

COMMUNICATION CONNECTION



UNC CHARLOTTE DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNICATION STUDIES

GRADUATE PROGRAM ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



Communication Studies
UNC Charlotte 



LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Greetings from the UNCC Communication Studies Graduate Program!

I'm excited to present this year's Communication Connection, a newsletter made with alumni in mind.

For those of you who graduated before my arrival at UNCC, my name is Jaime Bochantin, I've been at UNCC since 2014 and I recently became program director in October 2017. I have loved the role thus far and I am excited to continue working with our students, faculty, and alumni!

The program is currently in its 18th year and we have graduated well over 100 students. Our students, alumni, and faculty are doing awesome things in the field of communication studies, with many continuing on to PhD programs and teaching at the college level. Others are doing wonderful work in both the nonprofit sector and in industry, both nationally and abroad!

The purpose of this newsletter is to share some of the wonderful things our alumni are doing as well as connect and reconnect with all of you! You can further connect with us on both Facebook and LinkedIn (the links are listed below). Also, if you are not currently receiving emails from us about events on campus we do not have your current email. If you would like to update us and let us know how you are doing please email my personal email or gradcomm@uncc.edu

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and please keep in touch!!!

-Dr. Jaime Bochantin
JBochant@uncc.edu

ALUMNI FACEBOOK:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/UNC-Charlotte-Communication-Studies-MA-Program-Alumni/1556485631296425>

ALUMNI LINKEDIN:

http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=4909468&go back=.gmp_4909468

EDITOR AND MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:: **Olivia Sadler**



ALUMNI UPDATES

Graduate Alum Gives Back By Funding Current Students' Academic Travel

Nan Wilson Wilkenfeld ('14) received her bachelor's degree in Political Science and Government in 2005 from The University of North Georgia. After years in the workforce, she decided to further her education here at UNCC and earned the dual degrees of MBA and MA in Communication Studies in May 2014. While in our program, Nan was competitively selected to study abroad at Zeppelin University in Germany for a semester. Since graduating, she has taught Business Communication classes for our department, and been involved with the Faculty Learning Community for Adjunct and Part-time Faculty and the Communication Across the Curriculum program for Belk College Students. She is currently President of Wilkenfeld Consulting, a business development, teambuilding, and leadership development consulting organization in Charlotte. Next, she is starting a doctoral program in the Fall at The University of California at Santa Barbara

The Nan Wilson Wilkenfeld Communication Studies Graduate Travel Scholarship was founded with a generous contribution from Wilkenfeld. This scholarship provides funding for UNCC Comm Studies MA students to travel for academic conferences, data collection, or study abroad. Olivia Sadler recently interviewed Wilkenfeld about her time in the program, how it has influenced her success post-graduation, and what inspired her to start her scholarship fund.

***Is there a course you took while in the graduate program that has stood out to you?***

The first course I took in the program was Dr. Davis' Focus Group course. Throughout the semester, Dr. Davis convinced me I was meant to be a Communication Studies student. I think it's safe to say taking that course changed the course of my life as it put me on the path to earning the double degree and subsequently here I am about to start working on my PhD in Communication.

What are your responsibilities as the president of your own consulting agency? How did your time in the MA program prepare you for your current position?

ALL THE THINGS! It's just me as President, CFO, Employee of the Month, etc. I look for and solicit contracts for teambuilding or organizational development. I have done cold-calling and basic marketing. Lately, I've been getting most of my jobs through word-of-mouth or previous connections. Some of my recent projects include team building sessions with Sherman Chiropractic College, a team building/charity event, and writing a business plan for an indoor adventure facility, Kinetic Heights in Charlotte. My MA in Communication Studies really helped improve my writing abilities, but more importantly, I learned how to do research - how to find answers to questions I had, and how to think critically. I think those are lifelong skills that are invaluable. I also learned theoretical knowledge which I could then apply to the challenges I'd face in my development programs.

What gave you the idea to create a travel scholarship for graduate students?

Creating a scholarship has been something I've wanted to do for many years - since I was an undergraduate. Scholarships helped me pay for school, travel and have all sorts of new experiences I wouldn't have otherwise had. I wanted to give back so that other students would be able to have opportunities as well. As to why this scholarship is for Communication Studies graduate students, it's really because the Communication Studies graduate program had such a major impact on my life. The courses broadened my horizons and challenged my way of thinking. The department faculty and staff are very supportive, and I feel they have created an environment in which students can flourish and reach their full potential. The coursework and internal forums are great, but I definitely believe (and agree with Dr. Davis) that making the connection with other programs, students and faculty through external experiences like conferences and study abroad is vital for a well-rounded graduate education.



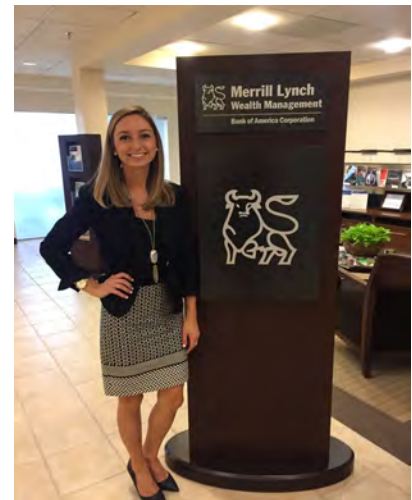
ALUMNI UPDATES

Emma Butterworth: From TA to Adjunct Professor

After her graduation and fantastic work as a Teaching Assistant, **Emma Butterworth ('17)** was offered the opportunity to become an adjunct professor for the UNCC Communication Studies Department. Butterworth currently teaches courses centered on Public Speaking and Small Group Communication. Also, she has recently been accepted into a PhD program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst which she will start this Fall. Good luck Emma!

Recent Alumni Coordinates Communication for Merrill Lynch

Along with thriving in academia, our alumni are also making their mark in the corporate sector. **Lizzie Ballard ('17)** has been doing wonderful work as a branch office coordinator for Merrill Lynch, which is a part of the Bank of America Corporation. Her fantastic oral and written communication skills she mastered in our program have made her a great addition to the company!

**Next Stop – PhDs: Exciting Alumni Admissions**

Congratulation to **Shanice Cameron** (graduating in **Spring 2018**) who has been accepted to the doctoral program at **Chapel Hill University!**

Congratulations to **Nan Wilson Wilkenfeld ('14)** who, after many offers, chose to attend **UCSB (University of California at Santa Barbara)** for a doctoral study in Communication this Fall!



FACULTY UPDATES

Welcome Teddy Carbone to Our Extended Family!



Heartfelt congratulations to our graduate faculty member **Dr. Margaret Quinan** and her husband James Carbone on the birth of their second child, James Edward Carbone. Teddy (as they have chosen to call him) was born of February 11, 2018. Also, a professional congratulations to Dr. Quinan whose outstanding research with Professor Bethany Johnson was awarded the prestigious OSCLG Outstanding Competitive Conference Paper Award in 2017.

New Graduate Director Begins Mid Semester: Dr. Jaime Bochantin

In October 2017, **Dr. Christine Davis** stepped down as graduate program director after years of wonderful work. **Dr. Jaime Bochantin** has since assumed the role and is already doing a fantastic job leading our program. Thank you Dr. Davis and good luck Dr. Bochantin!

Three Faculty Members Published Books!!!

Dr. Jason Black

Decolonizing Native American: Communicating Self

Expected Release: June 2018

Dr. Christine Davis

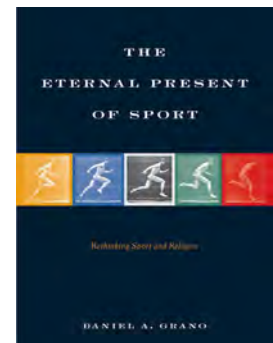
Talking Through Death: Communicating about Death in Interpersonal, Mediated, and Cultural Contexts

Expected Release: Summer 2018

Dr. Dan Grano

The Eternal Present of Sport: Rethinking Sport and Religion

Released: Summer 2017



Dr. Grano's book cover

Be sure to check them out!!!!!!



FACULTY UPDATES

UNC Charlotte Communication Studies Says Thank You and Bids Farewell to Dr. Rachel Plotnick



1. How would you describe your time here at UNC Charlotte?

I have had a wonderful five years at UNC Charlotte! From the moment I stepped on campus, I could tell it was a special place -- with faculty and students who genuinely cared about each other. Since I came directly from a PhD program to UNCC, I have learned so much about what it means to be a faculty member and to be in a university context as a professional. I am so indebted to the great people I've worked with and taught in Comm Studies!

2. Do you have a particular memory, of your graduate students or any grad classes, that you wish to share?

My favorite moment was Comm Celebration night a couple of years ago. I had the good fortune to work with and advise three graduate students at the same time -- and then gotta hood each of them at the ceremony. It was an awesome experience, and I'm thrilled that all of them have gone on to do great things beyond the program.

3. What will you miss about the UNCC graduate students? What will you miss about the grad faculty?

I will really miss seeing how the UNCC graduate students interact with one another. I always get the sense that there is a close knit community that has developed amongst each cohort, and I love seeing that bond develop. It makes me remember my own graduate cohorts and how important they were for my success as a student! In regard to faculty, I'll very much miss our collaborations and chats about how to teach, design syllabi, and work with students. I consider the faculty to be mentors as much as friends, and my classes have definitely improved from their input.

4. Can you tell the alumni a little bit about your new job?

I will be an assistant professor in The Media School at Indiana University Bloomington. My position is focused on Media Theory, Technology and Culture, and I'll be teaching and researching in a very interdisciplinary school with people who approach media from lots of different angles. I attended IU as an undergraduate, so this is a kind of "homecoming" for me. That being said, this move is very bittersweet!

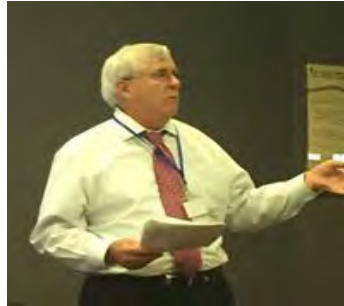
5. Do you have any advice for the UNCC Communication Studies Graduate program alumni?

Be strategic about how you package yourself once you get beyond graduate school. Whether preparing for PhD programs or a job, it's important to figure out a narrative about who you are, the kind of work you do, and how you can leverage your strengths to serve others' needs. Both in academia and in organizations, I think the question of "fit" is paramount -- people will be asking, how does this person fit into what we already do, and how will they enrich and improve what we do? If you can offer a good answer to that question, you'll go far.

Thank you Dr. Plotnick!!!!



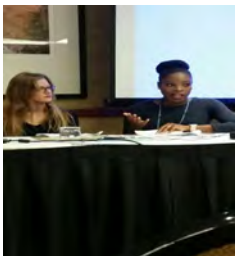
CONFERENCE RECAP CCA: Clemson, SC



The theme for this year's annual Carolinas Communication Association Conference was *All In* and our faculty and students took this to heart in their diverse group of presentations. Current M.A. students **Olivia Sadler, Patrick Gentile, Shanice Cameron, and Maddy Michalik** all did an outstanding job presenting their research at the conference, which was held in Clemson, South Carolina, and prompted interesting and productive discussions with other scholars. **Maddy Michalik** was a finalist for the prestigious Jarrard Undergraduate Research Award for her paper entitled *Student Parents and Their Partners: Negotiating Enrollment in Higher Education*.

Our faculty also made a strong showing at CCA with presentations from **Dr. Jason Black and Dr. Richard Leeman**. Dr. Leeman also received the esteemed Ray Camp Research Award for his paper entitled *The Radical Post: Reconstruction Rhetoric of Frederick Douglass*. Our faculty was also well represented by **Dr. Jon Crane** who won the Lloyd Rohrer Career Teaching Awards, the Association's top honor for lifelong commitment to classroom teaching, mentorship, and overall student development. Dr. Black was elected Executive Director of CCA for a five-year term and Carol Leeman continues on as CCA treasurer, a position she continues to innovate for the Association. Congratulations to all of our student and faculty for another successful year at CCA!

NCA: Dallas, Texas



The theme of this year's National Communication Association Conference was *Our Legacy, Our Relevance* and featured presentations pertaining both to the past and present of the Communication Studies field. Students and faculty traveled south to the beautiful city of Dallas, Texas for the four-day conference that took place November 16th - 19th. Graduate student **Shanice Cameron** presented original quantitative research. Her paper, written in Dr. Christine Davis's research methods course, was entitled *Black Men Don't Defend Us: Gender and Types of Black Feminist Discourse* and was a part of the Women and Feminist Studies Panel. Shanice was the only graduate student presenting on a panel made up otherwise of faculty and did an impressive job! Faculty were also well represented with panel presentations by **Dr. Jaime Bochantin, Dr. Stephanie Norander, Ms. Sayde Brais, Ms. Brandy Stamper, Dr. Ashli Q. Stokes, Dr. Shawn Long, and Dr. Erin Basinger**. The legacy and relevance of our department in the field of communication studies was evident at the conference.



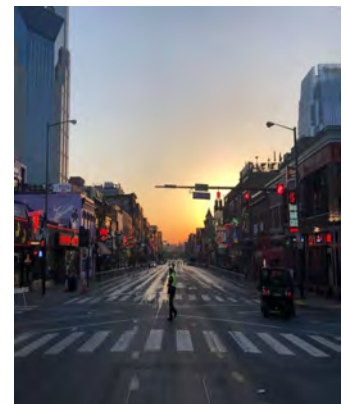
CONFERENCE RECAP

OSCLG: Omaha,

This year, the **Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Gender (OSCLG)** celebrated its 40th annual conference and aimed to highlight papers that look forward to the next 40 years of feminist thought. The conference was held in in Omaha Nebraska (October 5th-8th, 2017) and our program was well represented. UNCC faculty **Dr. Margaret Quinlan** and **Professor Bethany Johnson** were awarded the prestigious OSCLG Outstanding Competitive Conference Paper Award for their article “This Is Your Job, To Me It Means the World: Female Patients’ Perceptions of Nurses’ Communication During Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility (REI) Treatment”. Faculty member **Dr. Stephanie Norander** presented a paper in the Women in Leadership division. Alumni **Jaclyn Marsh**, who is now a PhD student in Nebraska, also attended the conference.

SSCA: Nashville

This year’s annual SSCA conference was held in beautiful Nashville, Tennessee on April 4th -9th. The conference theme was *Muses and Musings in The Music City*, inspired by the city's rich history of music and inspiring creativity. Our program was represented well by current graduate student **Cameron Davis** who presented two fantastic original research papers, one of which was named a *Top Student Paper*. This paper was entitled *The Effect of Gendered Language on Letters of Recommendation for Medical Students: Applying to Residency Training Programs* and was a part of the prestigious *Language and Current Events: Top Student Papers in Language and Social Interaction* panel. Davis’s second panel, *Gendered Spaces at School and Work*, also featured a presentation by our faculty member **Dr. Rachel Plotnick**. Our faculty made a strong showing with presentations by **Dr. Christine Davis, Dr. Jason Black, Dr. Grano, and Dr. Ashli Stokes**. Alongside presenting and listening in on panels centered around a variety of communication research disciplines, students and faculty also got the chance to explore the vibrant Downtown area. Congratulations to everyone!





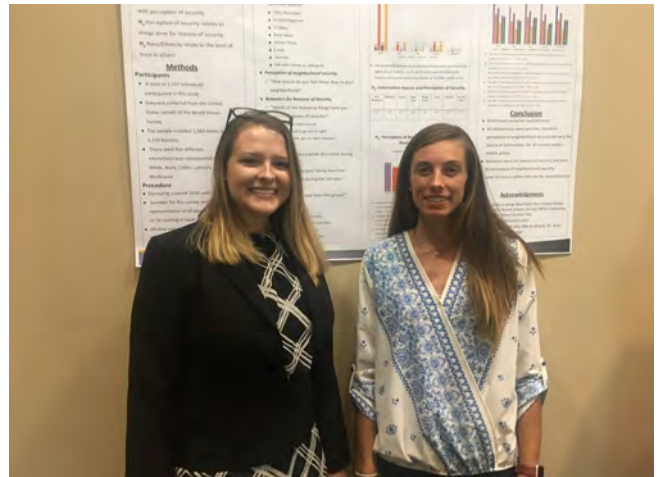
COMMUNICATION CELEBRATION DAY 2018

Spring Colloquium | CSGSA Presents: Dr. Patrice Buzzanell



A highlight of our **Communication Celebration Day** every year is bringing an outstanding scholar to our campus! This year, we invited esteemed organizational communication scholar, **Dr. Patrice Buzzanell**. Dr. Buzzanell's research focuses on career, work-life policy, resilience, gender, and engineering design in micro-macro contexts. She has published 4 edited books, as well as 200 journal articles, chapters, and encyclopedia entries. Her talk was entitled "**What do you want to be when you grow up?: Career Design Over the Lifespan!**" A large crowd of our students, faculty, and alumni were in attendance. She also met with our students and faculty one-on-one to use her experience to help them with their own research. We are so grateful she came to our campus and we will continue to bring exemplar scholars to UNCC. Please know as alumni, you are always encouraged and welcome to attend and learn from those in our field!

Communication Studies Graduate Student Research Poster Fair



One of the most exciting parts of **Communication Studies Day** every year is the **Graduate Research Poster Session**. On Tuesday April 10th, graduate students, undergraduate students and faculty met in the Student Activity Center to see a majority of our graduate students present their research in the form of posters. The posters showcased the diversity of research topics studied by students in our generalist program that encourages everyone to explore their specific interests. Projects ranged from studies on communication and gender to sports rhetoric to public speaking anxiety and a variety of other interesting topics. Students and faculty went from poster to poster and asked questions of the researchers in an informal manner similar to an academic conference. This event was sponsored by CSGSA.



COMMUNICATION CELEBRATION DAY 2018

Hooping Ceremony



On April 10th, students, faculty, friends, and family gathered in the Student Activity Center to end a fantastic COMM Celebration Day on a high with the annual awards banquet. Undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, as well as Alumni were honored for their achievements and contributions to our program and the field of Communication Studies.

One highlight was the hooding of eight fantastic graduate students, led by graduate program director **Dr. Jaime Bochantin**. The eight future alumni hooded included **Desiree Bataba, Shanice Cameron, Cameron Davis, Brittany Little, Elizabeth Medlin, Miranda Rouse, Olivia Sadler, and Brandy Trull**.



Coincidentally, **Desiree Bataba** and **Olivia Sadler** both successfully defended their comprehensive exams that same day. Thank you to the planning committee, which included alumni and now lecturer **Sayde Brais**, for their fantastic work!

WSOC COMES TO COMM 6011

In Fall 2017, a class of our graduate students undertook a visual ethnographic project that looked to give voice to an often-silenced group, women who struggle with infertility. Under the direction of faculty members **Dr. Margaret Quinlan** and **Professor Bethany Johnson**, graduate students **Desiree Bataba, Shanice Cameron, Cameron Davis, Samantha Maine, Maddy Michalik, Elizabeth Medlin, Nathan Pope, Miranda Rouse** and **Olivia Sadler** transformed their semester-long research into a documentary entitled *1 in 8: Communicating (In)fertility*.

After watching a story where WSOC News anchor Allison Latos disclosed her infertility status to viewers, Cameron Davis reached out and invited her to visit the class. Latos was interested in the documentary, which aimed to inform and educate individuals of the importance of social support for women going through infertility, and agreed. Latos and a team from the News station attended the class and taped a feature on the documentary which aired on WSOC December 15th. It was also featured on the station's website, allowing the community at large a chance to watch the documentary. The documentary is set to be a part of a traveling exhibit called *The Art of Infertility*. The production of *1 in 8: Communicating (In)fertility* exemplifies the dedication our faculty and students have for community outreach and innovative research presentations.



WSOCTV.COM
UNC Charlotte documentary helps couples struggling with infertility



MEET THE NEW ALUMNI - Spring 2018 Graduates

Desiree Bataba, advised by **Dr. Stokes**, was accepted into the Fulbright International Study Abroad Program, allowing her to complete an MA in Communication Studies at UNC Charlotte. She comes to us all the way from Togo, West Africa. She is a member of Springboard for Health Communication Professionals and Association des Professionnels de la Communication (APROCOM-TOGO) (Professional Association for Communication practitioners in Togo), which will help in her in goal in relying on her training in communication studies to help solve the many challenges in the Global Health field. While with us, Desiree took a wide range of courses and specialized in global health. Though Desiree has written that “change is very uncomfortable and stretching out of your comfort zone is uncomfortable,” she learned through her work that it was ok to be vulnerable and there is strength in vulnerability. Desiree successfully completed comprehensive exams under the advising of Dr. Stokes.

Shanice Cameron, advised by **Dr. Leeman**, is interested in helping scholars better appreciate black millennial communication and their contributions to social justice. Throughout her classes, her research has focused on that issue. Her thesis, “Lit and Woke AF: An Analysis of African American Discourse and Black Feminism on *The Read*,” uses a black feminist critical lens to analyze “The Read,” a socially-conscious, very popular podcast that features Kid Fury and Chrissle West. Shanice has presented her scholarly work in this area at regional and national conferences as well. Dr. Leeman stated that Shanice’s thesis proposal defense was “the best he has ever seen.” Shanice’s dedication to excellence in all she does will stand her well as she begins the doctoral program in Communication next fall at UNC Chapel Hill.

Cameron Davis, advised by **Dr. Bochantin**, completed our program part time while also working full-time as the Coordinator for the Neurosurgery and Vascular Surgery Residency Programs at Carolinas Medical Center. Her research interests are varied and include social justice issues affecting marginalized populations as well as gender inequities. She also loves organizational communication topics like work-life balance and emotion labor. Her directed project examined gender bias in letters of recommendation for residency applicants in the medical profession (across a variety of specialties). Her project includes the development of online training modules for both letter writers and for those reading them. She has presented this research at several conferences both in and outside the field of Communication Studies!

Brittany Little, advised by **Dr. Bochantin**, served as vice president of CSGSA. She is from Lilesville, NC and her predominant scholarly interest is organizational communication. Her secondary interest is in race, specifically the experiences of African American women which is what has informed her directed project that looks at leadership style across the Queen City Metropolitan Chapter of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women. She has done focus groups and interviews to inform a white paper type report that will provide this group with best practices and recommendations for leading their organization. After she graduates, she will be taking a well deserved year off from school to prepare to apply to PhD programs in the fall.





MEET THE NEW ALUMNI

Elizabeth Medlin, advised by **Dr. Crane**, is a rhetorical/critical scholar who is interested in the ideological work that creates, sustains and propagates marginalized online communities. In this pursuit, she is particularly focused on the study of online interest groups populated by alt-right, white supremacists. She successfully completed and defended her comprehensive exams. Elizabeth has also taken on the challenge of teaching Comm Theory, serving as a TA and guest lecturer under the tutelage of Dr. Erin Basinger. Given Elizabeth's future plans to teach as a college professor, she should be ready for any challenge.

Jonie Oleson, advised by **Dr. Gossett**, took her experience as a survivor of a major corporate layoff in her first year in our program, from an ethnographic project in Dr. Christine Davis's Research Methods class to her thesis, titled, "Resurrecting the departed: An exploration of the organizational socialization experiences of rehired employees." In between, she was an engaged student and model departmental citizen, participating in the competitively selected One Team Leadership Experience, presenting at Carolinas Communication Association convention (and being nominated for the prestigious Jarrard Graduate Student Paper Award), and taking a study abroad class in Berlin. In addition to her experience in our MA program, Joni is communications manager for Human Resources initiatives at Bank of America and has recently led the communication, engagement and change adoption strategy for a company-wide program focused on organizational culture transformation, and risk management.

Miranda Rouse, advised by **Dr. Grano**, is President of CSGSA and has pursued her passion for communication pedagogy during her time in our program. She has worked closely with Debbie Baker and Dr. Stephanie Norander, serving in the Communication Across the Curriculum Program and at the University Speaking Center. She co-authored an essay published with Dr. Norander in the *Communication Center Journal*, which makes a case for incorporating oral communication into ePortfolio initiatives as a way to position Communication Centers as invaluable resources for connecting oral communication, critical thinking, and student learning.

Olivia Sadler, advised by **Dr. Quinlan**, is our program Graduate Assistant and successfully defended her comprehensive exams. As a communication scholar, her research interests include fan culture, gender, popular music, social change, and the intersection of these topics. According to her advisor Dr. Quinlan, "Olivia is one of the most intellectually curious students she has worked with. She is one of those students who takes criticism well, is exceptionally motivated and independent and always meets deadlines!" She also presented her research at CCA and did a wonderful job representing herself and our program. Olivia is currently in the process of applying for jobs in a variety of fields including academic advising/alumni management, communication coordination for performing arts venues, and research associate positions at non-profit organizations.

Brandy Trull, advised by **Dr. Scott**, is a long-time student of the program attending part-time until just this past semester. After graduating from UNC Charlotte with a bachelor's degree in health communication in 2012, Brandy continued working for Hanesbrands while pursuing a M.A. in Communication Studies on a part time basis, eventually earning promotions in retail management. This past semester, Brandy decided to accept a department assistantship so she could complete her degree as a full-time graduate student. As a graduate student, Brandy's primary research interest has been in organizational communication, organizational identification in particular. In terms of next steps, she has an awesome opportunity to work in Alaska over the summer and will return to the career search in October!