

Communication Journal

of the COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS & COMMUNICATION
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI- ST. LOUIS

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Meet the department's new Assistant Professor, Su Ahn Jang ...

For more information about our University, check out:
www.umsl.edu



Teaching Assistant Program Launched

by Priya Soni

This year the Department of Communication began a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Program. The program assigns graduate students to help with undergraduate classes under the supervision of a faculty member. The student teaching assistants get a tuition waiver and get paid a monthly stipend. This year, the department hired five students to serve as its first GTAs: Hannah Klautke, Keith Morton, James Kase, Amy O'Neil, and Priya Soni.

One would probably ask, what exactly does a GTA do? Some responsibilities



The Comm. Department's first paid GTAs: (top row, left to right) Priya Soni, Hannah Klautke, Amy O'Neil, (bottom row) Keith Morton, & James Kase

include grading papers and projects according to criteria set up by the professor. GTAs also record grades and oversee students' dis-

cussions and group exercises. They answer students' questions via e-mail, in person, or over the

see **GTA** on page 3

Department Ranked in Country's Top 5

A recent study published in the December (2005) issue of the *Journal of Communication* indicated that the Department of Communication at UM-St. Louis ranked as one of the top five research departments in the country, ahead of programs at institutions such as Stanford, Northwestern, and the University of Southern California. The rank was based on the

number of research articles published in major professional journals authored by faculty members. The UM-St. Louis department has the fewest faculty of the top 12 and was the only department in the top 12 that did not have a doctoral program.

Department Chair Michael Beatty believes that the ranking represents an important

achievement because "the number of publications in major journals by faculty is an important determinant of a program's reputation. Those articles are the basis for what is covered in textbooks and taught in classrooms at universities all over the country."

More information about faculty members' research can be found on the Department's web page.

Alumni Notes and Campus Events

- Alumni News -

Nicolle Olivastro (MA '05) has accepted a new position as Communication Coordinator for the Public Relations Department of Covenant Theological Seminary.

- CoFAC Events -

The Alumni Board of the College of Fine Arts and Communication is sponsoring a roundtable discussion between students and alumni on April 10th at 5:30 pm in the Century Rooms of the Millennium Student Center. The event will allow students to talk with alumni about their careers.

The College's spring commencement ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, May 13 in the Mark Twain Athletic Center. Tickets are not required.

Gallery 210 will be presenting an exhibit of

mixed-media drawings by St. Louis artist James Michael Smith from January 27 to March 11. More information about this and other gallery events is available on the gallery's web page: <http://www.umsl.edu/~gallery/>

- Department News -

The Communication Department welcomed a new Assistant Professor, Su Ahn Jang, this fall. Professor Jang attended the University of Texas Austin. (See story on page 4)

The Communication Department has launched a graduate teaching assistant program. (See story on page 1)

-Conventions -

Communication Department faculty members **Michael Beatty, Alan Heisel, Alice Hall, Su Ahn Jang, Yan Tian,** and **Jina Yoo** were authors or coau-

thors on papers that were presented at the National Communication Association Convention that was held in Boston in November of 2005.



Alice Hall

-Publications-

An article by Assistant Professor **Alice Hall** was published in *Media Psychology*. The article is titled "Audience personality and the selection of media and media genres."

An article by Assistant Professor **Alice Hall** was published in *Psychological Reports*. The article is titled "Sensation seeking and the use and selection of media materials."

-Alumni Assoc-

Members of the UM-St. Louis Alumni Association are eligible for discounts at the University Bookstore, University Eye Center, and the Mark Twain

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Coordinator Alice Hall
Contributors Michael Beatty
Priya Soni

- disclaimer -

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- disclaimer -

Tell us your story!

We're always interested in updates from alumni. If you have new job or family announcements contact the newsletter at commalumni@umsl.edu

Athletic/Fitness Center. If you are interested in joining the alumni association, please contact Kathy Kinney at kinney@umsl.edu

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phone. GTAs work about twenty hours a week and assist with courses that can be applied to what they are studying. "Graduate students had been requesting opportunities for teaching and administrative experience, and funded GTA positions are a great way to do that," Director of Graduate Studies and professor Alan Heisel said.

The teaching assistantships are attractive to graduate students for a variety of reasons. Who could turn down free tuition? The position takes the stress out of the financial aspect of graduate school because students do not have to try and balance a full-time job with their classes. It can help students limit the debt they

are left with after they complete the Master's program. The experience that GTAs receive also helps prepare students who would like to be professors, teachers, or trainers after they graduate. The experience can give students an advantage over others when applying to Ph.D programs, for example.

The department reaps the benefits of the program as well. The GTAs ease the demands placed on faculty in the undergraduate curriculum. It is also a way to attract strong students to the program. The department's GTA package is very competitive and a great recruiting tool, according to Heisel. "We are likely to attract more students from larger institu-

tions around the country. Having funded GTA positions, in combination with the high-quality scholarship of our faculty, can only increase the prestige of our department and the University of Missouri–St. Louis overall."

Heisel said that the experience with the GTAs so far has been extremely successful and that he is confident that it will only get better. The Department is creating an office space for the GTAs. Soon, the GTAs will be able to hold on-campus office hours for students who need to meet with them.

Teaching Assistant Keith Morton described his experience so far: "I am having a great time with it." He says that being a GTA is a great

opportunity and that he would recommend applying for one to incoming or current students. The work may also help him in his future career. "Hopefully, the GTA experience will help land me an additional assistantship with my Ph.D. studies," Morton said. "It is very helpful, and it's great not having to pay those tuition bills throughout the semester."

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for a graduate teaching assistantship or wants to learn more about the program, visit the financial support section of the Department's web page. The address of the web page is <http://www.UM-St. Louis.edu/divisions/artscien ce/communication/>

Student to Study Talk about People with Disabilities

by Priya Soni

This is the second in a series of articles focusing on different faculty members or graduate students.

Communication graduate student Keith Morton has an interest in many aspects of communication. Before he entered the UM–St. Louis' communication graduate program he was interested in film production. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Cinema and Photography from SIU-Carbondale he decided to take his education a different direction and pursue teaching and research. Keith is now living



Keith Morton & daughter

in St. Louis with his wife and one-year-old daughter and is working to obtain his graduate degree. He is one of the first teaching assistants of the graduate pro-

gram (see story on page 1) and, if all goes well, he could be one of the first to exit by writing a thesis.

Graduate students in the UM–St. Louis communication program can select from several different tracks within the program and design a degree that caters to their career goals. All students must complete 15 hours of required core courses. However, they can complete the program by doing an internship, extra course work, or a thesis. An internship is designed to allow students to gain practical work experience in their field. A thesis is basically a complex research project that tests

some aspect of a communication theory. The internship and thesis are supervised by graduate faculty members and must be approved before students can begin to work on them.

Keith has been developing his thesis since August. He is interested in the effects of using "People First Language" to refer to individuals who have disabilities. The "People First" principle stresses that people come before their disability. For example, "person who is blind" would be preferred terminology over "a blind person." "I became aware of this concept while working as a teacher assis-

see **Morton** on page 4

New Prof Brings Passion for Teaching to Dept

Assistant Professor Su Ahn Jang joins the Faculty

by Priya Soni

There is a new addition to the Communication Department and she comes from far away. Su Ahn Jang joined the team at UM-St. Louis in August. Professor Jang has studied at Michigan State University and at the University of Texas Austin. She has been able to bring her experience and knowledge to the department. Her area of expertise is interpersonal communication. Currently she is researching the relationships between various communicative efficacies and one's ability to talk about certain issues or topics in close relationships. She is interested in researching the effect on communication when people in close relationships have been hurt.

Professor Jang will be teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in

interpersonal and organizational communication. Some of her courses are web-based and some are traditional face-to-face classes.

Professor Jang says she really likes UM-St. Louis' Communication Department and that it is the perfect place for her to be. She felt welcomed by her fellow scholars and believes this is a place for her to grow professionally and personal-

ly. The people on campus are eager to help me settle in here." Fellow professors have had great things to say about Professor Jang. Professor Alice Hall said, "Professor Jang already has an impressive record in her field. She's a valuable addition to the faculty who has a lot to offer our students."

Professor Jang says she lives the typical life of a professor. When asked what her day consists of, she said

thankful to be a professor, but if she could have a different career she would probably be an English teacher or a singer in a Christian praise band. "My dream was to be a professor since childhood. I'm quite happy with where I am." Some of Professor Jang's career goals include publishing her work in scholarly journals and remaining diligent in scholarship and research. Her number one goal is to be the best educa-

- "I'm really happy to be here. The students are wonderful, responsible, and enthusiastic about the communication field." -

ly. So far her experience has been great, she said. "I am really happy to be here. The students are wonderful, responsible and enthusiastic about the communication

she gets up early in the morning and goes on campus or to a local coffee shop to do her work. During the weekends, she enjoys walking at Forest Park. She is

tor she can be.

More information about Professor Jang and other faculty members can be found on the Department's web page.

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tant for Special School District of St. Louis and thought it would be interesting to study," Keith says. He hopes to find that "if more people use this sort of language, others will too and attitudes about the disabled would be slightly more positive." He is currently wrapping up his proposal. If it is approved, he will conduct an online survey next

semester to test his prediction. He plans to submit the finished product to conventions and to journals.

Keith is scheduled to graduate in May of 2006 and would like to begin studies in a Ph.D. program next fall. He is particularly interested in South Carolina's Clemson University because of their new interdisciplinary program involving their com-

munication, English, and art departments. It is called RCID (Rhetoric, Communication, and Information Design) and incorporates many of Keith's varied interests. The program also offers assistantships that allow students to teach undergraduate courses. "The area," Keith says, "appears to be a nice fit for my family and me."

Keith is one of the many

intelligent students who can be found in UM-St. Louis' Communication graduate program. "I honestly chose UM-St. Louis because it was in St. Louis and it was affordable. I had a very specific bachelor's degree (cinema and photography), so I wanted a broader Master's degree. I stumbled into a very good program with a very strong faculty."