DR. ED FUNKHOUSER HONORED BY FACULTY, STUDENTS

Popular Professor to Enter Phased Retirement after 37 Years of Service to NC State

By Katie Liguori

Thirty faculty members from the Department of Communication and other NC State departments gathered on October 15 to celebrate and acknowledge Dr. Ed Funkhouser for his 37 years of service to the university as he enters phased retirement.

Phased retirement, a feature of the university system in North Carolina, allows tenured faculty members to work for a period of three years with a reduced course load and at a reduced salary. It is favorable for those who do not wish to cut ties all at one time.

Dr. Funkhouser’s phased retirement will have him teaching one class per semester, as well as having his office hours, for the next three years. “It’s a great plan,” said Dr. Funkhouser. “At the end of the three years, I will have spent a total of 40 years with the university.”

Thus far, in his 37 years with NC State, Dr. Funkhouser has held numerous titles and positions which have contributed to the continued success of the Department of Communication. “Ed has been truly selfless to the college,” said CHASS Dean Jeff Braden.

“Dr. Funkhouser’s colleagues.

Thus far, in his 37 years with NC State, Dr. Funkhouser has held numerous titles and positions which have contributed to the continued success of the Department of Communication. “Ed has been truly selfless to the college,” said CHASS Dean Jeff Braden.

“The service that he’s done for the college and the campus is something that I really can’t overestimate,” Dean Braden added.

Department Head Dr. Ken Zagacki noted, “Simply put, Ed is one of the most dedicated and gracious people I’ve ever met at North Carolina State University. He has been a terrific colleague.”

The kind words were followed by an outpouring of gratitude expressed in speech after speech from a number of Dr. Funkhouser’s colleagues.

Dr. Funkhouser said that despite his phased retirement status, his schedule has showed no signs of slowing down.

In addition to teaching for the next three years, Dr. Funkhouser will continue to be the voice (PA announcer) of State football games, a position he has held since 1999.

“Ed Funkhouser

Alumni and current students can rest easy knowing that he will continue this tradition well into his retirement. Dr. Funkhouser will also spend more time focusing on his photography, a hobby that he has been passionate about for many years.

“When I look back on the past 37 years, I feel fortunate,” said Dr. Funkhouser. “I’ve had a great career. I’ve had wonderful colleagues. I’m just thankful for the opportunity that was given to me back in 1977 to come here.”

NC State has definitely been fortunate to have Dr. Funkhouser. Whether you know him as the Voice of the Pack, Dr. Funkhouser or Ed, it is certain that his impact on NC State has been immeasurable and that the department will not be the same without him.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

DR. ED FUNKHOUSER SET STANDARD WITH HIS MANY MAJOR SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Many faculty in the Department of Communication spend a great deal of time providing service to the department, the college and the university. Oftentimes, they receive little recognition for their work. Yet it is important that we acknowledge these faculty, who serve the university so tirelessly and selflessly as administrators and as members of committees.

One faculty member who dedicated much of his time at NC State to major service duties is Dr. Ed Funkhouser.

Ed is retiring from NC State, and it was an honor to join with faculty and friends this past October to celebrate his long career and his many service accomplishments.

Ed came to NC State in 1977. Twice he served as the associate department head in the Department of Communication. He was the department’s coordinator of advising, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHASS) assistant dean and director of undergraduate programs, the CHASS facilities coordinator, and the CHASS associate dean for academic affairs.

He also served for many years on the NC State Faculty Senate. The NC State Academy of Outstanding Faculty Engaged in Extension elected Ed to their ranks in 2000.

Of course, Ed also was a highly praised teacher. He taught a wide variety of communication media, public speaking, and public relations courses, and conducted many seminars and workshops in communication across the state of North Carolina for a variety of organizations.

Graduating seniors voted Ed the Outstanding Teacher in the Department of Communication in 1987, 1989, 1991, and then again in 2006. In 2006, Ed also received the First Year Student Advocate Award, an award presented annually to one NC State faculty member by the First Year College for outstanding service to students at NC State University. The first thing many alumni say to me when I meet them at alumni gatherings is: “How is Dr. Funkhouser? He was my favorite professor at NC State.”

“Ed is one of the most dedicated and gracious people I have met at NC State.”

In addition to his university work, Ed served the local community in many different capacities. Among other things, he led efforts to use his and others’ expertise and the technical resources of NC State to establish a newspaper and magazine content reading service delivered via a special radio signal to blind and visually impaired citizens of North Carolina. For this work he received, in 2004, an award for actions that “created accessibility and inclusion in the community for people of all ages and abilities” from the Alliance for Disability Advocates and the Center for Independent Living.

In his role as the “Voice of the Wolfpack,” Ed has always been an ambassador for the Department of Communication and State.

Ed is one of the most dedicated and gracious people I have met at NC State. He has been a terrific colleague, always putting the needs of the department and the university above his own.

I know I speak for all the faculty, students and staff in the department when I applaud Ed for his remarkable efforts and his exemplary achievements. We thank him for making NC State a better place, and we wish him all the best in retirement.

— Ken Zagacki
COM SUMMER CAMP FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS COMING IN ’15

By Olivia Clapp

A new hands-on opportunity for high school students to learn what communication is all about in a college environment is the latest venture for the Department of Communication.

For the first time the department will host a five-day Communication Summer Camp for rising high school juniors and seniors in 2015. Professor Dean Phillips is the director of the camp and has done much of the planning and outreach for the camp. Phillips said that the idea came from department head Dr. Ken Zagacki. Other departments on campus have similar camps.

Phillips loved the idea. "When people think of NC State they sometimes think engineering or design, but this camp can help them think about communication — a growing field that most high school students do not get to experience until college," he said.

To begin the process, Phillips reached out to the other camps to see how they function and to observe what works and what doesn’t. Phillips liked focusing on the outreach and less of the logistical and technical side of planning. He admits that the outreach wasn’t easy. “Getting in the schools is hard. I had to spend an entire summer building relationships,” recalled Phillips.

But the excitement of what the camp could mean for the department helped him push through. When asked how the camp will benefit the department, Phillips said, “We have the best department in the area, and we just need to build a greater profile of it; we need to show it off.” Additionally, he noted that the camp will funnel good students into our program and will showcase the positives we have to offer.

Already several professors agreed to help teach, Phillips said. “It will be hard, there will be no sliding through and hand holding, but it will show these students what college is like and give them a taste of higher education.” As intense as the camp sounds it is also planned to be enlightening and fun for the students.

The camp plans to give the students an insight in learning about television production by putting them into a broadcast-quality studio and providing training behind, and in front of, the camera.

Phillips is excited for the camp and hopes it becomes an annual event with possible expansion. But for Phillips it is all about being in the classroom. “Teaching students, that is why I am here,” he explained.

CONVOCATION ANSWERS QUESTION: WHY STUDY COMMUNICATION?

By Stanhope Johnson Jr.

For the past five years the Department of Communication has held an annual convocation to help communication majors answer the question: why study communication? The convocation is held during a COM 230 class, which is taught this semester by Dr. Ed Funkhouser. All communication majors are required to take this course and the students range from freshman to seniors.

“Well, I think it has been consistently good over many years,” said Dr. Funkhouser. “We vary our speakers, from noted scholars and their scholarship, communication experts from around the country and Department of Communication alumni.”

These speakers emphasize the importance of writing and speaking skills. This experience is to prepare students not only for their concentration courses, but also for careers after graduation. At the end of the convocation students have the opportunity to ask questions. Students also have the opportunity to meet with professors they might have in the future and begin to build a relationship with them.

This semester’s key presenter was Dr. Vicki Gallagher and her team who presented an engaging presentation of the Virtual MLK website. The website is part of the Virtual Martin Luther King Project, a digital humanities research study by Dr. Gallagher, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Matt May to understand how oral recordings are perceived given alternate viewpoints and settings.

The presentation drew great interest from the audience. “The presentation was a fabulous integration of rhetoric, media and public relations, making it a great orientation to our department for our new majors,” said Dr. Jessica Jameson, associate professor in the Department of Communication.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there have been 4,912 Ebola-related deaths in the current outbreak in the West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. There have been 5,666 laboratory-confirmed cases. According to NC State communication professor and researcher James Kiwanuka-Tondo, communication can play a vital role in containment of this epidemic.

Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo is an associate professor in NC State’s Department of Communication. His interests and research center on health communication campaigns, with a focus on HIV/AIDS in Africa.

With substantial expertise in the area of health communication, Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo noted that Ebola can, in fact, be contained. And it has been.

“Uganda has seen Ebola and successfully handled the disease twice in the past 15 years,” said Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo. “Yet they are among the poorest countries in the world.”

Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo sees a solution to contain the epidemic: a mass communication campaign to educate the public.

So if Ebola can be contained, then how did it spread across the three West African countries at the rate that it did? Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo blames a lack of education.

In African cultures, death involves careful rituals. The body of the deceased is bathed in a respectful manner, dressed in the best clothing and placed in the home of the deceased before burial. The closest extended friends and family members perform these rituals. In the nature of the rituals, those performing them come into contact with bodily fluids, subjecting them to the virus.

“We need to focus on educating the people,” said Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo. At the root of the campaign should be how Ebola is contracted, how it spreads, and how to act if you believe you are at risk. The campaign then needs to address how to safely perform these rituals in a manner that does not put others at risk for contracting the virus.

Also important to note is that Ebola is not a crisis in the United States. There are other far more deadly diseases lurking in America. For example, 1,148,000 Americans are living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, over 53,000 Americans die of flu each year.

Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo sees a need for communication in the United States to drive home this point — Ebola is not a crisis in the United States. “The media frenzy has blown the threat of Ebola out of proportion in our country,” said Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo.

A mass communication campaign, again, is the answer to this puzzle. Education is key.

Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo also strongly cautions against putting any sort of racial spin on the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. “We need to be careful not to include racial or political undertones in the West Africa epidemic,” said Dr. Kiwanuka-Tondo. “We just need to solve this.”

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By Allie Johnson

Dr. Melissa Johnson, professor of communication, attended the World Public Relations Forum in Madrid this fall to present her co-authored research article “Communicating Catalan Culture in Global Society.” The article, which explores the use of culture as a message strategy for branding of an organization, was enriched by the culturally diverse audience present at the bi-annual research conference for educators, practitioners and researchers from more than 65 countries.

The PR field is in a constant transition of growth domestically and now globally, as demonstrated by the forum. Dr. Johnson stressed the importance of developing knowledge of different cultures when attempting to establish relationships “outside of our bailiwick,” or outside of our sphere of understanding.

“Public relations is growing worldwide and that creates all sorts of opportunities for our alumni and current students,” said Dr. Johnson. PR practitioners in the United States are no longer competing within the borders of this country. “We are competing on a global stage.” Understanding culture, Johnson said, is one of the first steps to adapting to this new challenge in the public relations field.

The next World Public Relations Forum will take place in 2016 in Toronto. For more information, visit http://www.worldprforum.com/.

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The general public does not always grasp the significance of complicated scientific research, especially research on topics such as climate change. At NC State, the Southeast Climate Science Center addresses this issue by incorporating communication training into its mission. The goal is to help scientists more effectively inform audiences about the scientific research they conduct and how this research may inform public policy decision making.

Dr. Ken Zagacki, professor of communication and head of the Department of Communication, has worked with other department faculty such as Dr. Andy Binder and Dr. Deanna Dannels to organize and lead these communication training efforts. Eventually, he would also like to involve communication graduate students interested in science communication in these training programs. The communication training represents an important and growing interdisciplinary partnership between the department and other colleges and programs like the Center. Dr. Zagacki explained that the training workshops encourage scientists to engage in creative and productive ways.

When it comes to contentious environmental topics like climate change, scientists have been met with strong and in some cases unexpected resistance. “There’s no magic bullet for overcoming the resistance. There’s no guarantee that a particular scientist will be able to convey every bit of complex and controversial information to all audiences. But given the stakes, we think it’s worth teaching scientists communication-based strategies for engaging with these audiences,” said Dr. Zagacki.

The science communication training involves intensive role playing episodes. The idea is two-fold: first, to recreate the public situations (e.g., presentations in front of town councils, environmental organizations, journalists, business groups, and museum-goers) where scientists are increasingly being asked to share their expertise; and second, to help scientists develop communication strategies for engaging these situations, strategies that keep audience analysis front and center. Participants in the training sessions deliver mock presentations, critiqued by Dr. Zagacki and other trainers, which enables the participants to better understand how their messages are interpreted by different public constituencies.

“Scientists have always thought that facts should speak for themselves. But the facts don’t always stand on their own. They have to be framed in particular ways, depending on the situations in which scientists find themselves speaking. The communication framing is something we try to teach scientists to do,” said Dr. Zagacki.

Gaps in the public’s scientific literacy are not likely to go away completely anytime soon. However, partnerships between the Southeast Climate Science Center and the Department of Communication demonstrate there are ways to bridge this gap even on controversial issues such as climate change.

By Rhianna Scott

This semester, Dr. Melissa Johnson is continuing her research in cultural communication and media with two new studies conducted with Ph.D. students in the Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media program. The studies are organized through a directed research approach, where the professor works one-on-one on the research project with the student.

Hector Rendon, a Fulbright student from Mexico who is currently enrolled in NC State’s CRDM program, worked with Dr. Johnson on a media study titled “Media Coverage of Children at the Border: A Minor Problem.” This paper examines the news coverage of young migrant children from Central America crossing over the Mexico-U.S. border alone. In particular, the case analyzes media coverage from the U.S., Central America and Mexico. Both Dr. Johnson and Rendon have prior experience in journalism, but Rendon brings his knowledge of international journalism and reporting to the study. This paper was submitted to a communication conference.

Johnson’s second study delves more into visual communication research with the assistance of Ph.D. student Keon Pettiway, a CRDM major with a background in design and Africana studies. Their paper, “The Black Visual Aesthetic: An Analysis of African-American Museum Websites in the United States,” is based on a “visual analysis of more than 40 African American websites exploring how the museums incorporate African American identity into the branding of the organization.”

The “theoretical groundwork” for this study was laid out by Dr. Johnson and co-author Larissa Carneiro, Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media student, in a previous research that looked at how websites for 43 different ethnic museums in the U.S. are using culture in the organizations’ digital communication.

Dr. Johnson and Pettiway’s study will be submitted for review in spring 2015.
How Do College Athletes Deal with Uncertainty?

By Kianna Freitag

Dr. Lynsey K. Romo, an assistant professor in the department, has been busy delving into her latest research, which has just recently been published online in Communication & Sport with co-authors and communication students Christine Davis and Alyssa Fea.

This study sheds light on how some collegiate student-athletes deal with uncertainties ranging from excelling in both school and sports to their career prospects outside of athletics, and urges university athletic programs to adopt new efforts to support student-athletes.

“We wanted to explore how student-athletes at top-tier universities cope with the dual challenges of meeting the expectations of their teams while simultaneously complying with their responsibilities as university students,” she said.

Dr. Romo’s research involved 17 collegiate-athletes at an elite Division-1 university in the U.S. to investigate and obtain insight into the forms of uncertainty that scholar athletes face, and how communication plays a critical part in enabling them to be able to transform personal, social and future roles for themselves.

The researchers found that student-athletes reported feeling uncertain in three areas: personal uncertainty, such as uncertainty about injury or about balancing school work and sports; social uncertainty, such as uncertainty related to who their “real” friends are; and future uncertainty, such as uncertainty concerning their post-collegiate careers and whether the time they spend pursuing athletics will hurt their career prospects.

Most of the student-athletes reported using a variety of techniques to reduce uncertainty. These uncertainty-reduction strategies included seeking social support from friends, family, or academic counselors; socializing with friends to take a break from sports and school pressures; negotiating with coaches in an attempt to raise their scholarship; and sometimes concealing their athlete status from peers to minimize people befriending them for the wrong reasons, or prevent negative stereotypes. Other student-athletes came to terms with uncertainty as a natural part of life and turned to prayer to help them cope.

“Our findings suggest that universities can do more to prepare students for life outside of athletics,” Dr. Romo said. “For example, athletics departments may be able to work with employers to offer flexible paid or unpaid professional internships around student-athletes’ seasons. In this way, student athletes can receive work experience in fields outside of sports.”

Communication Grad Student Association Thriving at NC State

By Molly Mahnke

The Communication Graduate Student Association (CGSA) at NC State welcomes students to join the Master of Science in Communication program. CGSA creates an environment to network and meet other graduate students in the program. CGSA has 36 members and four executive board members.

According to President Matt Abele, “We don’t have any requirements to join in order to keep our community as inclusive as possible. Our members include full-time students, part-time students, and students with or without assistantships.”

CGSA has monthly events to keep members involved and active. Recently, an annual kickball game against the Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media program was held, and according to Abele, it is one of their most anticipated events. The next event is scheduled to be a lunch and learn program for faculty and students.

Abele noted CGSA’s top goals for the 2014-2015 academic year. First, the association hopes to develop stronger alumni connections through networking, socials, or a newsletter. Next, uniting faculty and student research in order to discuss common research interests and goals. Lastly, improving events and socials within the association to build a stronger bond between members.

"The Communication Graduate Student Association is a resource for graduate students in communication. Not only is it a great tool to meet fellow classmates and network, but also to engage faculty in the communication community," Abele said.
Natalie Brenner, a communication major concentrating in media with plans to pursue a parks, recreation and tourism minor, completed the internship of her dreams over this summer in Portland, Maine. Brenner applied to multiple radio and TV stations in Maine, where she has extended family. The Maine Public Broadcasting Network (MPBN), the PBS TV and radio station in Portland, invited her to join their internship program.

MPBN is a nonprofit company, so she had to work on a tight budget. Brenner learned how difficult it is to work with limited funds and the importance of budgeting.

Brenner had the opportunity to work on major events the station covered within the community. One of her most memorable projects was co-planning a day of free concerts statewide by working with various venues and organizations.

Additionally, she worked on a segment with radio station “The Booth,” which is when she coincidentally ran into NC State Communication Lecturer Anita Croasmun. Brenner also shadowed station executives to events, such as the Maine International Film Festival, which Croasmun also attended. Her duties included interviewing about movie preferences, such as old-time favorites, that would later be aired on the radio station.

“The internship was a great experience. I learned a lot about the various elements of event planning, and witnessed firsthand the different aspects of working with a radio/TV station. It was a lot of fun, and I’m glad I got to interact with the public and hear their perspectives,” Brenner said.

The typical college student is sometimes stereotyped to be someone who rarely makes it to class on time, someone who stays up late and someone who doesn’t spend enough time in the library. However, members of the NC State swim and dive team have completely different habits.

These student-athletes live with rigorous schedules and are responsible for maintaining a balance between swim and school commitments. Their typical day starts before 5 a.m. for their first practice. The rest of their day is filled with classes, meals, more practice, and homework. But for these students and their teammates, swimming is not only sport but also a lifestyle.

Sophomores Kendall Pena, Natalie Labonge and Kayla Brumbaum along with junior Mariah Hamil are all teammates pursuing a communication degree with a concentration in public relations. Being a competitive swimmer has drastically impacted their daily lives since the time they started the sport at an early age. According to Brumbaum, who started swimming at age 8 as a way to make friends, she stuck with the sport because it was a way for her to channel her competitiveness.

“I kept getting better and better, and when I got to high school I figured I could keep being competitive and also pay for college at the same time,” Brumbaum said.

Brumbaum isn’t the only teammate who stayed committed to the sport as she transitioned from one stage in her life to the next. Labonge said that the sport is a part of who is she today.

“Competitive swimming becomes part of your lifestyle because it requires so much dedication and self-discipline,” Labonge said.
PRSSA TRIES NEW METHODS TO PROMOTE INVOLVEMENT

By Kristen Esposito

As with many student organizations and clubs on campus, PRSSA, the Public Relations Student Society of America, is always striving to provide the most benefits it can to its members. PRSSA holds several meetings each semester, each with a different theme or message. Topics of the meetings can range from interview tips, advice from new graduates and alumni, and resume advice. For students, it is also a great way to make connections and network with potential employers and professionals in the PR field.

This semester has been all about thinking of new ideas and ways to increase membership and awareness of PRSSA. The officers of PRSSA have been working since August to create new and innovative methods to get the word out about the club.

PRSSA has introduced several new ideas this semester that put a spin on the typical meetings members might be used to. “We wanted to add some variation to our meetings this semester, so we added a tour, a dinner and workshops,” says Danielle Mayber, president of PRSSA.

The tour this semester was held at Capstrat, a communication firm located in Raleigh. Members were able to see what life at an exciting company is like. “Not only was the incredible company culture evident from our visit, but also the outstanding work ethic of the employees around us,” said Mayber about the tour.

The dinner is a new idea. Members were provided the opportunity to meet and mingle in a more relaxed environment outside of school. Additionally, members were able to network and interact with Dr. Susan Katz, a professor in the department of English, and an expert on finding a job after college.

Two workshops were also held this semester, designed to be more interactive and focused on a specific topic. The first workshop was all about personal branding and how to make a LinkedIn profile as strong as possible. The second workshop featured Dean Phillips, a senior lecturer in the department, and was focused on portfolios. Phillips gave specific tips on what a portfolio should contain, as well as some resume tips.

When asked about the success of the changes implemented for this semester for PRSSA, Mayber said, “There’s no harm in trying something new, as long as you can step back and reevaluate afterward.” Officers are in the process of determining the success of these new programs implemented this semester to see what ideas should be continued in the future.

LPH EXPERIENCES RAPID GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP

By Nick Moran

Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) is the honor society of the National Communication Association for undergraduates in communication. NC State prides itself in being the second chapter (Beta) of the society, with the Alpha chapter being founded at the University of Arkansas. Students need to maintain a 3.25 GPA for all communications studies courses, 3.0 in all courses taken, and at least 60 credit hours.

While one of the core focuses of LPH is communication research, LPH members are committed to serving their community. Recent public service outreach events include: trick-or-treat events at local hospitals, creating care packages for the Ronald McDonald House, and a veteran’s dog walk to name a few. Members are enthusiastic about creating events for this year with a 5K run in the works.

Every year, the LPH chapter at NC State sends their president to the National Communication Association national conference. The current president of Beta chapter, Catherine Glover, will be in attendance representing NC State. The conference is composed of networking opportunities along with panels where scholars and professors from all around the world share their research. Opportunities last year included meeting the person responsible for the founding of LPH in the 1980s and making connections with other colleges, such as Elon.

Dr. Ryan Hurley, Beta chapter advisor, is optimistic about the future of LPH at NC State. When Dr. Hurley took the reins three years ago, there were around 20 active members. Now, there are over 50 active members with room to grow. "This is a excellent group of students who are exceedingly bright," said Dr. Hurley. "They have the best leadership LPH has had in a while under the leadership of Catherine Glover, and they are doing a great job getting involved with departmental and community events." Glover attended the 100th Annual National Communication Association's Centennial Convention in Chicago in late November.

"I am excited to be an undergraduate representative for the Department of Communication and also to represent Lambda Pi Eta. I imagine that this is an experience in my undergraduate career that I will never forget due to the magnitude and prestige of this conference. I most looked forward to the number of communication scholars and professionals that attended the conference. This was a great experience for me to network professionally, both on behalf of NC State and myself," Glover said.
JENNIFER GILMORE CONNECTS STUDENTS AND ADMINISTRATORS

By Olivia Clapp

Jennifer Gilmore is a name many students are familiar with, but much like the Wizard of Oz she is one of those mystifying, all-knowing people many of us have never met. We receive her emails and see her comments on the ever-popular Facebook group, Wolfpack Students; she’s who we turn to when our food is not satisfactory or when we want to know why there is a giant screen attached to the outside of Talley. So who is this woman behind the name and profile picture?

Gilmore, an alumna of the Department of Communication Class of 1990, said that when the opportunity for her to come work at NC State arose she never hesitated to accept the job.

Gilmore is the Director of Marketing and Communication for Campus Enterprises. Her favorite aspect of her job is getting to be the liaison between the administration and the students. Gilmore credits her time as a student as the motivating factor for wanting to be a voice for the students and a face of the administration that has open, transparent, two-way communication, something she says the university was lacking when she was here, mostly because the mass communication channels we have today did not exist then.

When asked how she relates so well to the current students she smiled and said, “Besides air conditioning and some fresh paint, not much has changed around here.” She explained that students today are focused on the same things students were when she was here. “You get up every day, go to class, get work done, have some fun and dream about the future. That’s exactly what I did, too.”

When Gilmore was in school, the brickyard and library were some of the only places for students to hang out and see friends, and with no cell phones or Internet when students left their dorms they were completely disconnected. Now thanks to technology and the efforts of Gilmore and others on campus, such as former student body president Chandler Thompson, there are many more places for students to gather, such as the Atrium and the new and growing Talley Student Union.

She makes it a point to value student input and is humble about her accomplishments. She credits those who helped her with various projects and her professors in the Department of Communication. It was professors like Mike Herman, Mitch Javidi, Bob Schrag, and Bob Kochersberger that Gilmore said pushed her to be the best she could be; the lessons they taught her are used every day as she gives back to the school that gave her so much.

LESLEY ROMANO FINDS HER PASSION IN WASHINGTON, DC

By Mackenzie Macksood

From one capital city to another, Raleigh just wasn’t big enough for NC State alumna Leslie Romano’s aspirations.

Following her graduation in May of 2014, Romano moved to Washington, DC for an internship with Congresswoman Renee Ellmers of NC District 2, and has since landed a full-time position as the Political Coordinator at DDC Public Affairs. Leaving behind friends, family and all things familiar immediately following graduation is a daunting decision for many recent graduates, but Romano saw her move to DC as an opportunity worth taking.

“I knew moving up to DC and finding a job right out of college would be difficult, but I was certain that I wanted to start a new adventure here, and I gave myself no other option but to succeed in doing that,” Romano said.

She spent this past summer working inside the Capitol as an intern, where she was given the opportunity to meet with politicians and to communicate with constituents about improving state and federal legislation. Despite the fact that she had limited knowledge of politics prior to her internship, it did not take long for Romano to realize that she had found her niche, and immediately took any and all opportunities she could to network and set up informal interviews. By the time her internship was completed she had an extensive network of new contacts and multiple job opportunities.

Romano accepted the position at DDC Public Affairs and has not looked back. “I never imagined I would end up in this field of work, but I could not be happier,” Romano said. “I love that
ALUMNA'S DREAM BECOMES REALITY ON WHEEL OF FORTUNE

By Allie Johnson

For years, “Wheel of Fortune” has enticed contestants and viewers alike to take a crack at some mind-boggling word puzzles. Some win, some lose; but NC State alumna Tensie Taylor has always been up for the challenge.

“From the first moment I saw ‘Wheel of Fortune,’ I was hooked!” said Taylor. There’s a sparkle in her eyes as she recalls watching the show as a young girl. Each night after the evening news, she and her family would enjoy the show together.

“Three and four letters would appear on the letter board, and I could solve the puzzle,” said Taylor.

Finding her love for the show and dreaming big were just the first steps toward fulfilling her lifelong goal of being a contestant. Being cast, however, is no easy feat. In 2013, Taylor submitted an application 365 times.

An astounding one million people contact the show each year.

An 2400-pound wheel. Unfortunately, Taylor did not go home with $1 million in her pocket as the ultimate victor. She did take home an impressive $5,300 as the second-place winner with admirable sportsmanship.

“My favorite part was turning my dream into a reality!” said Taylor. “I have always wanted to be on the show since I was five years old, and to be able to make it on there, was a dream come true.”

Considering her incredible spunk, this should come as no surprise: Taylor isn’t done yet. She’s still dreaming big. Her next goal is to be a contestant on “The Price is Right.” “With more determination, I know I can!” said Taylor.

Tensie Taylor with one of the show’s stars, Vanna White

Romano — continued from previous page

I work in a place where I am constantly being challenged, and the great part about my job now is that I work directly with our internal marketing department, sales team, advertising department and digital department, which are all areas I want to grow in.”

Romano’s schedule changes on a day-to-day basis. She works directly under a partner at the firm, so managing her schedule is a significant part of Romano’s responsibilities. Romano also conducts research and creates content for clients, works on projects for the upcoming elections and handles her boss’s TV appearances to make sure that she is prepared for the topics being covered.

“It is definitely a job that keeps me on my toes, but I couldn’t have picked a better fit,” Romano said. Her new job isn’t the only change in lifestyle that Romano has made since graduation. “Being in a big city is so exciting for me and there are opportunities I have had here that I could never get anywhere else,” she said. Romano loves having visitors to the city and experiencing all the new adventures it presents, but she can’t help but miss Raleigh. The role that NC State played in preparing Romano to follow her dreams is not lost on her. “I am constantly learning new things on a daily basis, but my foundation that I have from studying at NC State is what enabled me to move to a big city and have the confidence to find a job,” Romano said.

As far as joining the “real world,” Romano said, “The real world honestly is just freedom to make decisions about your life. It gives you the flexibility to learn about yourself and find out what it is you want to do, and then figure out how to get there.”

While she misses the free time that many students oftentimes forget to appreciate, Romano has recognized that it is easy to learn to appreciate new things, like paychecks. “College is such a fun time, so enjoy it, but don’t be scared of graduating,” Romano said. “It is just the start of a new and exciting chapter. Embrace it!”
FALL GRADUATION FOR COM STUDENTS DECEMBER 18

CONGRATULATIONS FALL COMMUNICATION GRADUATES!

The Department of Communication’s graduation ceremony will be held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, December 18, in Carmichael Gym.

There will be 74 undergraduate students walking the stage, including 21 students from the Communication Media concentration, 18 students from the Public Relations and Organizational Communication concentration, and 35 students from the Public and Interpersonal Communication concentration.

The ceremony will honor one graduate student in Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media (CRDM) who completed the graduate degree requirements this fall.

Students graduating Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude and Summa Cum Laude as well as students with memberships in communication societies will be recognized.

Swimmers — continued from page 7

The importance of self-discipline in swimming was echoed again by Labonge when asked the key to maintaining a balance between a swim schedule and a demanding course load. “You have to learn to prioritize your never-ending to-do list,” Labonge said. “You have to discipline yourself after practice in order to get your stuff done and not just go to sleep.”

Pena elaborated on the never-ending to-do list of swimmers. The average day in the life of Pena and her teammates starts around 4:50 a.m. in order for them to be in the water for practice at 5:30 a.m. The team is expected to swim until 7 a.m. and lift weights for the next one and a half hours. When 8:30 a.m. strikes it is time for class until the second practice of the day at 3:30 p.m., which lasts until 5:30 p.m.

The rest of the evening is spent eating dinner and doing homework, only for the student-athletes to wake up the next day and do it all over again.

“There is always something for us to be doing whether it’s homework, lifting weights, studying or even eating,” Pena said.

There is no denying that college itself presents its own stresses. However, the pressure of student-athletes is often overlooked.

People continuously question the dedication and commitment of student-athletes, but it is the love of the game, the sport and the lifestyle that keeps them motivated.

“I chose to continue swimming at this level because of all the friends I’ve made and all life lessons I’ve learned so far,” Hamil said. “I couldn’t imagine not having this lifestyle in college.”

Alumna Tensie Taylor appeared on the highly popular game show Wheel of Fortune. Did she win $1 million? Check out the story on page 10 to find out what happened.