, Sanderford's career path has taken her into different industries, from non-profits to financial services.

Today, she serves as Senior Director of Communications at Aetna; a health care company that sells traditional and consumer-directed insurance plans. The company's growth has exploded in the last decade, jumping from earnings of \$1.1 billion in 2005 to \$47.3 billion in the 2013 fiscal year.

Sanderford's time at Aetna started in 1999 as a Regional Internal Communications Manager, working to develop and implement internal communications for Aetna's business objectives. After five years, she was promoted to Communications Director, where she led communications for a range of Aetna businesses. After almost ten years, she was promoted to the Senior Director of Communications.

"My time at FSU helped establish a solid foundation for my career," she shared. "I learned how to put outspokenness and a naturally curious mind to work in building public relations strategies for different industries."



Alumna works for U.S. Consulate General in China



Linley Wartenberg ('90) returned this Fall for a lunch with students. Her visit was part of a Hometown Diplomat program in which State Department officials volunteer their time to meet with students during home leave. Wartenberg is now serving as an office management specialist at the U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou China. This is her first posting, but she travelled extensively before joining the State Department in September 2013. She has visited all 50 states, and worked as sports reporter in Detroit for eleven years with the Associated Press. She also worked for 15 months on an AmeriCorps project in flood recovery in Minot, North Dakota, just prior to joining the Foreign Service. Add to that her 2007-2009 Peace Corps service in Morocco, and you can see her love for travel and public service throughout her career.

School of Communication Alumni News

Ferraris finds Detroit dream job

Sarah Jean Ferraris (BA '14) lands her dream introductory position for Team Detroit as a Digital Junior Project Manager. Her position at the agency is within the Shopper Marketing team on the Ford account.



Ferraris' success is no coincidence. As a student in CCI's advertising program she was president of the Advertising Club, served on the CCI Student Leadership Council and interned at multiple advertising and public relations agencies in town.

"FSU provided me with plenty of opportunities," says Ferraris, "it was just a matter of taking advantage of them. I've been seeking experiences through countless internships, leadership positions and professional affiliations to inspire, challenge and prepare me for this very moment. This is everything I have been working towards my entire life – a career that satiates my curiosity and creativity."

This past summer she worked on popular brands such as Bayer Aspirin and Aleve through a student internship program at Energy BBDO in Chicago. It was there that Ferraris witnessed the Lay's 'Do Us a Flavor' campaign unfold. As part of the Aleve team, she was able to sit-in on creative and planning meetings, and help develop three campaigns – one of which will be released at the end of this month (Aleve PM).

Sarah Jean Ferraris looks forward to her experience as Digital Junior Project Manager.

Thompson works on the Sleepy Hollow set

These days the Sleepy Hollow set doesn't function without **Erin Thompson**, a media production grad. Thompson landed the job shortly after her 2014 graduation, in North Carolina's "Wilmywood" area (known for its film industry).

"My classes at FSU taught me that production is competitive and hard to find a way in... making connections is extremely important," says Thompson. She worked as an extra for the Fox television show until she walked up to an Assistant Director and told him she wanted more. Within the week she began her job as a Production Assistant.

The position requires on-call availability and extreme hours. Thompson has had experience with the gamut of background production tasks; keeping track of background actors, main actors, distributing paperwork and keeping the crew quiet while the camera is rolling.

"My background in Media Production will help me move up faster through different production jobs. I am excited to see what doors this position will open," says Thompson.



Gupta gives students advice

Ritesh Gupta graduated from Florida State's School of Communication in 1998. "I always knew I wanted to do media production," he told a full room, fifteen years later. "But – it took me 13 months to get a job offer."

Today, Ritesh owns his own production company, R&D Media. He's traveled to Africa with Bill Clinton, creates commercials for Match.com, sang to Nelson Mandela and met Beyonce. Twice.



Somewhere after the thirteen month wait and today, Ritesh made some invaluable career moves to become an Emmy-nominated producer. "It's not so much about your degree, but who you know," he shared. "Utilize every resource – especially your professors and fellow students."

It was a fellow student that gave Ritesh his "door" into a career. He was working as an on-air sports anchor for WCTV in Tallahassee when a friend got him an interview with MTV. He spent five years at MTV as a Producer, traveling across the world and working on the football documentary series, "Two-a-Days."

Now, he runs R&D Media. He's done work with Subway for their World Cup spots, 5 Gum, and NFL Community Projects. He's produced commercials for Allstate, Vogue & GAP. "You have to intern," he said. "But you have to be reliable, consistent and dependable. The industry is huge on word-of-mouth."

School of Communication Alumni News

Goldberg returns to Florida as CEO, Zimmerman

Michael Goldberg ('88) is a talented man. Well versed in strategic direction, advertising and creative solutions – he's been in high demand.

Until recently, he has been Partner of Deutsch Inc. and Senior Partner/Global CMO at Porter Novelli, both in New York City. This month, he returns to Florida as CEO of Zimmerman, one of the largest agencies in the country. All great men must start somewhere and for Goldberg, that start was Florida State University. He graduated in 1988 with a BS in Advertising/Communications & Psychology. Goldberg is back with a mission. That is, to make Zimmerman “the best retail agency on the planet.” Taking the leadership role is a large responsibility, as the agency has over \$3 billion in billings, about 1,000 people and offices throughout the country. “I'm thrilled to lead an agency that has an equal amount of scale and still untapped potential. It is a truly rare combination, actually.”

While he's a businessman by day, he's also a family man. He and his wife's strong careers (she is the CEO of South Florida PR Firm O'Connell&Goldberg) inspire their three daughters, one who is interested in leading trends and the other interested in leading religious congregations, Goldberg says he can see the similarity in both. The youngest still has more time to decide. Back in the sunshine state, Goldberg is committed to playing a larger role of mentorship with FSU students and alumni.



Alumnus wins EMMY, joins Siegelvision

If you tuned into MTV anytime during the last few years, you probably caught a round of commercials. MTV is known for their social campaigns (Get Yourself Tested, It's Your Sex Life, A Thin Line, I'm Positive) which run during popular shows like “Teen Mom” and reminded viewers that there were a range of options for cyberbullying, sexually transmitted diseases, and safe sex. One of the brains behind that campaign is none other than **David Grad**, who left Florida State with two BAs in 1994.

When his time at Florida State was finished, he worked in television, theatre and film as an actor. Shortly after that, he was writing, shooting and editing, running art departments for commercial shoots and finally found himself in production management and producing.

In 2006, he was offered a position with MTV's new channel, MTV Tr3s. It was a big step for David, “Building an aspirational brand for young Latinos in the US gave me the opportunity to move closer to the purpose-driven work I had always longed to do.” Years later, he was given the chance to lead MTV's on-air arm, in charge of developing pro-social initiatives.

Here's where the social campaigns come in. Over the years, David had been nominated for four Emmy awards. His work in prosocial campaigns paid off in 2014 with an Emmy award for the campaign “It's Your Sex Life.” Though David has a successful career and a list of awards to prove it, his passion for his work still takes center stage. “Encouraging open communication, safe sex practices, regular testing for STD's, and confidence in owning one's sexual health, it was a pleasure to be able to help young people overcome some of their biggest challenges,” he says.

After eight years, Grad left MTV with 3 Emmy nominations, an Emmy win, as well as a gracie, Imagen, Beacon, Promax, Namic and numerous Creativity & Mark awards. While all this was happening, David pursued his Master's degree in Strategic Communications during his time at MTV/Viacom.

Currently, David has joined the team at Siegelvision, a brand strategy firm based in New York City. The move allows him to work directly with the non-profits and NGOs that he has worked to champion.

“I thank Florida State for providing me with the confidence necessary for seeking a life of professional exploration aimed at maximizing my personal impact.”



School of Communication Alumni News

Nine alumni at Bowstern win Dick Pope Golden Image Award



Bowstern team members celebrate their highly coveted Dick Pope All Florida Golden Image Award, won July 18th at the Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) Capital Chapter Image Awards.

Principals at Bowstern, Kelly Robertson and Tom Derzypolski are both graduates of Florida State's College of Communication and Information.

The award is the highest honor given to a marketing agency headquartered in Florida. Their winning campaign, for the Electric Bus, gained national, regional and local coverage.

"The award itself was for a project done in our own backyard," said Robertson. The Electric Bus campaign was based locally but gained recognition across the country. The work was done for City of Tallahassee's StarMetro, a public transportation service.

ALUMNI WHO WORKED ON THE BOWSTERN CAMPAIGN

Thomas Derzypolski – BS '02, Public Relations.

Brittney Metzger – BS '06, Finance

Raquel Simon-Petley – BA '00, Public Relations and Theatre

Marisa Smith – BS '15, Public Relations and Marketing

Whitney Nunn – BFA '07, Graphic Design

Amanda Handley – BS '02, English, MS '04 Education

Kelly Robertson – BS '02, Public Relations

Jaclyn LaPointe – BS '13, Public Relations

Maggie Peterson – BS '08, Public Relations



Alumnus promoted to dean of Harding Honors College

Mike James, (Ph.D. '92) has been a member of Harding's faculty since 1985 and began his career at the university in the office of public relations in 1973. Harding is a four-year, private liberal arts university located in Searcy, Arkansas.

James was promoted to chair of Harding's department of communication, and was eventually chosen as the first dean of the College of Communication in 2008. James holds the academic rank of Distinguished Professor of Communication. He received the Distinguished Teaching Award in 1989, 1995 and 2007.

Currently, James is serving as the director of Harding University in Greece, a semester-abroad program in Porto Rafti, Greece.



School of Communication Alumni News

Lively hits gold in California



Nick Lively recently graduated from Florida State University in with a degree in Digital Media Production. Through the LATE program, he went to Los Angeles to intern for the summer. Before he left the Sunshine State,

he clocked over 250 hours with Seminole Productions recording live football, baseball and basketball games.

The FSU LATE (Los Angeles Television Experience) program brought him out to California and his hard work morphed into a job. “FSU was very helpful in both getting me out here and getting me employed,” said Lively. “There is a tight-knit group of FSU alums out here who work together and help each other out.”

Currently, Nick is working at Soapbox Films as a VFX and Motions Graphics Assistant in Burbank, California. He spends his days working on promotional and creative content for clients like Disney and FOX. Most recently, he worked on a piece for Fandango, promoting Rise of the Planet of the Apes.

President of Soapbox Films, David Smith, is an FSU alumni with a dedication to bringing Seminoles onboard. “Almost half of the employees at Soapbox are FSU Film and Media Production alumni,” reports Lively.

Alumna promoted to Vice President



Caroline Underwood, School of Communication alumna ('06), has been promoted to Vice President of Kreps DeMaria Public Relations and Marketing. The promotion comes after six years as an Account Director for the company.

A native of Miami, Underwood returned after graduating magna cum laude from Florida State with a B.A. in Communication and double minor in English and Spanish. She spent two years at NBC Miami as a morning show producer.

“I took a course in broadcast as well as Seminole Sports Magazine ... In addition to the experience at “FSU Headlines” these programs furthered my love for the industry”

Years later, Caroline is a valued member of Kreps DeMaria: “Caroline is an invaluable asset to Kreps DeMaria,” said the firm’s CEO, Israel Kreps. “Her skills, work ethic and professionalism are appreciated by her clients and peers alike.”

Kreps DeMaria is a mid-size public relations and marketing firm in Miami. Recently celebrating 25 years, Kreps DeMaria is well respected in the industry, specializing in residential and commercial real estate, hospitality, law, business, banking and luxury retail.

Her new role will include increased leadership in the role of account management, staff supervision and business development.

Jenkins awarded ALE Rising Star Award



Dan Jenkins, Ph.D., was recently honored at the Association of Leadership Educators (ALE) Conference. At the annual conference, ALE presented Jenkins with the 2014 ALE Rising Star Award. According to his nominator, his most endearing quality is his passion. “He exudes a contagious spirit, which motivates his colleagues and me.” The award highlights an ALE member who has made a significant contribution in leadership and service within ALE and in the community.

Jenkins is an active member of ALE since he joined in 2011. He serves as the Secretary on the Board of Directors and served as Conference Chair last year.

He recalls his time at Florida State as the most influential time of his life. “I was apart of the first leadership course FSU offered,” he said. “I’m not sure if it was the diversity of the student body or my involvement in student government, but my four years in Tallahassee were instrumental to the career path I chose.”

School of Communication Alumni News

Alum works for CCI Partnership

Alumnus **Collin Gaston** recently returned to campus to tour his former college and help set up a pipeline for internships and employment with his employer, Raycom Media.



The former Florida State “Mic Man” (1993-95) started his career in the broadcast field as a sales intern at WTXL-ABC in Tallahassee the semester prior to his graduation in December 1993. Gaston also worked with WTEV-TV and WAWS-TV in Jacksonville, Fla., before moving to Alabama, where he joined WSFA 12 News and the Raycom

Media family in 2007.

Gaston served as general sales manager of WSFA 12 News television before being promoted to vice president and general manager of WSFA 12 News in March 2011.

Raycom Media is one of the nation’s largest broadcasters and owns and/or provides services for 53 television stations in 37 markets and 18 states. Raycom stations cover 13.1 percent of U.S. television households and employ nearly 4,000 individuals in full and part-time positions.

Gaston is part of a group of Raycom executives looking to collaborate with the College of Communication & Information (CCI) to engineer programs that will be beneficial for both organizations.

Alumna launches NYC charity



Danielle Skeen (‘09) is a busy advertising professional, who uses her free time to run The Star Boutique, Inc., a charity-driven, pop-up shop that provides clothing, shoes, accessories, makeovers and workshops in self-esteem to underprivileged, teen girls

who are affected by homelessness in New York City.

Following graduation, Skeen went to the Big Apple to become Director of Volunteers at NY Youth at Risk, Inc., for two-and-a-half years.

While she changed her career path in 2012 to join Kirshenbaum, Bond, Senecal & Partners (kbs+) as an account executive, the experience working with underprivileged youth made a marked impact on Skeen.

Skeen, who handles national advertising campaigns for BMW at kbs+, started The Star Boutique as what was supposed to be a one-time occurrence. She wanted to donate clothes to teenage girls in need, but in a fun and enriching way. Eighteen months later, the charity continues to grow.

Before the physical makeover begins, participants go through a workshop with a life coach about the importance of confidence and self-esteem.



Alumnus wins Daytime EMMY Award

At just 22 years old and only one year after earning his bachelor’s degree, alumnus **Steven Rodriguez** (‘13) can proudly list “Emmy-winner” on his résumé.

Rodriguez, a producer for the Spanish-language morning show “Un Nuevo Dia” which airs on the Telemundo Network, was a part of a team that won the category Outstanding Morning Program in Spanish at the 41st Annual Daytime Emmy® Awards by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences on June 22. Rodriguez, who majored in media communication studies and minored in Spanish and Hispanic Marketing, got his foot in the door at Telemundo’s version of the “Today Show” as an intern in the summer of 2012. Originally from Miami, he returned to his hometown

and Telemundo just two weeks after graduation in May 2013.

In his current role, Rodriguez does a little bit of everything, including gathering content, editorial assignments, coordination with the control room on live shots and production of the segment called, “I Saw It”, which talks about items trending on the Internet. Rodriguez said the skills he learned at the School of Communication like public speaking, how to collaborate and writing effectively have been a key factor in his early career success.

School of Communication Alumni News

Alumna follows entrepreneur dreams

Joy Lynn Fields ('86) became a highly successful advertising executive and entrepreneur by following her own instincts and challenging herself to think creatively – two lessons she learned to embrace as a student at Florida State University. For years, she worked in advertising and later in market research, eventually becoming the Senior Vice President of Pyramid/Peachtree Creek.

Despite the success, something nagged at Fields. It was time to follow her instincts once again. “I missed doing the work so I decided to spin off on my own and focus exclusively on qualitative research full time as a focus group moderator,” Fields said.

Fields started Joy Lynn, Inc., in 1995, and while she employs contractors and support staff, she is still responsible for the deliverables.

Fields is enjoying a successful career owning her own firm and received two awards last year for her accomplishments. Enterprising Women Magazine named Fields one of their 2013 Enterprising Women of the Year, and Fields garnered a Gold Stevie Award for Women in Business in the category of 2013 Female Entrepreneur of the Year – Business Services – 10 or Less Employees – Advertising, Marketing, & Public Relations.



Alumna follows late-night TV producing dream

Gina Sprehe's ('97) introduction to late night television did not happen until her freshman year of college. She was not allowed to watch TV on weeknights while growing up, but once she got a taste of David Letterman and Conan O'Brien, she was hooked.

During her media production courses, she was encouraged to apply to the “Late Night with David Letterman,” but didn't get the position. She accepted an internship with the Rosie O'Donnell show, which was in its first season but was formatted like late night TV during the daytime.

In 1999, Sprehe nabbed a great gig as a producer for “The Oprah Show.” She stayed at Oprah for 10 years before getting an opportunity to work with Jerry Seinfeld on “The Marriage Ref”, a TV reality show in which a rotating group of celebrities decided winners of real-life marriage disputes. “It was in the middle of Oprah's second-to-last season, so I had to make a decision,” Sprehe said. “Do I go to comedy which is what I really love and work with one of my heroes or do I stay to do Oprah's last season? I decided to roll the dice and move to New York and work with Jerry Seinfeld. That show didn't do well, but I got to work with Jerry and he was amazing.”

But Sprehe missed producing comedy. A few short weeks ago, Sprehe got her chance to return to comedy and delve into the late night genre as a human interest producer for “The Jimmy Kimmel Show.”

Alumna opens The Burnette Agency

Arielle Burnette graduated in 2010 with a degree in Public Relations and hasn't stopped moving since then. Accepting a position with Ogilvy Public Relations was the spark of Arielle's career, pushing her into internal communications with JWT INSIDE. During her time with JWT, Arielle accepted freelance work and eventually accepted a position with The Center for Family Resources. It was at CFR that Arielle realized her true potential. This November, Arielle opened her own full service firm, The Burnette Agency, and has been met with overwhelming response and support. Check out her company at www.theburnetteagency.com.





Alumna follows unintended career in audiology

Jennifer Lamfers intended to major in criminology upon entering Florida State University. Then, she walked into the wrong room at freshman orientation. It was a mix-up that made an enduring impression and why Lamfers (B.S. '06) urges current students to keep an open mind when deciding their educational paths. Lamfers had walked into the room for prospective School of Communication Science & Disorders students, and when she heard faculty member Selena Snowden speak about audiology, it more that piqued her interest. She decided to switch her major to Communication Science & Disorders with hopes of pursuing a career in audiology.

After earning her bachelor's degree from Florida State in 2006, Lamfers went on to complete a Clinical Doctorate in Audiology at A.T. Still University – Arizona School of Health Sciences. She now works in private practice at Oro Valley & Tanque Verde Audiology in Tucson, Arizona. One of the reasons Lamfers attended A.T. Still was the network she made at Florida State. A professor at A.T. Still, who was a FSU alumnus, recruited her to the small, private medical college.

“The connections I made and the people I met at Florida State were incredibly helpful,” Lamfers said. “I think that was a huge asset of going to Florida State.”

Alumna leader, innovator in SLP field

Carmen Vitton is thriving as chief operating officer of an in-house therapy provider, while also collaborating on innovation of new tools in speech-language pathology.

When she graduated from Florida State 27 years ago, Vitton began her career as a speech-language pathologist, continually progressing up the ladder until starting her own company, Rehab Synergies, three years ago. Vitton is the chief operating officer of the in-house therapy provider, which is strategically aligned to provide skilled occupational, physical and speech-language therapy. The company has grown to over 250 full-time therapists, as well as another 250 therapists employed on an as needed basis.

Throughout her career, Vitton has treated clients in a variety of settings including public schools, Visiting Nurses Association, hospitals, and skilled nursing. She was awarded the Accelerated Care Plus Innovator of the Year Award in 2013. Vitton is an American Speech-Language Hearing Association ACE Award recipient and has presented at Texas Speech-Language Hearing Association Conference.

One of the things Vitton remembers most about her Florida State education is the close association with the audiology program and her fieldwork placements under an audiologist.

“It really gave me a perception of aural rehab,” Vitton said. “What I have found in the field is that a lot of speech pathologists are not prepared or even aware of what the rehab audiologist does or how the speech pathologist can work with hearing losses.”



School of Information Alumni News



Alumnus thrives as president of tech incubator

Joey Ricard ('07) started building computers when he was 13. Now, at only 31 years old but an old pro in the startup business, Ricard is running the publicly traded Development Capital Group (DLPM), which gives anyone the opportunity to invest in technology startups by buying the company's public stock.

"A lot of entrepreneurs are churning out apps and trying to get seed funding and critical mass, and then trying to go through a successful IPO if they ever get to that level," Ricard said. "The odds trickle down lower and lower as you get to these milestones."

DLPM invests in and develops businesses and technologies with significant potential for growth and customer acquisition. The company analyzes market trends and looks for opportunities to leverage their understanding of technologies to create efficiencies for under-served sectors.

Alumna receives 2014 Beta Phi Mu Award

Beth M. Paskoff (Ph.D. '89) will receive the 2014 Beta Phi Mu Award, given annually to a library school faculty member or to an individual for distinguished service to education for librarianship, on June 29 at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

Paskoff, who earned her doctorate from Florida State in 1989, has served as the director of Louisiana State University School of Library & Information Science since 2000 and retired on July 1.

"The Beta Phi Mu award Jury chose to honor Beth for her leadership of the LSU School of Library and Information Science during times of challenge and adversity and her longtime commitment to education in librarianship," said John A. Moorman, jury chair.

During her career, Paskoff taught more than nine different courses on the graduate level, developing six of them; served on more than 100 graduate committees and chaired 149; and published numerous book chapters, refereed articles and reports.

She will receive a 24 karat gold-framed citation and \$1,000 contributed by Beta Phi Mu, the library and information studies honor society.



Alum joins Facebook Team



Skyler Vander Molen ('08) is now part of the Facebook Team. Post graduation, Vander Molen worked for the Zimmerman Agency as a Senior Designer but left after 18 months.

After being self-employed for more than a year, Vander Molen joined Postmates, a San Francisco startup, as a lead designer and worked on Postmates' marketing sites, branding and their three iPhone apps. During that time, Facebook reviewed his portfolio and approached him about joining their team.

At Facebook, Vander Molen collaborates on product and brand marketing projects and is currently working on finding ways to more tightly integrate film with web experiences.

"At FSU, I learned how to function in an organization effectively, which is something I think most people don't spend much time developing. If you can't talk to people or convince them that your idea is a good one - you can't be effective."



School of Information Alumni News

Alumnus Rule works for Bank of America



Alum **Ron Rule** was hired two months after his graduation from FSU's iSchool in 2005. Since then, he's served in six different positions for Bank of America. He accepted a position with Bank of America two months after graduating from Florida State.

Today, he continues to work for Bank of America, now serving as the Senior Vice President, Senior Business Support Manager with his team of problem solvers.

Ron is responsible for overall business support, leadership routines, risk management, employee engagement, and communications. He credits Florida State University for two skills that he uses on a daily basis: accountability and public speaking. In addition to Ron,

his wife and sister (who is also a CCI alumni) work in banking. "We're a banking family," he joked. "FSU taught me the value of building strong relationships and respecting everyone, because you'll never know when you will need that person's help."

Walker named Manager of Public Relations

Jervishia Walker was named Manager of Public Relations at TransMedia Group, a full service public relations firm headquartered in Boca Raton. Walker will work with clients like Leah Flynn, the 7 year old violin prodigy, Ballroom Dance Fitness and Aqua Television Network.

Jervisha was a double major in her undergraduate, studying Creative Writing and Information Technology. She later completed her MBA from South University. During the same time, Walker revived a service sorority that had been gone for over twenty years. She created an online blog that became so successful that she offered internships to students through her popular website, FemaleReloaded.com



IT Alumna joins Cerner Corporation



Katie Smith graduated from Florida State with her Bachelor's in IT and her M.S. in Integrated Marketing Communication. Since, she's joined Cerner Corporation based in Kansas City, Missouri.

During her time at FSU, she participated in STARS, AITP, Student Leadership Council, and was Vice President of WISE. In addition to her service, Katie also taught public speaking labs at FSU, interned in project management and planning & quality with Tallahassee Memorial Hospital.

Today, Katie is loving her job with Cerner as a Clinical Reporting Analyst. She travels across the country consulting on the Cerner system and client needs. "When Cerner offered me a job, I was very excited," she shared. In her off time, she is working towards her project management professional certificate.

Alum works for FSU Research Computing Center

Casey McLaughlin is currently employed at FSU's Research Computing Center (RCC), where for the past year his job has been to coordinate support activities, liaise with their research partners on campus, manage documentation and the website, develop support applications, and supervise a team of interns. He also provides highly specialized consultation, technical advice, and coordination support to the research cycle on behalf of a diverse array of research disciplines engaged in High Performance Computing. In addition to working at the RCC, Casey is an adjunct professor for the College of Communication & Information.



School of Information Alumni News



MLIS Alumna starts career in Japan

After graduating from the Media Studies Master's program in 2012, **Karen Kayir** started her journey around the world. She worked as a teacher in a middle school in Germany, a program coordinator in Colorado, and now she works in Japan as a librarian.

Today, she works for the Department of Defense School System on an American Army base in Camp Zama Japan. "I love being based overseas. Travel has always been very important to me so having the opportunity to live and work in Japan while still having a meaningful and challenging career was exactly what I was shooting for," said Kayir.

While she loves her job, Kayir hopes to pursue another library position at the university level someday.

IT Alum takes flight in career and the sky

Waner Del Rosario graduated from Florida State in 2008 with his degree in Information Technology. But - he started his computer career when he was in high school, starting his own company, Dreniam Technology Solutions. It still thrives today, providing repairs and training for computers.

Since graduating, he's worked as a Computer Applications Coordinator at Florida Gulf Coast University, eventually becoming a Computer Specialist. He then moved to the Collier County Board of Commissioners as an IT Professional, but chose to follow a different job with Lee Memorial Health System be closer to his wife and child.

In May of 2014, Waner received her Private Pilot Certificate. He flies with the Fort Myers Flying Club, where he serves on the Board of Directors, webmaster, and Communications Officer.



Alum Dr. Shiflett works for UNC Greensboro

In 1979, **Lee Shiflett** graduated from Florida State University with his doctorate. Since then, he's written a book about Louis Shores, worked and taught across the country in Library Sciences and today he works for the Department of Library and Information Studies at University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

It was a push from Dean Harold Goldstein and Professor John Goudeau that brought Shiflett into the world of academia. "I never intended to pursue a career in library education," he admitted. He accepted a faculty position at LSU and told Dr. Jane Robbins, future School of Information dean, that he would only be staying for three years. He stayed for 22 years.



Now, at University of North Carolina Greensboro, Shiflett is the Chair of the Department of Library and Information Sciences and has been there since 2011. After an unexpected career path, Shiflett can trace his career back to his defining days at Florida State.

School of Information Alumni News

Doc grad accepts faculty position at TWU



Aaron J. Elkins, a recent doctoral graduate of Florida State University's School of Information, accepted a position as an assistant professor at Texas Woman's University's School of Library and Information Studies beginning in August.

Elkins, who successfully defended his dissertation on June 23 and will officially graduate Aug. 2, will be teaching Librarians as Instructional Partners in the fall semester at the school located in Denton, Texas. Elkins prepared for his new position as a graduate teaching assistant of several different courses at FSU's iSchool. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of South Florida.

Librarian by day, Fireman by night

Mike Siriwardena started working at Florida State's Strozier Library when he was in his undergraduate career. Around the time he graduated from his Bachelor's with Secondary Language Education, he was offered a full-time Senior Library Associate position in Collections Access. For two years, Mike worked in this department before realizing he wanted more out of his library career and started the MLIS program.

Now, Mike is the General Collections Coordinator, where he oversees the daily operations and logics dealing with the general collection materials spanning two libraries and two remote storage facilities.

In his off time, Mike is a volunteer fireman for the Midway Fire Department, for the same reasons he became a librarian. "I like to serve people who are in need," he shared. Even if it means fighting fires until two o'clock, running home for a "nap" and a shower before work - Mike loves it.



Mears shines at Microsoft

Stephanie Mears was an intern at the City of Tallahassee and in the blink of an eye, she had been offered a job at Microsoft. Today, she works as a Senior Support Engineer for the company.

In the short two and a half years Stephanie has been at Microsoft, her impact on the company has been noticed. In June 2014, she was the recipient of The Great People, Great Performance award, which recognizes individuals who make key contributions to the Services business that align to Microsoft's Services' mission & goals. Last month, she was recognized again - this time to participate in the Senior Technical Leadership Program. The program focuses exclusively on the top 2% of individual contributor Technical Leaders and works to accelerate their development in areas outside technical expertise.

School of Information Alumni News



Alumnus Julian becomes first data research librarian at Strozier Library

Renaine Julian is FSU's very first Data Research Librarian, a goal to which he has been working toward for quite some time. He has received his BS in Political Science, his MS in Urban & Regional Planning and his MLIS from Florida State. After almost five years at Strozier, he accepted a position at the Florida Virtual Campus where he served as Library Support Technician, and worked behind the scenes on library systems.

As he graduated with his second Master's degree, his dream job opened up. Strozier Library was looking for a Data Research Librarian. "I was able to find a place doing what I love and working for my alma mater," he remarked. "So far, this job has been everything I thought it would be and more."

Former Help Desk tech at Shepherd Center

Brent Grooms was once a support tech at the CCI Help Desk. After graduating with a Master's of Science in Information Studies under his belt, Brent headed off to Montgomery, Alabama, where he began working for Cerner Corporation. After working for Archbold Medical Center in Thomasville, Georgia, Grooms ended up at the Shepherd Center where he works as a Soarian Clinical Analyst. He's a lead analyst in various departments such as Occupational, Speech, and Physical Therapies, outpatient nursing, and dietary/nutrition where he implements orders and services.

In the future, Grooms sees himself continuing in Health IT Management, and hopes to one day become a clinical Applications Director at a major health system.



Alumna welcomes the challenges of life

Today, **Sheena O'Connors** is a full fledged IT woman and project manager for Black Night Financial Services. There she exhibits the ability to problem solve and manage teams, frequently taking on projects that have gone on too long and getting them back on track. "I enjoy analyzing the project and being a contributor to its success," says Sheena. Sheena also enjoys being the person to clear obstacles to move projects along.

Sheena discovered her passion for project management in her Business Communications class and her capstone classes. She started out as a technical support agent, and used each job as a stepping-stone to what she really wanted to



do. "As a Project Manager at a large financial company, I'm able to apply the knowledge from FSU and my prior jobs to my daily job." Still, the ten -year veteran of the IT industry continues to learn more everyday.

In addition to her contributions to the IT world, Sheena is a military brat, a runner, and a social chameleon. As a young person, living a military lifestyle, she moved to various states and learned to adapt quickly to new environments. While working on both her bachelors and masters degrees in information technology, she supported herself by working sales and clerical jobs. "I feel these experiences that have helped build the foundation for hard working and multitasking skills."

School of Information Alumni News

Project Manager by day, Actor by night

Dontrail Brinson graduated in 2007 with an IT degree. Seven years later, he works in California for the Walt Disney Company as a Technology Analyst. The job market was rough right out of college, “I took a job inside one of the Disney parks working as a seater for Cinderella’s Royal Table,” he shared. Three months later, he found work with Countrywide Bank as a Systems Analyst. The company was soon bought by Bank of America, jeopardizing his position. “I was told my position could end today or two years from now,” he recalled. Looking for more stability, twenty three year-old Dontrail returned to Disney in the Guest Services Manager training program. After his training, he was placed back at Cinderella’s Royal Table. “I still couldn’t find work in the technology realm.”



It was 2012, five years since graduating, and Dontrail wasn’t doing what he really wanted to do. “I thought I would use another skill I learned at Florida State – acting.” At FSU, he took acting classes to minor in Theatre and competed on the FSU Forensics team for Oral Interpretation. While filming in Orlando, he was contacted to interview for a position within Disney – this time with TV and movie studio business in Los Angeles. On the last day of filming, Dontrail got the job.

His success at Disney hasn’t stopped his acting ambitions, he’s starred as the main actor in a national USAA Military Insurance commercial and will appear in the EMMY nominated TV show “Shameless” during its 5th season. “I never would have guessed that I would find a job that dealt in the film industry and computer world all in one,” said Brinson. “My job goes from implementing upgrades on computer systems to walking the red carpet with celebrities.”

Dontrail has been promoted from a technology analyst to a project manager, leading a global project for The Walt Disney Company that is creating a new program for the company that houses information throughout the country.



STARS Alum Bertino & current STARS students

IT alum designs video games for EA Tiburon

One of Florida State’s School of Information alumni, **Andrew Bertino**, has been working for EA Tiburon for three years.

While he was a student at FSU, Bertino was involved with STARS Alliance, serving as the Administrative Assistant. He also worked as a Data Analyst for Real Estate Data Services (RDS), while working towards his

degree in Information Technology. “I handled various real estate data for both print and the web,” he shared. “After I graduated in ’08, I continued to work for RDS as a PHP Web Developer.” He remained at RDS for several years, when he had a change of heart. “I decided to go back to school and pursue my passion for Game Development,” he said.

Now, in his third year with EA, Andrew works as a UI Technical Artist. In this position, Andrew specializes in the development and design of various Front End User-Interface elements for the NBA LIVE franchise. Mainly working with ActionScript and Flash, he develops interface elements like menus, screens, buttons, lists, and in-game overlays. “I work to better and improve our UI pipelines and processes.” During his time at EA, he’s worked on three NBA titles, shipping NBA Live 14 for Xbox One and Playstation 4 in November 2013, and NBA LIVE 15 later this month.

Andrew shared, “I do lots of different things at EA; but the skills I learned at FSU are used the most: project management, people skills, good design, the ability to constantly learn new things, and to adapt. I wear many hats on the team; these skills are transferable to any IT job.”