

2012 Award Winners

Distinguished New Teacher Award | Dr. Tang Tang

Dr. Tang Tang is an Assistant Professor in the School of Communication at the University of Akron. She teaches courses in media management and leadership, programming and audience analysis, media writing, mass communication theories and quantitative research methods. Her current research focuses on uses and impacts of new communication technologies in post-convergent environments, social media business models, and the attributes that lead to career success in the creative industries.

Dr. Tang has published journal articles in the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *International Journal on Media Management*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *Journal of Media Education*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *Journal of Sports Media*, *Chinese Journal of Communication*, and *International Journal of Business & Social Science*. She is also a co-author of *Strategic Social Media: From Marketing to Social Change*.

Dr. Tang received her Ph.D. from the School of Media Arts and Studies at Ohio University in 2008. She was previously an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, where she taught media management and leadership. Dr. Tang currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Management, Marketing and Programming Division of the Broadcast Education Association, and is a member of the Ohio Communication Association, the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, and the International Communication Association. She has given more than 40 national and international conference and invited presentations. Dr. Tang is also a NATPE (National Association of Television Program Executives) Faculty Fellow.

Innovative Teaching Award | Dr. Deleasa Randall-Griffiths

Dr. Deleasa Randall-Griffiths is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Ashland University. She received her bachelor's degree in Theatre from Indiana University, her master's degree in Performance Studies from Southern Illinois University, and her Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communication, also from Southern Illinois University.

Dr. Randall-Griffiths has over 25 years of experience teaching at the college level. She loves working with college students because they are at such pivotal life-stage when they truly discover their own unique communication styles. She teaches the basic communication course, along with courses in interpersonal communication, family communication, performance studies and international storytelling.

Her research interests in performance studies include:

- performance of local history
- multicultural storytelling
- healthcare narratives

She has also worked in the areas of family communication and conversation analysis. Her research appears in *Text and Performance Quarterly* and the *American Journal of Semiotics*. Dr. Randall-Griffiths is active in campus leadership, serving as chair of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. She also stays connected with the local community by chairing the Ashland Chautauqua Planning Committee which brings history alive

through performance. She has also written and directed three local history performances for the Ashland Chautauqua utilizing archival research and oral history. Dr. Randall-Griffiths and her husband, Tom, live on a lake near Ashland, Ohio with their 10 year-old daughter, Faith.

Distinguished Service Award | Kenneth A. Carano

Ken Carano has worn many hats- educator, entrepreneur, advocate and politician, just to name a few. Carano will be the first to admit that it is his love for the art of communication that makes him so versatile.

He was a successful educator for 36 years at Austintown Fitch High School and Youngstown State University. He was a championship Speech and Debate Coach, and his teams were recognized as “Team of the Decade” after winning twelve state titles. For this, he was inducted into the National Speech League Coaches Hall of Fame. Carano also served as General Manager of the local Austintown Television Station, Channel 19.

However, it wasn’t through speech or television where Carano earned his most famous title, but as announcer for the Fitch football home games where he was affectionately known as “The Voice of the Falcons”.

Carano’s political career is where his versatility is most evident. He began as a precinct committeeman 41 years ago. He ran a successful campaign for Austintown Township Trustee and served for six years. In 2000, he was elected to serve the 65th district of the Ohio House of Representatives and was re-elected three additional times in the newly designated 59th district. With the election of Governor Ted Strickland, Carano became the Governor’s Regional Director for the four counties in the Mahoning Valley.

To this day, he is also the Executive Vice-Chairman, the Election Chairman and the Parliamentarian of the Mahoning County Democratic Party, posts he has held for 15 years.

Distinguished Graduate Student Award | Steve Phalen

My interest in communication began in the early 2000’s as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. While there, I took to the idea that communication does not solely transmit meaning between individuals but is a key component in the (co)creation of the social worlds we inhabit. My formative experiences at River Falls, lead me to pursue my M.A. at the University of South Florida in 2007. There I was exposed to the idea that communicative practices are never innocent and became sensitive to the role communication plays in the pursuit of social justice. Since 2009, I have been pursuing my Ph.D. at Ohio University, where I was introduced to the relationship between communication and pragmatist philosophies that situate knowledge generation as an active process stemming from lived experience. I spend my time at OU fulfilling my graduate student teaching responsibilities and volunteering at The Gathering Place, a community drop-in center for people living with mental illness. I have become taken by music’s expressive and relational capacities through my participation in their weekly musical activities and music therapy groups and providing free guitar lessons to interested members. My musical experiences with the organization form the backbone of my dissertation research as I explore the relationship between communication, music, and self-expression. It is an honor to be named Distinguished Graduate Student by the Ohio Communication Association and hope to uphold the integrity of the award.

Distinguished Undergraduate Student Award (Two winners)

Lauren Tennet

Lauren Tennet is a senior Public Relations student with a double minor in history and Spanish at Ohio Northern University. Tennet is a Dean's List student and a member of Ohio Northern University's Honors College program. A native Houstonian, Tennet is currently the intern at The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion in Texas. In the fall, she will serve as True North Public Relations' Firm Director, Advertising Manager for FORUM and Vice-President of Membership for Delta Zeta. Tennet is a member of the academic honoraria Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma, as well as Lambda Pi Eta, the communications honorary.

She serves on the Student Advisory Board to the College of Arts and Sciences, President's Club and Alumni Singers. Tennet has received the Presidential Scholarship at Ohio Northern University and was nominated "Best Student Firm Member" in May of 2012. Besides academic achievements, Tennet has a passion for music and performance. At Ohio Northern, Tennet was a part of four musical productions, including The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and Oklahoma! In the future, she hopes to be happy.

Megan Wise

As a student at Ashland University, Megan currently serves as the Editorial Assistant for the nationally peer-reviewed scholarly journal Communication Research Reports, and she recently developed instructor material for the text, Organizational Communication: Strategies for Success. During the spring, Megan presented at Ashland University's College of Arts and Science Undergraduate Symposium about the seriousness of medical professionalism and the detection of suspicious behavior through nonverbal communication tactics.

At Ashland University, Megan is the President of the public relations club, Accent on PR, where students work toward representing the Department of Communication Studies in an alluring light to attract future students and highlight the many accomplishments of our alumni and students. Additionally, she is the President of Lambda Pi Eta, a communication honorary, where they celebrate the successes of current communication students and present research at various conferences. For the past two years, Megan has received the academic honors award for both the Department of Communication Studies and the Department of Journalism and Digital Media based on academic performance.

During the fall semester, Megan will carry out a marketing and public relation campaign for the Ashland YMCA by developing, implementing, and maintaining a variety of marketing components. By using forms of media, she will promote and advocate the company in order to increase awareness and participation.

Upon graduation, Megan hopes to secure a position in the public relations field with a prestigious organization where the skills of writing, marketing, planning, and coordinating events help her strive toward her passion of communication.