

SPEAKING FROM THE CENTER

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 2 SPRING, 2016

THE DIRECTOR'S PODIUM

BY: KIM CUNY



Last semester, Erin Ellis and I attended the National Communication Association's annual convention where Erin presented an original manuscript plus a teaching idea and I participated in two panel discussions. We also published one chapter, two essays, and two journal articles. This semester, there are many things that are new around here and some that remain the same.

NEW

*We are developing interpersonal communication programming to be launched both for the residence halls and student employees in the fall.

*Our web page has an updated look. We continue to update the content.

*Critical thinking support by way of our new *bring a friend to your video viewing* sessions has expanded far beyond CST 105.

NOT NEW

*We do not have a one-size-fits-all perspective. We are open to your new ideas in supporting oral communication at UNCG.

*We continue to offer public speaking, group, and interpersonal communication consultations.

*We provide a safe place for non-native English speakers to practice conversation with native speakers.

*Speakers who need to be recorded when they come to practice can be recorded on their own electronic device or we can use ours. If we record on one of our devices we'll share by Google Drive before the consultation ends.

*Due to the process nature of our work and space limitations,

we require appointments. It is never too early to call for an appointment. It can, however, be too late. Appointments need to take place two or more days before the final presentation date.

*We are taking requests for our interactive oral communication workshops.

*During a consultation, speakers work one-on-one with a communication consultant trained to offer guidance and feedback. Each individual session lasts 30 minutes while a group session lasts 60. We can assist you at any stage of your presentation, from discovery to organization to delivery.

*Our services are open and available to the entire campus community and, through our community outreach, to not-for-profit off-campus communities as well.

VITAL STATISTICS

Location: 3211 MHRA

Phone: (336) 256 1346

Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 10am to 7pm

Friday 9am to 12pm

Sunday 5pm to 8pm

Web: <http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu>

Gmail: UNCGSpeaking

Summer: Check Web for hours

OUR AWARDS

Essma Boucteb won the Weiss Top Undergraduate Research Paper award for the communication center research she conducted under the direction of Dr. Schwartzman in Communication Studies.

Speaking Center students Anastasia Shymanovich, Katie Haynes, Essma Boucteb, and Karen Boger have all been inducted into UNCG's Golden Chain Honor Society.

Anastasia Shymanovich was also inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

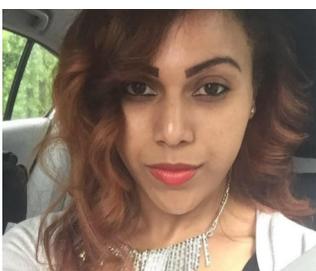
Karen Boger is our spring 2016 Pete and Joan Allan Student Research Fellow.

Taylor Williams, our Graduate Consultant and Communication Studies MA candidate, has been nominated for the National Communication Association's top Communication Center Graduate Tutor award.

BECOMING A CONSULTANT

Students interested in becoming a Consultant first complete CST 390. To apply for CST 390 admission, you'll need to provide proof of a 3.0 GPA or higher, a faculty recommendation letter, and a letter of personal interest that indicates (after you complete CST 390) a minimum of a one-year commitment to a part-time paid position or a one-semester, 90-hour internship (CST 412). Learn more at: <http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/staff/index.php>

STUDENT PRESENTATION RUBRICS BY: ERIN ELLIS



In many classes across the campus, faculty and staff find themselves assigning presentations to students. This means that faculty must not only listen to presentations but must also evaluate students on their oral communication competencies.

Recently, I attended the National Association of Communication Centers annual conference held in Pittsburgh, PA. I was surrounded by colleagues and their suggestions for how to evaluate student presenta-

tions. Some faculty used narrative rubrics, others used numerical rubrics, while others used no rubric but relied on student peer evaluations.

There are so many different ways to assess student speaking, but which one will students benefit from the most? While there is no single correct way to evaluate presentations or one single rubric that can be used across every discipline, a simple internet search for rubrics specific to one discipline will yield tremendous results from universities across the nation. You can research the rubric that you think would work best as it pertains to the learning outcome(s) to be assessed.

There are two organizations in particular that can help with understanding rubrics and

selecting one particular to your course. The National Communication Association (www.natcom.org) outlines the purpose, rationale, scoring procedure, and characteristics of an effective speech evaluation form. The Association of American Colleges & Universities (www.aacu.org/value-rubrics) has a list of 16 rubrics that you might also find useful.

Whichever rubric you find calls your name, remember that students need oral communication instruction, practice, and feedback if they are to improve. The more instruction we can give students on what an effective speech looks, sounds, and feels like, the easier it will be for faculty to evaluate those speeches.

MEET TAYLOR WILLIAMS, GRADUTE CONSULTANT

BY: KATELYN WILKINSON



If you've ever attended a Speaking Center workshop, orientation, or just stopped by the Center on a weekday afternoon, chances are you've run in to Taylor Williams – an energetic, focused graduate student who's quick with a joke and a smile. Armed with markers and a white board, she's always ready to unleash her massive store of communication knowledge on students and strangers alike.

After graduating from UNCG with a BA in Communication Studies, Taylor has returned to the department to pursue her MA and work in the Speaking Center

as a Graduate Consultant. "I think the work we do here matters and can make a direct impact on students' abilities to think critically and exercise their voices," she said of her decision. "It's important to be able to meet students where they're at. And, no two consultations are ever the same – it's just fun!" Her work has not only been enjoyable from the perspective of a consultant teaching others, but a student learning as well.

"Conducting workshops was beneficial for me as a public speaker. I learned how to present with a partner better. I also enjoyed the

fast pace and ability to have fun teaching about something I love, which the workshop structure virtually guarantees as opposed to having students sit in a lecture."

In addition to her role as a Graduate Consultant, Taylor is also devoted to our community outreach, specifically engaging with a group of special needs adults living on a working farm called Peacehaven Community Farm. She has pioneered programs for them with the help of the Speaking Center precisely designed to fit the communication needs of this often overlooked group of people. "It was something that was built from the ground up, and it's been really impactful because we've been able to include the [speaking center] staff as well," she said of the project. "It has taught me a lot about being adaptable and flexible in communication pedagogy, particularly in diverse communities." This work has become the foundation of her future goals, as Taylor plans to continue developing sound curriculum for Peacehaven that can not only be duplicated for Beyond Academics students on campus, but published as well. "I would

really like to be part of the reason our services are expanded and able to reach to people with all different communication skills," she said earnestly.

When Taylor is not out spreading communication love to the masses, she can often be found at home, listening to music and hanging out with her laid-back pup Dupree. Even in those calmest of moments, however, the art and importance of communication remains imprinted on her mind. "I want to eliminate the frustrations of miscommunication, which can be destructive to relationships," she reiterated. "We can develop models, strategies, and tools to reduce those frustrations to their most minimal points."

As is abundantly clear to anyone that knows her, Taylor will undoubtedly meet the goals she has set for herself, using in part the skills she has learned here at UNCG. "One thing this job has taught me about myself is the power of being resilient regardless of the obstacles you are facing – persevering is very important, and I've learned that through my work at the Speaking Center."

THE MAKING OF MASTER COMMUNICATORS

BY: MITCHELL BYERS



While we have always worked to support the voices of communities off campus, we had never done so on a farm! We have been spending Friday afternoons at Peacehaven Community Farm since the start of the 2015-16 academic year, forming a partnership that gives a voice to the adults with special needs who live on the farm by way of a self-paced certificate program.

Currently living at the Peacehaven Farm are four core members: Jeff, Anne, Molly, and Jake. The Speaking Center takes trips to the farm to support the core members in improving their interpersonal and social communication skills. Last April, three of our undergraduate team members joined our director at the 14th Annual Excellence at the Center Conference to share their work, what impact the outreach has had on them as consultants, and a video group interview with the core members themselves. Here is a snapshot of what they had to share:

Rachel Siczowski spoke about each core member and the individual struggles of communication they each wanted to attend to. She also provided details about the fully-sustainable farm itself, which sits on 83 acres and includes a main house with land for animals and crops. The farm also hosts workdays where people from the community come to volunteer on the farm, meet core members, and learn more about Peacehaven.

Anna Curtis primarily discussed the one-on-one sessions she had with core members – specifically Jake, who she helped to speak up and fully pronounce sentences. Anna admitted that she suffers from anxieties in communication, especially when conversations don't go back and forth between people. "I felt like I wasn't doing anything right, that they weren't learning" Anna explained. However, she soon learned that these pauses in communication were normal because core members tended to stay quieter if they didn't know what to talk about. Over time, Anna became more comfortable and was informed that her presence was meaningful and that the Speaking Center team always has her back.

Karen Boger presented the theatre technique of side coaching she utilized to help core members with their individual communication complications. "Side coaching," Karen said, "is when someone is actively at your side and coaches you while in the communication situation, providing techniques to help throughout the conversation." Borrowing from theatre does not stop there; we also engage in improvisation by using props such as hula hoops for personal space, and outfits to create different personas to aid each core member in learning introductions and asking questions about others. Strategies such as open-ended questions were used to help conversation become more comfortable and open between each core member. Karen specifically stressed that these were not games they played, but effective tools to give the core members a more improved, confident, and sociable ability to communicate.