

# The COMMUNICATOR

The newsletter of the School of Arts and Communication

Spring 2017

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COM assistant professor Dzmityr Yuran listens during the fake news and media panel discussion. Photo Credit: YJ Sohn



**Florida Institute of Technology**

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## Free Speech Events Resonate With Students, Faculty

By Mary Kozaitis, For *The Communicator*

**A**s an undergraduate humanities major, Madelaine Elam remembers hearing stories about campus events celebrating the First Amendment.

But it wasn't until this semester that Elam, now a graduate student in the global strategic communication program, got to experience her first Free Speech Week event.

"I love that we were talking about fake news, which ties in with the Mass Communication and Society class I am taking with Dr. (Heidi Hatfield) Edwards," said Elam after attending a roundtable discussion in Evans Library on fake news and the media.

The discussion, led by School of Arts and Communication (SAC) professors Dzmityr Yuran, Jacob Ivey and Moti Mizrahi, was one of several events held over three days during Free Speech Week in late February.

Originally starting out as a single day when it began six years ago, what is now Free Speech Week has grown in popularity on campus. The week is organized by *The Florida Tech Crimson* newspaper and sponsored by the SAC, Old School Pizza and Jersey Mike's Subs.

The week's events are designed to educate and celebrate the right to free speech, as protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"The First Amendment is the first amendment for a reason. It's highly important, and it's vital to a democracy," said Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D., professor and chair of the communication program and associate head of the SAC.

Ted Petersen, Ph.D., associate professor of communication and *Crimson* faculty advisor, said this year's Free Speech Week events also highlighted how essential local journalism is to the public.

"I do think it is an important event, especially with what is going on in the national media," he said.



A student writes on the free speech wall during Free Speech Week in late February. Photo Credit: Lindsay Isaac

Mary Beth Kenkel, Ph.D., dean of the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts, said the First Amendment, especially the right to free speech, helps people who feel reluctant to voice a minority or discrepant opinion.

"I think for us to have the country like this, which is filled with diverse peoples and very diverse opinions and backgrounds, if we are going to grow and thrive as a nation, we need to hear all of those voices. I think they each have something important to say and a great contribution," she explained.

The week kicked off Feb. 21 with the *Crimson* staff hosting "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Cookies" outside the Denius Student Center. The free speech wall was erected for students to write anything they want, completely uncensored, and to receive a free cookie in return.

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## SAC Faculty Promotions

Congratulations to **Ted Petersen**, Ph.D., assistant professor of communication, and **Angela Tenga**, Ph.D., assistant professor of English! Both have been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.



Ted Petersen, Ph.D.

## Faculty Service

Congratulations to these SAC faculty members recently honored during the 2017 Service Awards:

Name	Years of Service
Heidi Hatfield Edwards	10
Billy Leach	15
Gordon Patterson	35

## Save the Date: Calendar of Events

**Communication Faculty Meeting**  
April 28, 9:30 a.m. | Crawford, 611 COM Lab

**Communication Senior Design Presentation**  
April 28, 4 p.m. | Olin Engineering 118, Auditorium

### Academic Calendar

April 26 Last Day of Classes  
 April 27–28 Study Days (No classes)  
 May 6 Spring Commencement  
 July 29 Summer Commencement  
 Aug. 7 Faculty Report Date  
 Aug. 21 Fall Classes Begin

**THANK YOU** Special thanks to those who contributed to producing this issue of *The Communicator*. We owe you a debt of gratitude!

Majed Alshammari, Eliza Dopira, Audrey Gangloff, Riley Geeskie, Lindsay Isaac, Mary Kozaits, Dr. Lisa Perdigao, Dr. YJ Sohn and Aaliyah Thomas

# The Communicator

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## FACULTY Professors

Andrew Aberdein, Ph.D., Logic and Metaphysics, *University of St. Andrews*  
 Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D., Mass Communication, *University of Georgia*  
 Gordon Patterson, Ph.D., History, *University of California–Los Angeles*  
 Lisa Perdigao, Ph.D., English, *Northeastern University*

## Associate Professors

Gabriella Baika, Ph.D., French, *University of Pittsburgh*  
 Kevin Burke, Ph.D., Musicology, *University of Cincinnati*  
 John Lavelle, Ph.D., English, *University of Louisiana–Lafayette*  
 Ted Petersen, Ph.D., Mass Communication, *University of Florida*  
 Youngju Sohn, Ph.D., Mass Communication, *University of Georgia*  
 Angela Tenga, Ph.D., English, *Purdue University*  
 Wanfa Zhang, Ph.D., Political Science, *University of Alabama*

## Assistant Professors

Melissa Crofton, Ph.D., Literature, *University of South Carolina*  
 Natalie Dorfeld, Ph.D., English/Composition & TESOL, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*  
 Michael Finnegan, Ph.D., Literature, *University of Rhode Island*  
 Chris Frongillo, Ph.D., English Literature, *Vanderbilt University*  
 Sharon Irvin, M.A., English, *University of Wisconsin*  
 Jacob Ivey, Ph.D., History, *West Virginia University*  
 Lars R. Jones, Ph.D., Art History, *Harvard University*  
 Bill Leach, Ph.D., Texts and Technology, *University of Central Florida*  
 Debbie Lelekis, Ph.D., Literature, *University of Missouri*  
 Moti Mizrahi, Ph.D., Philosophy, *The Graduate Center, City University of New York*  
 JoAnn Parla-Palumbo, Ph.D., Applied Linguistics, *State University of New York–Buffalo*  
 Alan Rosiene, Ph.D., English, *Northwestern University*  
 Matthew Ruane, Ph.D., Higher Education and Policy Studies, *University of Central Florida*  
 Andy K. Stanfield, Ph.D., Instructional Design and Development, *University of South Alabama*  
 Dzmityr Yuran, Ph.D., Communication and Information, *University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

## SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION FACULTY AND STAFF, SPRING 2017

### SCHOOL HEAD

Associate Dean Robert Taylor, Ph.D., History  
*Florida State University*

### Instructors

Annie Caza, M.Ed.  
 Elizabeth Dopira, M.M.  
 Rolanda Hatcher-Gallop, M.S.  
 Keturah Mazo, M.A.  
 Anna Montoya, M.A.  
 Joy Patterson, M.A. and M.S.  
 Alexandra Soya, M.A.

### Visiting Instructors

Ingrid Bradley, M.S.  
 Amy Laakman, M.S.

### Adjunct Instructors

John Almasi	Nancy Garmer	Anne Smith
Christina Apelgren	Doug Grover	Judith Strother, Ph.D.
Douglas Bailey	Shirley Johnson	Carol Tillema
Dana Beattie	Michael Kahn	Charles VanRiper
Andrei Belyi	Kyle	Fontaine Wallace
EJ Castor	Knappenberger	Melinda Wittekind
Erik Cole	Julianne Mallak	
Kyle Creedon	Pervin Muradov	
Mariana	Kelvin Nelmes	
Garciagodoy-Cervantes	Matt Reed	
	Lucy Serody	

### Staff

Anushka Boyd, *Administrative Assistant II, Student Services*  
 Sara Torabi, *Administrative Assistant II, Faculty Services*  
 Margaret Moore, *Administrative Assistant*

## From the Chair:

# Providing Tools for Students to Navigate Through Troubled Times

It is nearly impossible to be unaware of the events and forces buffeting the world and American society in the past year.

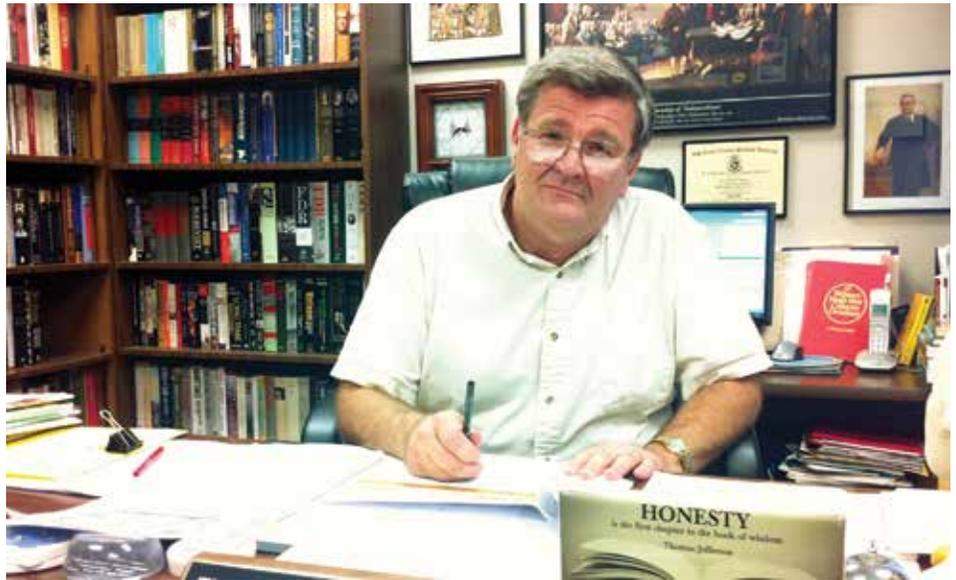
Future historians will have to unravel whether these are indeed the best of times or the worst of times. But as V.I. Lenin once wrote, “what is to be done” to understand such things? One sure way to come to grips with the pressing issues of the day is to look at the wide variety of courses the School of Arts and Communication (SAC) offers every semester. These can provide majors and non-majors alike insights that can help deal with complicated questions that dodge simple answers.

History (a subject near and dear to my heart!) can put things into context and offer examples that guide us toward the unknown future. There are lessons to be learned from the past, and much wisdom handed down to us if we are wise enough to seek it out. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay—all authors of the *Federalist Papers*—covered practically every political situation we might face today back in the 1780s, and presented solutions that still work in 21st-century America. Our political science courses study the roles of nations, “soft” and “hard” power and an international system seemingly in a state of flux.

Literature can open vistas for us and deal with the fundamental questions of the human experience in ways the nonfiction writer cannot. Fiction writers are free to create worlds like ours, or radically different ones, but manage to tell very meaningful tales. It is no accident that in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election, George Orwell’s futuristic nightmare novel, *1984*, returned to the bestseller lists.

The technical marvels of the communication revolution (which all seemed fantasy when I first viewed them on the original “Star Trek” in the 1960s) impact every facet of our human experience on a global scale. Classes in the Strategic Communication degree program look at this phenomenon and offer interesting and timely insights.

Mass media studies have come into their own in a society wired for sound and video. These theories open a path to understanding of what we see and hear on an hourly basis. Journalism, especially today’s multiplatform variety, remains a key component of representative democracy.



Robert Taylor, Ph.D., Associate Dean, College of Psychology and Liberal Arts, and Head of the School of Arts and Communication.

This is never as true as it is in an era of “fake news” and “alternative facts,” and where social media is a powerful tool for politics and, hopefully, for governing.

The above-mentioned subjects are a means to navigate through our troubled times and help people become informed citizens and effective leaders. They continue to offer us so much, regardless of one’s major or career plans after graduation.

If our American democratic republic is to continue to function, and to remain what Abraham Lincoln called “the last best hope of earth,” we need many informed people, regardless of their political ideology. So the SAC will continue our tradition of offering classes that stimulate and challenge our students.

By sharing their journey with us, they will be far better prepared for the problems, and hopefully the solutions, facing the rest of the 21st century.

*Robert A. Taylor*

“If our American democratic republic is to continue to function, and to remain what Abraham Lincoln called ‘the last best hope of earth,’ we need many informed people, regardless of their political ideology.”

Connect with us:



Editor's Note: Students in English classes helmed by Assistant Professor Michael Finnegan, Ph.D., quickly learn of his dual passions for fishing and literature. Here, he explains where his love of both began.

## Hooked: A Lifetime of Fishing and Teaching

By Michael Finnegan, *Guest Columnist*

My father first took me fishing shortly after my 10th birthday.

We drove in our Bel Air Chevrolet to the town of St. Regis Falls, located on the northern edge of New York State's Adirondack Mountains.

It was here that I got my first lesson in fresh water trout fishing.

To my surprise, the gray, bearded old-timer at the bait store refused to sell worms to us because he claimed that the best bait for trout was grasshoppers that could be caught in the field next to the stream just below us.

Dad did purchase a canning jar with a perforated top to collect our bait, and what followed was one of those golden moments of childhood that I recalled a decade later.

It was at Colgate University that I first read Ernest Hemingway's story, *Big Two-Hearted River*, and quickly realized that this tale was much more than a war story; it was a manual on how to catch freshwater trout with green grasshoppers as bait.

Hemingway's character, Nick Adams, was fishing in a river on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and the natural setting was remarkably similar to my experience at St. Regis Falls, down to the Indian reservations.

This was not only the beginning of my lifetime as a student of Hemingway, but it also marked the moment I decided that teaching was my calling.

Simply put, I wanted to share my enthusiasm for the stories of this writer with college students.

What followed was a lifetime of fishing and teaching.

My first students were at the University of Rhode Island where I found myself teaching Hemingway's stories as part of sophomore literature courses. Since Rhode Island is officially called "The Ocean State," it was only a short time later that I began to learn about Hemingway's other fishing passion, offshore fishing.

I bought my first offshore fishing vessel, a 23-foot Mako with a 250 Horsepower Yamaha. Within a matter of a few weeks, I discovered the "Mud Hole," a lively tuna and shark fishing ground about 50 miles off the southern Rhode Island shore.

It was my move to Florida in 2004, however, that not only allowed me to continue teaching Hemingway, but gave me my first experience with fishing the very waters that inspired Hemingway's Nobel Prize-winning novel, *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Hemingway called the Gulf Stream the "Great Blue River," and it was in these very waters



Assistant professor Michael Finnegan displays a prized catch from one of his recent fishing expeditions. Photo courtesy of Michael Finnegan.

that I caught and released my first beautiful 100-pound sailfish.

Today, I fish these waters from Sebastian Inlet to Key West, and I am happy to say that Hemingway's "Great Blue River" continues to excite me as it reminds me of that first day with my father and the grasshoppers.

Any of my COM 1102 students can verify my enthusiasm for Hemingway and his fishing stories. I can only hope that some of them are able to share in this enthusiasm, not only in the classroom but on the water as well.

## The SAC Five FIVE FACTS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

**Elizabeth Dopira, M.M.**  
Music Instructor and Director of  
Choral and String Studies

An infographic featuring a central circular portrait of Elizabeth Dopira. Five numbered facts are connected to the portrait by lines and decorative bubble patterns. Each fact is accompanied by a small icon: 1. A ghost icon for 'I hate being scared.' 2. A pair of lips icon for 'I'm an excellent whistler.' 3. A tube of skin cream icon for 'I was an esthetician for a year after graduate school.' 4. A dumbbell icon for 'I love weightlifting.' 5. A flame icon for 'I love very spicy food.'

1 I hate being scared. No scary movies or haunted houses for me!

2 I'm an excellent whistler. I can perform the theme to "The Andy Griffith Show" perfectly.

3 I was an esthetician for a year after graduate school. I love skin products and treatments!

4 I love weightlifting. You can find me pumping iron in the Clemente Center several days a week.

5 I love very spicy food. The hotter, the better. Bring on the ghost peppers and sriracha!

## Making Moves: SAC Faculty News Roundup

**Andrew Aberdein** travelled through nine airports in 18 days while delivering three presentations last month:

- “Evidence, Proofs, and Derivations,” at the Symposium on Mathematical Evidence and Argument, Universität Bremen, on March 16;
- “The Dual Nature of Proof,” at a special session on proofs in mathematical practice at the North American Meeting of the Association for Symbolic Logic, Boise State University on March 22;
- “There’s Glory for You! Redefining Revolutions,” at the Philosophy Department Colloquium, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, on March 24.



From left: Kimberly Miller, professor of communication studies at Grove City College; Joanna Paull, professor of English at Lakeland Community College; and Natalie Dorfeld at the NCTE Conference.

**Natalie M. Dorfeld** presented “I Have No Idea What You Are Saying: Teaching Composition through Art” at the Pedagogy, Practice and Philosophy Conference in Gainesville, Florida, in January. Her latest article, “Meatless Mondays?: The Demonization of Vegetarian Studies,” will be featured in *Cultural Ecologies of Food in the 21st Century*.

**Eliza Dopira** was the featured mezzo soprano March 11 in the Brevard Symphony Orchestra concert, BSOLé, a tribute to the music of Spain. She performed with the orchestra during Manuel de Falla’s “The Three-Cornered Hat.”

**Michael Finnegan** will present his paper, “A Truth of War” at the 28th Annual Conference of the American Literature Association in Boston on May 27. The paper is a discussion of Ernest Hemingway’s short story, “Soldier’s Home.” In addition, his article on playing hockey at Colgate University’s Starr Rink was published in the university’s alumni publication, *The Colgate Scene*, last September.



Michael Finnegan

**Rolanda Hatcher-Gallo** was a guest presenter at the “R.E.S.P.E.C.T... Humanity” Spring Diversity Out Loud Colloquium sponsored by the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts (CoPLA) Diversity Committee on March 24.

**Debbie Lelekis** talked about the history of scrapbooks, Mark Twain and a project that her students created during her presentation, “Creative Collaboration through Literary Scrapbooks,” at a roundtable panel on collaboration and pedagogy at the Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) conference in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 25.

**Lisa Perdigao** organized a session “Marvel vs. DC: Civil War?” and presented a paper “We’re not exactly a team’: Marvel and DC’s Civil Wars on the Small Screen” at the Northeast Modern Language Association (NeMLA) in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 23–26. She is the NeMLA Cultural Studies and Media Studies area director. Perdigao also presented, “Sometimes the world needs a team’: From Singularity to Universality in the CW’s Legends of Tomorrow,” at the Popular Culture Association in the South/American Culture Association in the South, in Nashville last October.

**Robert Taylor’s** review, “Schoolgirl and Sailor: Valuable Perspectives on Disunion and War,” was published last fall in the *Civil War Book Review*, LSU Libraries’ Special Collections.

**Angela Tenga’s** paper, “The South Will Rise Again: Contagion, War, and Reconstruction in AMC’s *The Walking Dead*, Seasons One through Five,” was published in *The Last Midnight: Essays on Apocalyptic Narratives in Millennial Media*, 2016, pp. 37–47. Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy 53. She also is an editor, with Dawn Keetley, of *Plant Horror: Approaches to the Monstrous Vegetal in Fiction and Film*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. She authored the chapter, “Seeds of Horror: Dominance and Sacrifice in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Wicker Man, and Children of the Corn,” in the collection.

Additionally, Tenga’s paper, “You kill or you die, or you die and you kill’: Meaning and Violence in AMC’s *The Walking Dead*,” was published in the *Journal of Popular Culture*, 49.6 (2016): 1280–1300.

**Wanfa Zhang**, along with Sugu Narayanan, authored “Political Attitudes of China’s and the U.S.’s Future Elites toward Governance and Their Implications for Southeast Asia,” a paper published in the *International Journal of Culture and History*, Vol. 3, No. 1. 2017. Zhang, Narayanan and Feng Sun also presented the paper, “The U.S.–China ‘Thucydides Trap’: Implications of the Attitudes of China’s Future Elites,” at the 29th Annual Meeting of the Association of Chinese Political Studies at Middlebury College in Monterey, California, Oct. 10–11. In addition, Zhang chaired a panel on “Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges” at the conference.



Wanfa Zhang

Zhang also presented “South China Sea Disputes: Stories Beyond Media,” at the Lifelong Scholar Society meeting in Viera on March 1.

## HUM Faculty, Students Present at Modern Language Conference

Special to *The Communicator*

The School of Arts and Communication (SAC) was well-represented at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) conference in Jacksonville on Nov. 4–6.

Debbie Lelekis, Ph.D., assistant professor of English, and Lisa Perdigao, Ph.D., professor and humanities program chair, organized the “Fragmented Identities in Fractured Worlds” session as part of SAMLA’s new initiative, the Undergraduate Research Forum.

The panel featured presentations by four Florida Tech students, humanities major Karlyn Prisco, and three literature minors, Maher Basha, Allison Pinther and Aabha Sant. The literature minor was introduced last fall.

Basha presented his paper, “Forever Resilient: The Lacanian Promise of Restoration to Rape Survivors,” while Pinther presented, “Call Me Sweetheart One More Time’: Feminine Power through Information in Fringe.”



From left: Florida Tech students Aabha Sant, Allison Pinther, Maher Basha and Karlyn Prisco attended the South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) conference along with (standing) English professors Debbie Lelekis, Lisa Perdigao and Melissa Crofton, and COM graduate student Madelaine Elam. Photo courtesy of Lisa Perdigao.

Prisco’s paper, “The Contradictory Nature of Hemingway: How Dystopia Comes to Fruition from Utopia,” also was presented along with Sant’s “Sex in Someone’s Paradise: Sexuality and Social Identity in Joss Whedon’s Dystopias.”

Additionally, Perdigao organized a session entitled “Devolving: Engineering Dystopia” and presented the paper, “I’m not what you are and not what you intended’: Perverse Instantiation in The 100 and Avengers: Age of Ultron.” Global strategic communication graduate student Madelaine Elam also participated in the session, presenting the paper, “Me or It—Who’s the Clone?: The Dilemma of Cloning in *Never Let Me Go*, *The Island*, and *Doctor Who*.”

Lelekis presented the paper, “‘Marooned’ in Paradise: Depictions of Race in Francis Robert Goulding’s Florida Literature.”

Melissa Crofton, Ph.D., assistant professor of English, also attended the conference where she presented the paper, “Rome is but a wilderness of tigers’: The Dystopian World of *Titus Andronicus*” as part of a roundtable session. Angela Tenga, Ph.D., associate professor of English, presented the paper, “His Kingdom for a Horse: *The Walking Dead* in Print and on Screen.”

## SAC STUDENT PROFILE: MEET RILEY GEESKIE

Hello! My name is Riley Geeskie, and I am a senior majoring in communication.



Riley Geeskie

I grew up in a military family, with my father in the U.S. Air Force. This meant spending most of my life moving across the country, making new friends and going to new schools.

We would move about every three years or so, depending on my father's military assignments, but I was alright with that because I got to see the uniqueness of each state and its people. So far, I have lived in eight states, including my birth state, and in 10 different houses.

This is my second time living in Florida.

I originally started college in Colorado at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs with a major in meteorology, but then transferred to Eastern Florida State College once I moved here.

I transferred to Florida Tech in 2015 and changed my major to communication. Since then, I have felt much happier and I feel as though there is a world of opportunity for me.

I am so grateful that I was able to come to Florida Tech and now I look forward to my future.

I have learned to become a better writer and I now feel confident when I speak in front of others. I would personally say that my biggest accomplishment is learning to be confident when speaking and to be proud of who I am as a person.

### 5 THINGS FLORIDA TECH DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT RILEY GEESKIE:

1 I got to be in a cage with a wolf for my 16th birthday.

2 I was a professional model at age 5.

3 I used to do Taekwondo, a Korean martial art, and Judo, a Japanese martial art form involving swords.

4 I have a brother who is an U.S. Air Force pilot.

5 I want to be a voice actress.

## FREE SPEECH EVENTS continued from page 1



From left: Jeff "J.D." Gallop, COM alumnus and Florida Today journalist, joined SAC professors Moti Mizrahi, Jacob Ivey and Dzmitry Yuran in a panel discussion on fake news and the media. Photo Credit: YJ Sohn

The wall was kept up throughout the week for students to add to as the events continued.

The next event was the fake news panel discussion, which also included Jeff "J.D." Gallop, M.S. Global Strategic Communication '15, a veteran journalist with *Florida Today* newspaper.

Melbourne resident Coralee Zaremba said she attended the panel to learn more about what fake news is and how to get to the truth in media stories.

"The more you know, the better life can be for you," she said. "You never want to stop learning."

Free Speech Week continued on Feb. 22 with speaker and *Tampa Bay Times* investigative journalist Leonora LaPeter Anton, who won the Pulitzer Prize for her work involving the decrease of staff at Florida's mental institutions and the increase of violent acts within them.

Her talk, held in the Hartley Room, attracted more than 50 people, mostly Florida Tech students and faculty.

Nga Luong, a graduate student studying psychology, was impressed by Anton's speech.

"Providing people what they want to know and where they need to go to get it is the most useful thing journalism does because it gives answers," Luong said. "The public doesn't know how to obtain certain information, but journalists do and that is what makes it important."

Gallop and other journalists from *Florida Today* joined in a discussion on local news coverage on Feb. 23 in the Olin Engineering building.

The final event and the one that reached the student body the most was on Feb. 24 in the Crawford Green. The event, "Live Free or Eat Free", consisted of students taking a walk into another "government," where their basic rights were taken away.

Students and faculty were offered free food and drinks by the *Crimson* staff.

Under this "government," basic rights were not guaranteed and event participants sometimes received a different food or drink item than requested. Some were also instructed to do something (such as talk about a certain subject) or be thrown in "jail."

Petersen said this exercise focused on appreciating the freedoms granted in the First Amendment, mainly the freedoms of speech, religion and press as well as the freedoms to petition and to assemble.

"We have got to continue to have these conversations," he said.



From left: Florida Today Breaking News Reporter J.D. Gallop, News Columnist John Torres and News Director Mara Bellaby participate in a local news panel discussion on Feb. 23. Photo Credit: Majed Alshammari

"I always wish there were more people at each event, but overall, I think Free Speech Week does have an impact on campus."

This year's event definitely made an impression on Alex Light.

The mechanical engineering major, who is minoring in communication, left Anton's talk feeling more certain than ever of the importance of the First Amendment.

"I think (free speech) is not only a right, but a responsibility," Light said.

"So, if you get the chance to speak up, do it. Don't just stop and let it go."

Communication students Lindsay Isaac, Aaliyah Thomas and Riley Geeskie contributed to this report.

## COM ALUMNI PROFILE: EBUBECHUKWU UBOCHI

By Audrey Gangloff, For *The Communicator*

Ebubechukwu “Ebube” Ubochi didn’t have much time to enjoy a sense of relief after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in communication last fall. In fact, the newly minted Florida Tech alumnus only had a week to visit with family over winter break before diving back into studies as a graduate student.

“I saw continuing with graduate school as a good way to further my academic endeavors while looking for work,” says Ubochi, who comes from Lagos, Nigeria.

“Getting a second degree has always been part of my plan.”

Reflecting on his undergraduate years, Ubochi says he is forever grateful for a wide range of experiences, including one that truly stood out above the others—graduation day.

“Walking across the stage as a graduate felt surreal, but satisfying,” Ubochi says. “I was elated to walk on a platform that represented the pinnacle of my academic achievement thus far.

“It felt like crossing a bridge toward great things to come,” he says.

Ubochi is now a student in the global strategic communication graduate program.

“Students like Ebube bring an international perspective to the classroom, giving more breadth and depth of perspective to our discussions,” says Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D., communication program chair and associate head of the School of Arts and Communication (SAC).

“We are fortunate to have a diverse group of students—age, nationality, gender, race, experience—that broadens our perspectives on topics we encounter in global strategic communication. Ebube adds to that diversity,” she says.

Ubochi loves expanding his horizons, but admits he is as much of a cinephile now as he was as an undergrad.

Among the 18 television shows he is currently watching are popular titles like “How to Get Away With Murder” and “Game of Thrones” as well as some lesser-known shows like “Tokyo Ghoul” and “One Piece.”

Watching TV shows like “The Big Bang Theory” and “How I Met Your Mother” introduced Ubochi to the magic of cinema and fostered his intrinsic love for storytelling.

“There’s just an excellent artistry in creation, and I think film is one of those art forms that truly shows that,” he explains. “It all boils down to a filmmaker’s ability to tell a story.”

Ubochi appreciates the similarities between situational comedies and epic theater. He likes how each television episode is a single piece in the narrative of the season, and yet each one can also stand alone as its own story, from beginning to end.

Also, he is an enthusiastic fan of anime and considers the Japanese animation form one of the more underrated genres.

“Just because it’s animated doesn’t mean it’s ridiculous or contains things that are impossible,” Ubochi says, adding that anime has some of the best storytelling he’s seen.

“Once you understand the parameters of the world that’s created, the stories that you can create are endless.”

The importance of storytelling in Ubochi’s life is backed by the strength of his bonds with his siblings. The oldest of four, he says they are quite the squad.

Besides traveling together and their shared interest in music and sports, watching TV shows together is one of their favorite pastimes.

Ubochi says this strong family bond keeps him grounded. He has lived in three countries—Nigeria, Qatar and the U.S.—and traveled to many more.

Ubochi may be away from his family while at school, but he’s created a new one for himself at Florida Tech.

As an undergraduate, he found a sense of belonging and accomplishment while working with *The Crimson* student newspaper and as a member and communication officer with the school’s African Students Association (ASA).

Obinna Uyanna was on the ASA board with Ubochi and says he is an incredible leader, doing the work others typically shy away from.

“Ebube is very methodical and somewhat of a perfectionist,” said Uyanna, a Nigerian doctoral mechanical engineering student. “He likes to complete his tasks on time and with high levels of precision.”

Ubochi remains active with the ASA and participates in several other campus activities. He also attends First Love Melbourne, a church that meets in the Olin Life Science building on Sunday mornings.

He says being a graduate student feels like a continuation of his old Florida Tech life, but with a new vibe.



*Ebubechukwu “Ebube” Ubochi discusses his educational journey at Florida Tech. Photo Credit: Audrey Gangloff*

“Graduate school honestly hasn’t been too difficult,” he says. “But that’s probably because I’m being very cautious and trying to stay on top of everything. I get the feeling things will heat up pretty soon, and I’m just trying to make sure I’m prepared when that time comes.”

He will use the advanced degree toward starting his career in marketing and web-based media production, including growing his own media production company, Jilshock Media.

Ubochi advises COM seniors who will be graduating this semester to focus on time management during finals. They should also have a post-graduation plan before they cross the commencement stage, he adds.

“Remain focused despite the fatigue because even though it won’t always be easy, it’s the easiest way to make sure time is used efficiently,” Ubochi says.

“Deciding what the post-graduation agenda is as soon as possible is also a good idea, so it becomes clearer when to start applying for jobs and/or graduate programs.”

### CONGRATULATIONS FALL 2016 GRADUATES

These students graduated from the School of Arts and Communication in December.

M.S., Global Strategic Communication:

**Judith M. Brooke**

**Brenda Oliva Quesada**

B.S., Communication:

**Sky Morrison**

**Ebubechukwu “Ebube” Ubochi**

B.A., Humanities:

**Michael Sanchez**

## Math major follows heart, gets accepted into four English grad programs

Literature minor Allison Pinther has been accepted to four graduate programs in English: Boston College, Brandeis University, University of Central Florida and University of Minnesota—Twin Cities.

Interestingly, Pinther is an applied math major and computer science minor. She added the literature minor after developing an interest in literary studies while taking HUM 2213: British and American Literature 2, taught by Lisa Perdigao, Ph.D., English professor and humanities program chair.

She now plans to pursue a Ph.D. in English and to become a college professor.

Pinther presented her senior thesis, “Separating ‘The Hole’ From ‘The Void’: Rings of Narrative in Everything is Illuminated,” during capstone presentations on April 24. She also submitted it as her writing sample for the graduate programs, along with a paper she presented at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) conference held in Jacksonville last November.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN READ-IN

The works of Nikki Giovanni, Billie Holiday, Langston Hughes and even Childish Gambino took center stage Feb. 24 during Florida Tech's second annual African American Read-In.

More than 100 people attended the event, held in the lobby of Evans Library and sponsored by both the library and the School of Arts and Communication (SAC).

Special thanks to SAC faculty Melissa Crofton, Rolanda Hatcher-Gallop, Jacob Ivey, Kyle Knappenberger, Debbie Lelekis, Joy Patterson and Andy Stanfield for their talented contributions as well as to several FIT students.

Photo Credit:  
Jeff Gallop



## SAC Alumni News

- **Rebekah Duntz**, B.S. Communication '16, is the new content marketing specialist for Jaycon Systems, a product design and manufacturing company in Melbourne.
- **Fumiko Shinkawa**, B.A. Humanities (with minor in Communication) '16, is now a community manager at Groundswell Startups, Inc., a nonprofit high-tech business incubator in Melbourne.



*Robert Taylor, history professor and head of the School of Arts and Communication, discusses the U.S. entering World War I during the event: "From Civvies to the Trenches: A Commemoration of America's Entry into World War I" on April 14 in Evans Library. SAC professors Matthew Ruane and Jacob Ivey also participated in the event. Photo Credit: Evans Library*

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