

# Communiqué

## Creating Community and Synergy in Communication Studies

### **PROGRAM OF THE MONTH: THE COMMUNICATION FOR YOUTH INSTITUTE**

Have you heard of the Communication for Youth Institute, or CYI, as it's commonly known? CYI is an educational program that originated in the Department of Communication Studies at CSUN nearly twenty years ago to provide public speaking skills to youth in the community. CSUN students, supervised by faculty and graduate students, have the opportunity to teach public speaking skills to 5th through 12th graders who are recruited from local middle and high schools. CSUN students enrolled in the class learn the art of course preparation, delivery of course content, oral and written assignment evaluation, and curricular assessment while the youth who attend CYI learn how to find and strengthen their public voice. A credited service learning course, CYI is available to all students at CSUN. The only prerequisite is the completion of COMS 151/L Fundamentals of Public Speaking, and approval from the CYI Program Coordinator.

Dr. Rebecca Litke, who received her Ph.D. from USC and MA from CSUN, is the founder of CYI. In 1996, she proposed the Institute to address concerns that youth lacked opportunities to learn basic speech communication skills. Originally named the "Speech for Youth Institute", it was initially offered to CSUN students as an independent study/senior project. In the summer of 1998, the curriculum and criteria for entry were altered and the program was offered as an Introduction to Communication course, similar to today's COMS 150, which covered introductory lessons on small group, nonverbal, and interpersonal communication, as well as lessons on language and gender. By 1999, the program changed its name to its present title and in the Fall of 2001, it was offered as COMS 437. Refocused as a service learning program, youth are guided in building public speaking skills in a safe and supportive environment

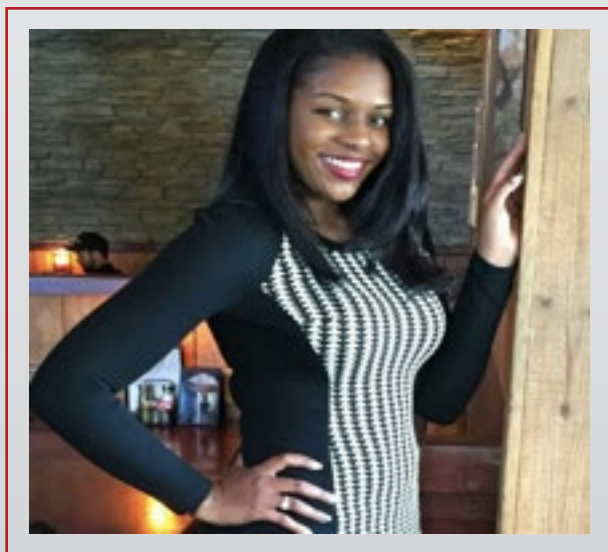
while enrolled CSUN students have the opportunity to be part of a team that empowers youth.

Throughout its various incarnations, Dr. Litke has remained involved with CYI. For the past several years, Josefa Gonzalez, a lecturer in the Department of Communication Studies, has been at the helm of the Institute. Ms. Gonzalez loves her job as Program Coordinator of CYI. Elaborating on her passion, Josie remarked, "Teaching, in and of itself, is a rewarding profession. I get to interact with and help stimulate growing minds. I am constantly engaged in a life-long learning process, in which not only am I challenging my students but they, too, are challenging me to think differently and to expand my own horizons. Every Saturday, I am privileged to join my students on their journey of service learning." Professor Gonzalez, the undergraduate students and Teaching Associates, who serve with CYI, have received tremendous praise for the work they do to benefit participating youth. In Fall 2014, Jason Endicott, Michelle Menjivar, and Sara Shiekh supported CYI as part of their Teaching Associate responsibilities.

Amber Pena, a youth participant, said "I have been attending CYI since 2011 when I was in middle school. Now, I am a sophomore in high school and I still look forward to participating in CYI. CYI has helped me so much. I used to be very shy and not really talk. Now, I am an honor student and always talk to my teachers. I have learned a lot and feel like I can actually be ready for college. Thank you for a great experience." Outside of the classroom, parents of the youth have also praised CYI. Anthony Wetherholt commented, "This is hands down the best thing I ever did for my son. He went on to be Simi Valley Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year and was runner up on the Ventura County Competition for County. You guys do a great job and I am forwarding this [program] to all my friends who have kids."

For the past twenty years, the Communication for Youth Institute has positively impacted communities surrounding CSUN, building bridges between CSUN and local middle and high schools, fostering relationships between the University and families across the Los Angeles area, and developing communication skills among participating youth, CSUN undergraduate and graduate students, as well as for the faculty involved in the Institute. The Department of Communication Studies, CSUN students, parents and youth extend our appreciation to Dr. Litke for her vision and hard work and to Professor Gonzalez for sustaining such a vital program.

### **MORGAN JONES: FEATURED PROFILE BY DANIEL ROBERTS**



During Fall semester 2013, I participated in COMS 437, a credited course devoted to the operation of the Communication for Youth Institute (CYI). Like most who enrolled in CYI, I was interested in exploring the profession of teaching. Some had arrived with previous teaching experience while others had none at all. As the semester progressed, only a handful of fellow undergrads seemed to possess the natural ability to connect and actively engage with the middle and high school students who signed up to learn public speaking skills. One of those was Morgan Jones.

Assigned to the 9th through 12th graders, Morgan knew how to handle a group of students, speaking in a way they could relate to and that brought smiles to their faces. She was also very adept

at managing a class, giving classroom instruction, and directing activities that kept her students interested and learning. Bright and energetic, humorous and yet serious about her commitment to her students, Morgan exemplified what being a good teacher is all about. In fact, she loved doing what she did at CYI so much, she re-enrolled in the course and taught to the 7th through 9th graders as part of her final semester at CSUN. When interviewed for this profile, Morgan had this to say about her experience with the program: "CYI gave me the opportunity to see students grow from start to finish. It was very rewarding to actually apply concepts learned in my undergraduate work and see them impact individuals in significant ways. This led me to wanting a career where I could get this feeling everyday, of making a difference in someone's life."

Completing her BA in May 2014 with a major in Communication Studies and a minor in Gender and Women Studies, Morgan is now attending the University of Texas, San Antonio. Inspired by her experience with CYI, she intends to obtain her Masters in Education with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction. In addition, Morgan has secured an internship with the San Antonio Spurs, a top rated NBA basketball team, teaching life skills and professional development classes to members of the organization. Furthermore, Morgan has established a 501(c)(e) non-profit named Nirvana You Inspire, which focuses on changing the world through communication. A social media site with more information on her organization will be launched sometime this month.

As a CSUN graduate and twice enrolled participant in CYI, Morgan is a true inspiration to all of us. Her dedication to applied pedagogy and a natural ability to connect with others from a wide array of backgrounds will surely provide additional opportunities for personal and professional success in her future. I, for one, am grateful to have had the pleasure of working with such a talented individual and will continue to be interested in all her accomplishments as she progresses on her chosen path. ■

## DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

o **Kathryn Sorrells** and **Sachi Sekimoto** co-edited a book, *Globalizing Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, published by SAGE, which is hot off the press and available as of January 15, 2015. Each of the 14 chapters pairs an original research case study with a first-person narrative to explicate key topics, theories, and concepts. The Reader focuses particular attention on postcolonial and critical perspectives, local and the global connections, and translating theory into practice to promote social responsibility and social justice. For further information on the book, please see: <http://www.sagepub.com/books/Book240695?siteId=sage-us&prodTypes=any&q=-globalizing+intercultural+communication&fs=1#tab-view=title>

o **Elyse M. Warford-Spearman** contributed an article to a book published in December, 2014. The title of the book is *Performing Motherhood: Artistic, Activist, and Everyday Enactments*. Co-authored with her mentor and advisor, Lynne M. Webb, PhD, the article contributed was adapted from Elyse's master's thesis research about communication in the adoptive family and is titled "Mothers' Reports of Challenging Conversations With Their Adopted Children: Performing the Social Role of Mother". For further information or to buy a copy of the book, please visit <http://demeterpress.org/PerformingMotherhood.html>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

o **Josefa Gonzalez** will begin the CYI spring session on March 7th. For those of you interested in submitting an application for a 4th through 12th grader interested in learning public speaking skills on Saturdays from 9:00am to 12:00pm, please email [thecyiteam@gmail.com](mailto:thecyiteam@gmail.com) for an application.

## WSCA SCHEDULE FOR FACULTY AND TAs

o **Gina Giotta** will present a paper titled "Web 2.0, Fashion, and the Rhetoric of Democratization." In addition, she will serve as a respondent for a panel titled "Current Trends in Digital Media Research." And finally, she will co-chair a roundtable with **Dr. John Kephart** titled "Terminal: The 21st Century Communication Master's Degree."

o **Alexander Howard** will present a paper titled "Speaking with Presence: Mindfulness Techniques for the Benefit of Public Speaking Students" You can catch his presentation at the Community College interest group.

o **Dr. John Kephart III** will participate in a roundtable discussion titled: "Terminal: The 21st Century Communication Master's Degree" with **Gina Giotta**, **Brianna Broady**, and a few other folks from San Diego State University, San Francisco State University, and Pepperdine University. The panel considers how well our graduate programs are serving the needs of our graduate students, and endeavors to have an open and direct discussion about what master's-level education is and should be. **Dr. Kephart** will also respond on a panel titled *Panoptic Practices: Visuality and Surveillance in Modern Media*.

o **Nina Kotelyan** will present as a paper titled, "The American Dream to Promote Individualism". The panel is titled, "Imaging Protest, Paradise, Destruction, and the American Dream: Visual Analyses of Multiple Media" and will be presented by the Media Studies interest group.

o **Robert Loy** will present a paper titled "War Management: A Critical Textual Analysis on the Hyper-real and Simulated Experience of War Video Games." To attend his presentation, please see the schedule for the Rhetoric and Public Address interest group

o **Jessica Baty McMillan** will present on the Top Three Papers panel in Performance Studies. Co-authored with **Jong Sook Ahn**, MA graduate from CSUN, the submission and winner of the panel spot is titled "Pain as a Positive: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue Exploring Abandonment and Guilt in Mother-Daughter Relationships." In addition to presenting, Baty will also be teaching yoga at WSCA on both Sunday & Monday mornings, February 14th and 15th.

- o **Randi Picarelli** will be part of a panel titled “Innovative Projects Create Positive and Productive Departments” presented by the Community College interest group. The panel highlights innovative projects and positive relationships happening at community colleges and universities. Each panelist will discuss a new pathway that strengthened Communication Studies departments. Randi’s contribution to the panel is “Building Bridges: Creating Mentoring Relationships and Teacher Training in a Communication Studies Department”

- o **Kathryn Sorrells** will present on a panel at WSCA entitled “Accentuate the Positive: An Intercultural Ode to Mr. In-Between and Pandemonium Walking on the Scene.”

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

- o **Yoga Classes!!**

Lecturer **Jessica Baty McMillan** will continue giving yoga classes this semester at CSUN. In addition to free classes for faculty & staff held on Tuesdays at I Iam in the USU Lake Balboa room, Baty is also scheduled to give classes at the Student Recreation Center Tuesdays and Thursdays at 4:00pm. So stop by relieve your stress in a healthy way!

- o **Equity & Diversity** Members of the CSUN community have a right to work, live, and learn in an environment free from unlawful discrimination based on a protected status. CSUN is committed to maintaining an environment where no student, employee, visitor, or recipient of services and/or benefits provided by the University is subjected to any form of prohibited discrimination in any University program or activity. To that end, the Office of Equity & Diversity affirms the University's commitment to the core principles of diversity and inclusion, to the policies and practices that ensure equitable consideration and opportunity in education and employment, and to a culture that embraces a multiplicity of talents, knowledge, beliefs, abilities and experiences. Every member of our campus community plays an integral role in contributing to our diversity and in addressing fundamental issues of bias and exclusion. To contact, please visit them University Hall, room 285 or call (818) 677-2077 or email at [equityanddiversity@csun.edu](mailto:equityanddiversity@csun.edu)

## CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

- o **Follow the link for information on CFA Collective Bargaining:** <http://www.calfac.org/bargaining>

- o **Follow the link for CFA News:** [http://www.calfac.org/headlines/cfa-headlines-january-28-2015?utm\\_campaign=CFA%20Headlines%20%E2%80%A2%20January%2028%2C%202015&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=bundle\\_and\\_blast](http://www.calfac.org/headlines/cfa-headlines-january-28-2015?utm_campaign=CFA%20Headlines%20%E2%80%A2%20January%2028%2C%202015&utm_medium=email&utm_source=bundle_and_blast)