

# Center for Communication and Media Research

A Center in the Department of Communication to Advance Inter-Disciplinary Research

## Mission

Faculty from the Department of Communication propose a *Center for Communication and Media Research* to advance knowledge and to support scholarly and applied inquiry into the study of interpersonal, group, organizational and media communication. We believe an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to study many of the complex social, political and economic aspects of communication. The *Center* shall promote excellence in research and teaching. To achieve this, the Center will aggressively seek external funding to foster cross-disciplinary alliances and research between departments and schools on the campus of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

## General Description and Rationale

The complex field of Communication has exploded as liaisons between communication scholars and individuals in allied fields have formed. A Center designed to foster cooperation among faculties across the university will facilitate the grant and funding application process. Specifically, a cross-disciplinary approach will aid both in identifying funding sources and by drawing upon theoretical and methodological expertise in the process of writing proposals. A multidisciplinary character also broadens the types of grants and funding for which Center-affiliated faculty can apply. Additional departments and schools interested in engaging in Center activities may include Journalism, Law, Business, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and Computer Science. Alliances such as these will facilitate research in *communication* and:

- *Advertising*
- *Dispute resolution*
- *Education*
- *Environmental issues*
- *Family*
- *Health*
- *Information technology*
- *Legal concerns*
- *Life stages*
- *Media audiences*
- *Organizational concerns*
- *Politics*
- *Religion*

Whether applying as an individual or group, Center-sponsored faculty grant or funding applications strengthen the competitive position of the Fulbright College and University of Arkansas. An existing Center conveys the message that individuals with national research expertise and reputations are located at the institution. In the highly competitive and difficult grant application process, an application from an individual or team based in a Center implies that applicants are committed to completing and sustaining nationally funded research projects and programs.

Knowledge produced by the Center will be used to develop educational outreach programs and provide for intellectual exchange by disseminating information or sponsoring colloquia. These outreach programs may help underserved populations, media institutions, for-profit, non-profit, and not-for-profit organizations, and educational institutions. As such, the Center will benefit the University of Arkansas community as well as individuals, groups and organizations across the state, region and nation by conducting relevant research and disseminating the results of that research.

## **Benefits to the University of Arkansas and the J. William Fulbright College**

- **Grants and Contracts:** The most likely sources of grant support are interest groups, foundations and federal funding agencies. A list of potential funding agencies is attached in Appendix A.
- **Intra- and Inter-disciplinary alliances:** The Center will foster Intra- and Inter-disciplinary alliances and research among departments, colleges and schools such as Agriculture, Communication, Computer Science, Business, Journalism, Law, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology. Such alliances facilitate the grant and funding application process through the identification of funding sources and allows for the use of a wide array of theoretical and methodological expertise.
- **Outreach Programs:** Knowledge produced by the Center could be used to develop educational outreach programs and provide for intellectual exchange by disseminating information or sponsoring colloquia. Outreach programs could benefit underserved populations, media institutions, for-profit, non-profit, and not-for-profit organizations, as well as educational institutions. Such programs will benefit the UA community as well as individuals, groups, and organizations across the state and region.
- **Recognition/visibility.** Promoting the Center will increase the various departments' visibility. If and when the center is formally approved, we plan to distribute an announcement that includes a list of services, outreach programs, a mission statement, etc., to scholars who do research in the various project areas. We plan to invite some of the better-known scholars and citizens to serve on the Center's advisory board.
- **Supplement to Existing Academic Programs.** Faculty affiliated with the Center will make research/teaching presentations to undergraduate and graduate classes at the University of Arkansas and other universities. The Center will enhance the quality of extant and future doctoral programs at the University. We believe that grants and contracts will aid us in developing doctoral programs committed to exceptional training in research. The resources generated by the Center will be instrumental in attracting the highest caliber doctoral students from around the nation and globe.
- **Research and Data Repository.** The Center can compile its own collection of reports, research articles, and other publications. The faculty associated with the Center can author, compile and disseminate a collection of working/discussion papers. These items can be distributed to government officials, interest groups, the media, and other relevant parties
- **Private Partnerships.** Associations may be developed with the private sector allowing us to use our research skills to solve the problems facing organizations as well as promoting internship and employment opportunities for students.

### **Start-up Resources**

The Center will be housed in the Department of Communication. The Chair of the Department of Communication and a principle faculty member will provide initial leadership for the Center. A permanent director will be appointed at a future date. Initial expenses are the cost of letterhead and envelopes. We plan to obtain external funding to sustain the cost of the Center..

### **Center Areas of Expertise**

The Center's cross-disciplinary researchers (See Appendix B) possess expertise in a wide range of communication specialties and methodologies including but not limited to:

#### COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

- Media audiences and human information processing
- Processes and effects associated with using media
- Media information about terrorism and war
- The social or cultural impact of media messages, individuals' use of media and information technologies, strategic practices of media institutions and their effects on media systems

#### COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING ISSUES

- Self-regulatory, regulatory, market, organizational and ethical issues relating to television broadcasting and advertising

#### COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Individuals' use of and attitudes toward information technologies
- Computer mediated communication and social relationships
- Social impact of information technology
- Workplace applications and evaluation of information and communication technology
- Educational technology including instructional design, implementation, and evaluation
- Communication and the information technology workforce

#### COMMUNICATION AND POLITICS

- Political advertising and persuasion strategies
- Traditional media and the Internet in political campaigns
- Developing political information systems

#### COMMUNICATION AND THE LAW

- First Amendment issues and controversies
- Courtroom and judicial communication including jury selection and effective advocacy
- Issues regarding deceptive infomercials and advertising

## COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL SETTINGS

- Communication effectiveness and processes in organizations
- Communication and the information technology workforce
- Employee quality of work life issues and turnover
- Employee health (esp. substance abuse prevention) and health campaigns
- Organizational dynamics in health care settings
- Workplace communication and diversity due to ethnicity/race/gender
- Strategic processes of and communication within media organizations
- Workplace mediation
- Public relations and organizational image management during crises
- Ethical decision-making

## COMMUNICATION AND HEALTH

- Tobacco and drug abuse prevention campaigns
- Organizational dynamics including the quality of the work environment in health care settings
- Employee health campaigns such as substance abuse prevention

## COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

- Teacher-student and student-student communication within and outside the classroom
- Instructional communication strategies with various teaching models
- Course-related communication evaluation
- Educational technology – instructional design, implementation, and evaluation
- Instructors' and students' use of and attitudes toward educational technologies

## COMMUNICATION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Communication strategies for effectively conveying environmental concerns and problems
- Group decision-making regarding environmental issues
- Collaborative community discussions regarding environmental concerns

## COMMUNICATION AND RELIGION

- Religion and media
- Media portrayals of various denominations and faiths

## COMMUNICATION DURING LIFE STAGES

- Communication and end-of-life issues
- Children's and adolescents' social skills development
- Children, families, and media messages
- College students and credit card abuse

## COMMUNICATION AND FAMILIES

- Parent-child communication
- Problem solving and marital dyads
- Family discourse

- Portrayals of families presented through the media
- Parental monitoring of children's media use

#### COMMUNICATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- Communication behaviors that increase conflict
- Problem solving strategies
- Cooperative versus competitive behaviors
- Verbal and nonverbal speaking and listening skills

#### COMMUNICATION DURING LIFE STAGES

- Communication and end-of-life issues
- Children's and adolescents' social skills development
- Children, families, and media messages
- College students and credit card abuse

#### RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

- Qualitative research including focus groups, site-based observational studies, and analyses using electronic databases, government and organizational documents
- Quantitative research including national mail surveys, telephone surveys, field experiments, laboratory experiments, organizational audits, content analysis, and statistical procedures

## *Appendix A*

### **Potential Funding Sources**

American Association of Retired People  
American Legacy Foundation  
Americans for Nonsmokers Rights  
Armstrong Family Foundation  
Benton Foundation  
Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids  
Center for Substance Abuse Technology  
Centers for Disease Control  
Children Now  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Ford Foundation  
Kaiser Family Foundation  
MacArthur Foundation  
Markle Foundation  
National Cancer Institute  
National Institute of Drug Abuse  
National Institute on Aging  
National Institutes of Health (including NIMH & NICHD)  
National Parent Teacher Association  
National Science Foundation  
Pew Charitable Trusts  
Public Health Service  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
SMSA  
Sloan Foundation  
Spencer Foundation  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
William T. Grant Foundation

## *Appendix B*

### **Research Capability and Expertise**

The research team at the University of Arkansas includes individuals with strong interdisciplinary strengths relevant to communication, media and public affairs. All are experienced in publishing in national journals and serving in national academic or professional organizations. Collectively, the team has produced books, book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers as well as articles that have appeared in magazines and newsletters directed toward journalists and educators. The interdisciplinary strengths of the research team at the University of Arkansas including communication, journalism, public policy and political science has and will produce data developed from multiple academic and applied perspectives.

- Dr. Myria W. Allen holds a doctorate degree in Communication with emphases in management and research methods from the University of Kentucky (1988). Her research interests include organizational, health, environmental, and intercultural communication, as well as workplace mediation. She worked as a print journalist and editor as well as in a public relations capacity for health and educational organizations. Since 1985, she has consulted for or conducted research in hospitals, trucking companies (J.B. Hunt), universities (Louisiana State University), engineering firms, television stations, governmental entities (Council of State Governments), trade associations, food processors (Tyson), and volunteer organizations. Her scholarship is published in journals such as the Journal of Applied Communication Research, Management Communication Quarterly, the Journal of Public Relations Research, Sex Roles, Women's Studies in Communication, Communication Monographs, Communication Yearbook 16, Consultation: An International Journal, and Journalism Quarterly. She has served on the editorial board for the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Management Communication Quarterly, and the Southern Communication Journal. She teaches quantitative research methods and statistics at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Allen is an associate professor in the Communication Department.
- Dr. Patricia Amason holds a master's degree in Secondary Education - Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Kentucky and a Ph. D. in Communication from Purdue University (1993). Her research focuses on provision of social support in interpersonal relationships, social skills development, quality of work life issues, and social networks. She has published in Journal of Applied Communication Research, Communication Research, Communication Yearbook 10, Southern Communication Journal, Sex Roles, Health Communication, and Journal of Family Communication. She has done consulting work in a variety of organizations such as Northwest Health Systems, Tyson's Foods, HelpCard, Inc., Springdale AR Public Schools, Ferris State University and serves as Chair of Advisory Board for Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers—Fayetteville. She also has served as an officer for the Applied Communication and Communication Theory divisions of the Southern States Communication Association, and on the Editorial Board for a special issue of Communication Research focused on health communication. She is the recipient of two research grants given by the Science Information Liaison Office funded through the Arkansas State Legislature. Dr. Amason is an associate professor in the Communication Department.

- Dr. Robert M. Brady holds a doctorate degree in Communication from the University of Michigan. His research interests include persuasion, media effects, and organizational communication. He has worked extensively as a consultant and instructor for management training programs in manufacturing, retail, governmental, and non-profit organizations. These organizations include the U.S. Marine Corps, Arkansas Department of Health, Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., Army Air Force Exchange Service, Simmons Industries, Kawneer Inc., Arkansas Municipal Clerks Association, and the Arkansas Bankers Association. His scholarship is published in the American Communication Journal, Management Communication Quarterly, Journal of Business Communication, Communication Monographs, Western Journal of Communication, Journal of Language and Social Psychology, and Social Behavior and Personality. Dr. Brady is an Associate Professor and the Chair of the Communication department.
- Dr. Thomas Rosteck holds a doctorate degree in Communication Arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1987). His research interests include public and mass communication, especially non-fiction and documentary television and film. He worked in corporate communications and public relations for state government (Tennessee) and Fortune 100 corporations (FedEx Corporation), while also free-lancing as a producer and writer of industrial and educational films and videos. His scholarship has appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Southern Communication Journal, Western Journal of Communication, and Rhetoric Review among others. He is the author of two books: See It Now Confronts McCarthyism: Television Documentary and the Politics of Representation (winner of 1995 Choice Academic Book Award) and At the Intersection: Cultural Studies and Rhetorical Studies (winner of National Communication Association Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Public Address), and six book chapters. He has served on the editorial boards of the Quarterly Journal of Speech, Southern Communication Journal, and Communication Quarterly. He teaches courses in communication and culture at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- Dr. Todd Shields has a master's and doctorate degree in Political Science with emphases in political communication and research methods from the University of Kentucky (1994). His research examines the relative impact of visual versus textual messages and how television news viewers develop attitudes and beliefs about public policy issues. Dr. Shields was co-principal investigator of a \$450,000 grant from the US Department of Education focusing on political attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of people with disabilities. He is a co-author of Money Matters published by Roman and Littlefield (2000). His research has been published in many journals, including Political Communication, American Journal of Political Science, The Journal of Politics, American Politics Quarterly, and Political Research Quarterly. He serves as a reviewer for many journals including Political Communication, Critical Studies in Mass Communication and American Political Science Review. Dr. Shields is the Chair of the Department of Political Science and Associate Director of the, Fulbright Institute.

- Dr. Stephen Smith holds a doctorate in Communication Studies from Northwestern University. He completed special studies in First Amendment issues at Harvard Law School. He has been a Visiting Fellow at the University of Wisconsin's LaFollette Institute of Public Affairs; a Visiting Fellow in the Departments of Politics and Anthropology, Princeton University; a Visiting Scholar at Stanford Law School; an Andrew Mellon Fellow in the Department of History and the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, University of Pennsylvania; a Visiting Scholar at Emmanuel College and a Visiting Fellow in Wolfson College, Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge; a Visiting Scholar at St. Benet's Hall and St. Edmund Hall and a Visiting Fellow in Manchester College, University of Oxford, and a Visiting Professor of Rhetoric and Communication Studies at the University of Virginia. Smith previously served as a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives, Vice President of the Arkansas Constitutional Convention, Chief of Staff to the Attorney General, and Executive Assistant to Governor Bill Clinton. Smith's books include, Myth, Media and the Southern Mind (1985); Reason and the Republic: The Oratory of James Madison (in press); Clinton on Stump, State and Stage: The Rhetorical Road to the White House (1994) and Preface to the Presidency: The Speeches of Bill Clinton, 1974-1992 (1996). His work has also appeared in Free Speech Yearbook, Oregon Law Review, Arkansas Law Review, American Communication Journal, Communication Education, Southern Communication Journal, Communication Law Review, Journal of American Culture, Journal of Popular Culture, Southern Cultures, Studies in Popular Culture, Journal of Communication Inquiry, Journal of Communication Studies, and State Government. Dr. Smith is a professor in the Department of Communication and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science.
- Dr. Ron Warren has a master's degree in speech communication from Colorado State University and a Ph.D., Mass Communication – Telecommunications from Indiana University (1997). He has expertise in studies of media systems, media content analysis, audience research, educational technology, information technology, and research methods. He has participated in applied research projects for several local and national clients, including AT&T, NCR, and the Indiana Partnership for Distance Education. He is a co-author of Distance Education: System Design and Implementation published by the Indiana University School of Continuing Studies, which received the 1996 Outstanding Book Award from the National Association of Continuing Education Administrators. His research has been published in both international and national journals, including Journal of Communication, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, Journal of Family Communication, and Media & Society. Dr. Warren is an assistant professor in the Communication Department.

- Dr. Jan LeBlanc Wicks has a master's degree in advertising and a Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences – Mass Media from Michigan State University (1989). Her research examines self-regulatory, regulatory and ethical issues regarding advertising and infomercials. She held positions at advertising agencies and television stations. She is a co-author of Media Management published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Her research is published in Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media and Journal of Media Economics. Dr. Wicks is the recipient of the 2000 Baskett Mosse Award, a national award from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), given in recognition of her outstanding research. She also received an American Academy of Advertising (AAA) Research Fellowship. She has been chair of the AAA Publications and Research Committees. She held several AEJMC posts including head of the Advertising Division. Dr. Wicks is an associate professor in the Journalism Department.
- Dr. Rob Wicks has a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri, and a Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences - Mass Media from Michigan State University (1987). His research areas include information processing, media audiences and effects, and developing technologies such as the Internet. He is a former newspaper, radio and television journalist and editor, and has served as a media consultant. He has been employed in both journalism and communication departments. He is the author of Understanding Audiences: Learning to Use the Media Constructively (2001) published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Dr. Wicks has published in Journal of Advertising Research, Communication Research, Communication Yearbook, Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, and Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly and other academic journals. He has also published articles in the Society of Professional Journalists' Quill and the Radio and Television News Directors Association Communicator. He held several posts within the Association for Education and Journalism in Mass Communication (AEJMC) including head of the Radio-Television Journalism Division. He is a member of the editorial boards of Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media and Visual Communication Quarterly. Dr. Wicks is an associate professor in the Communication Department.