

# UB COMMUNITY

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University at Buffalo

Department of Communication  
College of Arts and Sciences



## A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR | Mark Frank, PhD

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### 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!

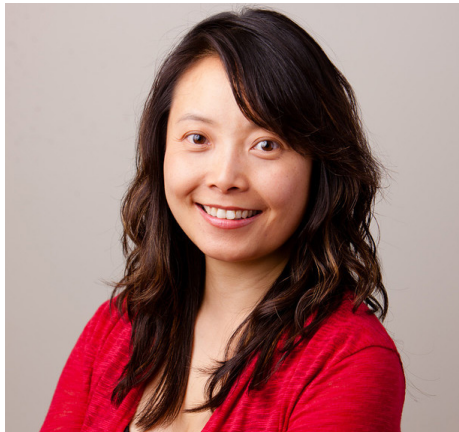
Regards,



Mark Frank, PhD  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Communication

## FAST FACTS

**Hua Wang, PhD** was recently featured on National Public Radio for her work with the popular Hulu web series, "East Los High,"



which acts as a collaborative social experiment that seeks to improve teen sexual health education and other important topics.

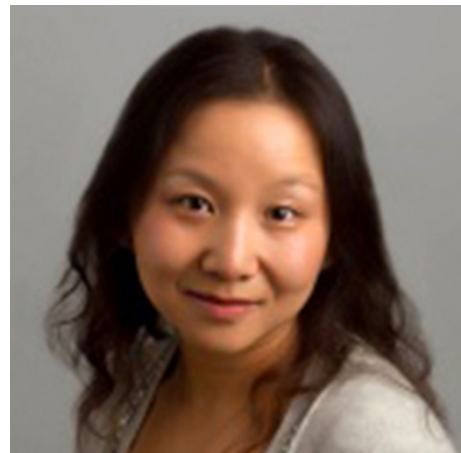
As of the Fall 2016 semester, Professors **Melanie Green, PhD**, **Janet Yang, PhD** and **Hua Wang, PhD** have all been promoted to Associate Professors with tenure.



**Matthew Grizzard, PhD** was selected to join the editorial board for the *Journal of Media Psychology*, and was also selected as one of the journal's top 13 reviewers.

**Arun Vishwanath, PhD, Janet Yang, PhD** and **Helen Wang, PhD** were all recently featured for their research on UB's "The List," a progress report released by UB highlighting the best research and accomplishments from the academic community.

**Janet Yang's, PhD** research on risk communication related to the Ebola outbreak recently appeared in the international journal



*Risk Analysis*, a publication of the multi-disciplinary Society for Risk Analysis.

## Twitter Takeover

This past October, UB Communication alumna **Kathryn Przybyla** (B.A. '11), currently employed as Social Media Coordinator for the Brooklyn Nets and the Barclays Center in NYC, took over the UB Alumni Association Twitter handle (@ubalumni) via The Office of Alumni Engagement to chat with students, alumni, and other members of the UB community.

View the entire chat and more at [Storify.com/UB\\_Alumni/KatPrzybyla](http://storify.com/UB_Alumni/KatPrzybyla)

**UB Alumni** @ubalumni 22 Oct 2015  
I was the SA Entertainment Director senior year. Now I use some of the same skills working shows at Barclays Center.

**Matthew Prok** @mrprok  
Were there experiences at UB that without your knowing (at the time) became instrumental in your success today? @ubalumni and #askUBalumni

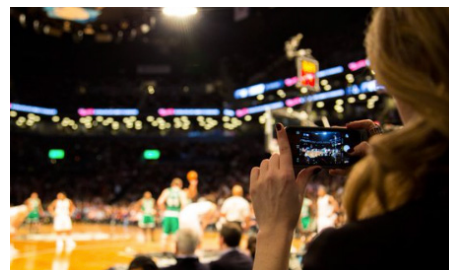
**UB Alumni** @ubalumni 22 Oct 2015  
I love to interact w/ our incredible fan base on a daily basis & share an inside look of the Nets org. #askUBalumni

**UB Arts and Sciences** @UBCAS  
@ubalumni Kat, what's the best part of your job with @BrooklynNets? #askUBalumni #ubuffalo

**UB Alumni** @ubalumni 22 Oct 2015  
It took me about 7 months to land my first real post-college job at the Buffalo News. Was the right fit for me!

**Jess** @jessiesaller  
@ubalumni How long after graduation did it take you to find a job that you sincerely enjoyed?

**Kat Przybyla** @katprz 22 Oct 2015  
I'm taking over the @ubalumni Twitter account until 1PM today to answer questions about social media, sports marketing & more: #askUBalumni



Kathryn Przybyla (B.A. '11) shooting gameday action for the Brooklyn Nets.

During the Takeover, Kathryn was able to speak about her experience at UB and how it prepared her for her career, as well as share career advice with students by fielding questions regarding sports marketing, social media, content production, and more.

## Alumni Spotlight:

### Lena Reading, B.A. '10

Senior Technical Project Manager,  
Maritz IT Services



As Senior Technical Project Manager for Maritz IT Services in St. Louis, Missouri,

Communication Department alumna **Lena Reading** (B.A. '10) leads project teams to the successful implementation of technical solutions that impact employees and clients. Projects include designing, operating, and implementing infrastructure solutions that support recognition and reward programs, sales channel incentive programs, customer loyalty programs, and more.

In addition to her work at Maritz, Reading was recently named President of Friends of Carondelet Park in St. Louis. Reading has made a great impact in her relatively short tenure as president, collaborating with Utah-based retailer of card making and craft supplies DCWV Inc. to launch the Paper Box Project. The Paper Box Project allows visitors to the park to select the perfect supplies for a homemade card, resulting in creativity, community, and smiles.

**"The UB COM program presented communication from many different angles and perspectives. I'm constantly asking the question: 'What message do we need to send to people affected by this change?'"**

## Professor Andrew Sachs uses his Experience and Passion to Inspire Students

A recent article in the *UB Spectrum* highlighted the work of Adjunct Assistant Professor **Andrew Sachs, PhD**. Sachs is very popular among students for his sense of humor and straightforward communication style. But Sachs's humor doesn't come from an easy life. Growing up in Alabama as a member of a Jewish family at the height of the Civil Rights era, Sachs and his family struggled with racism. In the *Spectrum* interview, Sachs also candidly reveals that he dropped out of college and took a 10-year break, before returning to the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Far from allowing these challenges to set him back, Sachs has now been teaching for 33 years. He's held teaching positions in Singapore, at the



University of Wisconsin and at the University of Utah, and has taught at UB for 15 years. Says Sachs, "I was struggling to discover what I wanted to be and what I wanted to do. I've been very fortunate to have landed after some struggles." Sachs brings these experiences, as well as his entertaining personality and honesty, to UB, employing them to help his students overcome their own adversities.

In addition to his enthusiasm for teaching, Sachs has a passion for acting. He has acted professionally in roughly 30 off-Broadway shows and works as a director when classes are out for the summer. This love for the stage makes his teaching engaging, and students are frequently impressed with how he weaves his acting chops and teaching prowess into his public speaking and written composition courses. Former student Benjamin Greenfeld notes that, "He was a great professor and really taught the class well. I have greatly improved my writing skills from taking his writing course and I feel as though I am now an above-average writer."

**"I'm passionately interested in what young people, and all students, are doing and what they hope to do. I want to help them navigate the world."**



## NEW SPACE FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS



Baldy Hall serves as home to the UB Communication Department and various other departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. It is without a doubt one of the most congested buildings on the North Campus. A recent project funded through UB's Capital Planning group helped to alleviate some spatial concerns within the department this past year by creating a new office space for Teaching Assistants/Graduate Assistants. The newly renovated space employs a design known as "hotel-ing," which maintains a large, bright, and open space with new furniture and multi-functional work stations for both private meetings and individual study.

### Central Authors in the Communication Field

**Thomas Feeley, PhD ranks as #1 Central Author**



Professor **Thomas Feeley** was recently ranked as the #1 central author in the field, according to a study by Darrin Griffin of the University of Alabama on central authors in the field of communication. The study utilized social network analysis to determine centrality scores for authors in the field based on

citation data from 24 of the central most communication research journals. From this, the study's data set included over 3,000 authors and their publications during the time span of 2007–2011. The study in its entirety was published in *Scientometrics* in October 2015.

### Alumni Spotlight

**Felix Swierski, B.A. '12**

*Special Assistant to the President, Georgetown University*



**Felix Swierski and Vice President Joseph Biden**

A recent study led by **Felix Swierski** (B.A. '12), department alumnus and the son of Adjunct Instructor Karen Swierski, has risen in the ranks since conferring his undergraduate degree at UB. Swierski, secretary of Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society while at UB, went on to be the media

coordinator for the New York State Assembly, and has since obtained a position as Special Assistant to the President at Georgetown University. In addition to the opportunity to work with numerous noteworthy people, Swierski has traveled extensively, including trips to Qatar, Rome, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge.

## Alumni Spotlight

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### Chua Siang Yee, B.A. '13

Reporter, *Straits Times Singapore*



An article in the *Straits Times* (a major Singapore newspaper) featured a recent graduate from the Department of Communication's program at the Singapore Institute of Management. **Chua Siang Yee**, now a reporter for the *Straits Times*, received the S-League

(the Singapore football league) Story of the Year Award.

At an award ceremony which brought together the past and present generations of Singapore footballers, Siang Yee received the award for his story, "Pennant looking to start over in S'pore" which was published on January 10 in *The Sunday Times*.

The feature highlighted Jermaine Pennant's "reflections on his chequered past, his reputation as a bad boy, and his vow to put his troubled past behind him," notes the *Times*.

ST sports editor Lee Yulin observed the following statement

about Siang Yee's win: "Jermaine Pennant was not just the biggest name to play here but also one of the most interesting. His colourful and controversial history, his legacy of unfulfilled potential, his admission of underachievement, and determination to right all that before his career is up – these were all captured masterfully by Siang Yee in his feature."

<http://www.straitstimes.com/sport/football/sts-chua-has-banner-day-for-pennant-feature>

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## AWARD WINNING DEPARTMENT FACULTY

On October 20, 2016, three Department of Communication faculty were recognized for their achievements at the 13th Annual Celebration of Faculty and Staff Academic Excellence.

**Mark Frank, PhD** Professor, is the recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Scholarship and Creative Activities. The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities supports the pursuits foundational to sustaining the intellectual growth of SUNY institutions by recognizing consistently outstanding scholarly and creative productivity, conducted in addition to teaching, by SUNY's instructional faculty (SUNY, 2016). Frank is recognized for his work on emotional recognition and detection deception.

**Thomas Feeley, PhD** Professor, is the recipient of the UB Exceptional Scholar Sustained Achievement Award. The award recognizes work that has garnered public and/or professional accolades beyond the norm for other bodies of work in the

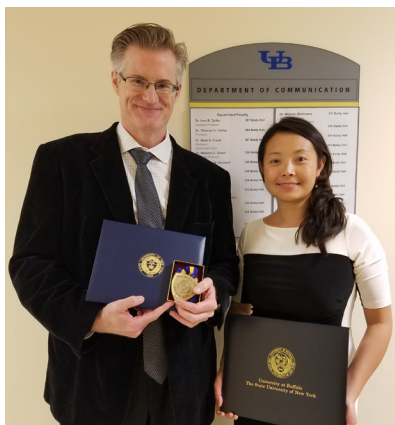
identified genre (e.g. citation analysis, critical reviews signifying the work is of enduring importance, or completion of the work under the auspices of a highly prestigious fellowship or grant). The award serves as recognition for outstanding



performance in a recent segment of a scholar's career (University at Buffalo, 2016). Feeley is recognized for his work with organ donation.

*Continued next page*

## AWARD WINNING DEPARTMENT FACULTY continued...



**Helen Wang, PhD** Associate Professor, is the recipient of the UB Exceptional Scholar Young Investigator Award. The award recognizes work by a junior faculty member that has garnered public

and/or professional accolades beyond the norm for other bodies of work in the identified genre. Wang is recognized for her work with the International Communication Association and her work on multiple grants from state, federal and international agencies.

## Recent Top Paper Awards

Carr, Zachary M., Frank, Mark G. *Do I Know You? Synthesizing Facial Identification and Emotional Evaluation Processes in Cross-Cultural Contexts*. Top Student Paper Award for the National Communication Association's Conference for the Nonverbal Division, November 2016

Rui, J.R., Stefanone, Michael, Covert, Jessica. *Source-Target Relationship and Specificity of Other-Generated Information: An Extension of Warranting Theory*. Top Paper Award in the National Communication Association's Conference for the Human Communication and Technology Division, November 2016

### Give to the Department of Communication

Thank you for your support of the Department of Communication. With the support of alumni and friends, we can provide vital resources to enhance our department and provide support for students, research projects and programs. We are grateful for your generosity.

You can support your department and help to provide for our students by making a gift online.  
[www.buffalo.edu/cas/communication](http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/communication)

### STAY CONNECTED

You will always be a part of UB and we want you to stay connected and get involved by:

- Attending alumni **events and programs**
- Becoming a **Regional Network Leader**  
Help build a strong network of alumni in your region
- **Mentoring** UB students
- Attending **career** events with students
- Recruiting **prospective students** as a UB Admissions Ambassador
- Connecting with an **alumni chapter** in your area
- Giving to UB and making an impact on students
- Following UB and the College of Arts and Sciences on social media

### To get involved, visit

<http://www.cas.buffalo.edu/alumni-friends/get-involved/>  
or email [UB-CollegeAlumni@buffalo.edu](mailto:UB-CollegeAlumni@buffalo.edu)

[www.buffalo.edu/cas/communication](http://www.buffalo.edu/cas/communication)

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We welcome you to contact us with feedback and/or stories for future editions:  
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