

Communication Studies Club

by Rosemary Shultz

The Communication Studies Club has survived yet another exciting year. To continue with a long-running tradition, the Club—which comprises all communication studies majors—hosted two American Red Cross Blood Drives for the Gustavus community in November 2005 and March 2006.

The Communication Studies Club is presided over by an Executive Board, which consists of eight Communication Studies majors, Visiting Instructor Sarah Wolter, and a faculty adviser, Dr. Patricia English. The Executive Board was solely responsible for donor recruitment for the blood drives, visiting every communication studies class before both events to recruit volunteers and donors. Then, volunteers spent an entire week outside the Evelyn Young Dining Room each semester, recruiting donors and educating the Gustavus community about giving blood.

With the help of an amazing group of Red Cross personnel and all of the wonderful volunteers, Gustavus students, faculty, and administrators donated a total of 354 healthy units of blood to the Red Cross this year.

Throughout the year, the executive board hosted many other exciting events. The Communication Studies Club holiday party took place at the end of fall semester. Majors enjoyed treats, holiday arts and crafts, and the second annual “Professor Coloring Contest,” in which students voted on the best artwork completed by professors in the department.

This spring, excitement was not lacking for the Communication Studies Club. To throw a little fun into a winter afternoon, communication studies students engaged in a curling event with Kevin Birr of Gustavus Dining Services, who’s an Olympic-level curler. Many majors were out on to the ice to enjoy an afternoon of great fun.

To cater to those students beginning to think about internships and, eventually, jobs, the Communication Studies Club executive board organized a “Resume Writing Workshop” with experts from Federated Insurance Company. The workshop was a first for the Department of Communication Studies and undoubtedly aided in majors’ abilities to put together strong resumes.

The Communication Studies Club wrapped up the year in style with a department barbeque in Johns Courtyard. ■

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Evan Anderson Forensics Endowment

Plans are well underway to establish a program endowment for the Evan Anderson Forum and to guarantee the future success of the Gustavus speech and debate team. Last fall, an initial cash pledge of \$100,000 was received, along with an estate pledge in the same amount. The cash pledge provides for a one-to-three match for any funds raised toward the endowment over the next ten years. Put another way, the team seeks to raise approximately \$30 thousand each year for the next decade. While daunting, the amount is by no means insurmountable. “I’ve been really pleased with initial support for the campaign,” Phil Voight noted. “People understand the value of forensics and I think that they realize the role that forensics may have played in their success after Gustavus. We’ve been quietly approaching donors for the past six months and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Once the endowment has been realized, proceeds will be used to support a variety of activities, including underwriting tournament travel, establishing an endowed chair, and providing a series of merit-based scholarships. The endowment has been designed so that it will always grow faster than the rate of inflation, and over the long term, it will provide funding for new programs and initiatives—such as forensics-related service-learning opportunities and an expansion of international competitive opportunities. If you would like to make a contribution to the Evan Anderson Forensics Endowment, please contact Phillip Voight at (507) 933-7369, or pvoight@gustavus.edu. ■

contact

V1N2 Spring 2006

Gustavus Adolphus College Communication Studies News

Social Activism Projects

by Tane Danger

Viewing history through the eyes of the elderly...and giving voice to groups and individuals on the fringes of society who are usually unheard...

Continuing a departmental tradition of connecting scholarship to service, students in communication studies engaged in service-learning opportunities, going beyond the classroom into the larger community in 2005–06. Through work in two courses, students discovered the joys of volunteering; explored the wisdom of previous generations, and engaged modern technology to tell some very human stories.

Public Speaking is a traditional first step into the department. Students get the opportunity to explore all types of public address, from simple persuasive and informative speeches to more complex after-dinner and impromptu monologues.

In Visiting Professor Sarah Wolter’s course, however, students used public speaking skills to explore their community and share what they had learned with others through a living history interview project. Students were asked to interview volunteers from the St. Peter Senior Center about particular events in that person’s life. Students followed the interviews with academic research on the events and presented all they learned to the interviewees and to their classmates in an informative speech aired on public access television.

Students and interviewees claimed the project helped them open up dialogue about history and events that had remained untouched for years. Wolter notes, “Seeing the faces of the interviewees light up as they heard an oral account of their lives was amazing. The success of the project was evident in their excitement.”

In another communication studies course, students in Visiting Professor Martin Lang’s Video Representation class conducted their own form of community work. Video Representation is an introduction to the world of multimedia communication, using digital film and editing to reach a wide audience.

For a final project, the class broke into groups of two or three students to present the story of a marginalized person or group within the Gustavus or St. Peter communities. In essence, students used the media of digital film to give voice to a community member or group that often goes unheard.

Students leapt at the opportunity to do some concrete social work. Groups chose everything from Gustavus custodial workers to community members with AIDS as their subjects for the projects. The students spent hours interviewing dozens of people on camera, followed with countless hours in the Confer digital arts lab, editing and re-editing film.

continued on next page

Allison Marten,
Eunice Amos,
Emma Espel



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Projects

Continued from previous page

The results of the project were phenomenal. Lang and his students organized a film gala to debut their films, attracting a wide range of students and community members. Most who saw the series of films learned something new and heard at least one story with which they had been previously unfamiliar with.

These are just a couple of the ways in which current students in the department are working to improve Gustavus and the surrounding community. With the continued effort of students and faculty, the longstanding tradition of service in the department will live on. ■

Potential Grows with Evan Anderson Forum Forensics Program

by Katelyn Reschetz

With

a very young team including six competing freshmen, the Evan Anderson Forum Forensics Program had a very successful 2004–05 season. Competition highlights include placing second at the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament and propelling Rebecca Kuehl (class of 2006) to All-American status in Pi Kappa Delta and in the American Forensics Association, both historical accomplishments. Andrea Carlile represented the team at the Interstate Oratory Competition, claiming honors as the first Gustavus student in over twenty years to attend the world-renowned event.

Momentum gained from the team's success last season was definitely not lost for the 2005–06 season. Additional team trophies and individual awards have made for a very rewarding season. One especially significant award was the "Jim Pratt Year End Sweepstakes" for the 2005–06 Twin Cities Forensics League (TCFL), which was given to Gustavus for accumulating the most points at TCFL tournaments. Beyond awards, the team hosted three significant tournaments on campus, including the Pi Kappa Delta Province of the Northern Lights Provincial Tournament, where they took first place. This elite tournament will be held at Gustavus again next year.

The Evan Anderson Forensics program is not only dedicated and successful within the realm of forensics, but is also devoted to helping the community. One focus of the 2005–06 season has been bringing back the service aspect of Pi Kappa Delta. Kris Kracht, co-director of the program, says, "I'm most proud of our program because of our service to our community—not only the forensics community, but the local community as well. I think our school is championing the forensics honorary known as Pi Kappa Delta and the ideals that it holds." The biggest service event thus far has been a food drive in which the team accumulated over 2,400 food items for the St. Peter Area Food shelf. The team will participate in "Relay for Life" this spring, where it will walk to raise money for cancer research.

After all of the success that the Evan Anderson Forum Forensics Program has had this year, the future of the program looks promising. ■

New Faculty 2005–2006 Academic Year

The Communication Studies Department at Gustavus welcomes two new faculty members in the 2005–06 academic year: Martin Lang and Sarah Wolter.

Martin Lang, hired to replace Mark Braun, recently earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and taught Media and Society, Video Representation, Media Criticism, and Gender in TV and Film (Interim Experience—a.k.a. January term—course) for the 2005–06 academic year. Lang says he chose Gustavus because, as an alum, he was familiar with the institution. He also notes his experience as a student provided a fantastic model for the kind of teaching in which he wanted to partake.

Lang's research interests revolve around the relationship between media and the societies in which they operate, particularly the representations of identity that the media offer to their audiences. In addition, he studies the influence society has upon the media, especially the impact of commercial motivations on media organizations and the content they produce. His dissertation is a highly contextualized close textual analysis of representations of American Indians in mainstream and Indian-produced newspapers. Guided by poststructuralist theories of language, critical race theory, and a feminist perspective, he argues that the bulk of the mainstream representations—and even some of the Indian-produced representations – commit a kind of "incognizant racism" by silencing Indian voices and adopting a non-Indian, "white" perspective as the default portal to understanding gaming in Minnesota and its various social and economic impacts.

Originally from Oakdale, Minn., Lang cites his interests and hobbies as making stained glass pieces, playing soccer, riding his mountain bike, reading clever satire, baking, watching documentary films, building hot rods, and shopping for skirts (yes, he said skirts).

Sarah Wolter, hired as Leila Brammer's sabbatical replacement, recently completed her master of arts degree in speech communication from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She taught Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication as well as the Interim Experience course The Social Impact of Media on Adolescent Girls in the 2005–06 academic year. Wolter describes her decision to come back to her alma mater as an opportunity to work closely with those who inspired her to teach. Her contract extends into the 2006–07 academic year, as she has been hired to fill course gaps due to Mariangela Maguire's appointment to the Dean of Faculty's Office.

Wolter's research interests are centered around communication and feminist theory with concentration on representations of female athletes in the media and identity as it is proliferated in interaction. Wolter's thesis examined the influence of student, colleague, and administrative governing relational communities on the formation and maintenance of professional identity of women assistant professors in the colleges of Arts & Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Originally from Red Wing, Minn., Wolter cites her interests and hobbies as playing golf and tennis, walking her dog Lucy, spending time with family and friends, and watching reality television. ■

2005–06 Faculty (l to r):

Sarah Wolter, Martin Lang, Patricia English, Phillip Voight, Mariangela Maguire, Kristofer Kracht, Terry Morrow, Jay Leighter



Maguire Assumes New Role as a Dean of Faculty

by Krista Kirchoff

At the inception of the 2005–06 academic year, Mariangela Maguire found herself in an entirely new and exciting role outside the classroom. Although she taught one class, Small Group Communication, fall semester, the majority of her time is now consumed by her position as one of three interim deans of faculty. The three-person administrative structure emerged out of conversations with the President and members of faculty. Maguire is responsible for significant issues, from hiring of new faculty to programming efforts of the curriculum.

In a somewhat untraditional structure, Maguire shares the interim dean of faculty role with Eric Eliason from the Department of English and Cindy Johnson-Groh from the Department of Biology. The ultimate responsibility of Maguire and her counterparts is to help ensure support, coordination, and alignment so that the faculty and programming efforts of Gustavus carry out the college's mission to educate students for lives of leadership and service. The responsibility of the position is great, and Maguire's background and skill sets make her a natural fit for the role. As Maguire aptly states, "This position is about relationships."

Maguire has already seamlessly transitioned into her new role. Building upon her past leadership experiences as department chair and co-director of the Women's Studies program at Gustavus, Maguire remarks, "I teach and push people in Small Group Communication and now I'll be operating in a small group for the next two years...My position in the Dean's Office just proves the existence of karma."

Maguire is kept thoroughly busy and spends her days meeting with other department chairs and program directors to address current needs and program directions, engaging in negotiation efforts for top faculty candidates, fielding questions and presenting before the Faculty Senate, and dealing with other pressing and important issues that relate to Gustavus' academic programs.

Maguire states, "Explaining concepts such as decisions, processes, and external constraints and considerations in classroom teaching has really prepared me for this position. Having a strong background in interpersonal

communication and small-group communication has also been helpful." Given her full plate of responsibilities this academic year as a dean, Maguire whimsically admits, "I don't think I was quite as hard on students last semester...although I'm not sure they would agree."

Although Maguire is very much enjoying her new role as a Dean of Faculty, she nevertheless still feels a strong connection to the classroom and her fellow communication studies colleagues: "It was wonderful to be in the classroom first semester, even if only for the one course," Maguire remarks. "I miss the level of contact with students I have in the classroom most." Maguire also adds, "I miss my colleagues in the department very much, especially the camaraderie...They [her colleagues] have been so supportive of me in this position, both personally and professionally."

The entire department is pleased to have such a capable and talented person as a dean of faculty, while at the same time is looking forward to when Maguire will be able to return in a full-time teaching capacity. Best wishes for continued success, Mariangela! ■



Mariangela Maguire