

# The ROAR

The Official Newsletter of  
TCNJ's Department of Communication Studies



## The Legacy of The ROAR

A Message From the Editorial Board

The ROAR has been a staple of TCNJ's Department of Communication Studies since the publication's founding in 2008. The newsletter continues to showcase the very best of our students, faculty, and programs. In this edition, you will find articles on student achievement, faculty excellence, and professional development. On behalf of the editorial board, we would like to thank our readers—whether they be alumni, current students, or prospective students—our advisor Dr. John C. Pollock, and all those individuals who contributed content for the newsletter.

It is an honor to announce the arrival of the 18th volume of The ROAR—the official newsletter of the TCNJ Communication Studies Department. May it be loud, proud, and strong! Enjoy.

### In this issue:

Department News  
Faculty Highlights  
Internship Spotlight  
The Editorial Board



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## Spring Has COMM

By Alana Adams

On March 13, 2019, students and faculty gathered in celebration of the Communication Studies Department's first #SpringHasComm Student Achievement Showcase. The event planning was led by Department Chair, Dr. Yifeng Hu, and the Communication Studies Awareness Team: Alana Adams, Kristine Spike, Lorriann Guzman, Jason Monto, Ryan Soldati, Michael Milazzo, and Caroline Muccifori.

The purpose of the showcase was to highlight the variety of projects that our students have worked on throughout their careers at TCNJ and demonstrate the diversity of the major's three tracks – Public/Mass Communication, Interpersonal/Organizational Communication, and Radio/Television/Film. Another goal was to increase pride and recognition of our students to a larger audience. To quote Dr. Susan Ryan, who teaches Introduction to Film Studies, Introduction to Television Studies and Community Documentary Production, "People had a problem understanding what goes on here." The first session of presentations was dedicated to students' poster projects, which covered a variety of topics and Communication Studies courses.



Students presented topics from Dr. Pollock's Research Methods and International Communication courses, Dr. Hu's New Media and Health Communication, Intercultural/Racial Communication, and Independent Study courses, and Dr. Fazio's Independent Study course.



To exhibit the skills of Radio/Television/Film students, the event also featured a variety of screenings. These included videos from Professor Faust-Gaynor's Art of Editing course, Professor Byrne's Advanced Television Production course, Professor Johnson-Frizell's Directing for the Camera course, and Dr. Ryan's Community Documentary course. Student achievement was further highlighted through an internship breakout session in which nine students introduced internships they have had relating to Communication Studies.

During this session, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and learn more about where our students are placed in the field and how to be successful in getting internships. The showcase proved to be a great success and demonstrated that Communication Studies is just as academically rigorous and rewarding as other majors. To quote Dr. Hu, "I am most proud of the enthusiasm and entrepreneurship of our own students, especially the planning team who spearheaded the idea of Communication Studies awareness and I was thrilled to support their initiatives through this journey. This is our first event and we definitely want to make this a new tradition going forward."



## Students Break Records at D.C. Health Conference

By Sarah Voorhees

TCNJ's Department of Communication Studies furthered its reputation for producing top-notch undergraduate research, with a record-breaking number of student-authored papers chosen for presentation at the D.C. Health Communication Conference in Fairfax, Virginia.

Eight TCNJ students were the only undergraduate students in the nation invited to present papers at the conference hosted by George Mason University that took place on April 26–27, 2019. Communication studies and public health majors presented on a variety of issues related to this year's topic, International and Global Health Communication Research.

Each paper — co-authored by TCNJ Professor John C. Pollock — tested Pollock's Community Structure Theory, which posits that city or national demographics have the power to influence media coverage of national and global issues.

Communication studies major Casey Hendrickson '20 presented a paper titled "Nationwide newspaper coverage of safe drinking water: Testing community structure theory." Hendrickson and her co-authors — Nicole Bruno, Michelle Lampariello, Michael Milazzo, and Jared Kofsky — collaborated on their paper in Pollock's Communication Research Methods course.

"We chose safe drinking water as our area of analysis because we recognized that it is a widespread national issue," says Hendrickson, "Cities across the nation have individualized safe drinking water hazards and we were interested in seeing how various newspapers approached these problems."

This was Hendrickson's first research conference, and she says the experience was humbling. According to Hendrickson, it is the extensive original research TCNJ undergraduates conduct in Pollock's course that gives them a leg up over students from other institutions.

The following students presented co-authored papers at the 2019 D.C. Health Conference:

- Brielle U. Benyon, Cross-national coverage of child hunger: Testing community structure theory
- Jessica Farrell, Nationwide newspaper coverage of minimum wage: Testing community structure theory
- Jessica Fleischman, Cross-national newspaper coverage of HPV vaccination: Testing community structure theory
- Casey Hendrickson, Nationwide newspaper coverage of safe drinking water: Testing community structure theory
- Dare Lewis, Cross-national coverage of food security: Testing community structure theory
- Ed Melvin, Cross-national coverage of promoting condom use: Testing community structure theory
- Mason Moran, Nationwide newspaper coverage of gun safety: Testing community structure theory
- Kristine Spike, Nationwide newspaper coverage of prison reform: Testing community structure theory.

The D.C. Health Communication Conference takes place once every two years and features competitive papers, posters and panel sessions related to the year's chosen topic.



From left to right: Rebecca Doherty, John C. Pollock, Kristine Spike, Jessica Farrell, Dare Lewis, Casey Hendrickson, Brielle U. Benyon, Mason Moran, Jessica Fleischman, and Ed Melvin



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## TCNJ Communication Students Present at the NJCA Conference

The New Jersey Communication Association Conference was held on Saturday, April 2, 2019. Eleven students from Dr. Susan McManimon's and Dr. John Pollock's courses in the Department of Communication Studies at TCNJ were selected to present their papers in sessions at this year's conference held at Montclair State University. Dr. McManimon's students presented in the area of trends in media convergence in the news media and entertainment field. A discussion followed the presentations predicting on future trends in new media convergence. Dr. Pollock's students presented papers in a thematic panel centered on national and cross-nationwide newspaper coverage of critical social issues such as human trafficking, opioid dependency, child labor, prison reform, and gun safety in the framework of the Community Structure Theory. Congratulations to all for their acceptances into the conference!



*Top row left to right: Jack LoVecchio, Faris El Akhmi, Miranda Crowley, Isabella Cicoone, Alexis Marta, Julia Lombardi, and Mason Moran*

*Bottom row left to right: Alyssa Sanchez, Kimberly Harbison, Katherine LoFredo, and Ian Pereira*



*From left to right: John "Mason" Moran, Kristine Spike, Alessandra D'Ugo, Ian Pereira, Katherine Lofredo, Sierra Culloo, Nala Williams, and Julia Lombardi*



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## Students present at the 76th Annual New York State Communication Association Conference

Dr. Hu, Jessica Stevenson, and Kristine Spike attended the 76th Annual Conference of New York State Communication Association in October 2018. Stevenson and Spike were part of Dr. Hu's Spring 2018 COM 411 course, Intercultural Communication, where students' perceived notions about what makes up a culture were challenged as they explored and applied concepts such as intercultural competence, privilege, and cultural identities. Students worked in groups on a semester long ethnography project where they visited a local non-profit at least three times in order to create an intercultural communication guide for new volunteers.

One team, consisting of Stevenson, Spike, Alana Adams and Rocco Siravo, worked closely with HomeFront, an organization dedicated to ending homelessness in Mercer County. Through the ethnographic study, the team produced a guide aiming to help new volunteers understand the culture of Homefront and better communication skills with clients. At the end of the semester, the team presented their findings to the class and the community partners, who were very impressed with the final documents, saying it was "very professionally done, well-observed and well-written."

Over the summer of 2018, after encouragement and guidance from Dr. Hu, Adams took the lead to revise the group paper and submitted it to the New York State Communication Association annual conference. The paper was accepted, and Dr. Hu, Stevenson, and Spike presented on the panel, "Ethnographies of Service Learning" (Adams could not attend the conference). To summarize the whole experience, Stevenson, Spike, and Adams said this:

"We realized the importance of taking a project to the next level after the semester is over, and how this demonstrates TCNJ's value of lifelong learning. We were very proud of the effort we put into this project throughout this year, and the experience is something valuable to take with us in our journey after graduation, for further research, and into future careers."



*From left to right: Jessica Stevenson, Dr. Yifeng Hu, and Kristine Spike*



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## Communication Studies Students win Top Comedy Prize at Campus Movie Fest

Rising Communication Studies seniors Tyler Law and Kevin Walsh received the National Best Comedy award for their short film "Milkman" at this year's national competition of Campus Movie Fest in Atlanta, Georgia. Campus Movie Fest is the world's largest student film festival. Each year it receives more than a thousand submissions from students competing on different campuses across the country. Only the top four films from each college campus are allowed to screen at the national event in Atlanta.

"Milkman" spins a humorous tale of a washed up hero saving the day for his community, and the woman he loves, with an unusual source for the much-needed dairy product. In addition to co-writers and co-directors Law and Walsh, "Milkman's" creative team includes a number of communication studies students including Nolan DeVoe, Ellie Schuckman, Sarina Sokoloff, Jason Monto, Peter Weiland, Stephen Walsh, Nick Wodeshick, and Carly Diamond. Co-director Law says that "We couldn't have done it without our passionate cast and crew."

Along with taking home the award for National Best Comedy, one of the most coveted awards at the festival, "Milkman" was also one of the top five nominees for Best Story. But their ambition doesn't end there. According to Walsh, "Tyler and I are already back to the drawing board for our next big project. We're always thinking about what's next, and there's always room for more improvement and learning".



*From left to right: Peter Weiland, Tyler Law, Kevin Walsh, Evan Noone, and Jason Monto*

## WTSR End of Year Banquet

On Saturday April, 13, TCNJ's own student-run radio station WTSR hosted their annual Banquet to celebrate another great year of radio. All staff members from freshmen to Community Volunteers (some with shows more than 30 years old) came together and celebrated Community Volunteer of the Year (Tom Kelley), Staff member of the year (Justin Cook), and Board member of the year (Sara Weingartner).

The night closed out with the induction of the new Board of Directors for 2019 - 2020. Congratulations to the new board, and thank you to the old board for your excellent work!



*Front row, left to right: Alana Staskiewicz, Ryan Soldati, Seva Galant, Brian Marino, Cristina Losada, Chandler Hubert, Kevin Potucek, Back row, left to right: Sara Weingartner, Nina Navazio, Connor Iapoco, Louis Mendoza, Dylan Lembo*



## Award-Winning Professor Larry Frey Lectures on Research to Help Community Activists

By Casey Hendrickson

Dr. Lawrence R. (Larry) Frey, a renowned communication professor at the University of Colorado – Boulder, visited the College October 24, 2018, to discuss the promotion of social justice through communication activism. Frey was hosted by the School of Arts & Communication.

Frey began his lecture by discussing numerous social justice issues in contemporary society, arguing that every issue merits action. “There’s no shortage of social problems that face us,” Frey explained. Frey believes that some of this social justice action can, and should, occur through academia. He suggested that in academia there should be a rejuvenated focus transitioning research from observation to intervention. “Educational institutions have drifted away from that civic mission,” he stated.

This is specifically relevant in communication studies, where activism for social justice through research and teaching can be conducted. “Activism demands the use of communication,” Frey explained to the audience. “These interventions make a difference through research and teaching.” Communication researchers have the ability to use communication theory and practices to intervene and reconstruct unjust discourses in an impartial way.

Frey presented a range of communication assessment instruments such as workshops, conferences, media advocacy and campaigns, some of which he has used within his own community-based projects and research. One of Frey’s latest projects is with Turning the Wheel Productions, an intergenerational theatre company that integrates dance and self-expression into programs designed to help at-risk children. Working mostly with Latino/Latina children, the organization helps them develop stronger communication, leadership, and group or community engagement skills. Frey was able to provide evaluative research, both qualitative and quantitative, for the company to assess success rates of the program, helping to maintain its funding.



*From left to right: Dr. John C. Pollock, Dr. Larry Frey*

An important aspect of social justice scholarship is to make a difference, which is what sets this initiative apart from typical research studies, which are typically designed for publication in scholarly journals. “Most of applied communication research is just offering recommendations,” Frey explained. “I’m talking about making a difference through your research practices.”

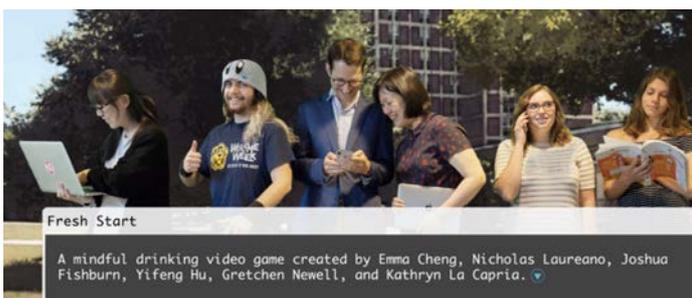
Toward the end of his lecture, Frey urged professors and students in the audience to reevaluate their courses. “Every single course can be oriented toward activism, if, the professor and the students want it to be,” he said.

After his lecture to the School of Arts and Communication, Frey also visited multiple communication courses on Thursday, October 25 as a guest speaker. Commenting on Frey’s visit to his communication research methods course, which uses one of Frey’s textbooks, Communication Studies Professor Dr. John C. Pollock observed: “Larry has been engaged in fascinating applied research helping community outreach groups for many years. Facilitating grant applications and renewals, Frey’s work represents a “gold standard” for helping activists measure their progress.”



## Innovative Interdisciplinary Faculty-Student Collaboration on Game-Based Alcohol Intervention

On October 31, 2018, Professors Yifeng Hu of Communication Studies and Josh Fishburn of Interactive Multimedia led a team of students majoring in communication studies, public health, and interactive multimedia to present a project at TCNJ's 4th Annual Interdisciplinary Research Forum. The project, titled "'Fresh Start' – A Video Game to Promote Mindful Drinking Among College Freshmen," aims to create a new alcohol intervention program for incoming freshman through game-based learning. The interdisciplinary faculty-student collaboration started with MUSE (Mentored Undergraduate Summer Experience) in the summer of 2018. The six-person team first sought to understand all aspects of gamified learning through reading and discussing scholarly literature. Once they had an initial understanding of video games as a learning medium, the team started their research on other alcohol intervention programs to identify the information that the game should contain. The game design then went underway, with the Communication sub team working on scripts and public health concept implementation, and the Game sub team taking the lead in the programming and character design.



*Team "Fresh Start" – A Video Game to Promote Mindful Drinking, MUSE 2018.*



*Team "Fresh Start" – A Video Game to Promote Mindful Drinking, MUSE 2018.*

Through this intensive 8-week process, the whole team was able to produce varying prototypes for the game and a full story line for the characters with many alcohol intervention concepts embedded within it. Following MUSE, the team continues to work on creating the best product possible, now with several new members added to this innovative cross-disciplinary project. The team has formed a close partnership with professional staff at student affairs who provided specific learning outcomes for and valuable feedback on the project. Because of this partnership, the video game has the potential to be adopted as TCNJ's mandatory alcohol education program in the future. Though the project still has a long way to go, it is committed to being a rare and valuable learning experience for students and a unique collaboration across campus.



# DEPARTMENT NEWS

## Join Lambda Pi Eta!

Lambda Pi Eta (LPH) is the Communication Studies honor society. Members of the Alpha Xi chapter at TCNJ participate in networking and professional development opportunities throughout each semester and take pride in being active in the department. To become a member, students must have completed and received final grades for 4 units in the Communication Studies department and have completed at least 20 units overall. They must also have at least a 3.3 GPA in only Communication Studies classes and a minimum 3.0 GPA overall.

Applications are open for the fall 2019 semester and are due no later than Friday, October 11 at midnight. Email Dr. Fazio or [lambdapi@tcnj.edu](mailto:lambdapi@tcnj.edu) with any questions.

Facebook: TCNJ Lambda Pi Eta

Instagram: @lph\_tcnj

Twitter: @lphtcnj



*LPH LinkedIn Workshop*



*2019-20 Executive Board*



*Faculty Advisor Dr. Keli Fazio*



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

## Professor Johnson Frizell sheds light on the Trenton Community in her documentary, "7 Square Miles"

Professor Lorna Johnson Frizell, alongside alumni Genevieve Faust, and senior Communication Studies major (RTF specialization) Aaron Wilson Watson presented their process in creating their documentary, "7 Square Miles" on October 12, 2018.

"7 Square Miles" focuses on the local Trenton community and follows the police and people living there. The documentary discusses crime, the justice system, and work to help improve their home.

When describing her process in creating documentaries, Professor Johnson Frizell emphasizes the focus on the people. The role of a filmmaker is to create stories, she claims, and that films should bring you into the everyday lives of characters, to make the audience care about them and their struggles. The challenge of the filmmaker is building a world the audience wants to be in.

*"The role of the filmmaker is to create stories."*

"7 Square Miles" has around 25-30 characters, but the main characters are Alexis, a police officer, and Abdul, an ex-convict. The two are close friends, and the film hints at how they met without explicitly stating how their relationship first formed. Their different backgrounds add an extra layer of interest into the film, drawing the audience in further.

Professor Johnson Frizell describes the filmmaking process — from collecting footage to organizing and then putting it all together. Editing the film fell under the responsibility of Genevieve Faust, an alumni from TCNJ and the Communication Studies department who has worked on several projects, many of which have been featured at the Sundance Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival.

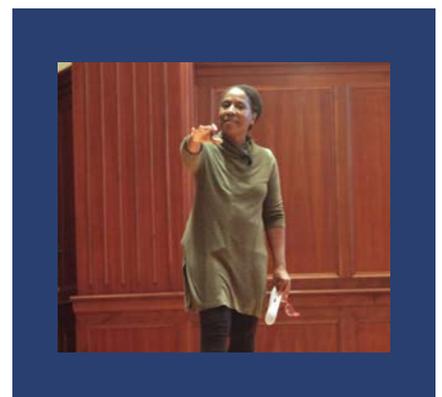
Faust had the responsibility of watching through all the footage with the understanding of the vision that Professor Johnson Frizell had for the film. She spoke on her process — viewing the clips in the eyes of the audience and screening based on the characters and their dynamics. She said specifically she wanted to focus on the love these characters had for Trenton and its people.

Following the screening of the clips, Faust described her day to day. She and Professor Johnson Frizell would talk each week, making sure the film was progressing smoothly. Faust began organizing the footage and putting it together. She said she treated the film like a puzzle, and need to look at each scene, break it down, and see where it would fit in the grand scheme.

By July 2018, the rough cut was completed and the team screened, critiqued, and went back to editing.

Aaron Wilson Watson, senior RTF student here, joined the team and helped collect footage. He talked about his experience being in the field and what that meant to him. He spoke on how meaningful the experience was to enter people's homes and get a peek into the intimate aspects of their lives, all the good and the bad moments. To him, the experience of working on this documentary taught him how films could evoke such strong empathy and feelings in others.

All in all, "7 Square Miles" is a story about love — a love for the people of Trenton and Trenton itself. All members of the team creating this documentary trace the heart of the film back to the characters, and it is through the characters they hope to shine a light on Trenton and its people.



Professor Lorna A. Johnson



# FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

## Dr. John C. Pollock Lecture Explores Human Rights Coverage, Occupational Prototypes and Career "Odysseys"

by Casey Hendrickson

On November 16th, The School of Arts and Communication hosted a pillar presentation within its fall, 2018, faculty-led lecture series featuring Professor John C. Pollock, PhD, discussing the topic, "What Shapes Human Rights Coverage? What Journalists Wish They Had Learned in College."

"How much do you follow your own dreams?" Dr. Pollock notably began, followed with, "How much do you follow the dreams of others?"

Dr. Pollock embarked on his own career negotiating his dreams and the dreams of others when he transitioned from a major in physics to exploring opportunities for social change, winding up in the social sciences – initially political science and sociology, currently communication studies and public health. He encouraged students to think of their majors and careers as a series of prototypes, suggesting that initial versions can always be improved upon. He also emphasized the importance of having multiple dreams, or odysseys, in one's life.

"Odysseys are quests. They are passions," Pollock explained. "If one doesn't work out, you also have another two."

One of Dr. Pollock's odysseys is studying media coverage of emerging human rights issues through research. In particular, he has been studying issues of transcendent political and social importance through the lens of his own Community Structure Theory in collaboration with students at the College for over two decades.

Dr. Pollock's research asks the question, "How do journalists choose some media frames rather than others in deciding how to report on emerging human rights issues?"

His research with students has led to identifying multiple patterns in newspaper coverage linked to variations in community demographics. These overarching patterns include most notably: buffer (positive coverage of human rights linked to higher proportions of privileged groups in a community); violated buffer (higher proportions of privileged groups linked to negative coverage of biological threats or threats to a cherished way of life); vulnerability (coverage mirroring the interests of society's most marginalized groups); and stakeholder (coverage reflecting stakeholder interests according to their proportions in a community).

"These hypotheses correspond with new roles for journalists," Dr. Pollock explains. "I am suggesting journalists should not only recognize the roles that they play, based on the patterns we've found, but also embrace them."

This student-faculty led research extends beyond the classroom through "commando" mentoring, an approach meant to generate a high level of student commitment to their projects. Through coaching, motivation, and guidance, Dr. Pollock is able to help his students reach a professional level of research that has produced impressive outcomes. For instance, over 130 of the student-written, refereed research papers have been presented at state, regional, national, and international conferences, and published student articles or chapters co-authored with Dr. Pollock number over 30.

Students working with Dr. Pollock on this research have gained admission to a multitude of highly recognized graduate and professional schools such as Johns Hopkins, Columbia, NYU, The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, the Newhouse School of Syracuse University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

"You should think of yourselves on a hero's journey," Pollock suggested to the freshmen. "What questions will you ask in your own lives?"

*"How much do you follow your own dreams? How much do you follow the dreams of others?"*



Dr. John C. Pollock



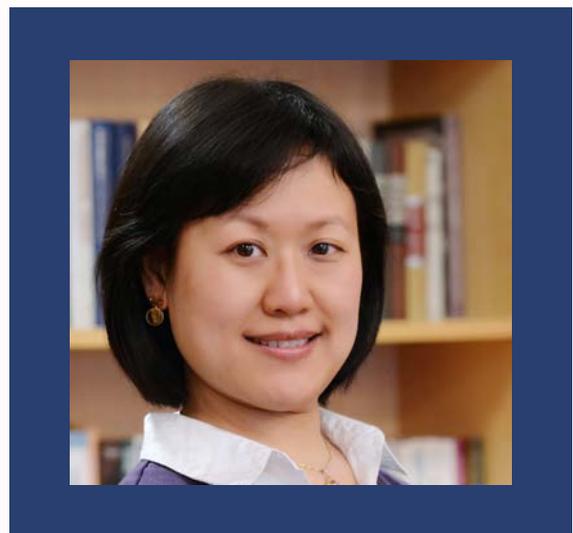
2018-2019 REVIEW

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

## Professor Yifeng Hu Hosted a Webinar for American Medical Student Association

Invited by American Medical Student Association on December 1, 2018, Dr. Yifeng Hu, Communication Studies Chair conducted an “interactive,” “eye-opening” and “enriching” webinar for medical students across America and Caribbean islands on the latest advances in media technology and how to use it to find solutions to public health problems. During the hour long webinar, Dr. Hu integrated various tools of communication such as polls, chats, and breakout rooms into her multi-media presentation. She stated that, “it’s no different than teaching in a classroom!” Prof. Hu received a certificate of appreciation for her “outstanding dedication and commitment” to the association.

*“...it's no different than teaching in a classroom!”*



*Dr. Yifeng Hu*



# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## Rachel Smith, 2020



Rachel is a Public and Mass Communications and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies double major. Over the summer of 2018, she worked at Planned Parenthood Action Fund as a Public Affairs intern. The majority of her internship consisted of legislative, communication, and field endeavors to promote advocacy efforts and community organizing,

## Madison Storcella, 2019

Madison is a Public and Mass Communication major with a minor in Marketing and Management. Throughout the summer of 2018, she interned at News America Marketing where she worked with clients to plan and organize events, established concrete public relations goals, and designed persuasive graphics for target audiences.



## Lorriann Guzman, 2020



Lorriann is a Public and Mass Communication Studies major with a minor in Marketing and Management. In the summer of 2018, she interned at AvalonBay Communities, Inc. where she established professional relationships with clients, assisted in organizational field events, and aided in event planning.



# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## Caroline Muccifori, 2021

Caroline is a Public and Mass Communication Studies major. From May 2018 until September 2018, she worked as a Social Media, Marketing, and Talent Relations Intern at an Innovative new health food eatery in the Atlantic City area. In her internship, she was responsible for designing, producing, and publishing colorful, attractive, and entertaining social media posts and campaigns across numerous platforms.



## Zoe Thompson, 2018



Zoe is an Interpersonal/Small Group Communication Studies major with a minor in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Throughout the summer of 2018, she worked as an Operating Systems intern at Dunkin' Inc. in Boston, Massachusetts. During her time there, she was charged with monitoring and facilitating the Implementation of new products, procedures and new equipment to ensure that stores were operating efficiently.

## Alexa Natalicchio, 2020

Alexa is a Public and Mass Communication Studies major. Throughout Summer and Fall of 2018, she interned for Wakefern's Corporate Communications Department, in the Community Relations division. There, she designed and executed large-scale fundraising events, volunteered at local food pantries, and attended company workshops for professional development.





# Meet the Editorial Board

## Miranda Crowley, 2021



Miranda is a Communication Studies Major in the Public and Mass Communications track with a minor in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. She is the Fundraising Co-Chair of Women in Learning and Leadership, a PR and Development Intern at Womanspace, and a Policy and Communications Intern at the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

## Jared Kofsky, 2019



Jared is a Communication Studies Major in the Public and Mass Communications track with a minor in Public Policy Analysis and Management. He is an Investigative Unit Intern for CBS News, Editor-in-Chief of The Streetlight, a Bonner Community Scholar, and Economic Development Reporter for Jersey Digs.

## Michelle Lampariello, 2020



Michelle is a Communication Studies Major in the Public and Mass Communication track with two minors in public health and journalism. On campus, she is an Alumni Engagement Intern and Vice President of Publicity for Lambda Pi Eta, the Communication Studies honor society.