Welcome to the third issue of COMpass, the Department of Communications bi-annual newsletter! We, the Editorial Board, are happy to be sharing this experience with you and hope that it brings some positivity in the midst of all that our world has been facing. We would like to make a shout out to all Saint Rose students, faculty, and alumni for rising through the impact of COVID-19 and all of the challenges our world has been facing. The COMpass Newsletter features 6 sections highlighting the amazing accomplishments of the department’s students, faculty, and alumni.

Sections include, but are not limited to:

**Department News**: Stay updated with our Department’s news, and what’s to come

**Student Spotlight**: Featuring successes and accomplishments of students outside of the classroom.

**Featured Interns**: Showcasing the hands-on experience gained by student interns

**Alumni Advice**: Advice from an alumnae on professional life after college and what to expect in the COM field.

**#Alumni Goals**: Highlighting the success of our alumni and sharing their story of achieving their professional dreams.

*We hope you enjoy our third issue. Happy reading!*
Heritage & Social Justice Month Goes Virtual

By Victoria Roy

From April 21 to April 30, the Offices of Spiritual Life and Community Service, in assistance with students from COM374 and COM481/BUS380 sponsored a virtual Heritage and Social Justice Month with the theme: “Build Community: Paths to Action.”

The event was organized with the help of Dr. Mark Congdon Jr., and The Office of Spiritual Life and Community Service director, Joan Horgan. Students developed programs in collaboration with community organizations and partners such as, The League of Women Voters of Albany County and CRIPDES. All events took place online, with accessible links on the Office of Spiritual Life Facebook and Instagram; the College of Saint Rose Virtual Events page; and the Heritage and Social Justice Month Facebook events page.

The COVID-19 pandemic could have discouraged student organizers to abandon their efforts, but the results proved just the opposite. Horgan stated the significance of pushing through the difficulties: “The moving of the events online felt really important because of what it means to really let something matter to you. You cannot just give it attention when the way is easy or cleared of obstacles”.

“After having done many versions of a social justice series in past years, I have to say I was incredibly excited and inspired to watch this take shape and to be able to be in the dialogues with students to hear about what mattered to them and how they wanted to engage with that as well as try to engage others”, says Horgan.

The two-week schedule tackled issues surrounding: Multi-faith Justice, Environmental Justice, Immigration & Refugee Justice, Racial Justice, Gender Justice, Global Justice, and Democratic Justice.

Students worked on planning and organizing this event over the course of four months in which culminated a deeper connection to the mission and purpose of seeking to address social justice issues.

While Social Justice Week events have been held on campus in previous years, this is the first time that the event has taken place virtually. Originally, this event was set to take place from March 23-27 at the College of Saint Rose, but with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic causing campuses to close, the event was set to either be cancelled, or re-envisioned. Given these circumstances, “The social justice issues that the student and community virtual events raised and educated our community on are very timely and deserve our urgent attention”, Congdon says.

Kyle Humphreys, a communications major, also felt the urgency of the times, “Taking Mark’s class on digital activism refined my understanding of social movements. I could not have taken it at a better time, it put everything into perspective”.

Approximately 100 people attended the virtual events, which was an impressive turnout considering the last-minute changes that needed to be made to the programming. “I am incredible proud of the tenacity and innovative thinking that students in both COM 374 and COM 481 did in the spring to transition the social justice week online due to Covid-19”, says Congdon.
By Melissa Cruz

The College of Saint Rose’s PRSSA chapter set its focus on community engagement and giving back during the Spring 2020 semester by co-sponsoring an event for Heritage & Social Justice Month. As part of the club’s efforts, PRSSA organized a Zoom panel discussion with CRIPDES and U.S. El Salvador Sister Cities titled: ‘There’s More to the Salvadorian Story: Elevating Silenced Voices’. This event, held on April 28, highlighted the consequence of U.S. involvement in El Salvador and the fight to bring opportunities and change to struggling rural communities. St. Rose’s PRSSA chapter took action during the COVID-19 pandemic; using strategic partnerships to create positive change.

Panel speaker Marixa Amaya, national board member for CRIPDES, shared the story of her experience living in a small rural community in El Salvador. Amaya’s personal account shone light on the current state of El Salvador as it deals with the long-term consequences of U.S. foreign policy. CRIPDES is an organization that fights for justice and positive change to small communities; bringing running water, creating jobs, and building structural housing in many areas that have been overpopulated. Acting as a community organizer, CRIPDES connects rural communities with legal change in hopes of creating equality in El Salvador.

Members from El Salvador Sister Cities, Zulma Tobar and Mario Guevara, also helped to guide the Zoom panel discussion; giving further insight into how COVID-19 is impacting their community today. El Salvador Sister Cities is a grassroots organization that operates globally by partnering committees in the United States with a community in El Salvador. This partnership helps small communities fight against exploitation and oppression at the hands of both the local and national Salvadorian government.

Guevara, co-coordinator at Sister Cities, expressed positivity about the partnership made with the college: “I am grateful that Saint Rose was interested in learning and sharing more information about the organizing process in El Salvador. I think it is really important to share with a younger generation the very similar challenges we are facing with an increasingly militarized government and the historical role the U.S. has played in Latin America, specifically in El Salvador”.

Guevara views the partnership with Saint Rose to be a step in a positive direction for Sister Cities. “We want to be another resource for younger generations and we need more participants to walk alongside us in this constant struggle for a more just world where people have the ability to decide whether they stay with their loved ones or they migrate looking for better opportunities. Young students must be aware of all the conditions that are imposed to counties in Latin America whenever U.S. aid support is provided. They need to challenge their own government,” Guevara says. Bringing the conversation to Saint Rose creates meaningful paths to action for our students to advocate for justice.
PRSSA faculty advisor, Dr. Mark Congdon organized and mediated the virtual discussion. Partnering with Sister Cities and CRIPDES gave Saint Rose a rare opportunity to hear a different perspective that is not often talked about in the media. Dr. Congdon expressed, “As a national board member of Sister Cities, we’ve discussed how we could engage, educate, and partner with college students to raise awareness. The social justice month provided an opportunity for students in PRSSA to get involved with Sister Cities and educate our community in solidarity”.

The Zoom panel gathered a variety of participants. One of those being the director of the Office of Spiritual Life, Joan Horgan. Horgan reflected on her experience listening to the panel. “I thought it was an amazing opportunity to hear from people who are geographically so far away from us and be inspired by their unwavering dedication to the needs of their communities. Each day our own problems and struggles are immediately in front of us, whether that be on the personal or national levels. It is good to be drawn out of that to be reminded of other struggles and the call to be connecting with those people who have less than we do in many ways and more than we do in some ways - things we can learn from them”.

Whether participants had background on the issues discussed or were new to the conversation, each person left the discussion with a fresh outlook and understanding of how connected we are on a global level. Overall, club partnerships like the one between PRSSA and Sister Cities are setting an example of how important it is to build strong relationships within our global community.

Looking to the future, PRSSA plans to continue to use its skills and knowledge to support their neighbors. St. Rose’s PRSSA chapter president, Emily Cruz has plans for the group’s future. “We want to partner up with different organizations in the community, have students drop off items and make care packages, and things of that nature”. Many clubs like PRSSA have skills that can truly help make a difference on both a local and global scale. Partnerships with the community are imperative now more than ever to fight for justice and create positive change.
Professors Paul Conti and Rosemary Sheridan Retire

By Julie Rybka

Professors Paul Conti and Rosemary Sheridan have been staples in the Communications Department for many years. While Conti has spent his time at the college teaching in Film and New Media, Sheridan’s time has been spent teaching various courses in the Public Relations and Advertising field. Both Conti and Sheridan’s careers at the college have come to a close with the completion of the Spring 2020 semester, and it is a loss the department will feel immensely.

The Department of Communications Chair, Cailin Brown, has worked closely with both professors. Brown says, “Paul’s professional experience in an actual television newsroom in this market provided our students a bridge to the professional world. Students learned from Paul the production skills that will help them succeed outside of the classroom. [His] vigilance in the television studio kept the department and students current in a discipline that changes quickly. Paul’s contributions were valued and will be missed.” While speaking of Professor Sheridan, Brown says that “students in the Department of Communications benefited immeasurably from the contributions of Rosemary over so many years. She taught hundreds of students what it means to be a Communications practitioner, always with an eye toward helping a student to become a professional. Helping was always at the center of all Rosemary did for her students and the department. She will be missed.”

Prior to becoming a video production professor, Paul Conti spent 30 years working in television news. Most of those years were spent as a News Director of NBC’s Albany affiliate, WNYT TV. There were many reasons that Conti decided to make the switch to the education field, one of those being that after 30 years in the industry he felt that he had reached all of his career benchmarks and goals.

Another influence came from his mentors and those who helped him break into the television news industry. It was years ago when Conti asked why they worked so hard to help him, to which they replied: “it’s what you do when you have a successful career … and one day, when your career is established it will be your turn to repay the favor.” Through his years of educating and giving students a boost in the industry, Conti did just that. “I can identify a number of former students who have their first jobs because I made a phone call,” he says, “It’s how I repaid the debt to my mentors.”

Class of 2020 graduate Leanne DeMartino spent many days in Conti’s classroom. “I took so many classes with Paul, most of his classes actually,” she says, “He made it really easy to talk to him and relate to him and everything we were learning in classes. He was a very personal professor; I could tell you more about his grandkids and family than any other professor I’ve had.” DeMartino says she learned just as much from Conti about life as she did about videography. “He taught me just to enjoy life and travel as much as possible. Nothing seems to be slowing Paul down, he makes me want to travel more,” she says, “I hope he keeps traveling and has fun during retirement! Hopefully, I’ll run into him on a trip or at a Mets game again someday!”
Professor Conti’s last words of advice to students would be: “Don’t be afraid to ask...questions when you don’t know what someone means. It doesn’t mean you are foolish or stupid. It means you are interested in learning. Good employers appreciate that. Don’t be afraid. Just try.”

Professor Rosemary Sheridan’s teaching career at Saint Rose began in the early 1990s. After teaching part-time for a full year, she took a few years off before returning as an adjunct in the fall of 1996. Collectively, Professor Sheridan has taught for 50 semesters at the college, and many summer sessions as well. While 21 of those years were spent as an adjunct, Sheridan taught full time from 2011-2016.

In addition to her career at the college, Sheridan also taught high school social studies and writing. She has also spent many years working as the Director of Public Relations at Saint Rose. Sheridan said, “I love both PR and teaching, so when asked to teach Communications part-time, it seemed like a perfect marriage of my two favorite things.”

Sheridan also spent several years as the faculty advisor for the department’s Public Relations & Advertising Club. She’d spend weekly meetings providing support and suggestions to members of the club and its’ executive board. In 2019, her final year as the club’s advisor, the club became a chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), a nationally recognized organization for students going into the PR field.

It was through the club and in the classroom that Class of 2020’s Audrey Moulton got to know Professor Sheridan. Moulton says Sheridan had a golden rule for PR: to always keep your writing short and simple. “You could tell that she really cared about how you did in her classroom,” Moulton said, “I’m so glad I got to learn and grow from what she taught me in a professional sense. It was a pleasure to work with her in the chapter, she will be missed greatly!”

Sheridan, both as an alum and a former teacher, will always remain connected to Saint Rose. She says her fellow professors and her students are what she will miss as she begins her next chapter. She calls her colleagues in the department, “the best,” and says that they are “the most supportive colleagues any teacher could have.”

“Interacting with students was, to me, one of life’s greatest joys,” she says, “Getting to know students and supporting them as they find their path in life are what motivated me as a teacher.”

Professor Sheridan’s last words to her students would be: “Believe in yourself! Your Saint Rose education has provided you with a strong foundation, but it is up to you to build on it. You can do it well if, while utilizing your knowledge and skills, you stick to the values and principles you’ve learned.”

Congratulations to both Professor Conti and Professor Sheridan on their long, successful careers, both at the college and beyond. On behalf of the entire Department of Communications, best wishes on your next chapter. You will both be missed dearly!

Happy Retirement!
By Danielle Townsley

With the departure of some of our beloved Communications professors following the Spring semester; Paul Conti, Rosemary Sheridan, and Dr. Mark Congdon Jr., The College of Saint Rose is excited to welcome two new faculty members this Fall. Joining the COM Department staff are Vicki Riley and Jessie Otitigbe.

Visiting Assistant Professor - Media Production

As a former an adjunct in the department, Vicki Riley of Saratoga Springs, NY is no stranger to the media industry. Riley was the director of Videography and Digital Resources at Skidmore College for 5 years and has a passion for Media Design.

As a professor, Riley is constantly learning from her colleagues and students, which encourages her to approach content differently and ask meaningful questions that encourage dialogue from different perspectives.

Riley finds the faculty at Saint Rose incredibly supportive and committed to their students. Saint Rose has a well-established program and is committed to video production and visual storytelling, and the equipment at the college will allow Riley to put her energy into innovative teaching.

Regarding the recent transition to remote learning, Riley stays positive about the situation: “I think we learned a lot from the past few months of remote learning and are having conversations and thinking creatively about how to make it better. Remote learning is difficult for everyone. I look at it this way. If a student is planning on a career in journalism, communications, or broadcast, one skill I promise you’ll need is the ability to adapt to the situation.

You have to figure out how to make it work, and that’s what we’ll do, together,” she says.

Visiting Instructor - PR & Advertising


With 20+ years of experience in Broadcast Journalism, Community Relations, Consulting, Corporate Communications & Public Relations, Project Management & Event Planning, and Publishing. Otitigbe is very confident in her work and in the Communications and Public Relations industry.

Otitigbe was at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) for 13 years where she was the Senior Communications Specialist that managed all public relations, corporate communications, media outreach, media events, messaging strategies, and marketing efforts to promote RPI to both internal and external audiences through local, regional, national, and international news media. Otitigbe was also responsible for publishing RPI research, curriculum innovation, educational programs, campus and student life, admissions, community relations, STEM pipeline initiatives, business and entrepreneurship, and campus activities which is all content for the website news page. Otitigbe is the individual that is able to transition her stories to her students to teach them real-life experiences. Saint Rose will welcome these two professors with open arms and make them feel at “home.”
The Communications department at the College of Saint Rose is proud to point the student spotlight on recent graduate and Communications major Joyce Hill. Hill has been known for her time in the television studio either working as president of SRTV or fulfilling her responsibility as an equipment/studio manager.

One of Hill’s earliest accomplishments at the college, the creation of sitcom Grade of Our Lives, occurred during her freshman year. “I didn’t have any idea what I was doing,” said Hill. In stepping out of her comfort zone and putting her creativity to the test Hill created great memories and long-lasting friendships.

In the Fall of 2019, Hill decided to take on another time-consuming project. Using her knowledge of production and summer freelance film experience, Hill created a series called Last Ditch. Hill explained that the process was daunting because of the 19 credits she was taking at the time, that required 20 hours a week of work. Thanks to the help and dedication of the Saint Rose Television (SRTV) team in working on Grade of Our Lives and Last Ditch, Hill was able to pull off two of her greatest accomplishments at Saint Rose.

In January, Last Ditch premiered in the local Madison Theater. Hill explained that it had always been a fantasy that her work would be premiered in a theater, and she did everything in her power to make that dream a reality. Hill’s dedication and hard work paid off, as over 65 people came to the viewing. “I couldn’t have imagined that being a better day,” said Hill.
On campus, Hill also took part in working on Sleepover Sessions, a live video concert series hosted by Sam Walczyzk and Kyle Robinson. This collaboration combined her love for visuals together with music. Sleepover Session was the first time that SRTV and Rose Record Label Group worked together.

During her time at Saint Rose Hill interned at Branch VFX and she is currently editing for Lyden Productions. These skills led Hill to take on the role as production assistant for the Punisher while it was filmed in Albany.

Hill could best be described by her peers as a woman who does it all; pulling off a six-hour shoot with Schenectady Light Opera Company, while producing the regular programs for SRTV, and maintaining academic work had Hill running on and off-campus more than ever. “I’d never run an off-campus shoot of that magnitude before, but it wound up being one of my favorite projects. It was the first time I felt like, “okay, I know what I’m doing and I can do this, and realized how much I had learned at SRTV and in the studio” and actually could do real production work”, says Hill.

Hill’s work was recognized for the first time off campus resulting from her nomination for the 2020 New York State Film Festival. The honor and positive energy of the event made the experience one she will never forget. It was a proud moment for both Hill and The College of Saint Rose’s department of Communications.

Another major accomplishment includes Hill’s acceptance into the PITCHNY 2019 program. Sponsored by Tribeca Film Institute, NBCU, and the Governor’s Office of Motion Picture and Television Development, PITCHNY 2019 funds a two-day trip for students to 30 Rockefeller Plaza in NYC. Only the best and brightest students were selected to network and practice pitching either TV, film, or documentary stories to industry professionals. Hill felt honored to have been able to visit NYC and be in one of the biggest entertainment headquarters of the world. Hill stated, “When I was there, I was just like PLEASE DON’T MAKE ME LEAVE, it was just so awe-inspiring and I still feel that way, but I feel so lucky to have done

Wanting others to have the opportunity to shine and grow in the area where they feel passionate, Hill leaves valuable advice for incoming COM students. Despite being shy, Hill advises college students to take chances, push through their fears, and start conversations with people while keeping an open mind. “Go to everything. I mean everything. Guest speaker? Go. Open house? Go. Club fair? Go. Info session? Go? Pizza party? Of course, go. Go to everything. Listen, pay attention, be curious, and seriously, write down everything. Take notes”, says Hill. The most important advice that Hill wants to share is to never let anyone make you feel bad about what you want to do, stating “Unlike Nike, just don’t. Don’t let anyone stop you from your dreams, be open to advice but beware of people implementing their fears and doubts in your head.”

Hill’s end goal is to direct big-budget films. Every day Hill is broadening her knowledge in different areas to incorporate it into her work with cinematography. Ms. Hill believes that she has something powerful to contribute to the world. She is going to keep pushing forward with her passion until she gets to a place in her life where she is content with all that she has done. Her goal is to tell stories and create visuals that inspire and bring hope to others; the way films and TV have for her on countless occasions.

The Communications department at the College of Saint Rose is beyond proud and honored to award Ms. Hill with the 2020 student spotlight. She has been an inspiration to many, her positive energy, and motivation have been contagious through the Saint Rose community. We are excited to see what she does next.
Communications major, Kyle Humphreys, graduated this May with a concentration in Critical Media Studies. During his senior year, Humphreys was accepted for the position of communications intern with Policy Research Associates (PRA) in Delmar, NY.

Policy Research Associates is a national leader in behavioral health and research. While interning, Humphreys was assigned several tasks such as developing a calendar of commemorative events for National Second Chance Month, drafting materials for National Volunteer month, and implementing the #WeekendWellness series on PRA social media. Humphreys says, “My largest task was to categorize and write descriptions for every resource in their resource library. It took me the entirety of my internship to complete this assignment, as I wrote 120 resource descriptions and had to consume enough of these materials to inform people about them in 200-300 words”.

Finding an internship is not an easy task, and it can be especially hard to find one that suits your future goals. Thankfully, Humphreys is an “avid future-planner,” he says, “I don’t like to stagnate”.

When he began his search for internships, he knew that while he didn’t want to conduct any research himself, he wanted to be involved in an organization that is involved in improving the welfare of individuals who are disadvantaged by a society that values capital over people. Using that information, Professor Mary Alice Molgard was able to match him with an internship that met his goals.

Humphreys touched on the experiences he had at the College of Saint Rose that prepared him for this internship. Humphreys says Professor Rosemary Sheridan’s class, Intro and History of Public Relations, helped him to understand the development and establishment of a brand, and says the class was useful in developing social media materials and learning to write in the voice of PRA. Humphreys notes that, “The entire COM department has always been very encouraging of my achievements, so I would like to send a big thanks to them. Their encouragement and feedback has been invaluable to me in my growth as a student, a person, and a future communications professional.”

“I learned a lot about justice involvement and how a lot of structures in the present system need to do more to help people who are justice involved, living with serious mental illness, and living with a substance use disorder,” Humphreys says of his internship.

Humphreys hopes his experience at PRA will make him a favorable candidate for other similar organizations, as he is confident advocating for people who are victims of injustice with the knowledge he has gained. Humphreys says, “The resources project has also been a great way for me to demonstrate my writing abilities and editing skills.”

Over the summer Humphreys plans to heavily revise his research on transgender microcelebrities for publication in a qualitative journal. Later, he’d like to get his masters in anthropology, sociology, or communications, and then his doctorate so that he can inspire students the way his professors have inspired him. “I’ll settle with being a financially secure dog owner, but I don’t want to settle for less if I can help it,” he says, “even getting regularly involved in a community-based organization would mean a lot to me.”
Another one of our featured student interns is Tiara Johnson, a May 2020 graduate and Public Relations and Advertising major. During her senior year, Johnson accepted a position as Spiritual/Multicultural intern at SUNY Albany.

“The internship helped me focus on what the next step of life was for me, but it also helped sharpen my skills in writing and learning how to articulate my thoughts clearly on paper,”

Johnson explains that much of the work was hands-on: “I did a lot of planning for programs. I created a press release and focused on organizing a book that credibly explained each religion that the University at Albany represented. I made a brochure that focused on the University’s spiritual life department and what kind of activities they created for the campus; how they focused on inclusiveness to engage more students in the department.”

Pertaining to her future plans, Johnson will be attending SUNY Buffalo State College this fall to study for her Master’s degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration. “I really have a desire to help people,” Johnson says, “and I believe that from my little experience, it helped me to understand what I feel like would be the best for my career path, which is to enter into Higher Ed.”

Johnson’s motivation and willingness to help others stems from the challenges she faced during her own undergraduate career: “What drives my passion to help students is me being a student and feeling lost. Having support is so valuable and needed. If I didn’t have the support of some faculty at the college, I wouldn’t probably have the courage to finish.”

Unfortunately, it wasn’t always supportive. Johnson notes, “I’ve been told all sorts of things, like ‘Maybe you should think of another major’; trying and being told by the reflection of my grades that I’m not good enough.

Determined to prove them wrong, Johnson kept persisting: “I tried and tried again. I went to tutoring, I studied, I went to class. I did everything in my power; I refused to give up. So my experiences drive me to be better and be a safe space for students that may be discouraged or need an outlet away from home.”

While her experience at Saint Rose was filled with “a lot of highs, and a lot of lows”, Johnson graduates from the college with more confidence in herself, remarking, “I learned that college isn’t that hard, but you just need mental discipline. What impacted me the most about college was all the connections and experiences that I had. I had such a great time meeting people that have become family to me. I learned how to be more self-sufficient, and about who I am as a person.”

Tiara Johnson
Alumni Advice

In the Field

By Bre Colon

I didn’t waste any time after receiving that leather diploma holder. Once I was home, I hit the pavement running with excitement to be in the field! I applied to the WEBelieve Inc, National Executive Board as a Digital Media & Communication Specialist, and I got the position!

During my new position the mixture of social media analysis, and public relations outreach definitely requires you to stay on your toes with dates, events, and be ready to launch a campaign at any point. Due to the pandemic, the murder of George Floyd, and 2020’s global revolution that’s happening outside, life keeps going, and it is your duty to share resources and create platforms for the rising issues. During my time at Saint Rose and since graduating, I’ve learned a few tips that I would like to share with recent graduates and current students.

Tip 1: Awareness of Yourself is Key to Your Success

Be aware of your thoughts and dreams, and recognize that they may evolve. I carry notepads and journals with me throughout the day. I jot down ideas, designs, writing prompts, and small to-do tasks, and then review these each day to stay on track. I tend to revisit things if I write them down. I consider these seeds of thoughts as answered prayers, encouragements to be persistent, and potential opportunities for when the time is right. The time you reflect with yourself, and changes you make allow you to grow professionally, relationally, and even spiritually.

Tip 2: Do Freelance Work

Be willing to do freelance work, and actively look for opportunities – there are many! I jumped into freelance work for artist management 2 months after graduating. Within 6 months of building up relationships for work, I hosted the artist, Aye-C33’s first showcase, interviewed with DJ Hollywood at the University of Albany, project managed photoshoots, and created cover art for Aye-C33.

Being a freelance artist manager taught me many things, such as the importance of being empathic and understanding others’ strengths and weaknesses in order to guide them in the right path. While developing the freelance relationship, be sure to set clear boundaries, so everyone understands and agrees to the terms, and also create SMART goals. This will help knowing the expectations of everyone involved and also be able to track your success and time.

The 2020 Black Lives Matter Vigil and March in Manhattan, New York
Bre Colon graduated in May of 2019 as a Communications major with a concentration in Public Relations and Advertising. She is the invited writer for the Alumni Advice Writer for the “311” section of the COMpass Newsletter. While at Saint Rose, Breanne founded the Women Everywhere Believe (WEBelieve) club to help provide tools, resources and experience closing the leadership gap for women and girls of color. When she’s not empowering women, she is using her talents and knowledge to assist others, while building her business.

Also, there are always opportunities out there - you just need to take initiative and network. For instance, I attended an art exhibition by Spicy Mami and Joi in July 2019. I followed their social media and stayed in contact. This eventually led to Spicy and I collaborating on Dia de Los Muertos, Day of the Dead Art and Open Mic Showcase. We celebrated our ancestors, past selves, and honored transformation of oneself.

These are the first few of big freelance moments in my early career. Bask in these moments and learn from them, because they may feed the hunger on your path. What you learn in these moments will be life-lessons for when you grow professionally and/or even create your own business, event, or whatever you choose.

**Tip 3: Create & Revise your Professional Portfolio**

Creating and contentiously revising a professional portfolio shows your growth, and allows you to share your talents, strengths, and past work with future clients and partnerships. Before I graduated, I created a professional portfolio highlighting some of the PR and advertising materials I created in my classes with community partners. I recommend keeping a folder of your work on Google Drive (or another online platform) and also a print portfolio. In your portfolio, be sure to break it down into themes based on your areas of interest. For example, my portfolio is structured into Poetry-Performances, Creative Publishing Concepts, and Digital Media. Be sure to continuously revise and add to your portfolio, so it’s always updated and relevant. You can even create a section of a professional website highlighting your work, which can be sent to potential job prospects and/or client work.

I’ve found these three tips to be helpful, as I continue to use my voice for good, and I hope they are helpful for you. As we go out into this world, it’s important to use what you learned at Saint Rose to help others and make an impact both professionally and in our communities.
Jessica Holden graduated from The College of Saint Rose in the Spring of 2019 with a degree in Communications and a focus in Public Relations.

After graduating Jessica began working at EYP architecture and engineering as a digital content strategist. She started at the company in May of 2018 as an intern. After her summer internship ended, EYP kept Holden on as a part-time employee. When graduation rolled around in December, Holden was offered a full-time position at the company.

Jessica and I shared a lovely phone call where we discussed graduating a semester early and moving on after college. She also gave me some tips for soon to be graduates. I asked Jessica what it felt like to walk across the graduation stage in May, to which she replied “It was the last hoorah, and to say goodbye to my college years. The icing on the cake, it felt really good!”

Holden also spoke to how graduating a semester early had made the transition from college to the corporate world really easy. She accredits this smooth transition to her internship turned job as well as her professors at Saint Rose. Jessica said that the most beneficial part of college was her involvement in the COM department. Holden was the president of the PR Advertising club, a founding member of PRSSA, and a COM Ambassador for the college. She was always in constant contact with the department members, which led to great networking opportunities and eventually landed her an internship. When asked what advice she had for soon to be graduates, Holden said, “Don’t let things overwhelm you. It can be scary to finish up your finals and then jump into a job. Don’t let it discourage you! Use stress as motivation and put your head down and get the work done!”

After talking to Jessica, I felt a sense of determination and hope for my future career. I think I speak for the whole COM department when I say we wish Jessica the best in her future endeavors, and hope to see her on campus again soon!
The COMpass newsletter would like to specifically highlight a superhero generation of ‘19 & ‘20 graduate. A recent Odyssey article described Generation Z as the superhero generation. Being a superhero means that you have a desire to change the world for the better. Each individual from the class of 2020 has not only accomplished the incredible success of graduating but is surviving through a pandemic. The optimism and determination to not let the challenges of the world stop you from putting on the cap and gown that you earned is inspiring. The College of Saint Rose communication department would like to congratulate the Class of 2020. You are a superhero generation. A generation that has fought COVID-19, social movement, and every challenge that has come your way. Be proud of all of your accomplishments and embrace all of the beautiful memories that you have made through your time at Saint Rose. Stay safe, practice social distancing, and continue to make a difference through using your voice and skills that you have learned at Saint Rose. We are here for you and are extremely excited for you to embark on your journey. A big congratulations class of 2020, a class that will go down in history.
Awards & Accomplishments

Student Achievements:

Kyle Humphreys, Awarded 1st place for Undergraduate Research Award

Aileen Burke, Awarded 2nd place for Undergraduate Research Award, Awarded the Service Award for the Department of Communications

David Meister, Awarded the Service Award for the Department of Communications

Lamera Palmer, Awarded the Service Award for the Department of Communications

Jaysalee Salcedo, Awarded the Sister Catherine Francis Soulier Junior Appreciation Award

Faculty Achievements:

Liz Richards, Promoted to Associate Professor

Dr. Mark Congdon Jr., Elected to serve as a National Board Member for the nonprofit, U.S. - El Salvador Sister Cities, Awarded a $425 CREST Fellowship Grant in the Spring 2020 to buy food baskets for 17 families of 4 in El Salvador impacted by COVID-19

Dr. Jin Kim, Granted sabbatical for Spring 2021, Received international recognition for his research in Game Studies by two Australian media outlets: The Curb, and Curtin University’s Journalism Program’s blog, The Western Independent

Dr. Karen McGrath, Co-authored an upcoming book with Dr. Gina Luttrell. The working title is “Generation Z: A Superhero Generation” with an anticipated publishing date during the 2020-2021 calendar year.

Congratulations to students and faculty for their accomplishments!

Do you have a recent promotion, job, award, or educational accomplishment you would like to share with our department? If so, email the Editorial Board at COMpassNewsletter@strose.edu to have your news featured in the Class Notes our next issue!