Welcome back to the fall semester!

The start of the fall semester is typically signified by the sounds of student chatter in the hallways, activities popping up around Paseo de Colachis, and a distinct reduction in available parking on campus. In 2020, the start of the fall semester has been signified by the sounds of students saying “can you hear me,” activities popping up in Zoom breakout rooms, and an abundance of available parking on campus.

This is not a typical semester. Students are not only returning to the remote classroom during a pandemic, but also in the midst of a civil rights movement sparked by the continuing murder of Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement.

Though 2020 seems to be shrouded in a gloomy cloud, remember that sunlight always finds a way to peek through, especially in San Diego. Here on campus, communication studies faculty have spent much of their shortened summer ensuring that students are provided with the best educational experience possible under the circumstances in which we are all living. Faculty have attended seminars and workshops on remote learning, and also participated in anti-racist reading groups and discussions to drive departmental changes that reflect our commitment to anti-racism.

The semester will be challenging, but I know that our students and our campus community can thrive in the face of challenge—that’s the changemaker way. I look forward to watching our faculty and students excel this semester, and to assist in any way I can. Wash your hands, wear your facemask, and have a good laugh now and then.

-- Dr. Bond
Associate Professor & Chair
Department of Communication Studies
The University of San Diego Department of Communication Studies has a new faculty member on board: Dr. Aziz Muqaddam. An assistant professor of Strategic Communication, he was hired to oversee the development of strategic communication courses within the Department of Communication Studies. Originally from Saudi Arabia, he’s spent the past 13 years in the United States and recently graduated from the Media Studies Ph.D. program at Michigan State University before coming to USD.

His expertise covers the aspects of influencer marketing, personal branding, luxury brands, social media analytics, body image, online dating, and strategic visual communication.

He said when he saw the job opening at USD, it was almost as if the job description had been written for him.

“I thought it was a really good fit, and that I could fill a really important gap at the institution,” Muqaddam said. “When I was applying for jobs, I was doing my Ph.D. program at a big university.”

He was looking for a different atmosphere in his career — a smaller, liberal arts university with a nice campus and a community feel.

“I wanted a place where I felt like I could contribute,” Muqammad said.

In the past, Muqaddam worked on projects in fashion marketing, food and restaurant services, non-profit development, decision-support systems, and educational outreach and training. His research interests lie in the interaction of personality traits and visual media images.

His current research project centers on how status seeking affects charitable behavior online and offline, and how to strategically convert virtual connections into real-live transactions.

In his new role at USD, Muqaddam hopes to add a practical aspect of communication. The department has already done a great job of developing critical thinking and media literacy skills, opening student minds to a wide array of issues and theories, he said.

But he can contribute by developing marketable skills and showing students how strategic communication can fit into a variety of careers — media management, the entertainment industry, advertising, public advocacy, and nonprofits, just to name a few.

“Students will learn something that’s relevant to where they see themselves in a few years when they graduate,” Muqaddam said.

In his free time before COVID-19, he frequented the gym and held weekly card and board game sessions with his friends. Now that he’s regulated to his own home in the pandemic, he’s spent more time in the kitchen. His most recent culinary obsession? Stew.

“It should be a festival of flavors when you’re done,” he said.

Despite beginning his USD career remotely during a pandemic and dealing with all the complications that come with it, Muqaddam’s excitement to join the USD community has not diminished.

“I’m so grateful for the people who are working hard day after day just to make our work possible,” he said.

Next semester, Muqaddam is teaching Intro to Research (COMM 265 §01, 02) and Strategic Communication (COMM 494 §01) for the Department of Communication Studies.
Summer memories from the Comm Studies faculty

Take a look at the **pop-up course** in the Humanities Center for Black Lives Matter, co-organized by Comm Studies professor Dr. Tullis.
Recent faculty publications

Dr. Bowman's new book was published this summer: *Nonverbal Communication: An Applied Approach.*

Dr. Tullis published “*Necessity, Uncertainty, and the ACA: Health Insurance Coverage in the Age of Trump,*” which was published in the book *The Personal is Political: Body Politics in a Trump World.*

Dr. Simmons published a children's book this summer, *How Boo Boo Duck Got His Name,* and she'll be holding a book signing for it soon. Check it out on [Amazon.](#)

Dr. Keeling recently published “*Colonizing cuts of labyrinth mythology, a tangling, parable of white sensibilities*” in *Communication and the Public.*
USD Student Media wins four journalism awards

USD Student Media has added four more journalism awards to its list of accomplishments during the 2019-2020 school year.

The USD Vista, USD's student-run newspaper that's been in operation since 1968, won two first-place awards for its story “USD Theology and Religious Studies Professor Suspended After On-Campus Threats” by Kaia Hubbard, Anderson Haigler, Celina Tebor and Amy Inkrott.

This story won first place in the College Media Division for News Story at the Society of Professional Journalists San Diego Pro Chapter 2020 Journalism Awards, as well as first place for Best Breaking News Story at the 2020 California College Media Awards.

Gina Lew, professor of communication studies at USD and USD Student Media advisor, explained how her students handled the sensitive situation.

“That was great teamwork, that was great sensitivity, and it was also taking a story and being as sensitive as we could and reporting something that was pretty painful,” Lew said.

“Not just for that student, but that community. I thought our students did a fantastic job.”

Lew said she'd put any of her students up against a student at a journalism school, even though USD doesn't have a journalism program or major.

“I think that's what's great about our program,” Lew said. “Is that we want our students to go from a classroom to a national newsroom, because our students are landing jobs.”

Victoria Holmes, whose stories won awards this past year, recently landed a job as a reporter at the WNCT9 television station in Greenville, North Carolina.

“It's been pretty great,” Holmes said about her new gig. “It's my dream job, literally.”

It hasn't been without its difficulties, however. Holmes said the biggest difference between USDtv and her new job was transitioning from doing journalism on the side to a full-time career.

“Deadlines are a little more serious,” Holmes said, who graduated in 2019 from USD with a degree in Communication Studies.

“Gina's class prepares you for the real world.”

She spoke about her award-winning story about the hate crime on campus, and how the reporting she did for USDtv helped her in the workforce.

“That one was a pretty serious story because even local news outlets worked on it,” Holmes said. “It’s exactly what I'm doing right now, and it's prepared me for what I'm doing right now.”

Lew said she isn’t surprised that her students are winning awards.

“We're producing great work and we're adhering to ethical and professional standards day in and day out,” Lew said. “I'm impressed by the tenacity of our students. These are kids that are doing it for the love of it, and they're using best practices as we maneuver deadlines and breaking news and I couldn't be prouder.”

To read The USD Vista, watch USDtv, and listen to USD Radio, go to uofsdmedia.com.

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-Gina Lew
Lambda Pi Eta, the National Honor Society for undergraduates in Communication, is recruiting new members

To become a member of Lambda Pi Eta, a student must:

- Have completed at least 60 semester hours in college.
- Have completed at least 12 semester hours in communication studies.
- Have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 and a minimum GPA of 3.25 in the major.
- Be currently enrolled as a student in good standing.
- Display commitment to the field of communication.

Apply here.
The 2020 election is quickly approaching. Visit the USD Votes [website](#) for information about how to register to vote, how to receive your ballot, and more.

Need career help? Check out the Career Development Center’s list of [upcoming events](#) this semester. If you want to talk to a Career Counselor, all of CDev’s appointments are being held via Zoom and students can [schedule an appointment on Handshake](#).

Need to figure out how to navigate the library during COVID-19 times? Don’t know how to start that research paper? Copley Library has you covered. You can find the library’s fall workshop schedule on [its website](#).

Check out our social media pages to stay up to date on the latest department updates.

Visit our website [here](#).

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