



DEPARTMENT *of* COMMUNICATION
and PERFORMANCE

College of Arts & Sciences

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

**Spotlight on Scholarship:
AY 2019-2020 Report**

Prepared by

Kelly A. Dorgan, PhD
Research Coordinator
Department of Communication & Performance
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, TN 37614
dorgan@etsu.edu

Presented to

Dr. Amber Kinser, Chair

&

The Communication & Performance Faculty



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Friends & colleagues—

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we had to reconceptualize our work as researchers, performers, and educators. Taking our classes and scholarly activities into virtual worlds requires ongoing effort and imagination, but we're finding ways of reaching and collaborating with communities, partners, and audiences.

Additionally, the brutal killing of George Floyd demanded that we review our mission and values once more and reinforce our commitment to diversity and inclusion education and antiracist policies. Dr. Amber Kinser collaborated with faculty in June 2020 to develop the department's Statement of Race Matters. (https://www.etsu.edu/cas/comm_perform/department-news/matters-of-race.php). Together, we continue the fight against social injustice.

Engaging communities

One of our departmental goals is to “promote civic engagement, social responsibility, and civil dialogue in local, national, and global arenas”; therefore, throughout 2019-2020, we engaged various communities. Dr. Wesley Buerkle accepted and participated in the East Tennessee State University's [21 Day Antiracism in the Curriculum Challenge](#), whereby he examined his course content, policies, and practices and considered ways of making his courses more inclusive. Plus, several departmental members have recommitted ourselves to offering inclusive readings and assignments in our courses, assuring that classrooms are exposed to a diverse array of voices.

Nancy Donoval arranged a visit to The Moth Story Slam in Asheville for her students, helping support storytellers from across multiple communities and populations. Dr. Delanna Reed participated in a joint effort by the Jonesborough Storytellers Guild and Franklin Woods Community Hospital as part of a patient-bedside storytelling initiative. Also, under the direction of Laughton and Erin Messmer, the Speech and Debate Team engaged the broader debate community by taking students to multiple tournaments to help them gain invaluable experience. Meanwhile, Dr. Andrew Herrmann continued his work with various academic associations. Keep reading to discover more.

Awards & honors

Our faculty received awards and honors in significant ways. It was a busy year for Dr. Wesley Buerkle. In addition to assembling an extensive Full-Professor Promotion application, he was nominated and was selected for the 2019-2020 Distinguished Faculty Award in Service for the College of Arts & Sciences.

And remember Delanna's patient-bedside stories project? She and her team took home several awards from Ballad. The awards don't end there. Our former graduate student Donna Paulsen, and current instructor in our department, entered her thesis research in the 3 Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition. The ETSU Graduate and Continuing Studies [homepage](#) explains that the “3MT® provides graduate

students the opportunity to develop their professional presentation and research communication skills.” Donna won ETSU’s (3MT®) Competition with her presentation on “Women’s Experiences with Infertility Within Faith Communities.”

Researching In and Out of the Pandemic

Despite new obstacles brought by the pandemic, Erin Blankenship-Mesmer moved forward with her dissertation, continuing her examining of first-generation women’s perceptions of support given to them during their college studies. Sure, she had to revise her methodology, but she persisted.

Andrew continued his collaboration with Dr. Art Herbig. Together, they co-edited their new book series, *Communication Perspectives on Popular Culture*. He co-founded *The Journal of Autoethnography*, a publication from the University of California Press that launched in January 2020. Then, he saw the publication of his edited book, *The Routledge International Handbook of Organizational Autoethnography*. Congratulations, Andrew!

Nancy Donoval’s co-authored book *Point of View and the Emotional Arc of Stories* was released in August 2020. The reviews are great. Nancy and Loren Niemi offer what’s being called, a “creative writing toolkit from pros” for writers and storytellers. Click [here](https://www.parkhurstbrothers.com/point-of-view-and-the-emotional-arc-of-stories.html) for more information (<https://www.parkhurstbrothers.com/point-of-view-and-the-emotional-arc-of-stories.html>).

Advising & mentoring

Let’s highlight Amber Kinser’s mentorship of graduate students. In the Fall 2019 semester, she advised her student-researchers through the Institutional Review Board approval process, a time-consuming endeavor. Also, she coordinated the second annual writing retreat for Communication and Storytelling Studies M.A. students.

Wesley Buerkle advised two brilliantly written undergraduate honors theses, and Adriane Flanary, Graduation Advisor, audited dozens of majors’ programs of study. Excitingly, we had approximately six (6) majors/minors selected to participate in the 2019 Young Appalachian Story Summit held at the International Storytelling Center; during the event, they were mentored on storytelling and community engagement.

I (Kelly Dorgan) developed and moderated the Engaged Research Seminar (September 19, 2019). This seminar brought together 20 undergraduate students with former graduate students Alana Claxton and Matthew Daggett, as well as Kallie Gay, current Communication Studies Lecturer. The seminar provided emerging researchers the opportunity to discuss data collection, data analysis, and barriers to qualitative researchers with three scholars who had successfully defended their thesis research.

In closing, thank you for all your scholarly and creative activities. We have even more projects, achievements, and performances on the horizon.

Gratefully,

Kelly A. Dorgan, PhD
Research Coordinator
Department of Communication & Performance

Thank you, Lori Ann Manis.

You have been a calm, steady presence during a difficult time. When we found ourselves in a virtual world of teaching, researching, and performing, you ordered supplies and equipment, sent reminders, and continued doing the invaluable work you do, work that is often behind-the-scenes—and always appreciated.

Pandemia Shout Out!

Faculty Activities
~Selected~

Christine Anzur

Publication:

Weiss, J. K., & **Anzur, C. K.** (Under Review). “Sometimes, During Deployment, It Seems Like We Won’t Make It”: Applying the Relational Turbulence Model to Couples Experiencing Military Deployment.

Presentations:

Anzur, C. K., & Myers, S. A. (2019, November). “*To Meet Her, That Changed Everything*”: *Adult Adoptees’ Discursive Construction of the Meaning of “Parent” Following Birth Parent Contact*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.

Going Virtual in a Pandemic: Teaching Emerging Researchers

Dr. Christine Anzur undertook the arduous responsibility of teaching a research methods class, but when the pandemic hit and campus closed, she had to rework Quantitative Research Methods (COMM 3330). Unfortunately, when ETSU went remote, her method students lost access to SPSS, necessitating that the weekly-statistics homework and activity assignments be changed.

Christine spent copious amounts of time running stats herself and editing the SPSS output, creating PDFs for her students to enable them to continue learning how to interpret results. Still not done, Christine developed detailed lectures to highlight the step-by-step process that the student-researchers would use for specific statistical tests.

For anyone who has manually “run” an ANOVA, for example, you know how time-consuming the process is. Now, imagine teaching 20 undergraduate students a multiple-step process.

On top of everything else, Christine added weekly one-hour review sessions to help her students better understand their assignments, computations, and outputs.

Group projects were revamped, creating shorter, individual multi-part projects; thus, Christine was better positioned to mentor her students more closely, but resulting in a substantially increased workload for herself.

Thank you, Christine!

You helped this group of emerging scholars adjust to the rigors of research under challenging circumstances.

Pandemia Shout Out!

Erin Blankenship-Messmer

Dissertation:

Messmer-Blankenship, E. (In Progress). *First-Generation Women's Perceptions of Support While Enrolled in College: A Phenomenological Study* [Dissertation].

Dissertation Research in a Pandemic

Erin Blankenship-Messmer's dissertation research continues, but when campus closed due to COVID-19, she did what researchers have to do: she reconceptualized her methods, including her data collection.

Her dissertation examines first-generation women's perceptions of support given to them during their college studies. Originally, Erin planned to interview 15 women from three different institutions. Of course, then the pandemic hit, and she adapted.

Over summer, she successfully interviewed **11** women via Zoom from institutions across the country. Having completed the data analysis, she has immersed herself in writing and revising her dissertation.

Congratulations, Erin Blankenship-Messmer, on making the best of an already challenging research study.

Pandemia Shout Out!

Wesley Buerkle

Presentations:

Buerkle, C. W. (2020). Not Seen on TV: Highlighting Consent's Absence in Mediated Images of Sex. Accepted for presentation at the *Applied Rhetoric Collaborative's 2020 Symposium*.

Promotion in the Pandemic

As Communication Studies Program Head, **Dr. Wesley Buerkle** regularly faces challenges that require his time, attention, and problem-solving acumen. He spends countless hours on staffing, assessment, and program reviews. Yet, he manages to squeeze in vital scholarly and service work.

In addition to working with the *Escape from Rape* regional conference, he continued advancing his own program of research, including his initiatives to help promote students' oral citation of sources during presentations, and his invaluable efforts to promote safe and healthy sexual consent.

Not surprisingly, then, Wesley received unanimous support when he applied for Promotion to Full Professor during the 2019-2020 year. In the Spring 2020 semester, he was nominated for and received the Distinguished Faculty Award in Service for the College of Arts & Sciences.

Congratulations, Wesley, on your well-deserved promotion to Full Professor and your Distinguished Faculty Award.

Award Shout Out!

Nancy Donoval

Publications:

Niemi, L., & **Donoval, N.** (2020). *Point of View and the Emotional Arc of Stories: A Handbook for Writers and Storytellers*. NY, NY: Parkhurst Brothers Publishers Inc. <https://www.parkhurstbrothers.com/point-of-view-and-the-emotional-arc-of-stories.html>

Kelly A. Dorgan

Publications:

Dorgan, K.A. (2019, November 15). Building Character. *Town Crier: The Puritan Magazine*. <http://towncrier.puritan-magazine.com/ephemera/building-better-female-characters-with-dungeons-dragons-kelly-a-dorgan/>

Forthcoming:

Dorgan, K.A. (Forthcoming). Custodian of Our Story. *Delmarva Review*.

Dorgan, K.A. (Forthcoming). Under the Rhododendrons. *The Bookends Review* [Reprint].

Podcast:

Dorgan, K.A. (2019, August 20). Taking Care. *borrowed solace*. [Podcast Episode 4, produced in conjunction with the ETSU Department of Media and Communication and *borrowed solace* producers]. <https://borrowedsolace.com/2019/08/20/episode-4-resources/>

Blog:

Dorgan, K.A. (2020, March 20-Present). Love in a Pandemic. <https://kellydorgan.com/my-blog>

Andrew Herrmann

Publications:

Herrmann, A. F. (2020). *Journal of Autoethnography*. Co-founder & Co-Editor (w/ Tony Adams). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. (Launched January 2020)

Herrmann, A. F. (2020). (Ed.). *The Routledge International Handbook of Organizational Autoethnography*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Herrmann, A. F. (2020). *Organizational Communication Approaches to the Works of Joss Whedon*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Herbig, A., **Herrmann, A. F.**, Watson, A., Tyma, A. W., Miller, J. (2020). Critical Rhetoric as Collaboration. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 885-898.

Adams, T. E., & **Herrmann, A. F.** (2020). Expanding our Autoethnographic Future. *Journal of Autoethnography*, 1, 1-8.

Dunn, R. A., & Herrmann, A. F. (2020). Comic Con Communion: Gender, Cosplay, and Media Fandom. In R. A. Dunn (Ed.), *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Media Fandom* (pp. 37-52). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Book Series:

Herbig, A., & Herrmann, A. F. (2020). *Communication Perspectives on Popular Culture*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Presentations:

Herrmann, A. F. (2019). *Autoethnography as Applicable Organizational Research*. Address given at the Colloquium on Organizational Ethnography, University of Colorado, Boulder.

Herrmann, A. F. (2020). *The Problematization of Online "Community" When the SMS Closes*. Paper accepted to the Central States Communication Association, Chicago, IL (Top Paper, Media Studies Interest Group.)

Donna Paulsen

Thesis:

Paulsen, D. (2020). *"No One's Gonna Say That at Church:" Women's Experiences with Infertility in Christian Faith Communities*. [Thesis]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3708/>

Awards:

Paulsen, D. (2019, December). *Women's Experiences with Infertility in Christian Faith Communities*. Winner of the 2019 3 Minute Thesis (3MT®) Competition. <https://www.etsu.edu/etsu-news/2019/12-december/3mt-2019-paulsen.php>

Coupling Research and Performance: The Tale of a Special Thesis

Ms. Donna Paulsen tackled numerous challenges during her graduate studies in the Communication and Storytelling Studies MA program.

For one, she focused her thesis on interviewing women who had experiences with infertility in Christian faith communities (<https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3708/>). Before she defended her thesis, she entered the 2019 3MT® (3-Minute Thesis) Competition here at ETSU, and, not surprisingly, she brought home First Place (<https://www.etsu.edu/gradschool/etd/3minutethesis.php>).

By watching her presentation, you'll get a sense of Donna's powerful, yet engaging and humane, presentational style, evidencing her ability to bring together her nuanced understanding of traditional research and compassionate performance (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tneZ6ITByFA&feature=youtu.be>).

In Spring 2020, she successfully defended her thesis. Afterward, Donna crafted an original ethnodrama. In "*Sing, O Barren One*," she weaves research participants' stories, performing them verbatim.

While her performance was postponed due to the COVID-19 quarantine, Donna didn't give up. Committed to delivering back to the community the rich voices of the women she interviewed for her thesis research, she rescheduled her ethnodrama for September 25, 2020 at Christ Community Church, Johnson City.

Thankfully, Donna accepted a teaching position in our department, so she will continue to reach our campus and local communities with her vital work.

Award Shout Out!

Delanna Reed

Awards:

Reed, D. (2019). *The Hamilton International Arts in Health Award for Arts in Innovation*. From the National Organization of Arts in Health.

Reed, D. (2019). *Ballad Health Community Collaboration Award*. From Ballad Health.

Performances:

Reed, D. (2019, August 15). [Performance] *Appalachian Tales and Ghost Stories*. Vance Birthplace Historic Site, Weaverville, NC.

Reed, D. (2019, September 10). [Performance] *Ghost Stories*. Eastman Communication Group at Eastman, Kingsport, TN.

Reed, D. (2020, January 26). [Performance] *Stories from the Heart*. Concert at Florida Storytelling Festival.

Performance & Performance Studies in and out of the Pandemic

Part of a research team, **Dr. Delanna Reed** is helping examine the patient-impact of bedside storytelling. *Prescription for Pain: One Dose of Storytelling* unites practitioners from the Jonesborough Storytellers Guild and Franklin Woods Community Hospital.

In 2019, the team received multiple honors, including the Ballad Health Community Collaboration Award

Delanna stayed busy when the campus closed due to COVID-19. She took her storytelling performances onto Zoom for the Jonesborough Storytellers Guild. Some of her stories are viewable on the [Guild's Facebook](#) page.

Delanna admits her strong preference for live performances, but she's resilient and committed to her craft. So, she continues to embrace change and strengthen her transition to remote work.

Award Shout Out!

Undergraduate & Graduate Student Activities ~Selected~

Undergraduate Scholarship

Honors Theses:

Heidi Armstrong (2019). *The War Within: Mental Health Rhetoric in NF's Rap Lyrics*
[Advisor, Dr. C. Wesley Buerkle]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/516/>

Max Faust (2020). *Menstruation Regulation: A Feminist Critique of Menstrual Product Brands on Instagram*
[Advisor, Dr. C. Wesley Buerkle]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/576/>

Graduate Theses & Capstones:

Lewis, Abby (2020, Spring). *A Poetic Ethnodrama: Discussing the Impact of the Pressure to Publish on Creative Writers' Production*
[Thesis Advisor, Dr. Andrew Herrmann]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3690/>

Lunceford, Tama (2019, Fall). *Stories of Color: An Exploration of Storytelling and Racial Microaggression*
[Thesis Advisor, Dr. Amber E. Kinser]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3672/>

Paulsen, Donna (2020, Spring). *"No One's Gonna Say That at Church:" Women's Experiences with Infertility in Christian Faith Communities*
[Thesis Advisor, Dr. Amber E. Kinser]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3708/>

Price, Isaac (2020, Spring). *Managing Cosplay Performance: The Forms and Expectations of Convention Roleplay*
[Thesis Advisor, Dr. Andrew Herrmann]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3753/>

Taylor, Paul (2020). *"A Lot of Prayer, and Some Wine In-Between": Applying the Relational Turbulence Model to the Stepparent-Biological Parent Marriage*
[Thesis Advisor, Dr. Christine Anzur]. <https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3728/>

Trent, Sarah (2020).
[Comprehensive Exam Advisor, Dr. Andrew Herrmann].

Whitehead, Joshua (2019, Fall). *Creating Post-Black Stories and Poetry: Bringing Awareness to Toxic Blackness*
[Capstone Advisor, Dr. Delanna Reed].

Thank you, Laughton Messmer and Erin Blankenship-Messmer.

Your hard work resulted in the Speech and Debate Team having numerous accomplishments in 2019-2020. Here are only a few:

Tennessee Tech University Tournament, Cookeville, TN

- * Braden Trent- 2nd place, Editorial Impromptu; 2nd place, Radio Broadcasting; 3rd place, Impromptu Speaking
- * Gowri Tumkur- 6th place, Editorial Impromptu

Smokey Mountain Debate Tournament, Morristown, TN

- * Sylvia Meredith- 3rd place Beginning Novice Speaker
- * Madison Sink- 7th place Beginning Novice Speaker

Front Porch Swing Tournament, Dandridge, TN

- * Brooke Hornberger- 1st place and Top Novice, Program of Oral Interpretation
- * Emily Napier- 6th place, Informative Speaking
- * Madison Sink- 7th place and Top Novice, Persuasive Speaking
- * 2nd place Limited Entry Team Sweepstakes

Tennessee Interstate Forensic Association State Tournament, Gallatin, TN

- * Braden Trent- 3rd place, IPDA Varsity Speaker; 2nd place, IPDA Debater
- * Brooke Hornberger- 6th place, Program of Oral Interpretation
- * Madison Sink- 6th place, Radio Broadcasting

Black Warrior Swing Tournament, Tuscaloosa, AL

- * Brooke Hornberger- 2nd place, Program of Oral Interpretation

Novice National Forensic Association Tournament, Mt. Berry, GA

- * Chloe Philpot- 5th place, Slam Poetry
- * 2nd place in Division 3 Schools Sweepstakes Awards

Awards Shout Out!

Going Virtual in a Pandemic: Training Young Professionals

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the landscape of education around the world. As a result of the shift to remote learning, instructors like **Ms. Adriane Flanary** had to adapt live classes to online formats.

Adriane reconfigured her face-to-face Public Speaking and Argumentation & Debate classes to meet the ITS Online requirements and students' needs.

Like the other faculty members in our department, she allotted more time for detailed feedback on speech and debate preparations, and revised assignments to help students continue developing and applying their speaking skills.

Concerned about student access to relevant course materials, Adriane utilized the Information Technology Service's Online Course Design Standards, reorganizing her course content into weekly modules.

She included checklists for students to track their task completion, provided supplemental learning material (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture videos), and, as needed, reconstructed assignments to better align with online delivery.

Drawing on her own skills as a communication professional, Adriane modelled for and mentored her student-presenters as they adapted to designing and delivering speeches to remote audiences. With each revised assignment, she helped students further develop professional skills, preparing them for engaging online meetings, online presentations, and online job interviews.

Bravo, Adriane, and to all of our committed and hardworking educators who find ways to continue teaching, even when facing seismic disruptions to the university and our classrooms.

Pandemia Shout Out!

Funding Opportunities



ETSU Internal Funding Overview

https://www.etsu.edu/research/orspa/funding_opps/internal.php



ETSU Elevates (team-based service grant)

General Information

<https://www.etsu.edu/etsuelevates/>



ETSU Research Development Committee

Small Research Grants

<https://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/smallgrant/default.php>

Major Research Grants

<https://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/major/default.php>

Interdisciplinary Research Grants

<https://www.etsu.edu/research/rdc/interdisciplinary/default.php>



ETSU Instructional Development Committee

General Information

<http://www.etsu.edu/academicaffairs/instructional-grants.php>



ETSU Internationalization Faculty Grant Program

General Information

https://www.etsu.edu/research/orspa/funding_opps/internal.php#Internationalization



ETSU PGIA

General Information

https://www.etsu.edu/research/orspa/funding_opps/internal.php#PGIA



ETSU Travel Award for Arts & Sciences Faculty

General Information

https://www.etsu.edu/research/orspa/funding_opps/internal.php#TAASF



ETSU Student Opportunities

ETSU Student/Faculty Collaborative Research Grant

https://www.etsu.edu/research/orspa/funding_opps/internal.php#Collaborative

ETSU Undergraduate Travel Grants (Undergraduate)

http://www.etsu.edu/honors/ug_research/funding/travel.php

Leading in a Pandemic

Dr. Amber Kinser did what few others have done before: she headed an entire department during a tumultuous period, navigating us through the pandemic and guiding our collective response to social-justice movements.

Fall 2019 semester began with a significant challenge and opportunity: the Communication & Storytelling Studies M.A. Program Review, led by Amber.

She coordinated meetings with graduate faculty, compiled faculty-drafted sections into a lengthy report, and revised the final report for continuity and worked with Lori Ann Manis to verify accuracy of content. Spring 2020 saw the continuation and conclusion of the review process that took over a year of preparation and execution, and Amber oversaw every step of the way, including the site visit. She ensured that graduate faculty, graduate students, and alumni actively engaged the entire process. The site team's final report praised the program and Dr. Kinser's leadership.

Throughout 2019-2020, she also continued working with the Cancer Stories Project. This is a long-running, transdisciplinary, grant-funded collaboration that included the storytelling program and the ETSU Quillen College of Medicine. Amber participated in the recording of performances for inclusion in medical training modules. On top of everything else, she served as Communication Expert for a speed-consulting Genius Bar event as part of STRIVE (Startup Training Resources to Inspire Veteran Entrepreneurship).

Then, COVID-19 forced the campus closure, and Amber went to work, helping faculty transition to online learning, all while advising multiple thesis-research projects. As department chair, she procured remote-delivery equipment and helped identify resources for remote-teaching training.

At the request of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, she was appointed to College Liaison for ETSU's Return to Classroom Instruction Team over summer 2020.

After the brutal killing of George Floyd, Amber collaborated with faculty in June to develop the department's [Statement of Race Matters](#). Her continued oversight of our strategic plan gave her insight into meaningful ways we could continue working to uphold our core values and departmental priorities of ensuring diversity and inclusion of people and ideas.

Thank you, Amber, for your continued leadership and commitment.

Pandemia Shout Out!
