Kelly Nurge graduated cum laude in 2011 with a double major in public relations and English, and is now a sponsorship marketing specialist with IBM. “I help our sales team out, and we handle different sports and cultural events throughout the country,” Nurge related. She attributes her success in landing a job in the difficult job market to her time at The East Carolinian. She first interned for the newspaper as the public editor, and later served as the opinion editor, managing a staff of 12 people. Certain public relations projects also enhanced her resume. “We did some huge projects in PR [Strategies]. We did a whole [semester-long] presentation for Kioti Tractors,” said Nurge, adding that School of Communication coursework also involved a lot of volunteer work.

Another recent graduate is Katey Warren (2012). She majored in Journalism and minored in Spanish. Warren moved to Harrisonburg, Va., for her new job, which she started this January. “I work for the City of Harrisonburg,” said Warren, whose title is Tourism Public Relations and Social Media Specialist. Warren has the distinction of being the first person to handle public relations for the Harrisonburg tourism department. Her job involves pitching story ideas about Harrisonburg to editors and writers in the media in order to promote tourism. Warren is familiar with being on the re-

“If they are not interested in that first sentence, they aren’t going to read it,” said Warren. “...grab their attention immediately.”

—Katey Warren

continued on page 4
Hands-on training can enhance a student's ability to apply theories and concepts taught in the classroom. It can also spark creativity and challenge interpersonal/organizational communication skills. With those goals in mind, award-winning SOC faculty member Dr. John Howard involves his Organizational Communication students in a major project each semester.

The project involves groups of students developing, producing and operating an organization that they have created. This organization can be commercial or non-profit.

Howard related that past projects have included the Women’s Football League and other sports teams; as well as restaurants and entertainment arenas.

Creating an A+ organization involves three major components: a 15-20-page paper, an oral presentation, and student evaluations of both their own work and the contributions of their other group members. Howard stated that the third part of this project — assessing co-workers fairly and accurately -- makes it an invaluable experience for students.

“Arguably the most important part is assessment; you evaluate yourself and everyone else in the group… [and it’s] one of the last times you’ll be able to evaluate others and be evaluated without any consequences,” said Howard.

“It was a great experience,” said James Love, a former Organizational Communication student. “I learned to work in a group and gained respect for all my group members; I learned better time management skills too.”

Love, whose organization was a Pirate-themed restaurant in Greenville, added that he would like to see the group’s idea become a reality in the future.

Howard challenges student groups to tap their creativity by Tory Rodriguez

This semester, Howard’s students presented their final projects in Mendenhall Student Center. One final project presented was “College Park,” a Greenville-located amusement park offering rides such as “The Pirate Ship,” “Rivalry Rapids” and “The Tar-heel.” Pictured: Dr. Howard introduces the day’s presentations, members of the “College Park” group and their related brochure.

An Open House Tour of the Multimedia Newsroom and Communication Center and the School of Communication/CommCrew Spring Reception were both held on Saturday, April 20.

Distinguished Speaker and Alumni Award Recipient Valeria Lassiter (’90) encouraged those in attendance at the reception to, “Choose your unique path and follow it.” Lassiter is the founder and CEO of Lassiter & Associates, a strategic partnership and fundraising management firm. A champion for women’s rights and women in leadership, Lassiter’s clients come from varied organizations, including educational, cultural, faith-based and public policy.
Students help SOC share success stories and provide insight

by Liz Hintze

The School of Communication Student Ambassadors program is a group formed in the fall of 2012. Coordinator for Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Todd Fraley, and Cyndee Mueller, an administrative support staff member, developed the idea for the SOC ambassadors, modeling the program after one the university already has in place. SOC student ambassadors help host official functions, including alumni events, and act as student liaisons to various additional communities. They assist others in large part by sharing their own experiences.

"While I enjoy talking with prospective students, it was often difficult to answer a lot of their questions regarding campus life," said Fraley. "We realized a student perspective was needed."

The students ambassadors are available for tours and to answer questions for potential students. They also help communicate the success of students and faculty.

Mutual benefits

The ambassadors have opportunities to network with professionals and strengthen their resumes, while building their interpersonal, leadership, group and public speaking skills.

"Being a School of Communication Ambassador has been really rewarding," said Caitlin Hunnicutt, who additionally serves as Editor in Chief for The East Carolinian. She has worked with others to help high-light student accomplishments, as well as collaborated with alumni in CommCrew, and shared with potential students "the great things ECU’s School of Comm offers."

Ambassador Kristin Smith, who, besides volunteering as an ambassador, is the Communication Graduate Assistant Student Association interim vice president and a graduate teaching assistant, feels similarly. "As an ambassador, I have had the privilege to represent ECU at various events throughout campus," Smith said. "These opportunities have enriched my academic experience and enhanced my skills as a communicator."

Qualifications

A competitive application process led to the selection of seven students—described by Fraley as "a great group"—to launch the new program. Fraley stated that ambassadors who maintain the required GPA and show continued interest are eligible to serve in this capacity until they graduate. Requirements include ability to attend mandatory training, as well as being enrolled at ECU for three semesters or a graduate student enrolled for one semester. According to Fraley, the students were additionally selected to ensure there would be representation of the four concentrations: journalism, public relations, media studies and interprofessional organizations communication. The current ambassadors are: Deanna Clow, Chelsea Guild, Elizabeth Hintze, Caitlin Hunnicutt, Victoria Loveless, Fanny Mendoza, Ke’Aria Morgan, Kristin Smith and James Summers III.

Adviser and Distance Education Coordinator Jennifer Cabacar with student ambassadors from the SOC—Kristin Smith, Deanna Clow, Caitlin Hunnicutt and Victoria Loveless—at ECU Excels, a celebration honoring ECU students.

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Student Journalism Society first

by Patrick Meine

ECU’s School of Communication has its own chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America, but a new organization is the first to focus on students with a journalism concentration.

Journalism Instructor Charles Twardy developed the Student Journalism Society, which began meeting this spring.

"The idea ultimately is to apply for membership in the Society of Professional Journalists," said Twardy, "and to become a chapter of it here at ECU!" Twardy explained that before a school can apply to become a chapter of the society, it needs to have a group already established.

Twardy volunteered to head up this organization because he feels it will help current students to excel, adding that the group will augment the professional experience faculty members already bring to their teaching by introducing students to other professionals in the field.

The association might also assist students with finding an internship or job by putting them in contact with people in current media positions.

Forty students signed up for the group near the beginning of this semester. A regular meeting time has not been set but will be determined by an executive board.

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Special thanks to:

Spring 2013 COMM 3310 Copy Editing and Design students for their contributions to the contents of this newsletter.

Here’s how to find us and stay in touch:

LinkedIn www.linkedin.com (search “Comm Crew”)
Facebook www.facebook.com (search “Comm Crew”)
Twitter: twitter.com/commcrew

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Kaley Warren was named both the School of Communication’s Most Outstanding Graduate and the Journalism Concentration Outstanding Senior. She also received the ECU Foreign Languages and Literature’s Most Outstanding Spanish Minor award.

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Caitlin Hunnicutt and James L. Summers III at SOC Open House Tours in April 2013.
You can help the School of Communication continue to grow by: joining CommCrew

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Please designate your gift to: “College of Fine Arts and Communication,” then “School of Communication,” and under “Other Area” type “CommCrew.”

Ready for more SOC news and info? Check out: www.ecu.edu/com