

Perspectives

Department of Communication Studies / 408 924 5360

Highlights:

- Fund for Excellence Announced
- New tenure-track faculty hired in performance studies and health communication
- Updates on COMM Lab and Chiba Program
- New faculty publications and participation in upcoming conferences

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Sproules make \$25,000 Donation

Michael and Betty Sproule announced a donation of \$25,000 to launch the Department of Communication Studies Fund for Excellence when they visited in September. As the beginning of an endowment that will grow due to the accumulation of interest and the contributions of other alumni, the Fund represents the largest such donation to the department in recent memory.

Michael and Betty's Fund seeks to stimulate faculty research, inspire curricular development, and support student-centered programs. The Fund also reflects the increasingly urgent need to support SJSU programs in light of declining support from the State government. However, the Fund does not simply respond to budgetary woes; it is designed to inspire departmental growth.

Introducing the Fund, Betty revealed the high aspirations for the department she shares with Michael. "We wanted to inspire all of you to be excellent," she said.

Michael and Betty announced their donation during Michael's public lecture, "Propaganda and Democracy," held in the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library on Tuesday, September 6th.

(cont p. 2)

Department Welcomes New Tenure-Track Faculty



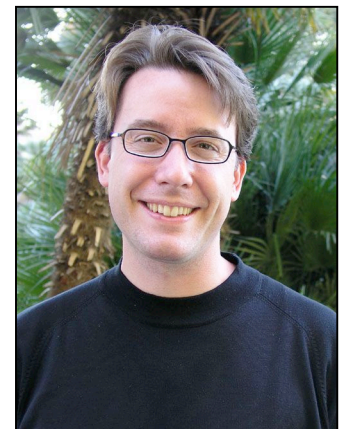
Jay Baglia, Assistant Professor, Performance Studies

Read his bio on page 2



Elissa Foster, Assistant Professor, Health Communication

Read her bio on page 3



Matthew Spangler, Assistant Professor, Performance Studies

Read his bio on page 3



Photo by Mari Duncan

Sproules Make \$25,000 Donation

(Cont. from p. 1)

Drawing from decades of research, Michael discussed the history of propaganda and some of its current practices, emphasizing that, “The risk of propaganda is that if you’re not a member of the public for the subject, your opinion is being formed for you.”

Michael’s presentation extended his tradition of top-notch scholarship that has already resulted in an important monograph published by Cambridge

University Press: *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion* (1996).

Michael Sproule left the SJSU faculty in 2001 to become the Director of the School of Communication Studies at Bowling Green State University. Since then, he has assumed his current position as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Saint Louis University. He is also the Second Vice President of National Communication

Association.

In announcing their gift, Michael reminded audience members of the need for all members of the SJSU Communication Studies family to contribute what they can to bolster the program and benefit our students.

Michael said, “The opportunity will come full circle...Perhaps there will be opportunity for you to return the favor, so the alpha returns to the omega.”

“The opportunity will come full circle... Perhaps there will be opportunity for you to return the favor, so the alpha returns to the omega.”
- J. Michael Sproule

New Tenure-Track Faculty Member - Jay Baglia

Jay Baglia will be teaching courses in performance studies, gender, nonverbal communication and health communication. His research utilizes performance theory and feminist theory in the exploration of gender in communication contexts. He completed his B.A., M.A. (1999), and Ph.D. (2003) from the University of South Florida (USF). While at USF he taught courses in public speaking, performance, gender, interpersonal, and health communication. In April 2002, he received both the Provost’s Award for Outstanding Teaching by a graduate assistant and the Bochner Award for Outstanding Research by a doctoral student. After completing his Ph.D., he was appointed

assistant professor in communication studies at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. While at Southwestern, his Introduction to Communication Studies course was chosen as Southwestern’s “Best Class” by *Texas Monthly* in their 2004 annual review of Texas universities. He has presented over twenty conference papers at national and regional annual meetings (National Communication Association, Southern States Communication Association, Eastern Communication Association, Western States Communication Association, and the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction). He has authored and co-

authored several articles in a wide range of professional journals (*Text and Performance Quarterly, Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism, Health Communication, Public Voices*). He is the author of *The Viagra (Ad)Venture: Masculinity, Media, and the Performance of Sexual Health* (Peter Lang Publishing), which was released in July. The book presents a fascinating exploration of the social and cultural implications of the “little blue pill,” with particular emphasis on the power of feminist and performance theory to reveal the construction of masculinity. Jay is originally from New Milford, Connecticut.

New Tenure-Track Faculty Member - Elissa Foster

Professor Elissa Foster was born and raised in Brisbane, Australia, where she spent the first part of her life entrenched in the arts (dance, theatre, music, visual art, creative writing, you name it!) and settled upon theatre for her first career. Upon completing two degrees in theatre and doing a lot of teaching and directing along the way, she accepted an unusual offer to teach communication courses in the Environmental Engineering program of a nearby university. Facing the uncertain income of a

life in the theatre, she accepted and discovered communication studies as a discipline. Seeking to learn more, she found that the only graduate programs in communication were in the United States.

In 1994, Elissa arrived at the University of Memphis (why Memphis? Ask her some time—it has nothing to do with Elvis) where she completed her MA degree focusing on Organizational and Interpersonal Communication with a new-found interest in Health Communication.

After spending a couple of years building up teaching experience in Wilmington, North Carolina (look up what happened there on September 5th, 1996 . . .), she moved to Tampa to complete her doctoral degree at the University of South Florida, extending her interests in interpersonal communication and health, and rediscovering her love of literary forms of writing. It was also in Tampa that she began her work with hospice, which is the topic of a book she is preparing for publication next year. Elissa is happy to be at

San José State, where she is looking forward to offering classes in health communication (among other things) and working among a stellar community of faculty and students.

If you're interested in reading some of her writing, you can find it in *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Journal of Aging and Identity*, *Women's Studies in Communication*, and the *American Communication Journal*.

New Tenure-Track Faculty Member - Matthew Spangler

Matthew Spangler's research focuses on Irish theatre, performances of cultural identity, Uruguayan studies, and the adaptation of literature for the screen and stage. He has published articles on the effects of economic and cultural globalization on the theatre of contemporary Ireland, the adaptation of James Joyce's fiction for the stage, the relationship between Irish nationalism and W. B. Yeats's poetry, as well as articles on Ernest Gaines and Elizabeth Bishop. Recently, the National Communication Association recognized his scholarship by awarding him the top competitive essay award. Dr. Spangler

is also a professional theatre director and actor. As the founding Artistic Director of Wordshed Productions, a professional, not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to presenting adaptations of literature and cross cultural performances, he has written, directed, or performed in numerous stage productions, some of which include: one-person shows of James Joyce's *Dubliners* and *Finnegans Wake*, which he has performed throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and Ireland, and *A Paradise It Seems*, an adaptation of John Cheever's short stories, which he directed at the

Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland (2004). His most recent projects include: *The Empty Chalice*, a play based on the poems and letters of turn-of-the-century Uruguayan poet Delmira Agustini, which he directed at the NextTheatre in Evanston, Illinois in the winter of 2005; February One, a PBS documentary about the "Greensboro Four" and their race protest at a Woolworth's lunch counter, which aired nationally also in the winter of 2005 (Dr. Spangler played the manager of the Woolworth's in the film's recreation of the events); and this summer he returned to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival for the third

time to direct Mozart for Breakfast, a play based on Mozart's letters to his father and sister. A graduate of Northwestern University's Department of Performance Studies, Matthew holds an M.Phil. in theatre from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and a Ph.D. in communication studies with a focus in performance studies and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to coming to SJSU, he taught performance studies at UNC and twentieth century American literature at North Carolina State University.

"There were many tearful goodbyes as our new friends boarded their plane back to Tokyo."



Photo by Jill Jaehne

The six students completing the program for fall 2005 are (Left to Right in photo):

Sara Muto
Nozomi Tanaka
Mayuka Ota
Yuta Toyozato
Ryosuke Mizuno
Naoya Osugi

COMM Lab News

The Comm Lab is up and running this semester Monday through Thursday, 9am til 6pm. The Tutors have been busy helping the students with the modules, videotaping speeches, along with a variety of

other activities. This semester our tutors are: Chris Anderson, DJ Bell, Lisa Marie Cantu, David Cohen, Steve Dicherico, Amanda Hardin, Dan Harrigan, Evan Inada, Jenn Lazarus, Tatiana Mancias, Bobby Manning,

Brandon Matteoni, Michael McFadden, Phillip Middleton, Jonathon Quijas, Danielle Romano, Shawntae Salmon-Tehrani, Philip Tejero, Christine Yu, Susan Tae Yamada, Chris K. Yoo and Steven J. Young.

Chiba Update

This fall marked the eighth year of the American Pre-Collegiate Experience Program with the Center for Frontier Science at Chiba University in Japan. Selected top ranked students spend one month every fall participating in oral communication classes in Communication Studies, sitting in on classes in other departments, and living on campus.

They had a great time learning to give speeches, talking about Physics in English, blowing glass, and learning about college life in the U.S. The staff and resident advisors of Hoover Hall went to great

lengths to make the students feel welcome and comfortable. Outside of class, the students attended barbecues at the home of Beth and Steve Von Till and Dennis and Jill Jaehne, took trips to San Francisco, Monterey, Berkeley, Stanford, Great America, and the San Jose Flea Market. Two of the lucky students went to see the great Ichiro play baseball in person and the others watched the game on television and ate hamburgers at the Jaehne's.

A cultural highlight of their trip was a visit to the Flint Center to see the San

Francisco Symphony perform under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas. Dr. Hanns Hohmann hosted and underwrote this event for the second year for the Chiba students.

The department would like to thank all those involved for the success of this program with special thanks to our own graduate students Ayumi Matsumura, Natsuko Yamamura and Miriam Kiyasu, and the members of the Japan club for all of their tireless assistance. There were many tearful goodbyes as our new friends boarded their plane back to Tokyo.

Faculty and Student News

Elissa Foster (Assistant Professor) is participating in a dialogue at NCA: "Investigating Intersubjectivity in Interview Research," and presenting a paper entitled, "Inspiration, Recreation, Motivation: Functions of Storytelling in Hospice Care."

James Lull (Emeritus) hosted a lengthy DVD feature on camera for the

upcoming re-release of the Academy Award winning film, *Platoon*. He has also finished a book that addresses the intersection of media and cultural globalization, cultural transparency, individualism, cultural programming, superculture, human expression, mobile communication, and the tension between cosmopolitan and

fundamentalist thought and culture. Learn more online at: <http://members.aol.com/JamesLull/>

Brian Reed Singer (MA Candidate) has accepted a position on the Board of Trustees of the National Parliamentary Debate League

Kevin Marinelli, Phil Toole, and

Karen Williams (MA Candidates) are presenting papers at NCA for a panel on Presidential Arguments chaired by **Anne Marie Todd**.

Matthew Spangler (Assistant Professor) is presenting a paper at NCA entitled, "Black Irish: Representations of Race, Identity, and Otherness in Irish Street Performance."

Federico Varona (Professor) has published a book entitled *El Círculo de la Comunicación*. (La Coruña, España: Editorial Netbiblo). He is also participating in planning meetings for the Second Communication Conference of the Americas sponsored by

NCA and the Latin American Communication Association.

Beth Von Till (Lecturer) will be presenting a paper at NCA on Training Tutors as part of a Senior Capstone Experience for Communication Majors.

Andrew Wood (Associate Professor) is presenting a paper at NCA entitled, "What Happens in Vegas": Performing the Post-tourist *Flâneur* in 'New York' and 'Paris.'" Wood has also published a new essay with **Anne Marie Todd** (Assistant Professor) in *Critical Studies in Media*

Communication. Their essay is entitled, "Are we there yet?": Searching for Springfield and the Simpsons' rhetoric of omnitemia."

News for next issue?
Email Andrew Wood!

Chair Report - Dennis Jaehne

Entering my ninth year as Department Chair, I notice that the university has become more complex than ever. For many of us who are nearing retirement, the college experience is vastly different than it was a few decades ago. One of the major changes is the shift throughout higher education from being "teaching-centered" to being "learning-centered." Moreover, as part of our accreditation requirements, we're moving to assess much more carefully how students meet the learning objectives of the major.

Now, as the seasons change, it's fitting to look at how the department is evolving as well. If you've been gone a while, you probably won't recognize many of the current faculty. Some of your favorite former professors have retired: former department chair Dr. David Elliott, Dr. Judith Barnes, Prof. Ken Salter, Dr. Michael Sproule, and Dr. James Lull. Dr. Philip Wander and Dr. Jo Sprague are in their final year; we'll be celebrating their careers and achievements at the

Western States Communication Association meetings in February, and on campus later in the Spring. Watch our newsletter and website for details.

Another former department chair, Dr. Tim Hegstrom, is now Dean of the College of Social Sciences. In the meantime, since I started as chair, we have hired eight new permanent faculty. Dr. Rona Halualani and Dr. Andrew Wood were promoted and received tenure last year. Dr. Deanna Fassett is under review for tenure and promotion this year. Dr. Anne Marie Todd and Dr. Christina Sabee are completing their fourth year with us. And this year, three new faculty members are starting out with us: Dr. Jay Baglia, Dr. Elissa Foster, and Dr. Matthew Spangler. We now have one of the most vibrant Communication Studies departments in the West.

New faculty mean new directions in curriculum as well. Baglia and Spangler will open up a new area called "performance studies," while Foster will develop health communication

coursework. Sabee has introduced courses in conflict and mediation, and a training program leading to a mediation certificate. Todd has brought the globalization dimension of our curriculum to prominence with courses in peace communication and social movements. Fassett has taken the training of our graduate Teaching Associates to a new level of depth and excellence. Halualani is leading the development of a new intercultural communication minor. Wood has introduced both "internet communication" and "communication and mobility" to our curriculum. It's thrilling to watch these energetic young professors revitalize our department. Of course, I've only offered a few highlights of the many things they are doing.

I'd like to keep in touch with our alumni. If you're in the area and would like to visit campus, please call and set up an appointment; I'll be happy to meet with you. In the meantime, send along an email to update us on what you're doing.

- Dennis Jaehne

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[http://www.sjsu.edu/
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