

The Alabama Communicator

Newsletter of The Alabama Communication Association

Fall 2021

ACA Fall Forum Set for Nov.9

In a continued effort to emphasize outreach and involvement of undergraduate students, the Alabama Communication Association will host a virtual forum focused on career preparation.

The ACA Fall Forum takes place Thursday, November 9 from 4 to 5 p.m. via Zoom.

Dr. Jay Hunt from The University of South Alabama will headline the line-up of speakers who will provide insights on how to communicate your best self when preparing to enter the job market.



Hunt

Also featured on the panel of presenters will be Dr. Jeff Walker from the University of Montevallo and Dr. Lindsey Sherrill from the University of North Alabama.

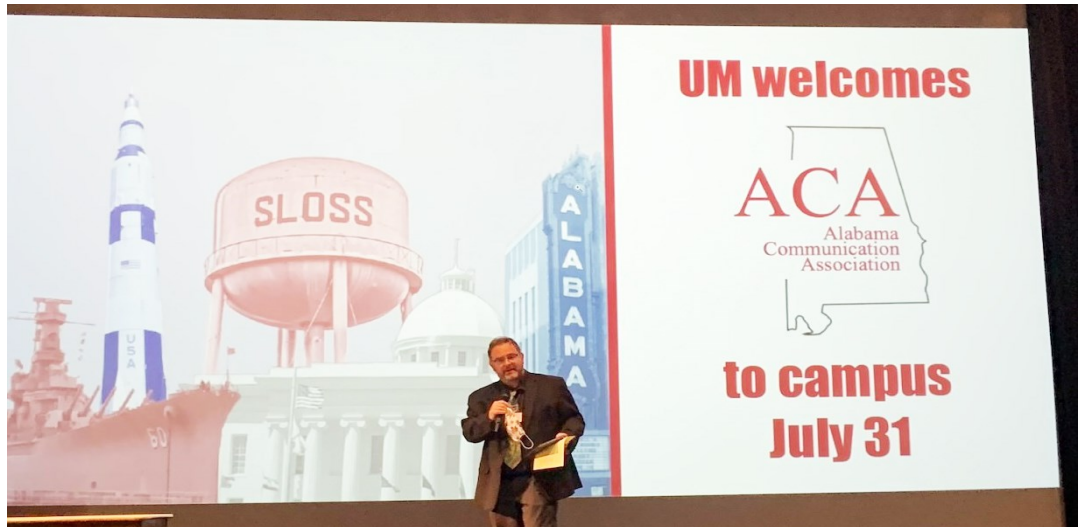
This is the second year that ACA has offered virtual forums as a part of its line-up of events as a year-round organization.

Faculty are encouraged to bring classes to the one-hour virtual session. Zoom meeting information for Nov. 9 event will be posted on the ACA e-mail listserv.

For more information on the forum, contact ACA Executive Director Ray Ozley at OzleyR@montevallo.edu

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John Saunders, who launched ACA more than a decade ago, received the Executive Director's Award.

University of Montevallo Hosts First Hybrid ACA Convention

Delayed 10th anniversary celebration recognizes founders

By **Niya Miller**
Vice President-Elect

After canceling its 10th annual convention due to COVID-19 Pandemic, the Alabama Communication Association held its 11th annual conference July 31.

The annual event was hosted by The University of Montevallo's College of Fine Arts. Most of the seven research panels and six other sessions took place in Strong Hall, which is home to the UM Department of Communication.



Black

Longtime ACA member Jason Black, who is now chair of the Department of Communication Studies at University of North Carolina-Charlotte, traveled back to Alabama

to give the keynote address as the association celebrated its 10th anniversary one year late.

Black's address and the Presidential Address were held in UM's new Center for the Arts.

As is the ACA tradition, the convention culminated with the "Top Papers" session and awards presentations. The following

are this year's award winners:

Bradley-Bryant Top Undergraduate Student Paper Award:

"Streamlined please! More streamlined!" Student and Faculty Perceptions of a University's Crisis Communication in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Presented to Julia Cleland, The University of Alabama in Huntsville

AND

"Deconstructing Hope: A Descriptive Analysis of Milk's "You've Got to Have Hope" Speech"

Presented to Marcos Lopez from the University of Montevallo

Top Graduate Student Paper Award:

"Framing the Assassination of Qassem Soleimani: Perspective from CNN and Fox News Editorials and Commentaries"

Presented to Bill Singleton, The University of Alabama

2021 ACA Teaching Award: Tiffany R. Wang, University of Montevallo

Executive Director's Award: Dr. John Saunders, University of Alabama in Huntsville

See more photos on pages 4-5

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear ACA Colleagues,

I write this letter with a huge sense of gratitude and hope for the future of our discipline in the state of Alabama. These past few months and years have proven to me the importance of the Alabama Communication Association (ACA) in helping us stay connected and on top of innovative ideas in Communication research and application throughout our state.

I thank the leaders of our organization for adapting and adjusting with a positive spirit as the world changed, and I'm grateful to our membership for continuing to support the ACA as we tried to navigate the uncharted waters. In a sense, the University of Montevallo (UM) became a "port" for ACA to rest through the storm of the uncertain times we experienced during the pandemic.

I'm happy to say the ACA ship is finally sailing away from the Montevallo harbor and heading down South for 2022!

I served as the ACA Program Planner for both 2020 and 2021 Conferences. In 2020, we stayed afloat as we adjusted and held a Town Hall-style Zoom conference, we remained connected through several virtual roundtable Zoom sessions through-

out the academic year, and we committed to holding the 2021 ACA Conference at UM in any format we could. That format turned out to be a hybrid conference with both in-person and virtual attendance.

I cannot thank our "pilot" and Executive Director, Dr. Ray Ozley, enough for his steady leadership through the storm and fog. He was calm, collaborative, and inclusive in all decisions.

Our 2021 ACA Conference was a huge success. We were able to host in person (although masked), we were able to offer Zoom access (thanks to our UM colleague, Dr. Tiffany Wang), and overall attendance was slightly up (especially among students both graduate and undergraduate). Thank you to each person who sent a paper, volunteered, and who attended the conference.

We look forward to smoother sailing as we move ahead this year. After working with the leadership of ACA, I know that we are prepared for anything. Our Vice-President and 2022 Program Planner, Dr. George Daniels, has been with us all the way and is prepared to take the helm. I hope and pray for a less chaotic future; a future we can carry the lessons of the past into and make better for ourselves, our students, and our programs.



Wishing you all the best as you finish out Fall 2021 and look forward to seeing you in Mobile, in July 2022!

Dr. Sally Hardig, President,
Alabama Communication
Association
Professor,
University of Montevallo



Alabama Communication Association 2021-2022 Executive Board

President - Sally Hardig, University of Montevallo
Vice President - George L. Daniels, The University of Alabama
Vice President-Elect - Niya Pickett Miller, Samford University
Secretary - Lindsey Sherrill, University of North Alabama
Immediate Past President - Jeremy Padgett, Univ. of Mobile
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Executive Director-Elect - Jeff Walker, University of Montevallo

INTRODUCING

The Alabama Communicator

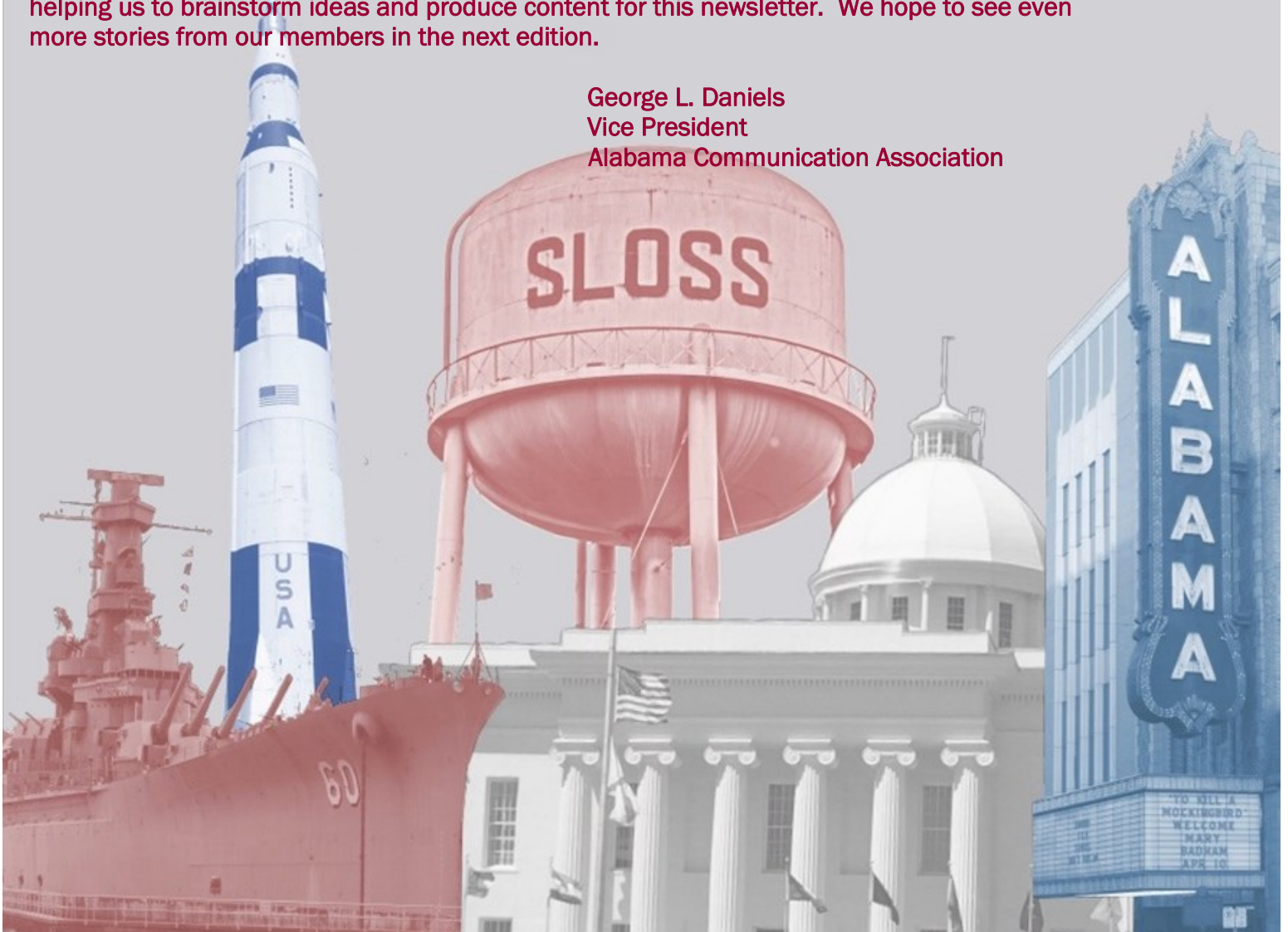
Here in the Alabama Communication Association one of the things we realized is the association is more than just an organization that meets for a convention once a year. Even in the midst of a pandemic in 2020-2021, we held virtual forums in both the fall and spring semesters. Thanks to the leadership of Executive Director Ray Ozley and then Vice President Sally Hardig we were able to sponsor virtual roundtables featuring new communication department chairs last fall and then showcase deliberative democracy this past spring. It is important to document these events and use them as a springboard to grow our membership as a state association.

At our convention in 2019, students from The University of Montevallo unveiled new graphics used to launch a more robust social media presence and build our first ACA newsletter. After an unusual year with the Pandemic, we are re-launching our newsletter with a new name (*The Alabama Communicator*) and the goal of using this publication as a tool to tell “The ACA Story” to our colleagues both at our campuses and around the state.

My thanks to ACA Vice President-Elect Niya Miller (Samford University) for her efforts in helping us to brainstorm ideas and produce content for this newsletter. We hope to see even more stories from our members in the next edition.



George L. Daniels
Vice President
Alabama Communication Association



ACA 2021 Convention in Revue



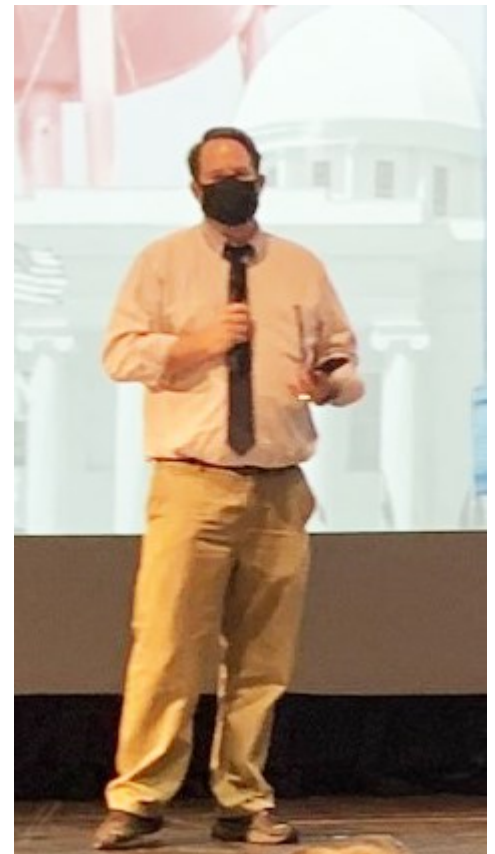
CONVENING BUT MASKING UP — On the eve of the 2021 Convention as the COVID-19 Delta Variant spread, University of Montevallo joined other universities in re-instating a mask mandate. That did not keep dozens from participating in the convention in person.



ACA ANNIVERSARY T-SHIRTS— Just before the conference Jeff Walker and Sherry Ford modeled the new ACA 10th anniversary T-shirts available to those who registered for the convention. While the new Alabama image is on the front of the shirts, the back of the shirts lists all the places ACA conventions have been held over the last decade.



AWARD WINNERS — University of Montevallo Associate Professor Tiffany Wang (center) received ACA's Teaching Award. UM's Marcos Lopez Acosta was recognized for his paper on the Harvey Milk's "You've Got to Have Hope" speech.



A PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS — ACA President Jeremy Padgett (University of Mobile) gave his address to 2021 Convention attendees gathered at the University of Montevallo's new Center for the Arts. The title of Padgett's address was "Progress with a Purpose."



ACA CONVENTION TEAM— An Alabama Communication Association Convention is as big a success as its volunteer staff. From making sure all attendees got registered as they arrived to helping convention attendees find their sessions in Strong Hall, the students from the University of Montevallo Department of Communication Studies played a major role in putting on the 11th Annual Convention.

MEET US IN MOBILE IN 2022



2022 CONVENTION HOST— The recently renovated William K. Weaver Hall on the campus of University of Mobile is considered the most picturesque building on campus. Named for the founding president William K. Weaver, it is the main administrative building on campus. It was originally built in 1963. But, in 2018, it was the site of a major renovation. Two floors were gutted and redesigned to create “living laboratories” that support a new approach to teaching college courses that University of Mobile calls “Prac-ademics™.”

ACA’s 12th convention to take place in Mobile, Ala.

After several years in the central Alabama, the Alabama Communication Association will once again be traveling to the Southern part of the state for its 12th annual meeting.

The date is set for **Saturday, July 30, 2022** and the place will be Ben May Hall on the campus of the University of Mobile. The last time the convention was hosted there was 2016.

Our conference hosts will be Former ACA President Gyro Newman and Immediate Past President Jeremy Padgett.

Just like our 11th annual gathering, this too will be a hybrid conference. Presenters are welcomed to attend virtually or in-person.

Stay tuned for more details about location and registration for the 2022 convention in future editions of *The Alabama Communicator* !



CALL FOR PAPERS

12th Annual Convention Mobile, Ala. July 30, 2022

The Alabama Communication Association invites submissions of scholarly papers, practitioner and student projects, and panel presentations for its 12th Annual Convention, which will be hosted by the University of Mobile on Saturday, July 30, 2022. **Presentations may be given in-person OR virtually through video conferencing platforms.** We especially welcome original research by undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty/professional members and practitioners from Alabama and the surrounding area. We invite individuals to submit a variety of projects from the Communication Studies discipline, and from other intersecting disciplines such as journalism, media studies, advertising, public relations, mass communication, and English, etc.). This conference is committed to focusing on the following submission types:

Completed Papers: Research papers (no more than 25 pages including tables, figures, and other material, but not including references) will be competitively evaluated. Papers that exceed this page limit will not be reviewed. We will recognize the Top faculty/professional paper, Top graduate student paper, and Top undergraduate paper.

Research-in-Progress: Faculty and student authors are encouraged to submit 500 to 700-word abstracts of research that will not be completed before the conference. Participants in Research-in-Progress panel will not give a paper presentation, but an overview of the work in progress and receive feedback from attendees. Research-in-Progress abstracts should include a clear purpose statement, an overview of the literature driving the research and the method or approach being taken. Research-in-Progress submissions are not eligible for ACA Awards.

Great Ideas for Teaching Students (G.I.F.T.S) panel: Instructors may submit teacher and student tested ideas for effectively teaching a wide variety of communication concepts and contexts (e.g., health communication, research methods, theory, gender, organizational communication, PR). We encourage presenters to bring handouts of the activity for the audience.

Project Panels: Creative panel ideas that explore applied and scholarly experiences are encouraged from multiple perspectives. Topical roundtable discussions from scholars and/or practitioners who have collaborated and applied communication practices in communities or the classroom are ideal. Individuals from a variety of institutions and backgrounds may submit ideas. We also encourage students to submit capstone course work and other class projects.

Submissions: Papers and panel submissions should be prepared for blind review; please remove all identifying information with only the title on the title page. Put title, name, and complete contact information in the body of the email. In addition to indicating whether you are FACULTY, GRADUATE STUDENT or UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, please note whether you are likely to present in-person or virtually. Panel submissions should include a brief abstract of the activity and up to two pages of supporting materials that articulate the goal, rationale, directions, and explanation of how the activity connects to/with communication concepts, theories, and/or various skills. **Please limit paper submissions to two per individual.** Send all submissions to alabamacomassociation@gmail.com

Respondents, Chairs, and Reviewers: We invite faculty members who would like to serve as respondents and graduate students who would like to serve as chairs to contact George L. Daniels, ACA vice president and 2022 conference planner with their areas of interest and expertise. Faculty who are willing to serve as paper reviewers should also contact the conference planner at the following email address:

alabamacomassociation@gmail.com

Conference Timeline:

Submission deadline: **May 16, 2022 (midnight CDT)**

Notification of Acceptance/Non-Acceptance: early to mid-June 2022

Conference: July 30, 2022



A CHAT WITH THE EDITOR-SELE JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY

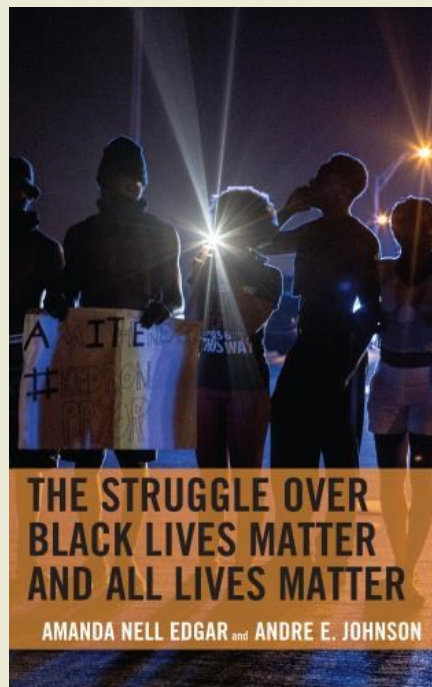
Editor's NOTE: First introduced during the 2021 ACA Convention as the next editor of the Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric, Dr. Andre Johnson from The University of Memphis will succeed Michael Warren Tumolo in the role. Johnson spoke with ACA Vice President George Daniels recently about his plans for the journal.

Daniels: Some of our ACA members may not know you and your work. Tell us about your research and what you teach at The University of Memphis?

Johnson: I currently serve as an Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Media Studies in the Department of Communication & Film and the Scholar in Residence at the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis. I teach classes in African American Public Address, Rhetoric, Race, and Religion, Media Studies, Interracial Communication, Rhetoric of Social Movements, and HipHop Studies. Additionally, along with my academic titles, I currently serve as Senior Pastor of Gifts of Life Ministries in Memphis, Tennessee.

Daniels: You recently published a book focusing on #Black Lives Matter. What was the gist of your argument about BLM?

Johnson: *The Struggle Over Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter* that I wrote with my colleague Amanda Nell Edgar was the first book to approach the conflict between BLM and #ALM from the perspectives of online posters. We argued that context



Dr. Andre Johnson is Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Media Studies at The University of Memphis

must be central to understanding both groups since the BLM movement and the #ALM counter movement draw from changes and stagnations in American culture. While many have argued that #ALM is simply the racist backlash against BLM, we explore the more nuanced motivations and practices of these two groups' online and offline communication to reveal the similarities and differences in how they understand one another and the US in general. Focusing on cultural influences, including the history of Black liberation rhetoric, contemporary post-racialism, the politics of fear, and religious discourses, we intervened in debates about contemporary racial justice rhetoric and traditional, text-based rhetorical inquiry, offering a lens of contextualized motivations to move both discussions forward.

EFFECT OF ACA'S RHETORIC

Daniels: What was it that made you interested in leading ACA's journal, *The Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*?

Johnson: I have been a fan of the Journal since its inception in 2011. When the Journal's first editor, Brett Lunceford, issued the call for reviewers and board members, I answered the call enthusiastically. I am proud to say that I have remained a member of the board and a reviewer from that time until now. When asked to consider becoming editor, I think it just boiled down to me wanting to continue the journal's legacy while at the same time building on that legacy.

Daniels: Let's not assume everyone knows what we mean by "contemporary rhetoric" How would you best define this concept?

Johnson: I have always defined contemporary as events happening in real-time—right now. I like how the Journal states it—"critical engagement with rhetorical dimensions of current events (those of the past 18 months or so)." However, for me, this also means issues and situations happening in real-time as well.

Daniels: What are some general areas that you would like to see the journal address as you take over as editor ?

Johnson: While I am still working on this, I would like to continue the trajectory of publications that have already been a part of the journal. For instance, JCR was one of the first, if not the first journal to publish scholarship on BLM in our field. Before calls for rhetoric scholars to attend to race in our scholarship, JCR published a special issue on Rhetoric and Race. One can find some of the best rhetorical scholarship on Trump's rhetoric in JCR. This is the type of scholarship tradition I would like to continue with JCR.

Stillman College Introduces New Department Name, New Leadership

By Michael Andrews
Stillman College

The Journalism Program at Stillman College was originally an extension of the Department of English.

Helmed by Program Coordinator Dr. Michael Andrews, the program focused primarily on news writing, photography, and desktop publishing.

With the addition of Assistant Professor Romeo Reese in the Fall of 2019, digital, audio/visual and broadcast courses in the program quickly began to expand.

The knowledge and experience that Mr. Reese brings to the department were formally recognized in Fall 2021 with the addition of his current title, Director of Digital Media Communications Center.

Dr. Kathryn Brewer-Strayer, full professor of English, was promoted to Interim Chair of the Department of English in Spring of 2020. Given her 47 years of teaching experience, including 20 years with Stillman, Dr. Brewer-Strayer recognized the significance of the expanding program both for students and the college.



Brewer-Strayer

One of her first decisions was to incorporate the journalism and media communication aspects into the department name, creating the Department of English, Journalism, and Media Communication.

Dr. Brewer-Strayer's promotion became permanent at the beginning of Fall 2021.



HAPPENING AROUND ALABAMA

Miles College Communications Division Partners with WVTM



By **JeLisa Tanniehill**
Miles College

BIRMINGHAM, Ala— The Miles College Division of Communications awards a bachelor of arts in Communications. The approximately 105 students individually select a concentration in one of four

areas: digital journalism, business communications, integrated public relations, and graphic design.

The division is in the process of updating the curricular offerings to better align with the ever evolving technology that is changing mass media industries.

Digital journalism is adding instruction including drama, short films, documentaries, and entertainment

genres. Business communications will emphasize the business/marketing side of media companies. Integrated public relation adds a journalism track, while graphic design incorporated two new courses. Students campus-wide will be able to minor in one of the concentrations.

The Division remains excited about its new partnership with WVTM 13, the NBC affiliate in Birmingham. Besides competitive internships, professionals from all departments in the affiliate will make themselves available for our students to individually spend a day or more shadowing them throughout a workday.

The Division and WVTM 13 recognize that faculty need to revamp their skills. WVTM 13 professionals will also provide opportunities for faculty to individually spend a day or more at the station. The professionals will also visit with students and serve on the advisory board.

NEW COURSES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES — As part of their instruction in digital journalism, Miles College students use the Adobe Creative Cloud software in designing news pages. With a revised curriculum, students in the digital journalism concentration will soon be able to take courses in drama, short films and entertainment genre. (Photos Provided by Miles College Division of Communications)

Alabama A&M offers interdisciplinary communication specialist degree

NORMAL, Ala.— When Homecoming festivities at Alabama A&M University (AAMU) recently wrapped, a 2021 graduate of the Communication Specialist MS Program (CSP) caught up with his former advisor—Program Director and Assistant Professor of Graduate Studies, Dr. Michelle M. Walton.

He was sharing his recent work with clients like Def Jam Digital, and seeking ideas on how to include more career avenues. Dr. Walton reminded him that with his CSP masters degree, his interdisciplinary studies and business specialty prepared him for a cross-section of other work opportunities such as teaching undergraduates in communication, working remotely in social media management, or as a brand ambassador for major product and service companies.

As the only interdisciplinary graduate degree program in the Graduate School at AAMU, and the only communication master's degree program among eight Historically Black Colleges

& Universities (HBCUs) in the state of Alabama, the Communication Specialist MS Degree program not only provides solid academic training, but cross-marketability for its students.

This master's degree particularly provides students with a greater understanding of how effective communication shapes strategies, structures and processes within organizations and society through core coursework, while also elevating their professional viability when they designate a specialty of study in Athletic Brand Management, Business, Communication Science, or Fashion Communication.

The multi-dimensional nature of this program offers admission to students of virtually any academic or professional background to enter and leave with diversified professional viability. Past gradu-

ates of the program have gone on to be entrepreneurs, educators, public relations and advertising execs, healthcare program managers, digital marketers, arts professionals, content creators, and collegiate instructors.

After streamlining and expanding what is the current CSP curriculum, Walton is currently finalizing publication of two textbooks with Kendall Hunt, customized for CSP courses: *Regenerating Gender Communication*, and *The Single Shift: Work/Life Experiences of Never-Married Professional Black Women*. She also co-created AAMU Careers in Communication & Media Week and has personally recruited at universities regionally and nationally for students seeking to pursue a degree that provides variation in career paths.

And like her former student who on his way to mega success in multiple digital arenas, the Communication Specialist MS Program at AAMU continues to shape the futures of those who embrace communication as a crucial discipline crossing all sectors of industry and education.



Walton

MEMBER NEWS

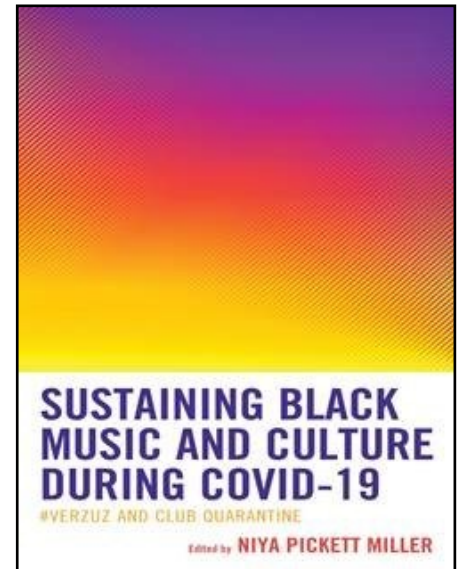
Black Music, Culture Focus of New Book Edited By VP-Elect Miller

Our own Niya Pickett Miller has a new edited book titled, *Sustaining Black Music and Culture During COVID-19: #Verzuz and Club Quarantine* (Lexington Books). It features a collection of essays and studies authored by twelve scholars from various university communication and media programs across the country.

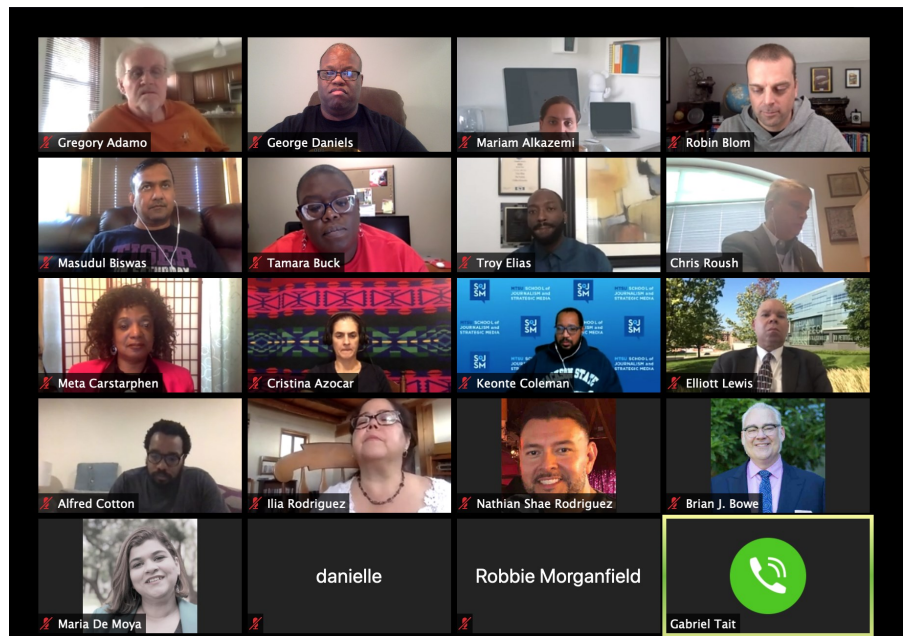
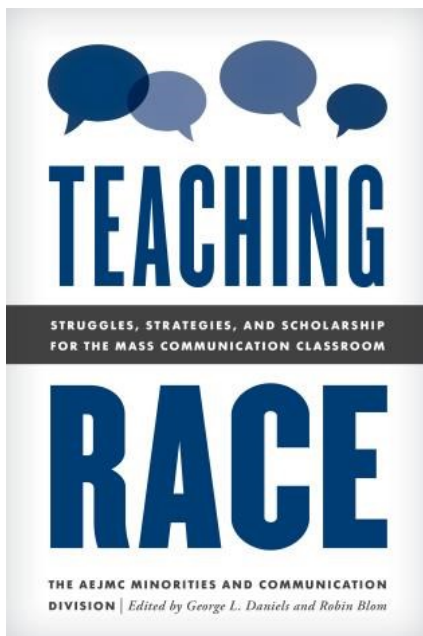
The work explores the communicative and Black cultural significance of the Instagram Live events, Club Quarantine (CQ) and Verzuz (battles). More specifically, the book situates Instagram (through CQ and Verzuz) as a premier digital leisure space to celebrate and promote Black American culture and identity, particularly evidenced during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic as the United States grappled with mandated shelter-in-place orders. CQ and Verzuz emerged as highly successful Black music-listening events, collectively provided respite from social isolation, and rearticulated space for Black culture engagement—all while ushering Black (techno)culture through a once-in-a-generation pandemic and beyond.

Visit <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781793645043/Sustaining-Black-Music-and-Culture-during-COVID-19> to buy.

Pickett Miller is an Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Samford University and ACA's vice-president elect.



Daniels Publishes Tips for Tackling Race in the Classroom



George Daniels, ACA vice president and associate professor of journalism and creative Media at The University of Alabama has teamed up with Robin Blom of Ball State University’s Department of Journalism to edit a new book on how to handle race in the classroom. The 199-page book covers everything from confronting color-blindness to teaching diversity in immersive learning environments.

Most of the 20 contributors to *Teaching Race: Struggles, Strategies, and Scholarship for the Mass Communication Classroom* met formally only once in early October 2020 to map out their strategy for their chapters and perspectives. The meetup on Zoom was a chance for the team of faculty who are members of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Minorities and Communication Division to collaborate on writing approaches and learn about the overall MASTER CLASS teaching series, which is edited by Chris Roush, dean of the School of Communications at Quinnipiac University.

Teaching Race is the fourth book in the series, which is published by Rowman & Littlefield. All proceeds from book sales go to the sponsoring unit of AEJMC.

We want to feature you and your accomplishments in this space. Send us your news for the next edition of *The Alabama Communicator* to be published in Spring 2022. Submit news items to [gdaniels@ua.edu](mailto:gDaniels@ua.edu)

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