



Difficult Conversations

Katie Johnston

Ever have trouble knowing how to talk about something “sensitive”? How to confront someone? How to listen, even when it’s hard? That’s what Difficult Conversations, an event co-sponsored by the Department of Communication and the Office of the President, was all about. Held March 29, this alternate chapel, featuring a series of roleplays and interactive group discussions, gave students and faculty across campus strategies for effective communication.


Students in Professor Kate Quimby’s Interpersonal Conflict class wrote scenarios that portrayed positive and negative ways to approach difficult conversations. The class voted and chose scenarios by Hannah Teklits, Beckah Griffin, Kelly Curran, and Drew Gehman for presentation at the event. Ranging from a hilarious argument about gender roles to Professor Mary Holloway yelling about curfews, scenerios had the audi-



ence members laughing, gasping, “aww-ing,” and learning throughout the whole night. Scenarios of bad conversations preceded an interactive discussion about how to improve the situation. The actors and actresses then presented a “rewound” version of how the scene should have gone for a more positive outcome.

The event received great feedback. First-year Kristin Simme says, “I learned that it is important to talk to someone when there is an issue and to not just let it go. During those conversations, it is good to not attack the other person, but to show them that you care enough about the friendship or relationship to fix it.” She adds, “People like to dance around different topics and I’m glad that the alternate chapel did not.”

President Kim Phipps closed the night thanking all audience members and participants in Difficult Conversations for playing their part in supporting her “To Change the World” series. She also hosted a dessert reception on Orchard Hill for all Communication Department students and faculty following the event.

This successful night of learning demonstrated that good communication can be rewarding—and fun! 

Continued on [Page 2](#)

Editors:

Nick Hemming

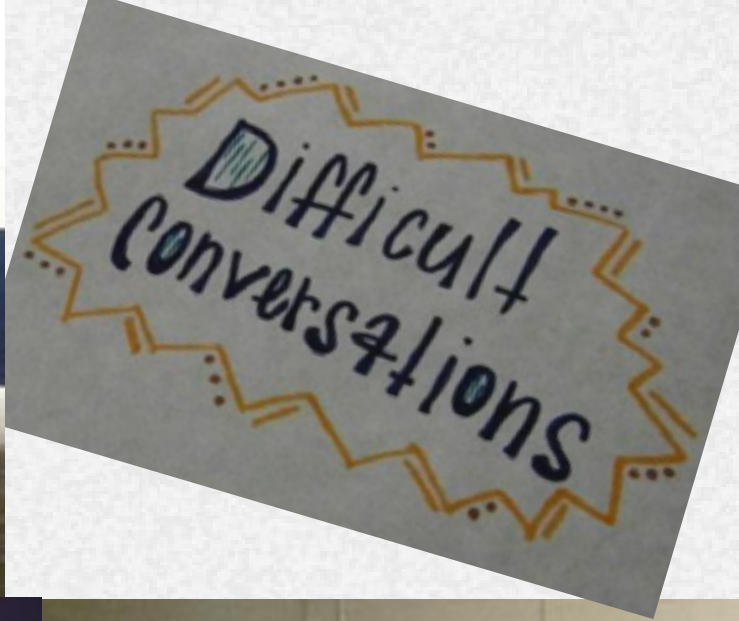
Katie Johnston

Brittney Radford

In This Issue...

Difficult Conversations	1
Pulse Debate	3
New Classes	3
Why “To Be”	4
Liz Warren	5
PRSSA Conference	6
Worth the Wait	7
iNeed an iPad	8







The Pulse Debate Educates College Voters

Nick Hemming

Every four years, American voters scramble to form opinions and attitudes on presidential candidates. Forty-four chiefs of state later, the country finds itself in a familiar position; The Pulse has already begun the education process.

On Thursday, March 8, economic masterminds Matthew Brouillette and Andrew Stein graced the Messiah community with a pre-election debate. The goal in hosting the event, according to student director Morgan Lee, stemmed from The Pulse's desire to inform the student body on a major political issue. They also hoped for fun. "We wanted the speakers to present in a lively setting," says Lee, "where students could gain information on the issues they will be voting on."

On this day, Brouillette and Stein debated the major difference between a libertarian economy and a free market economy. Stein believes the government has a role to play in regulating the economy; Brouillette respectfully disagrees. Although the two engaged in excessive banter, Lee noted a highly engaging debate that created undeniable awareness of the topic. "People really got into it...we really felt as though we accomplished our objective," she adds.

As students attentively listened to each side's argument, Lee couldn't help but notice the enthusiasm in the room. The Pulse had, in one night, educated Messiah students and faculty on a controversial presidential topic, allowing all to leave as well-informed American voters. "You can only vote for one person in the fall — you might as well hear the both sides rub against each other," Lee continues. "That is truly what I like most about debates."

For a full dialogue of March's economic debate, follow @ [MCPulseLive](#) on Twitter. 

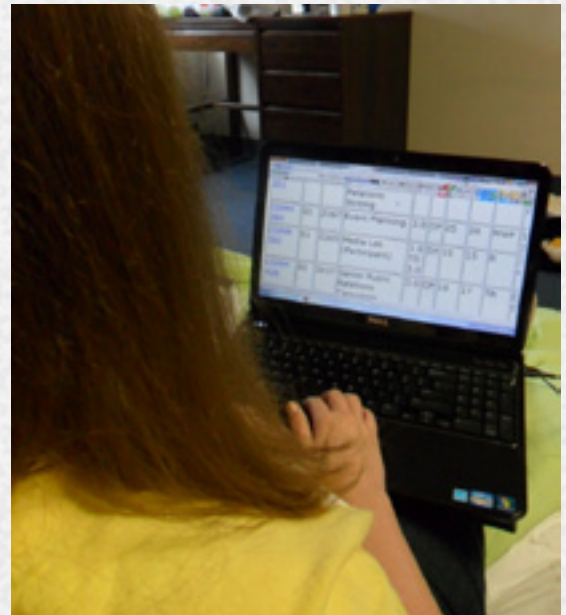
Plan, Press, Play, Persuade

Katie Johnston

Students' palpable spring fever indicates that the academic year's end is near. And that brings a look toward next fall, which holds exciting things for the Communication Department: the addition of Event Planning ([COMM 360](#)), Science Fiction Cinema: Envisioning Alternative Futures ([COMM 282](#)), and Persuasive Film Production ([COMM 227](#)) courses.


Next fall, Event Planning meets MWF, 11-11:50 a.m. In this class, Dr. Nance McCown will teach the class particulars by discussing event planning principles and putting them into practice. "Whether you secretly want to be JLo in 'The Wedding Planner,' hope to organize a huge fundraiser for your favorite non-profit, or want to rock the corporate world through a major product launch, there's more that goes into event planning than meets the eye," she says. In Event Planning, students will research, plan, and help execute an off-campus client's event. Guest professionals and field trips will show the behind-the-scenes work necessary for planning a successful event. Students cannot wait for Event Planning. Dr. McCown adds, "Every year when our department surveys seniors...we ask what courses they would like to take that are not currently in our list of offerings, and every year, many students request an event planning course. We are very excited to finally be able to meet this request!"

Science Fiction Cinema meets M, 7-10 p.m. (screenings) and MWF, 10-10:50 a.m. (lectures) next fall. In this class, Dr. Fabrizio Cilento will press play to show films



Continued on [Page 4](#)

from various countries, decades, and genres. Here, students can explore how “contemporary science fiction successfully hybridized with other film genres such as the western, martial art movies, melodrama, comedy, and film noir.” Dr. Cilento says, “In this course, students will have the opportunity to explore the logic and the conventions of science fiction... We will discuss issues related to technology and its applications in contemporary culture, multimedia, privacy and surveillance, cyborgs, terminators and neuromancers, virtual reality and simulations, alternate universes, and other fears and desires related to our immediate future. We will also explore the impact of digital special effects on SciFi.” Any student can take this class, as “an exploration of the challenging topics and ‘visions’ of our future raised by each film.” In Science Fiction Cinema, students will learn how science fiction “criticizes the present” as it “explores and spectacularly stages alternative worlds and ways of organizing society.”

Professor Reid Perkins-Buzo will teach Persuasive Film Production on TR, 2:45-4:00 p.m. He plans to teach formats and techniques for writing documentary, promotional, corporate and educational film scripts. In this class, students will learn exceptional camerawork, and train in field-sound recording and editing. For real-world experience, students will work with a community organization or on a project to make a persuasive film addressing a community, region, country, or world need. No pre-requisites exist for Persuasive Film Production, so students in any major could take, and benefit from, this class. 

Why “To Be”

Rachel Vandernick

Junior communication student Rachel Vandernick continues her education as she studies this semester with Costa Rica’s Latin American Studies Program. This incredible journey has led her to an eye-opening conclusion: “being” is the center of communication.

“To be” is the best verb in communication. This semester, so far, has been like a head-first trip down the rabbit hole with a walk through Oz. It hasn’t made any sense and it has thrown my world up against a wall. But



Junior Rachel Vandernick studies in Costa Rica this spring.

the one idea that I understand clearly is that to be an effective communicator, you have “to be.”

“Being” isn’t evaluative and doesn’t require a timely response. “Being” is engaging another person in who they are and how they view the world in an open and honest way. “Being” doesn’t bargain or cut deals. “Being” builds those mutually beneficial relationships that I’ve heard so much about. Essentially, it builds bridges instead of walls.

“To be” is to accept all forms of communication and expressions as valid. For example, when I returned from a few weeks in Nicaragua, all my host mom wanted to do was sit down and drink coffee with me and paint my nails. That’s her way of saying, “Raquel, we missed you more than we have words for.” I don’t understand a world where food equates to love, but “being” does. It recognizes the value in each individual expression and how it somehow contains an element relevant to the overall message. Instead of feeling compelled to respond, “being” accepts it as a piece of the puzzle. This is why I feel that this verb is at the core of communication.

“To be” requires that you see life through the lens of another. It requires honest effort in relationships and ac-

Continued on [Page 5](#)

cepts failure as a part of this process. Though you might get points docked in a paper for its use, being is something that every communication major should engage in: to just stop and experience life around you. As I write this, I'm sitting on a beach with my host mom. We are just "being," and it couldn't be better. 🌊

Graduate Expresses a Face of Positivity

Nick Hemming

Just three weeks after graduating from Messiah College, Liz Warren '12 boarded a plane for San Diego, Calif., to apply her newly acquired degree. Now serving as a "roadie" for Invisible Children, a nonprofit organization that seeks to end child soldiery in Central Africa, Warren cannot help but savor the opportunity, noting, "I'm digging deep now as a full-time advocate for Invisible Children."

When the animated alumnus arrived on the West Coast, she immediately entered into a six-week training program with 64 other participants. This period focused on preparing the "roadies" for a semester of promotion and awareness-building, a journey into the heart of Warren's education. Then they split. With sixteen teams established, Warren and her co-workers began traveling across the United States

and into Canada, expressing the devastating nature of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and its leader, Joseph Kony.

Warren's team travels with a man named Lauren, a native Ugandan who survived the African conflict. His story brings overwhelming pause. Lauren's uncle did not survive; he has been separated from his father; and he ran away from his hometown to escape his own death. "The most rewarding part has been working with someone who survived the conflict," says Warren. "The experience has opened my eyes to a lot."


During her travels, Warren and her fellow "roadies" enter local high schools and organizations to show "KONY 2012," a video created by Invisible Children co-founder Jason Russell. The mission remains simple: to expose Joseph Kony and develop awareness regarding his malicious leadership. In turn, the organization set out to acquire 500,000 online views; after three weeks, the video had amassed approximately 1.3 million.

As with any high-profile movement, criticism has surrounded Invisible Children's cause. Warren persists with optimism. "It's hard to deal with criticism that you take so personally," she notes. "I'm learning to take it in stride and be a positive reinforcement. It's very difficult when you're attached." While Warren's role began as a steady advocate, more well-rounded responsibilities have taken over. The graduate must now handle crisis communications, remain transparent, and handle negativity with the opposite ap-



proach. “We’ve always been the face,” she continues. “Now we’re the face of positivity.”

As the mission of KONY 2012 endures, Warren will follow. The positive nature she exhibited as a student now serves a different purpose — to establish social justice through inspired communication.

For more information on KONY 2012, visit www.KONY2012.com 

Public Relations Students Visit Capital

Nick Hemming

For eight public relations students and their advisor, a trip to American University in Washington D.C., provided a weekend of diverse growth. Just ask the students. “This trip helped us learn so much more about each other on both a personal and professional level,” begins Junior Lindsey Campbell. “Our time together enhanced our friendships and helped us bond as a community, making our PRSSA chapter even stronger.”


The two-day conference served as a meeting place for Public Relations Society of America (PRSSA) members from across the East Coast, with a common theme of “bridging online and offline communication.” Keynote speaker John Bell, Global Managing Director for Social@Olgyvy, introduced the regional conference on Friday, March 23rd; his insightful presentation set the stage



for a weekend of professional development. “I really enjoyed hearing from prominent PR professionals who have established a name for themselves over the years,” shares sophomore Ethan Eshbach. “Hearing the professionals discuss creative ways to promote nonprofit organizations was extremely insightful and encouraging.”

After hearing Bell’s presentation, professionalism took a back seat. The team hit the streets following a brief check-in in Bethesda, Md., trolley-hopping through one of the region’s most celebrated suburbs. “Our PRSSA chapter does not get to socialize much outside of our meetings every Monday night,” continues Campbell, “and this was a great chance to spend time together.”

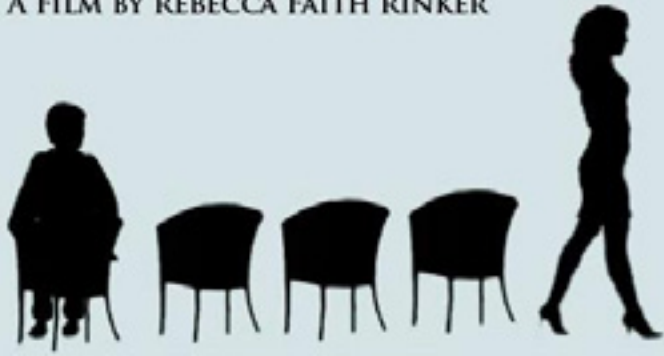
The short-lived adventure led way to a Saturday of professional development, as the conference welcomed a second speaker, Drew Hammill, Director of Communication for Representative Nancy Pelosi, and a series of professional breakout sessions. The presence of online communication remained at the forefront. “The conference seemed to emphasize how crucial it was to just get your name or story in the online world,” adds junior Erika Campbell, “but it’s equally important to pay attention and know who the people with whom you are interacting.”

With the experience of professional networking at bay—including a career fair and resume critiquing station—the inspired communication students returned to a casual evening together. In doing so, they found a way to pair career development with an enjoyable weekend away from home; these students focused and learned, and then they had fun. 

Worth the Wait

Katie Johnston

WAITING ROOM A FILM BY REBECCA FAITH RINKER



Senior film student Rebecca Rinker will make her debut as a screenwriter in April 2012, as her film “Waiting Room” comes to life on Parmer Cinema’s big screen. A make-up artist and producer by trade, Rebecca excitedly awaits her first major screenplay’s premier.

As the “Waiting Room” drama unfolds, viewers will follow Sam (Kyle McGrath) on his journey as he pines after his lost love Kate (Sarah Hawkins), and grows in his friendship with Shelly (Christie Heimbach), a bold, rash, “falling apart mess.” As the film’s title suggests, it opens and closes in a physical waiting room, but the waiting room also represents Sam’s psychological space, where he waits for his life to change.


Due to the project’s velocity, Rebecca sometimes doubted her abilities; however, she knew that her classes at Messiah and Temple University gave her the needed experience to write this screenplay and help produce the film. At Temple, Rebecca learned much in her Producing class, and 16mm Filmmaking at Messiah gave her a solid foundation. She also took screenwriting courses while at Messiah, including Professor Reid Perkins-Buzo’s Art and Science of Story and Media Writing at Temple.

Rebecca is a “people-person,” which showed through her screenplay and work with the actors. She notes, “I’ve definitely learned from experience that so much of filmmaking is about how you are able to work with other people and talk to them and relate to them.” This showed through her depiction of her characters, too. “For me, the characters were more important than the visual aesthetics,” she adds. “I wanted to make sure the actors understood their characters and that they felt like real human beings, and I think that came through.” Sam, Shelly, and Kate come to life in a meaningful way that makes it

impossible not to laugh, cry, and grow with them.

According to Rebecca, “Waiting Room” had “a million inspirations. This story is so close to my heart because it’s so representative of what young people go through. So many of us have loved and lost and thought it was the end of the world... So many of us have hit bottom and just needed someone to reach out to make us realize that it’s going to be OK.”

The “elephant-in-the-room” with regard to Christians in the entertainment world is always a question of ethics, and how a person reconciles his or her faith while working in such a secular industry. Rebecca notes, “I want to work in the mainstream film industry and still be influential as a Christian, but I don’t want to be a ‘Christian filmmaker.’ I believe that any film that tells truth about the world and touches the heart can reveal facets of godliness.”

Film student Maxwell Sacra is credited as Rebecca’s co-writer. For more information about “Waiting Room,” check out <https://www.facebook.com/WaitingRoomShortFilm>. 



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iNeed an iPad

Katie Johnston

It seems like everyone is getting one.. an iPad, that is! Innovative Technology funds allowed the Communication Department to “keep up with the Joneses,” with the purchase of iPads for enhancing classroom learning.

Messiah College makes Innovative Technology funds available to faculty members who propose new uses for technology. Communication Department chair Dr. Kate Simcox composed a proposal enumerating the department’s needs and inquiring what technology would fulfill them. Neil Weaver, in charge of the funds, suggested the iPad because it easily records students’ images, can post to the campus video server, and allows students to access their video by simply clicking a link.


Dr. Simcox says, “I want to do whatever I can to make sure that our faculty have the most up-to-date technology. I envision lots of different creative applications, and I want to explore different ways to put it into instruction.” Professors use iPads in both their personal and professional lives. Professor Kate Quimby says, “I am delighted with my iPad. I take it with me everywhere... I’m not particularly tech-savvy, but this device is so intuitive. Truly, it’s a pleasure to use.”

The technology proposal’s primary purpose was to use iPads to record [COMM 105](#) speeches. Dr. Simcox says, “With speech instruction, it’s really valuable for students to see themselves speaking, and...reflect on it to find ways to improve. No matter how many things I say, nothing is as persuasive as students watching themselves perform. They watch, and say, ‘Oh my gosh do I do that?!’”

Among its benefits, the iPad’s small size puts speakers at ease, thus improving public speaking. Dr. Nance McCown says, “Often seeing a larger video camera in the room increases students’ fear of public speaking. I hope that, along with the other benefits of smoothing the recording and critiquing process, using the iPad instead of a camera will help students feel more at ease.”

The Pulse: Messiah College Media Hub also uses iPads. Student Director of The Pulse, Morgan Lee says, “One of the ways we employ iPads is by using apps like hootsuite to coordinate our social media postings. This is an app that allows you to time your Facebook and Twitter posts.” Senior Caroline Hoffman adds, “Because our organization was growing rapidly in its fan base, it was important to be able to monitor our social media presence at any moment... Within the web/social media team, the iPad comes in very handy.”



The Communication Department enhances its courses by utilizing the latest technology. The iPads purchased continue proving themselves an indispensable resource as professors use them personally and professionally, students reap classroom benefits, and The Pulse keeps the campus up to date. 

Internship Opportunities

Did you know the Messiah College Internship Office maintains an online database of available internship opportunities? Visit the Internship Center [website](#) to find the latest positions in communication, broadcasting, film, public relations, media, and journalism.

This month features entries from Bethesda Mission, The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, WITF, Tierney, Capital Region American Heart Association, Cancer Recovery Foundation, National Civil War Museum, CURE International, PA Partners, Suasion, Macy’s, Phoenix Contact, PA Department of Health, and many others. On-campus positions include internships with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and the Office of Marketing and Public Relations.

For more information, check out the website, stop by the Internship Center near The Falcon, or contact mtrue@messiah.edu. 