

UB COMMUNITY

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Why UB?

University at Buffalo's Identity and Brand Strategy Initiative

With higher education currently undergoing significant societal changes and shifts in funding priorities, there is more pressure than ever for universities to differentiate themselves from their competitors and bring in the best faculty and top students. This competition forces UB to consider the important question: What can UB offer that sets them apart from other schools?



In any public research institution like UB, there tends to be a lower sense of community and a greater disconnect between the many different schools and departments within such a large university that has so much going on. To tackle this issue, University Communications is currently in the process of implementing a

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Dr. Ivan Dylko

Incoming Faculty Member Feature

The Communication Department welcomes its newest Assistant Professor: Dr. Ivan Dylko. With a main interest in Political Communication, Dr. Dylko completed his doctoral studies at The Ohio State University in 2011.



Dylko's dissertation at Ohio State examined the political and psychological effects of user-generated political content. His current research similarly examines how internet-based communication technologies affect political participation, specifically by analyzing how the personalized and selective nature of social media can create political attitude polarization by increasing exposure to posts similar to their own viewpoints while filtering out posts that are dislike them. Dr. Dylko will officially join the department in the Fall 2015 semester, and will be teaching COM 450, Political Communication.

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nine-month long project to develop a new identity and brand strategy initiative for UB.

"We need to define UB's strategic identity: who we are, what we do, and why it matters," says Nancy Paton, Vice President of Communications at UB.



The project was launched in January of this year after a contract for collaboration was officially awarded to Ologie Marketing and Marshall Strategy, who have successfully worked with branding and marketing some of the leading research and medical schools across the nation, such as University of Notre Dame, Kent State University, and Ohio State University.

The first phase of the four-phase initiative, referred to as the "discovery phase," focused on data collection and understanding how UB is currently perceived by its competitors, external stakeholders, and members of the UB community itself. To accomplish this, the university sent out a mass survey and conducted focus group interviews from alumni, faculty, staff, and current students. The participants were asked how they identify with UB, what they believe the university's current strengths are, their opinions of what UB needs to focus on and improve in the future, and other similar questions.

"It's a chance to tell our story better, to explain to the world who we are."

-Nancy Paton, Vice President of Communications

Currently underway, phase two is dedicated to analyzing the survey responses and researching current marketing techniques that could potentially be effective in communicating the new brand. After the analysis, phase three will include market testing, refining, and re-testing. The initiative will continue through October, at which time UB will complete the initiative with phase four, the official announcement and implementation of the new identity and brand strategy through its various communication channels,

Alumni Profile

Georges Khalil

Georges Khalil is a recent doctoral graduate from the Communication department. Georges also holds a BS in Biology/Chemistry from the University of Cincinnati, as well as a Master of Public Health in Health Communication from the University of Southern California.



Georges's dissertation focused on a study that examined the emotional experiences and effectiveness of a website-based intervention for preventing smoking among adolescents. Based on the success of this study, Georges was awarded a Cancer Prevention Research Training Pre-Doctoral Fellowship from the National Cancer Institute, in conjunction with the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas.

Currently, Georges is a full-time research fellow in Cancer Prevention at the MD Anderson Cancer Center working on designing and pilot testing a video game-based intervention for stress management among former smoking cancer patients.

"These advancements in my career would not have been possible without the great resources at the Department of Communication and the amazing support of my Dissertation Chair Dr. Helen Wang, Department Chair Dr. Thomas Feeley, and Dissertation Committee, including Dr. Mark Frank and Dr. Lance Rintamaki."

including UB's social media and a brand new website created specifically for the project.

"For UB, this initiative is a chance to come together and identify core ideas and principles that drive our diverse departments, schools, colleges, and initiatives," Paton explains. "It's a chance to tell our story better, to explain to the world who we are."

The end goal of the project is to clearly define UB's purpose as an institution, and effectively promote to the nation its unique value and experience not only within the SUNY school system and the Western New York community, but within the entire higher education marketplace as well. To learn more about the initiative, visit www.buffalo.edu/brand.

Fast Facts:

Associate Professor **Dr.**

Gregory Saxton received the award for Best Paper presented at the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Conference in 2014 for his paper, "Speaking and Being Heard: How Advocacy Organizations Gain Attention in the Social Media World," written with co-author Chao Guo from the University of Pennsylvania.



Associate Professor **Dr. Frank Tutzauer** and Assistant Professor **Dr. Helen Wang** recently created a new undergraduate course entitled "Social Network Analysis" that was recently offered in UB's Singapore Program in the Spring 2015 semester.



Professor **Dr. Junhao Hong** received a prestigious Korean Studies Fellowship in 2014, which was awarded by the Academy of Korean Studies in Korea. He was

selected as one of the six 2014 Korean Studies Fellows in the United States to visit South Korea to conduct research and academic exchanges with scholars in South Korea.

Assistant Professor **Dr. Melanie Green** recently presented at an international Media Psychology workshop that focused on narrative transportation, held at the University of Haifa, Israel.

BREAKAWAY: Preventing Violence Against Women & Girls

In December 2014, Dr. Helen Wang was awarded the UB Civic Engagement and Public Policy Research Dissemination Fellowship for her collaboration with Champlain College's Emergent Media Center and the United Nations' Development Programme on introducing an educational game called BREAKAWAY. The Fellowship Program helps encourage community based research by UB faculty members by awarding up to \$5,000 towards utilizing the research findings to make a difference in society.

BREAKAWAY is an educational soccer video game created by students within Champlain College's Emergent Media Center with the intention of helping to reduce negative attitudes towards women and girls in areas with higher rates of prejudice and violence. As early intervention is crucial to combating prejudice, the game is designed specifically for boys ranging from 7-18 years old. The story line of the game is based off of real-world situations of violence against women, such as abduction and human trafficking. These issues are addressed by having the players combat the gender inequalities with solutions arising from sportsmanship and teamwork.



Dr. Wang partnered with Ann DeMarle, President of the BREAKAWAY Initiative, and led the first research evaluation of the game within youth camps. Overall, the researchers found that the game had a great impact on the participants: they showed an increased awareness of violence, reported positive attitudes and behavior changes, and demonstrated that the game, when paired with group discussions, was helpful in addressing these social issues. BREAKAWAY made its debut in youth camps in El Salvador in November 2013, and has reached more than 180 countries since then. To view and play the game, visit www.breakawaygame.com



UB SIM:

Singapore Institute
of Management



This past May, the Communication Department celebrated the 10-year anniversary of its presence on the Singapore campus in the Singapore Institute of Management.

In May 2005, the Singapore campus had its first intake of students in the Bachelor of Arts in Communication program in conjunction with UB's College of Arts and Sciences. Ten years later, there are approximately 350 accepted Communication majors studying in Singapore that will receive a University at Buffalo Bachelor's Degree, just like all of the students that graduate in the U.S.

"I was an average student before entering UB. The Singapore program nurtured my interest in the field of

Communication and allowed me to exercise my creativity. Over my time as an undergraduate, the encouragement from professors to voice my opinions and engage in active learning helped to boost my confidence and widen my horizon."

-Zed Ngoh, Class of 2011 Valedictorian



Can Video Games Have an Impact on Morality?



After realizing he felt guilty for virtually murdering innocent civilians in a violent first-person shooter video game, Assistant Professor Dr. Matthew Grizzard wanted to know if other gamers feel this guilt, and if it has an impact on the way that the players behave and consider ideas of morality in the real world. So, in 2014 Dr. Grizzard, along with researchers at the University of Texas, Austin and

Michigan State University, conducted a study entitled "Being Bad in A Video Game Can Make Us More Morally Sensitive." The study received some major publicity; it was not only featured as one of UB's Most Interesting Discoveries of 2014, but was also recognized nationally this past April on the science documentary television series "Through The Wormhole," hosted by Morgan Freeman.

In the study, a group of participants played a violent first-person shooter video game in which their character was required to commit blatant terrorist crimes. Afterward, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire to measure the level of guilt that they felt upon completing the game. "We wanted to see if this guilt that was elicited from virtual environments could cause people to think more about real-world morality, and could actually increase their moral sensitivity to real-world issues," Dr. Grizzard explains.

"We wanted to see if this guilt could make people think more about *real-world* morality."



Dr. Grizzard on Through the Wormhole

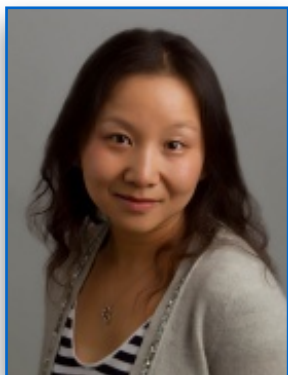
Contrary to the popular view that violent video games cause aggressive and violent behavior, the study's results showed that more often than not, the players actually felt more guilty after playing these games. The researchers believe that this is because in committing these crimes, the players violate their own personal sense of morality, and in turn, have an increased moral sensitivity and a greater consideration for what it means to be "moral" in the real world. "I think that's the real power of video games," Dr. Grizzard elaborates.

"You can think of them as kind of moral sandboxes, as areas where we can explore different aspects of morality, or even take viewpoints that are opposed to our very core of morality."

Dr. Grizzard's research was published in Journal of Communication in 2014, and was featured on Season 6 Episode 1 of Through the Wormhole on the Science Channel in April 2015. To view the episode, visit www.sciencechannel.com.

Surveying Public Risk Perceptions of Ebola

Although the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has not reported any recent cases of Ebola in the US, a poll released by the Harvard School of Public Health depicts that 39% of US adults are concerned that there will be a large outbreak in the US, and 26% are concerned that they or someone in their immediate family may contract the disease over the next year. Interestingly, according to a recent Gallup poll, Ebola is ranked as one of Americans top three health concerns, ahead of both obesity and cancer. While this strong fear has the potential to positively impact the public by helping to provoke healthier lifestyle choices, it can also easily lead to irrational behavior and a rapid spread of misinformation.



Dr. Janet Yang

Backed by an \$84,000 Rapid Response Research Grant from the National Science Foundation, Assistant Professor Dr. Janet Yang is currently leading a new study with intent to survey the public to uncover what factors are related to the public's perception of risk, and in turn, how these perceptions influence common risk communication behaviors that follow them, such as information seeking, processing, and sharing.

Dr. Yang contends that mental processes specifically related to the concept of psychological distance heavily influence risk perceptions. "One of the reasons people are paying attention to the outbreak is because of how close and frightening it appears," she explains. "The public's perception of risk comes from a reduction in psychological distance. When we didn't have any confirmed cases, people were less concerned that they themselves would be affected."

The findings from this project will serve to help revise health communication campaigns that inform the public with risk information, helping to improve both present and future communication of large-scale health risks to the public.

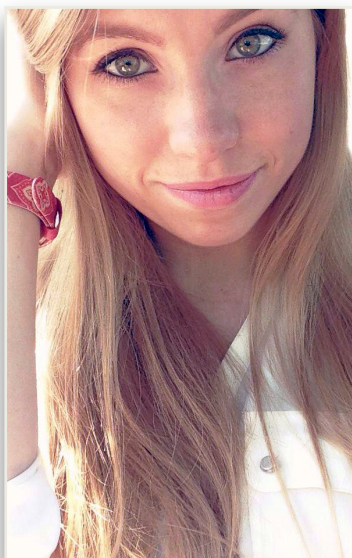
Senior Spotlight:

Kristin Beaudoin, a recent graduate of the undergraduate program, originally spent two years as a Biomedical Engineering major, but switched her major to Communication, and completed the entire major in two semesters, earning her Bachelor's degree within three years of study.

In addition to graduating a year early, Kristin was widely involved on campus during her time at UB. Kristin served as President of UB's chapter of The Public Relations Student Society of America, served as a member of The National Society of Collegiate Scholars and The American Marketing Association, worked as an Account Manager in the Advertising Department of UB's newspaper The Spectrum, choreographed for Impulse Dance Force, an undergraduate dance club, and studied abroad in Italy and Greece.

Next, Kristin's plans include pursuing a Master's degree in Business Analytics from American University.

Kristin Beaudoin



What would you say influenced you to switch your major to Communication?

I switched to the Communication major because I love engaging with others. I was good at Engineering, but I was more social, and the major didn't seem to fit with my personality.

What was your most influential experience within your time as a Communication student?

My most influential experience was being president of PRSSA and working with the Solar Decathlon team. I was able to help other Communication students get involved!

Is there a certain faculty member that you grew close to within the Communication Department?

I grew close to Dr. Rintamaki. He was our advisor for PRSSA, I have taken two classes with him, he brought the Solar Decathlon team to my attention, and I worked with him on an independent study for compiling and editing videos for the Sexual Communication course. He has been an amazing help and very inspiring in my journey to graduate school.