

A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR | Mark Frank, PhD



Greetings!

It's been a year since I took the reins as Communication Department Chair, and I am honored to now have this opportunity to write to you all. Let me introduce myself – my name is Mark Frank, and I am a proud UB alum; I graduated with a B.A. in 1983 (back when we called the campuses “Main Street” and “Amherst”). From there I received my PhD from Cornell University, and then spent three years in the Psychiatry department of the University of California, San Francisco medical school as a postdoctoral fellow. I went on to get my first real job at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. After four years at UNSW, I moved to Rutgers University, and then in 2005 I returned to my hometown of Buffalo to take up a position here in the Communication Department. I moved back to Buffalo for a number of reasons,

some involving family, but others involving my career. UB – and the Buffalo area – has undergone a lot of changes since I left in the 1980s, and all of them for the better. For the first time in my lifetime, Buffalo is on the rise. So many new and exciting things are happening – and UB is at the forefront for a lot of this excitement. When I was being recruited to come to the Communication Department, I was awed by just how sharp and smart the faculty was – yet at the same time down to earth and supportive. UB is a member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), which places it among the top 62 research universities in the country; in fact, on today's accepted analytics that compare the effectiveness of different communication departments, our Department of Communication at UB is in the top 10 of all communication departments in the country. This is the department I have inherited as Chair, and I would be remiss if I did not thank the outgoing Chair, Tom Feeley, for his wisdom and efforts that were instrumental in pushing our department to its lofty heights. However, in order to build upon this momentum, we need to not only hire the best and brightest new faculty, but we need to recruit the best possible graduate students, and to encourage our best undergraduates to pursue higher

education, ideally with us. We also need the support of our families, of our University, our students, and our alumni to make this happen. Our faculty have studied so many things directly applicable to our lives today, such as how to encourage healthy behavior, the effect of video games, how our interpersonal and online social networks transmit information, how people are persuaded—for good or ill—to do things, why phishing works to steal our personal information, how best to detect deception, how to get people to donate their organs, and even how the structure of stories makes us feel, believe, and act. We hope our newsletter can help keep you updated on some of the exciting things going on in our department, as traces of what you accomplished while here at UB are laced into our fabric. Therefore, as part of our team, I say on behalf of our department faculty and students, thank you for your past support, your current support, and we look forward to your future support!

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Frank'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Mark Frank, PhD
Professor and Chair
Department of Communication