

SPRING 2021

CONNECTION

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION



I hope that you are adjusting well to a post-pandemic world and are doing your part to help everyone stay safe. For our students, faculty and staff, and many of our alumni, this has been a tumultuous year. The College faculty and staff, already leaders in online education, developed expertise in working remotely. We expanded our knowledge and experience in communicating, working, and socializing with people who are not all in the same place. As a result, we were able to excel in spite of the challenges of COVID-19.

This fall as more and more University operations return to campus, the College continues to operate in a distributed way. We plan to build on the operational advantages of distributed work. This includes providing more online courses and programs, making more student services and co-curricular activities routinely available remotely, holding hybrid events that enable participation from anywhere, and enabling more faculty and staff to work remotely at least part of the time. As a result, while the majority of our courses this fall semester will be in classrooms, a large number of classes will be online.

We expect the next year to be an exciting time for CCI. With rapid growth of our graduate programs and the University accepting more first year and transfer students, our role in educating Florida's students will also grow. Overall, we expect 20% more enrollments, and remain committed to expanding our small class offerings and maintaining 96% graduation rates. Dedicated faculty and staff who support enthusiastic students are required to grow enrollments and maintain high levels of student success. We are blessed to have passionate and hard-working people at CCI, so I am optimistic about our ability to meet this tri-partite challenge.

As I am stepping down as Dean in August, this is my last newsletter. I would like to thank all of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni for their support over the last 12 years (and 16 years for the School of Information). Working with and on behalf of all of you has been an honor and a privilege that I have greatly enjoyed, and I look forward to continuing to work with you as I return to the faculty.

I remain passionate about education, Florida State, and the College. I am optimistic about the opportunities ahead for our graduates and the College, and in CCI's ability to make the most of those opportunities for FSU students.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the Dean of CCI.

With gratitude,
Larry Dennis



Larry Dennis
Dean & Professor

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

STUDENT EARNS OUTSTANDING DIGITAL REPORTING AWARD FOR ARTICLE ON INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS



Erika LeFlouria, a junior media/communication studies major, was one of two recipients of the Outstanding Digital Reporting Award at the 2021 North Carolina A&T Short Course Program for her article discussing the interview between Oprah Winfrey and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex. The article, "The Interracial Impact of the Meghan and Harry Interview," was published

on March 20, 2021 and shares reactions about the interview from other interracial couples around the United States. LeFlouria crafted the article as a student in the 2021 North Carolina A&T Short Course Program, a four-day course teaching students about journalism and connects them with mentors. The program is sponsored by the National Association of Black Journalists and the NBCU Academy.

PR ALUMNA CONNECTS STUDENTS TO MUSIC INDUSTRY



Samantha Kane ('19, B.S. Public Relations) formed a group on LinkedIn to connect FSU students and alumni in the music industry. From working as Campus Rep for Doak After Dark to working as Radio Promotions Coordinator for Big Machine Records in Nashville, Kane made connections and took advantage of opportunities to work in the field during and after her time

as an FSU student. Realizing the importance of networking, she was eager to pay it forward. The "FSU Music Industry" LinkedIn group she created is a place for students and alumni to connect, share helpful resources, and find job opportunities. "I've learned so much from hearing other people's journeys," said Kane. "I hope other alumni in the industry get connected and form an FSU music industry network!"

ALUMNA ACCEPTS POSITION OF EXECUTIVE STORY EDITOR FOR NETFLIX'S "BIG MOUTH"

Shantira Jackson ('08, B.A. Media Communication Studies) is a writer for "The Amber Ruffin Show," writer and consulting producer for the "Saved by the Bell" reboot, consulting producer on CNN's "She the People," and a staff writer for "Busy Tonight" on E!, NPR's "Ask Me Another," and BET's "50 Central." Earlier this year, she accepted the position of Executive Story Editor for the award-winning Netflix show "Big Mouth." Jackson said the key to her success is being herself.



JOURNAL PUBLISHES STUDY ON USE OF BODY-WORN CAMERAS' IMPACT ON RACIAL BIAS

On February 15, 2021, the Journal of Communication published a study by **Rachel Bailey**, Assistant Professor and Director of Doctoral Studies, that examines how videos from body-worn cameras by police officers lead to racial biases against black citizens. As racial inequalities and police brutalities remain dominant topics in the news agenda, Bailey believes this research is of high value to evaluate the impact such videos may have on the public opinion and in legal contexts.



STUDENTS BUILD RESEARCH AND CREATIVE SKILLS WITH FSU HONORS IN THE MAJOR PROGRAM

More and more School of Communication undergraduate students opt to complete **Honors in the Major** (HITM) thesis with each passing semester, and the School had the largest number of students participating during the Spring 2021 semester. By choosing to earn HITM, students complete a research thesis or creative project in their major area of study under the guidance of a faculty committee. The committees help the students in the process of selecting a topic, developing a prospectus, and completing a written document based on their research or creative project. "Graduate schools and employers love to see students complete HITM because it gives students the skills they are seeking through designing a project, synthesizing and organizing large amounts of information into a clear and concise project," said Dr. Jennifer Proffitt, Honors Liaison and Professor in the School.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR SPARKS CONVERSATION ABOUT STUTTERING ON ASHA PODCAST

Assistant Professor **Christopher Constantino** was a guest on the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's (ASHA) podcast, "ASHA Voices," on February 4, 2021. A conversation with Constantino is used to introduce a panel of experts who expand upon the episode's topic of stigmas around stuttering. The podcast's producer interviews Constantino about the representation of people who stutter in the media. Using President Biden's inauguration as a springboard for the conversation, the pair discuss how the President's speeches provide the general public exposure to stuttering and creates a dialogue around the subject. Constantino, who has a stutter himself, has conducted extensive research on the topic, receiving grants from ASHA and the National Stuttering Foundation.



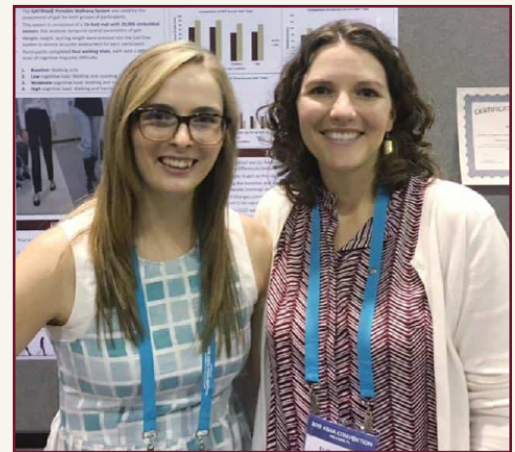
JSLHR PUBLISHES STUDY ON DYSARTHRIC SPEECH COMPLETED BY DOCTORAL STUDENT

On February 17, 2021, the Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research published work by doctoral student **Megan Hirsch**. The paper, "Generalized Learning of Dysarthric Speech Between Male and Female Talkers," was completed as part of Hirsch's master's thesis. "Previous research has shown that listeners can improve their understanding of speech produced by talkers with dysarthria through perceptual training," said Hirsch. "However, what previous research has not shown is whether generalization of learning is constrained by the talker's sex." Hirsch's research addresses this gap by investigating how a talker with dysarthria can generalize to another regardless of sex. It also adds to the growing literature on the viability of perceptual training paradigms as a treatment option.



STUDENT RESEARCH ON STROKE VICTIMS AND APHASIA WINS POSTER COMPETITION

Ashley Archer a graduate student working with **Elizabeth Madden**, Assistant Professor, won the FSU Institute for Successful Longevity's Student Poster Day competition in April 2021. Archer's study titled "The Effect of Cognitive-Linguistic Load on Gait Performance in Persons with Aphasia" summarized her work on victims of stroke and the problems they have with aphasia, the diminished speech ability that afflicts many stroke victims. Archer's study examined how the demands of speech can cause problems with walking in some people with aphasia. "The results of this study suggest that caution may be warranted when engaging in dual-task activities with individuals with aphasia," Archer said. "After stroke, up to 73 percent of people fall during the first six months after being discharged home. I believe these data reinforce the relevance of this study as persons with aphasia from a result of stroke may show gait disturbances."



FSU PRESIDENT'S HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR PROGRAM RECOGNIZES UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT



Jaya Smith was one of 12 nominees for the annual FSU President's Undergraduate Humanitarian of the Year Program. Smith is president of FSU's chapter of Operation Smile, an organization that provides cleft lip surgeries for children, and donated a kidney to her father in February.

STUDENT IS FINALIST IN FSU MASTER'S IN FOUR COMPETITION



Graduate student **Briana Acevedo** was a finalist in FSU's Spring 2021 Master's in Four Competition, where students present research in only four minutes and four slides. Acevedo's study, "Emergent Literacy Training for Parents of Children with Hearing Loss," earned third place.

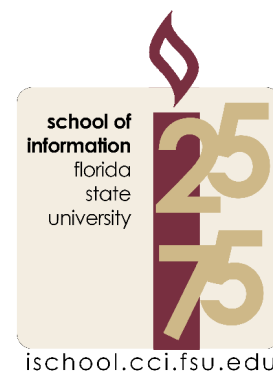
DOCTORAL STUDENT SELECTED FOR ALISE DIVERSITY TRAVEL AWARD

Shannon Williams, a doctoral student, received the 2021 Diversity Travel Award from the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE). This grant awards Williams with a stipend that defrays travel expenses to the ALISE Annual Conference, complimentary registration to the conference, and a one-year student membership in ALISE. Aiming to increase diversity in LIS education and research, the Diversity Travel Award allows recipients who wish to address issues of diversity in their doctoral studies to network with LIS industry professionals. Williams concentrates her doctoral studies on misinformation and its adverse effects on the African-American community in relation to the COVID-19 crisis, the Black Lives Matter movement, and misinformation on social movements in general.



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF ONLINE LEARNING AND 75 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

Join the FSU School of Information in celebrating 25 years of online learning and 75 years of excellence in 2021 - 2022! In August 1996, the School of Library and Information Studies (now the School of Information) offered FSU's first master's program utilizing interactive distance learning technology to over 180 students throughout the state of Florida. By comparison, there were 448 students enrolled in the School's master's degree programs in the Spring 2021 semester. The School is celebrating a commitment to deliver information regardless of location as 2021 marks 25 years of online learning and 75 years of top-ranked programs. Visit ischool.cci.fsu.edu/25-75 for more information and upcoming events.



ALUMNA SHARES EXPERIENCE WORKING ON NEWLY RELEASED MEMOIR

Elaine Crepeau ('73, M.S. Library Science, '72, B.A.) was the editor of a newly released memoir titled *J. Blanton Belk: it's an unfinished world, and it's still in the making...* Crepeau has had a lengthy and diverse career of 47 years as a professional librarian, archivist, and information consultant, and spent the past five years working on the memoir of J. Blanton Belk, the founder of Up with People, a nonprofit organization that has shaped Crepeau's life through initiatives to unite different cultures.



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR PUBLISHES RESEARCH ON COVID-19 CLINICAL TRIALS

The April 2021 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association includes a study by **Zhe He**, Associate Professor. His paper, "How the clinical research community responded to the COVID-19 pandemic: An analysis of the COVID-19 clinical studies in ClinicalTrials.gov," aims to understand the landscape of COVID-19 clinical research. He's work analyzed 3,765 studies using descriptive, association, and clustering analyses.



SPRING ALUMNI LEADERSHIP SERIES BUILDS INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS FOR STUDENTS

The undergraduate Information Technology (IT) Leadership course taught by **Ebe Randeree**, Associate Dean of CCI, has a tradition of hosting four to six alumni each semester as part of an effort to introduce students to potential career options. However, due to travel restrictions from COVID-19, Randeree transformed the class from in-person presentations to virtual discussions with alumni from all across the United States, coining it as the "Alumni Leadership Series" and bringing in 20 alumni of CCI programs. "Before this series, looking through job postings for entry level positions in my desired field was intimidating, but hearing graduated students speak about their experiences in the workforce made my aspirations feel obtainable," said Sydney Sawyer, an information, communication, technology student (ICT). "It was interesting to see career options there are for IT or ICT majors."

Thank You!

A note from Mafé Brooks, Director of Development

There are so many of you to thank for all that you have done to contribute to the success of our students, faculty and programs on what has been a rollercoaster ride of more than a year. Through it all, you stayed engaged with us by serving as guest speakers in classes, mentoring students via Zoom, and participating in various college virtual events. You also helped make the **10th anniversary of FSU's Great Give** in March the most successful one ever! Overall, FSU collectively raised over a million dollars in 24 hours and you, our CCI alumni, friends, faculty and staff contributed **over \$50,000 to support programs** that you cared deeply about at the college.

I'm happy to share the news that we also exceeded our FY 21 fundraising goal of \$1M through additional major gift commitments of \$5,000 and above. Special thanks to **Linda Alexionok, Karen Berkley, Ernie Brock, Jarrett Clark, Coca-Cola, Mike Cooper, The Dunham Family, Carol and Mark Gill, Cathy and Jeff Hewlett, The William Mills Agency, Adrien Lanusse, Paula and Scott Neidorf, Joe and Sabrina Snowden, State Farm, Wayne and Shirley Wiegand, and Marilyn Young and Michael Launer**. I am truly thankful for the generous support of our annual fund and major gift donors, and the time and talent that everyone contributed to CCI throughout this challenging year.



Mafé Brooks
Director of
Development

A special shout out goes to our outgoing CCI Leadership Board Chair, **Diane Ervin**, and Center for Hispanic Marketing Advisory Board co-chairs, **Leif Roll and Juan Jose Nunez**, for their leadership. Our boards have accomplished so much this year and I'm appreciative of their continued commitment.

I would be remiss if I did not say THANKS to our esteemed Dean, **Larry Dennis**, who will be stepping down as dean at the end of July. I will miss going on road trips with him, sprinting to catch flights and catching trains across the country to visit with alumni and

donors, working on fundraising priorities, finding creative solutions to get to our \$12M capital campaign goal, recruiting volunteers for our leadership board, and planning board engagement initiatives with him. However, what I will miss the most is his visionary leadership, his dedicated service to our college and his big heart. For over 12 years, he led CCI to greater heights and he resiliently helped us navigate the challenges brought about by the pandemic. I am eternally grateful. **We will miss you, Dean Dennis!**

FSU President **John Thrasher** is also retiring this summer. His transformative leadership has been instrumental in the upward trajectory of our rankings and laying a solid foundation for FSU's pursuit of excellence. We have so much to be thankful for.

We are slowly but surely transitioning to a new mode of normalcy. This Fall will usher in exciting leadership changes as the University welcomes **Dr. Rick McCullough and Mrs. McCullough** as our new President and First Lady, as we begin the search for CCI's new dean, and work with our new CCI Leadership Board chair, **Tim Giordano**. We are continuing to develop innovative ways to engage with alumni and donors through hybrid events and digital philanthropy, and to identify more meaningful ways to express our appreciation for our donors.

Save the date for **September 30, 2021** at 6:30p.m. for our annual Center for Hispanic Marketing virtual gala that honors Hispanic leaders in various fields and raises support for the Drs. Felipe & Betty Ann Korzenny Endowment.

EVER THANKS for always being there for CCI. Enjoy the summer (and stay well and safe) and see you this Fall!

If you wish to make a gift supporting students and programs, contact me:

mafe.brooks@cci.fsu.edu, (850)645-8312

CLASS NOTES

John Abbott ('83 M.S.) is retiring after 30 years in academic library collection management, including 20 years as Head of Collection Management at Appalachian State University.

Max Anderson ('99 M.L.I.S.) was named Director of Instructional Design and Learning Innovation at the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

Melissa Angel ('16 M.S.) is the Communications Coordinator at Global Landscapes Forum.

Felicia Brunson ('94 B.S.) was elected as Mayor of the City of West Park in Broward County, FL.

Chris Cyrille ('18 B.S.) is a Data Visualization Specialist at Coast Dental in Tampa, FL.

Kerry Czubko ('07 B.S.) is VP of Inventory Engineering at Cars.com.

Sydney Dell ('17 B.S.) is a Digital Drop Ship Specialist at Finish Line in Boulder, CO.

Greg Dugger ('07 B.S.) is Director of Software Development at Brandt Information Services in Tallahassee, FL.

Melissa Gracey ('87 B.S.) was elected to chair the marketing committee and serve on the board of directors and executive committee of United Way of Miami-Dade County.

Connor Griffin ('17 B.S.) is an IT Specialist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Marion Hargett ('93 B.S.) was one of four FSU alumnae selected for an Inspire Award by FSU Alumni Association.

Stephanie Hernandez ('12 B.S.) is Manager, Customer Engineers, at Microsoft in Dallas, TX.

Russ Hill, Jr. ('15 B.S.) is an IT Program Manager at PropLogix in Sarasota, FL.

Julian J. Hills ('98 B.A.) is the Deputy Press Secretary for the City of Atlanta Mayor's Office of Communications under Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms.

Brittany Holland ('14 B.S.) is Senior Manager, Growth and Media, at the National Basketball Association (NBA).

Rhiannon Jacobson ('20 B.S.) is a Software Developer at GM in Atlanta, GA.

Heather Larson ('11 B.S.) is a Technical Operations Manager at Facebook in San Jose, CA.

Courtney Lisenbee ('15 B.S.) is Manager, Product Owner at Aptean in Atlanta, GA.

Gerard Massey ('13 B.S.) is a Systems Engineer at Bezos Academy in Seattle, WA.

Samantha Rice McCandless ('19 B.A.) is a Park Ranger at Yosemite National Park.

Yvonne Mosley ('99 B.S.) is a Performance Improvement Specialist at North Carolina Healthcare Association and recently earned the certifications of ASQ Certified Six Sigma Black Belt, the NAHQ Certified Professional for Healthcare Quality, and IHI Certified Professional in Patient Safety.

Kyla Murphy ('19 B.S.) is an insurance agent at Brown & Brown.

Kristin Norena ('08 B.S.) owns three franchise locations of Card My Yard in New Jersey.

Mikayla Owen ('20 B.S.) is a Configuration Analyst at Lockheed Martin in Orlando, FL.

Gilberto Parada ('13 B.S.) is a Senior Product Designer at Solar Turbines in San Diego, CA.

Brian Pearson ('18 B.S.) is a Senior Enterprise Sales Development Representative at Okta, Inc.

Katie Pere ('00 B.A.) recently launched a jewelry brand called Katie Pere Jewelry.

Janmaris Perez ('17 B.A.) is a Production Assistant at StoryCorps where she helps produce a weekly broadcast on NPR's Morning Edition.

Stephanie Plucinsky ('15 B.S.) is a Public Affairs Specialist at NASA.

Julia Skinner ('15 Ph.D.) published a book with FSU iSchool Professor Melissa Gross titled "Underserved Patrons in University Libraries Assisting Students Facing Trauma, Abuse and Discrimination."

Brandon Tirado ('19 B.S.) is a Cybersecurity Analyst - Incident Response Shift Lead at Reliaquest in Tampa, FL.

Julia Zimmerman ('16 B.S.) is a Website Editor/Blogger at Excite Medical in Tampa, FL.

SHARE YOUR CLASS NOTE

Send your update, class year and degree to:

hello@cci.fsu.edu

Please note not all updates may be printed.



81 students and faculty were recognized with awards at the CCI Honors and Awards Recognition virtual event on April 1, 2021.



Dean Dennis recognized outstanding student workers during Student Employee Appreciation Week.



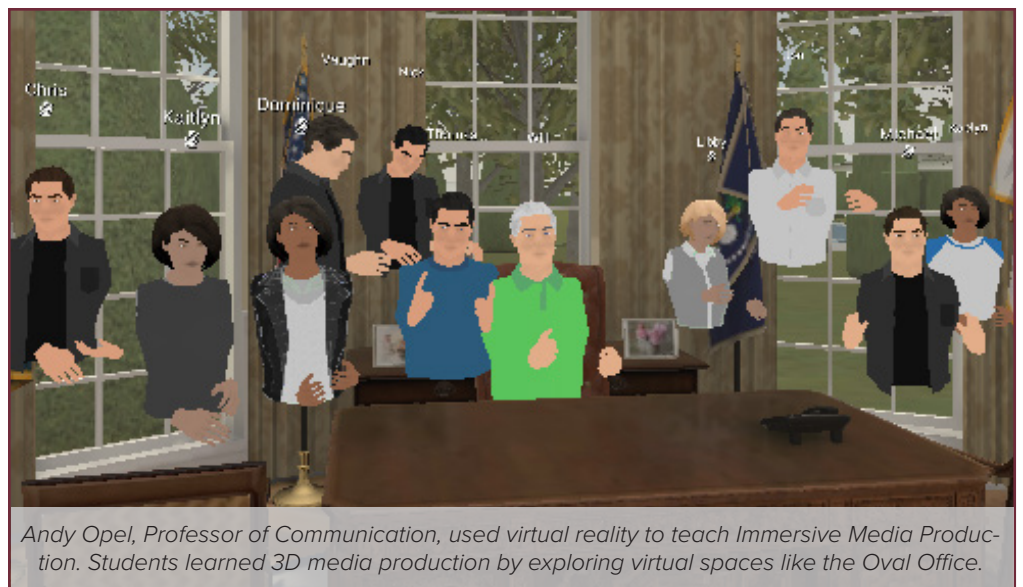
CCI hosted the 8th annual Women in Leadership completely online on International Women's Day, March 8, 2021. Students connected with alumni from all over the world. #WIL2021



The Student Academy of Audiology was recognized for humanitarian efforts.



Arrowhead Advertising won first place in AAF's district No. 4 competition.



Andy Opel, Professor of Communication, used virtual reality to teach Immersive Media Production. Students learned 3D media production by exploring virtual spaces like the Oval Office.

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A NOTE FROM THE CCI LEADERSHIP BOARD

I used to assume the message here came from the perfect alumni who gave a ton of money; but, writing as the new Chairman of the Leadership Board, that's not my story.

I ignored CCI for 18 years post-grad. No contact, no donations, nothing. I loved my time here, but life's motion is forward: we move on more than we reach back. When I did reach back, nervously, I felt like a stranger, yet CCI met me like family. The 18-year void didn't matter, all that did was my status as "alumni." CCI understands the work of life can keep us away, but they sure do love it when we "come home." Reconnecting for me has meant soul-nourishing nostalgia for simpler, bright times, new business contacts forged easily with shared history, access to research, professors, CCI media and technology, supporting students, and

speaking opportunities. What it will mean for you depends on you.

CCI meets alumni where their interests and needs lie, and none of it requires a dime, it just takes reaching back. So whether it's been five minutes, 18 years, or longer, please consider doing so. One way is to email me at timothygiordano@gmail.com to make the connection, or message me on LinkedIn. CCI may be of assistance to you, and the Board certainly needs help on key initiatives: doing better on D&I and creating tangible value for all alumni. We need ideas, expertise, even new Board members. It's also in dialogue that we can determine how best to help each other through tough times and into brighter days ahead. To the many in our CCI Family who have reached back already, thank you, and to everyone reading, let's re-connect soon.



Tim Giordano

'98 B.S.

Chair

CCI Leadership Board

