GSA Positions Open For Next Year!

It's that time of year again. While some of us will be moving on, graduating Spring Quarter of this year, others will be coming forward in hopes of “Starting Something Big!” This means for Graduate Student Assistants Andra Ely, Katie Smith, and... Please try to hold back your tears on this one; your dear sweet Peer Adviser Nolan Gruver (whom we hear was instrumental in putting a man on the moon and is currently working on a cure for all cancers) that new horizons await them out in the cold harsh realities of today’s economy.

However, for calculating and driven future MSC graduate students it means an opportunity to have your Master’s Degree funded. Every Spring Quarter the Communications Graduate Department looks for intelligent, able bodied graduate students to fill vacant GSA positions for the following academic year.

There are traditionally six available positions in all, with first year Graduate Student Assistants having to reapply to receive second year appointments. First year appointments waive most of a student’s tuition, minus books and fees. GSAs also receive health insurance and an $800 a month stipend to work 20 hours a week assisting Graduate faculty and teaching Introduction to Speech Communication, (CMST 200).

While the positions are a boon to any that can attain one, it must be remembered that Graduate Student Appointments in the Communications department are not for the weak of heart and require hard work and effort. Those interested in applying can find more information on the MSC main website or by typing in “Graduate Studies” into the search bar.

- Nolan Gruver

Meeting the Graduate Department, Faculty & All

Every quarter the GSAs writing the Department of Communications Newsletter like to introduce perspectives and current communications graduate students to new and interesting tenants of the intricate professional and academic world that is communications. To this end, having resurrected the Master of Science in Communications Newsletter from the dusty shelves of the past and given it rebirth in a new digital format, we have decided to introduce our readers to the people that make the MSC program happen.

Our first issue of the newly revised newsletter (Winter 2012) introduced readers to the Department GSAs of the 2011-2012 school year. This current issue will begin to introduce readers to the faculty of the MSC program as well as one “Blast From the Past,” a successful professional alumni of the MSC program her at EWU, 1998 graduate Rod Mattson. It is my hope that information contained in the newsletter will be beneficial to all those seeking a Masters Degree in communications and that the Newsletter will continue to be a lively and vibrant part of the MSC department for years to come.

- Nolan Gruver
Meet Department Chair Dr. Gary Krug

Department head Gary Krug has his hand in many corners of campus these days. As Chair of the Communication Studies department, he is responsible for the administrative functions of faculty, curriculum development, and helping faculty and students when the system needs a tweak. As the President of the United Faculty of EWU, he helps bargain and interpret the Collective Bargaining Agreement which covers faculty contracts, compensation and working conditions.

Dr. Krug has an extensive background in various disciplines within the social sciences. He received a PhD in Communication and is currently researching the culture of firearms in the U.S. This research should lead to publication in scholarly journals as well as presentation at various conferences nationally.

“I was struck by the different between firearms training and training in traditional Martial Arts [which he has practiced]. You have the terminal reality of a gunfight versus the art of Oriental martial pursuits,” he said.

As department chair, Dr. Krug said his goals for the next few years include making the program more flexible to student and faculty needs, along with curriculum reform that keeps up with the changing technologies. Another concern he holds for academia is the increasing financial burden placed on students at EWU with funding becoming more privately funded than publicly funded.

“The greatest challenge of the last 50 years is privatization of the public university,” he said. State funding to the university has dropped from roughly 70 percent to around 30 percent in the past few years.

In his private time, separate from EWU, Krug works as a radio host on Spokane’s Thin Air radio once a week.

“It helps elevate the social discourse of media a bit above the screaming, back-biting, dog and pony show,” he said. He also enjoys playing classical guitar and cross-country skiing.

Meet MSC Graduate Director Dr. Galina Sinekopova

Dr. Galina Sinekopova has her work cut out for her this year. As the new Graduate Director for the MSC program she has been kept busy organizing the program and insuring new ideas are produced that reach out to the MSC community (such as this newsletter). As an Associate Prof. of Communications she chairs multiple graduate theses in the MSC program. As an international/intercultural communications researcher, she has been busy attending conferences and writing articles about Jürgen Habermas, everyone’s favorite scholar to love and hate.

Prior to becoming an Assistant Prof. of Communications, Galina was an Intercultural Consultant and councilor at the Spokane Mental Health Hospital where she utilized her Masters in clinical psychology.

Similar to her husband Dr. Igor Klyukanov, Galina has multiple publications, one of her most prestigious being vetted in the much acclaimed Journal of Communication.

Originally from Russia, Galina enjoys travelling back to her native country to visit friends and family as well to vouch for the Communications Discipline at conferences there. Unlike the US or UK, in Russia the study of communications is seen as a rather “funny” endeavor to undertake—being that communication is still largely seen as a simple concept already covered by many other disciplines in Russia.

For fun Galina enjoys “reading and taking care of Tosha,” her pet Pomeranian. Her primary goal for her projected two-year plan “is to maintain [her] sanity.” - NG
Meet Dr. Peter Shields

With his research on electronic surveillance and privacy and the new state border modalities created from new media/electronic databases made available through the internet, as well as being the former MSC Graduate Director, Dr. Peter Shields has his hands busy.

While some may write off research in surveillance and privacy to be merely for the paranoid, Dr. Shields’ theoretically driven systematic work has had strong implications for individual and democratic civic engagement within contemporary societies—a facet that most of us appreciate.

Currently, Peter is chairing two theses, “one on user understanding of digital piracy and their policy implications,” and the other “on user assessments of the privacy implications of augmented reality mobile phone applications.”

One of Dr. Shields’ more interesting jobs prior to becoming a Prof. of Communications at EWU was working at a whiskey blending company in Scotland. For fun, Peter enjoys following his hometown soccer club. “The internet has made it possible for me to watch all Glasgow Celtic games, the team I have supported since I was a very young boy.” - Nolan Gruver

Meet Dr. Jeffery Stafford

As an integral member of the MSC Organizational emphasis Dr. Jeffery Stafford has kept himself gainfully employed over the years. Jeff’s primary teaching interest lie in the areas of Organizational Communication, Leadership Development, Organizational Change & Improvement, Strategic Planning, Project Management, Training & Development and Research Methods.

Dr. Stafford has an active action research agenda serving numerous organizations that focuses on research in the development of human capacity and organizational improvement. With 21+ years chairing over 70 theses and graduate/undergraduate research projects Jeff’s passions in life include teaching and working with students, his children, and being an adherent communications professional.

His future goals beyond Eastern include being a science officer on a starship, a “Disney Imagineer,” playing center field for the New York Yankees, and continuing with his action research agenda. - NG

Meet Dr. Igor Klyukanov

Having originally received a Candidates Degree (The USSR’s equivalent to a Masters) in 1983 and Doctorate of Science Degree in General Philology from Saratov State University, Russia in 1999, it can be said that Dr. Igor Klyukanov was studying communications before it even truly existed as a discipline or specific field of study. Furthermore, as the founder of the Russian Journal of Communications and one of the most published faculty within the Department of Communications Igor provides an impressive array of intellectual weight to back up his graduate courses, to include Advanced Communication Theory. Igor’s most recent publication, A Communication Universe, looks at manifestations and meanings behind the establishment of communicative significance among people and societies. Dr. Klyukanov has been a strong proponent that great cultural communicative changes evolve over time rather than occur in one revolutionary moment. For hobbies Igor enjoys translating Shakespeare’s Sonnets into Russian as well as golfing, reading and traveling. - Nolan Gruver
Meet Dr. Patricia Chantrill

With self described department titles such as “P-dawg, Troublemaker, Lincoln Lover, Lobby Gadfly, Wizard of Oddz,” and simply “Associate Prof.,” it is easy to see why many graduate students have sought out the interesting and fun-loving Dr. Patricia Chantrill to be the chair on their thesis over the years. As the main interdisciplinary member of the MSC graduate faculty, Patty has been heavily involved with teaching research methods courses such as CMST 522 as well as Rhetorical Criticism and Theory courses such as CMST 450/550.

Dr. Chantrill has held a wide array of university positions over the years to include being the former MSC Department Chair. However, when asked the job that meant the most to her within academia Patty replied “teaching... Of course.” That being said, even more important to her “is being a mom.” In reference to being a mother as well as a highly vetted working professional, Patty explains, “It defines me. I never left it to pursue a degree—just brought it with me.”

Dr. Chantrill has a long list of goals on her bucket list to accomplish amidst her two-year plan. These include taking time off; thinking more about an offer to return to Olympia to be a faculty legislative liaison; completing half a dozen half-finished research projects; requesting more opportunities to teach in the Honors Program; and applying for a Fulbright scholarship to spend a year in Cambodia or another country where she can “further demonstrate [her] crippling ability to learn foreign languages.”

For fun, Patty enjoys sewing, gardening, collecting “Lincoln books and odd Civil War memorabilia,” and listening to late 60s to contemporary music way too loud. - Nolan Gruver

Blast From the Past! Meet MSC Alumni Rod Mattson

Fourteen years of full-time teaching and one training company later, EWU graduate Rod Mattson can say his 1998 Master’s degree in Communications was worth it.

“I went through the program looking at management communication and leadership... those just hit home with me,” Mattson said.

Today, Mattson owns his own communication training company in the Seattle area and teaches full-time as a lecturer at the University of Washington’s department of business.

This semester he is juggling five courses on communication, while still managing his company. He got his first taste of teaching in 1997 when several EWU communication professors, Jeff Stafford and Igor Klyukanov, approached him for teaching as a graduate student assistant.

“I still teach today because of that,” Mattson said. For his thesis in 1998, he wrote a model for a communication training company, in which a consultant gives workshops on public speaking to clients. One professor read Mattson’s initial thesis and pointed out it was a very realistic business model, worth pursuing.

Mattson graduated from EWU in 1998 and looked for work that summer as a communication trainer. Forty-two interviews later, Mattson decided he wasn’t interested in any of the positions. He instead began working as an adjunct professor at Highline Community College in Des Moines, just outside Seattle. He taught there for several years, as well as at Green River Community College and today holds a full-time lecturer position at UW.

He launched his dream company- Mattson Communication Training- in 2006. Six years later, he now provides regular public speaking classes once a week for three client businesses. His company also hosts four-week training programs, workshops, public-speaking consulting, and public speaking literature. Mattson has published several books on public speaking as well.

“One of the biggest problems with selling communication training is most people who buy it think they have good communication skills. They don’t. And they don’t have much humility,” he said.

Mattson helps people- mainly managers and business employees- improve their public speaking skills. As he has worked on this through the years, Mattson finds that people need improvements in two major areas; empathy and humility. Many managers think they are communicating correctly and it is the employees who are not listening correctly. Mattson says people should work on empathy by putting themselves in the shoes of the person receiving a message.

“People think, managers especially, they think they gave good instructions but they didn’t. They need to look at communication from the point of the other person. Bad feelings and conflict escalates. People don’t give the same meanings to words as they [other communicators] are giving to them,” he said.

Mattson said he still visits eastern Washington as he has family in the area. After 14 years working in public speaking, Mattson has made a career from his Master’s degree with the EWU Communications Department.