

Department of Communication Studies
Fall 2014 Faculty Activities and Accomplishments Report
(August 1 to December 31)

At the National Communication Association (NCA) conference, **Sara Baker** had two papers accepted to the Caucus on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns. The first, "Encountering our Blind Spots: A Conversation on LGB/TQ Advocacy in the Workplace" (with co-author Amy Arellano, University of Nebraska) was presented at the panel "Advocacy through Dialogue and Conversation: Non-traditional Approaches to LGBTQA Community Building." The second, "You Bring Yourself to Work: An Exploration of LGB/TQ Dignity Threats and Identity Work" (with Kristen Lucas, University of Louisville) was presented during the Scholar-to-Scholar session ("Exploring the Communicative Space of Marginalized Others, the Field, and the Family").

During the fall, **David Gracon** presented "Free Radicals: An Exploration of Experimental Film: Revolutionary Decade: Reflections of the 1960s" as part of the Booth Library's series on the 1960s. In addition, he screened his documentary video, "Strip Mall Nature" (2013/6 minutes) at the Kuala Lumpur Experimental Film and Video Festival (KLEX). He also attended a workshop, "Documentary as Social Engagement" at UnionDocs in New York City. **David** continues to serve as an organizer and programmer for Hallways Microcinema (Champaign, Illinois). Since August 1, **David** has hosted four Microcinema events. Reflecting a critical visual/cultural studies perspective, the events include monthly screenings, performances, readings, presentations and workshops. Finally, **David** traveled to Rabinal, Guatemala in August to serve as a volunteer builder for Habitat for Humanity's Global Village Program.

Claudia Janssen Danyi presented a competitively selected paper titled "Resisting Corporate Apologia: Understanding Gruenenthal's Failed Mea Culpa to the Victims of Thalidomide" with co-author and master student Annelie Jenne (University of Potsdam, Germany) at NCA. At the same conference, she also chaired a panel titled "Celebrity, Politicians, and Popular Culture in Public Relations."

Rich Jones published a book chapter in *Critical Articulations of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*:

Jones, R. G., Jr. (2014). Divided loyalties: Exploring the intersections of queerness, race, ethnicity, and gender. In S. C. Howard (Ed.), *Critical articulations of race, gender, and sexual orientation* (pp. 23-46). Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

In addition, **Rich** presented two papers at the NCA conference: "Don't Rise Above Your Raisin': First Generation College Students Reflect on Class Identity, Roots, and Home" and "Beta Male Comedies as an Extension of the Bromance Genre: Homosociality and Homoeroticism in This is the End" (co-authored with **Carrie Wilson-Brown**). He also presented on two panels at the Illinois Communication and Theatre Association Conference

(ICTA) in September: “Best Practices for Leveraging Technology and Popular Culture in the Classroom” and “When Speaking Requires Listening.”

Rich’s professional service included serving as a reviewer for *Urban Studies, Language and Communication*, and the *Basic Course Communication Annual*. Additionally, he continued to serve on the Board of Directors for ICTA. In the area of university service, **Rich** is now serving as the co-chair of the Committee on General Education and Learning Goals.

Stephen A. King completed a short course at the NCA conference (“The Creative Imperative”). In addition, his book review was published in the *Journal of American Folklore*:

King, S. A. (2014). Review of the book *Segregated sound: Inventing folk and pop music in the age of Jim Crow*, by Karl Hagstrom Miller. *Journal of American Folklore* 127(505), 323-324.

Molly Niesen won the Outstanding Dissertation of the Year award from NCA’s Critical and Cultural Studies Division. She was presented this award at the NCA conference in November. **Molly** also presented a paper, “Economics (Re)education: Public Relations, Advocacy Advertising, and the Right to Rebuttal, 1976–1978” at the same conference. She published a paper in an International Communication Association journal called *Communication, Culture, & Critique*. In addition, **Molly** was elected to the steering committee of the Union for Democratic Communications Association for the next two years.

Andrew Robinson continues to serve as Volunteer Pastor and Faculty Advisor to ACTS Campus Ministry, where he has been highly effective in building bridges across racial and cultural divides. He worked with nine students and recent graduates in ACTS Cultivating Ministers Ordination Training Program (candidates anticipated ordination is August 2015). **Andrew** planned, coordinated, and hosted through ACTS an end-of-semester Pack the House celebration in Buzzard Auditorium. The celebration created a space for minority students to express their spiritual passion through their combined talents. **President William and Linda Perry** attended the event. **Andrew** is Faculty Fellow to Thomas Hall and Campus Minister Liaison to Thomas Hall and the African American Greek Fraternities and Sororities.

Brian Sowa published a new textbook on public relations:

Sowa, B. (2015). *Poised to respond: A practical introduction to public relations*. San Diego, CA: Cognella.

Emily Vajjala presented a paper on the “Best Practices for Leveraging Technology and Popular Culture in the Classroom” panel at the ICTA conference. She discussed using reality TV shows as a strategy to develop appropriate speech topics.

Scott Walus is the current chair of the Media Studies Interest Group for the Central States Communication Association (CSCA). He is serving as the interest group’s session planner

for 2015. In addition, **Scott** engineered and produced a record for The Down-fi from Indianapolis, Indiana. The band features Craig Bell, best known from Rocket From the Tombs (which became two nationally known bands: Dead Boys and Pere Ubu). In conjunction with Top of the Roc and Cavetone Records, **Scott** organized four free live music events for the Charleston community including a music festival. He is also involved with branding and media production for both Top of the Roc and Cavetone Records. In November, **Scott** was featured on the WTHI (Terre Haute) evening news about his work with Cavetone Records.