Section 1: Highlights

As a Department, during the year 2021-2022, we have published 45 peer-reviewed journal articles and 17 conference papers/presentations relevant to DEI and/or social justice issues. 

For example,

*Journal Publications:*

[https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2021.1985590](https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2021.1985590)

[https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1996610](https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2021.1996610)


*Conference Papers/Presentations:*


Meanwhile, we have taught 22 classes incorporating contents and pedagogical activities relevant to DEI and/or social justice issues.

For example:

**Carolyn Casertano** incorporates social justice/DEIA in her public relations courses, through course readings/videos, assignments, discussions, and case studies in PR 201 Intro to PR, PR 205 PR Ethics, and PR 423 Crisis Communication and PR.

She often highlights different examples in her classes that draw students' attention to social justice issues. In her PR 423 Crisis Communication class, they discuss the murder of George Floyd and the BLM movement - focusing on the responses from businesses, organizations, and stakeholder reactions (and, in some cases, stakeholder activism).

**Diana Leonard** taught Introduction to Public Speaking (COMM119). “We seek to find our unique voice to co-create a meaningful message with our audience, yet cannot have impact without considering the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of those audience members. In public speaking, we focus on a basic communication principle: The Social Construction of Meaning. And we discover where we have hit or missed the mark during verbal and written peer feedback about the message of the speech, its content and impact, not just about one's delivery skills.”

**Leila Bighash** taught 1) Intro to Organizational Communication (COMM 310), which includes a unit on Diversity in Organizations; 2) Applied Organizational Communication (COMM 312), which includes units on Diversity and Cultural Differences, along with activities that emphasize the role of diversity and equity in and as a member of organizations; and 3) Communication & Technology Theory (COMM 311), and the class covers topics related to online activism, collective/connected action, privacy and surveillance, and many other issues related to DEI and social justice.

In the classes, Leila 1) asks students to share their own personal experiences in relation to social justice issues in class discussions, 2) has students discuss their experiences in visiting or living in different cultural settings and relate this to organizational contexts, and 3) asks students identify an online social movement and write a discussion post online about the social movement's characteristics and relation to theory.

She also incorporates a networking activity where students are assigned with different roles or "needs," which requires students to think about diversity and inclusion even in seemingly informal organizational and work-related situations. In the lecture, she relates
the social network concept of the strength of weak ties to heterogeneous resources and
the diversity of personal networks.

Besides research and teaching activities, we, as a Department, have been actively involved in
service activities at different levels (e.g., department, university, or professional), as well as
receiving educational or professional training related to DEI and/or social justice practices.

For example,

**Jules Barbati** was a member of the AZCOVIDTXT team, which was a public health
campaign that gathered data from residents of Arizona about their needs during the
height of the COVID pandemic. The team often considered marginalized communities and
their needs (e.g., low SES, Native Americans, domestic abuse survivors, etc.) when
gathering and creating content.

**Elena Chabolla** “We received support from SBS and our department head for a staff
proposal that would encompass beautifying existing concrete benches near Old Main,
Douglass, and Communication buildings. The project would bring together about 100 SBS
staff to design and create mosaic tiles on each bench with a unique message on each one
-- each message a team effort from an SBS unit or staff team. The project would celebrate
and showcase the diversity within SBS of culture, language, gender, country of origin, and
other elements. Because of this support, we are pursuing a Provost Investment Fund and
plan to submit the proposal in October 2022 for a two-year project. The SBS Staff Advisory
Council, of which I am a member, will help move the project forward.”

**Susan Holland** assisted with the development and event management of “Paving the Way
to Inclusion: Race and Equity in Education with keynote speaker Gloria Ladson-Billings,
Ph.D., a researcher on critical race theory and racial disparities in education.

**Dam Hee Kim** served as the International Outreach Chair of the AEJMC (Association for
Education in Journalism and Mass Communication)'s Media Management, Economics, and
Entrepreneurship (MMEE) Division from 2020 to 2022.

Many student organizations in the Department of Communication have also helped in our
mission to prioritize DEI and social justice during the year 2021-2022.

**The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)** continued to encourage
opportunities designed to support students of diverse backgrounds, such as the Dr. F. H.
Teahan Chapter Award.

**Lamba Pie Eta (LPE)** invited a number of speakers to share their experiences in diverse
corporate, professional, and entertainment industries. For example, Maddy Rueda (Global
Projects Manager of Music, Youtube) shared her experience working in a culturally diverse
team as the youngest member, as well as the many advantages of diversity in teamwork.
The Association of Graduate Students in Communication (AGSC) held the Project Period Drive in spring 2022 in support of the YWCA Southern Arizona. They asked people within the department to donate new period products to people who menstruate that may not be able to access them.

Section 2: Research and Professional Projects

Jules Barbati published the article:

Leila Bighash published an article and three conference papers:


Leah Dajches completed her dissertation: We’re Here, We’re Queer, and We’re Stressed: Using the Minority Stress Model to Explore the Impact of Queer Readings on Mental Health Among Sexual Minority Youth.

And published the article and conference papers:


Dajches, L., Terán, L., Yan, K., & Aubrey, J. S. (2022, November 17-22). Girls just wanna...figure out their sexuality: The impact of celebrity idolization on U.S. adolescent


**Daniel Dominguez** published the article: Environmental Racism on Tucson's Southside: An Overview of the Tucson Superfund Site and a Call to Address New Chemical Contamination, 12 Ariz. J. Envtl. L. & Pol'y 239 (2022).

**Heather Gahler** published two articles and one conference paper:


**Hyeonchang(Kay) Gim** published two articles and one conference paper:


Jake Harwood published ten articles and eight conference papers:


**Matt Lapierre** published the article:

**Rain Liu** published three articles and one conference paper:


**Chris Segrin** published twelve articles:


**Jennifer Stevens Aubrey** published three articles:


**Larissa Terán** published six articles:


**Section 3: Teaching and Classroom Activities**

Jules Barbati taught COMM/PR 119, in which she discusses the content about audience considerations. Audience considerations are all about considering all viewpoints and making sure each audience member is heard.

In her class, she had students reflect on their own privilege - as a privilege walk or a privilege quiz.

She often uses examples in her classes that either make the students consider their own privilege, or draw the students' attention to social justice issues (e.g., Black Lives Matter)

In classes where language use is relevant (e.g., Public Speaking), the students and Jules do a class-wide word association test. They consider the differences between words (e.g., survivor vs victim).

Another activity is having students consider the differences between nouns (e.g., the homeless) and adjectives (e.g., a person experiencing homelessness) to teach cultural awareness/sensitivity.
Leila Bighash taught 1) Intro to Organizational Communication (COMM 310), which includes a unit on Diversity in Organizations; 2) Applied Organizational Communication (COMM 312), which includes units on Diversity and Cultural Differences, along with activities that emphasize the role of diversity and equity in and as a member of organizations; and 3) Communication & Technology Theory (COMM 311), and the class covers topics related to online activism, collective/connected action, privacy and surveillance, and many other issues related to DEI and social justice.

In the classes, Leila 1) asks students to share their own personal experiences in relation to social justice issues in class discussions, 2) has students discuss their experiences in visiting or living in different cultural settings and relate this to organizational contexts, and 3) asks students identify an online social movement and write a discussion post online about the social movement's characteristics and relation to theory.

She also incorporates a networking activity where students are assigned with different roles or "needs," which requires students to think about diversity and inclusion even in seemingly informal organizational and work-related situations. In the lecture, she relates the social network concept of the strength of weak ties to heterogeneous resources and the diversity of personal networks.

Joe Bonito taught Comm 228, which includes sections on ethics and measurement for variables that might address such issues.

Carolyn Casertano incorporates social justice/DEIA in her public relations courses, through course readings/videos, assignments, discussions, and case studies in PR 201 Intro to PR, PR 205 PR Ethics, and PR 423 Crisis Communication and PR.

She often highlights different examples in her classes that draw students' attention to social justice issues. In her PR 423 Crisis Communication class, they discuss the murder of George Floyd and the BLM movement - focusing on the responses from businesses, organizations, and stakeholder reactions (and in some cases stakeholder activism).

Amanda Cooper taught Interpersonal Communication (COMM 114) for the last two semesters. In teaching this class, she tried to create a space where all students feel comfortable exploring and critiquing concepts and theories. She has made an effort to be reflexive in her teaching of interpersonal theories, especially in teaching older theories that were developed with predominantly white, heterosexual populations.

Early each semester, they discussed intercultural communication and gender and she challenged her students to think about the ways that gender and culture are relevant to the concepts covered in class. During the lecture about language, they had a good discussion about the ways that language can marginalize or empower historically oppressed groups. During the
lecture about communication within families, they discussed the concept of discourse dependence and the ways that minority families use communication to establish and justify their family relationships.

She has more work to do to incorporate diversity and inclusion into her teaching, and is continuing to learn how to do this within the classroom.

**Leah Dajches** taught Introduction to Mass Media Effects (COMM 309) multiple times, and always includes a unit that focuses on media representation, diversity, and effects.

Leah stated that "My teaching perspective is informed through an awareness of race, gender, class, and sexuality, and how these aspects may impact a student’s experiences in the classroom.

I create course reading lists/syllabi that include a range of diverse scholars so that students may also feel seen as reflected in the course materials, and perhaps more importantly, be exposed to scholarly work from individuals of all backgrounds."

**Heather Gahler** taught Intro to Mass Media Effects (Comm 309) this past semester and have included units on Media Representation of race, gender, and sexuality. “I try to make students think about their own privilege and who they see represented in the media. I also try to use anti-racist pedagogy to consider different minority groups and experiences when creating materials.”

**Jake Harwood** taught Communication and Music (Comm 402), in which they discuss the importance of exposure to artistic works from other cultures; music as site for intercultural contact. He also taught intergroup communication (Comm 696g) -- theory and research related to communication and intergroup relations, prejudice and prejudice reduction and the like.

**Susan Holland** taught intercultural communication as an important part of our PR minor curriculum. She states that “Intercultural awareness and intelligence is of vital importance to future PR practitioners. The importance of social justice is also an integral part of every PR course that I teach. For example, in Sports PR and we examine the injustices of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and social class within the culture of sport. In my prior example of Sports PR, where we examine the injustices of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and social class within the culture of sport.

We learn about current sports crises in both collegiate and professional sports and examine and discuss social injustices. We apply crisis management strategies and tactics to current and relevant crises. Current and relevant crisis management in-class samples and also case studies. Students also examine cases of discrimination within sport and gendered expectations by sport - "highly masculine" sports vs. "feminine sports" and the gendered expectations by the type of sport. There are both individual assignments/activities and group activities.
One assignment: Students' sport research paper focuses on researching and writing about a social issue within the culture of sport.

**Dam Hee Kim** taught Communication Technology Theory (COMM 311); this class includes a unit about journalism in the digital age and a guest lecture by a former ESPN reporter/a current journalism appreciation podcast host, both of which cover the issue of diversity in the field.

**Matt Lapierre** taught Health Communication (COMM 369A)- this class is very much focused on DEI and social justice. In general, this class examines how we can use communication to improve health outcomes in the population. More specifically, we have lectures that focus on health disparities, health communication and culture, and designing health campaigns that address social inequities.

Media and Health (COMM 469)- “I dedicate multiple lectures to topics like media representation and its importance, health disparities, and the digital divide.”

Survey of Mass Communication (COMM 301)- “I have a unit dedicated to media representation. In general, my classes are focused on how we use communication to improve the lives of others with a particular focus on historically marginalized communities.”

**Diana Leonard** taught Introduction to Public Speaking (COMM119). “We seek to find our unique voice to co-create a meaningful message with our audience, yet cannot have impact without considering the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of those audience members. In public speaking, we focus on a basic communication principle: The Social Construction of Meaning. And we discover where we have hit or missed the mark during verbal and written peer feedback about the message of the speech, its content and impact, not just about one's delivery skills.”

**Rain Liu** taught COMM/PR 201 Intro to Public Relations and PR 421 Public Relations Campaigns. "In both classes, I've covered topics such as understanding and analyzing diverse target audiences with different cultural backgrounds and campaigns conducted internationally.

I've also discussed the DEI concepts specifically in the classes and introduced the Diversity & Inclusion Wheel for PR practitioners." "I constantly included campaign examples (both good and bad) in class and had students discuss what had been done well and what could have been changed to be more inclusive and less controversial.

Good examples include Burger King's "We Are All the Same Inside" campaign targeting the LGBTQ communities and Microsoft's "We All Win" campaign targeting the disability communities.

Bad examples include H&M's black boy modeling the "monkey" sweatshirt and Nike's campaign in Japan portraying the whole society as discriminatory in a misleading manner."

**Steve Rains** taught Comm 209, which has a unit about digital inequality.
Chris Segrin taught Nonverbal Communication (COMM 415) and this class instructs students on many universal and culture-specific nonverbal behaviors and their meanings in different cultures.

He also taught Family Communication (COMM 407) which includes material on different family forms (e.g., single parent, same-sex parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, stepfamilies) and how family communication is shaped by culture. “In Family Communication, we talk a lot about families in disadvantaged contexts due to things like cultural minority status, economic distress, stigmatized family living arrangements, or family fragmentation. I often draw on real-life examples from my work with disadvantaged youth and families right here in Tucson (just a few miles north of campus).”


Larissa Terán taught COMM 300 and focused on two specific units relevant to DEI. The first are feminist theories, which focus on issues of marginalization and social inequality regarding gender. The second is the intercultural unit, which focuses on individualistic versus collectivistic cultures and how they differ.

“I have had students complete a worksheet from Lang and Rajah (2003) I'm not a feminist, but... where they answer critical questions about the gendered social inequalities (e.g., why is it a man's world when there are more women than men in it?)”

Kyle Tusing “My belief is that because communication is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, all communication courses are relevant to DEI and social justice. Expanding beyond COMM, all courses in the college (SBS) are relevant to DEI and social justice due to the college's focus on social (human) science. Assignments and lectures focus on how communication can be used as a tool to examine issues related to social justice and DEI and then how communication can be used to improve those issues where reform is needed.”

Section 4: Service, Training, and Activities

Jules Barbati was a member of the AZCOVIDTXT team, which was a public health campaign that gathered data from residents of Arizona about their needs during the height of the COVID pandemic. The team often considered marginalized communities and their needs (e.g., low SES, Native Americans, domestic abuse survivors, etc.) when gathering and creating content.

Carolyn Casertano served as one of 4 national representatives for the Public Relations Society of America and served on a task force to help create the strategic plan for the organization, with a focus on DEI initiatives.
At the PRSA Western District Conference in April 2022, she gave a presentation on Risk and Reputation Management, which included content related to DEI and LGBTQ+

**Elena Chabolla** “We received support from SBS and our department head for a staff proposal that would encompass beautifying existing concrete benches near Old Main, Douglass, and Communication buildings. The project would bring together about 100 SBS staff to design and create mosaic tiles on each bench with a unique message on each one -- each message a team effort from an SBS unit or staff team. The project would celebrate and showcase the diversity within SBS of culture, language, gender, country of origin, and other elements. Because of this support, we are pursuing a Provost Investment Fund and plan to submit the proposal in October 2022 for a two-year project. The SBS Staff Advisory Council, of which I am a member, will help move the project forward.”

**Daniel Dominguez** - EDGE Learning: Tribal Consultation and UA Research/Engagement with Native Communities (Sept. 20, 2021) -- Live Online format

Presented his article for the Arizona Journal of Environmental Law & Policy (AJELP) at AJELP's symposium on April 22, 2022.

**Heather Gahler** has been doing the college teaching certificate, which has units in diversity in teaching, including specifically anti-racist pedagogy.

Her team is currently working on a project that considers the role of race in Instagram's effects on women's body image. This is a big project, including four racial groups (White, Latina, Black/African-American, Asian/Asian-American) and will result in 3 papers and conference presentations.

**Hyeonchang(Kay) Gim** took a "learner-centered teaching" class that focused on how to make the classroom environment more DEI friendly. This was a part of my college teaching certificate program.

**Jake Harwood** - Team leader/ faculty mentor/instructor for five communication classes for inmates at the Arizona Department of Corrections State Prison, Whetstone Unit (Tucson). The class included information on intercultural communication, and is for an extremely marginalized population (prisoners) who are (for complex reasons, many structural in nature) incredibly diverse on ethnic, racial, age, disability, etc. dimensions. Conference reviewer, ICA intergroup communication division.

**Susan Holland** continues to read current and relevant peer-reviewed articles on all of these areas (diversity in sport, intercultural intelligence, and education, social justice, gendered expectations in sport - hegemonic femininity/masculinity, apologetic behaviors, etc. in the context of sport through peer-reviewed journals such as Journal of Sport Management.
she also incorporates several documentaries in class through MEF: Media Education Foundation that focuses on social justice.

- Former training (2017-2019) and engagement at prior institution (SMU, Dallas, TX)
  Simmons Diversity Committee, committee member,
  -Collaborative work to improve race relations and improve intercultural awareness and education within our classroom, Simmons School of Education, campus and the DFW community

She assisted with the development and event management of “Paving the Way to Inclusion: Race and Equity in Education with keynote speaker Gloria Ladson-Billings, Ph.D., researcher on critical race theory and racial disparities in education.

-UA training: “I believe I am up to date on all UA training online courses, but I do not recall taking UA Safe Zone training. I am always passionate about furthering my education on these very important issues.”

**Dam Hee Kim** served as the International Outreach Chair of the AEJMC (Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication)'s Media Management, Economics, and Entrepreneurship (MMEE) Division from 2020 to 2022.

**Rain Liu** has completed the certificates of Preventing Discrimination and Harassment for Supervisors and Faculty and Preventing Sexual Misconduct (Title IX).

She has been serving as the International Liaison for the Intercultural Communication Division in the ICA from 2020 to 2022.

She presented at the Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning (AALL) Spring Conference with UA graduate student Taylor Foerster. Communication of controversial topics: Understanding social norms, audience analysis, and other communication strategies. April 9th, 2021.

She presented and led the workshop held by Sustainable Tucson on the issue of Climate Change Communication with UA graduate student Taylor Foerster. January 30th, 2021.

**Mamoru Sakura** took the "Building communities online" mini-course, where he learned how to use online resources to make students feel a sense of community even when they can't be present in in-person classes.

“Last year I was honing in on my research interests as a first-year MA student and I realized cultivating people's understanding of neurodiversity is my passion. In one of the classes, I wrote a paper that sheds light on the stigma toward neurominority groups, which I'm planning to pursue in the future.”
Chris Segrin chairs a Community Justice Board for the Pima County Attorney's Office. This is a program for youth offenders and their families based on principles of restorative justice. Although not by design, this program ends up serving many low SES, immigrant, and disadvantaged youth and their families.

“We are presently working on an international longitudinal study that examines the association between poverty and mental health outcomes in the US and UK, as mediated and potentially buffered by a variety of social and communication behaviors.”

Larissa Terán participated in the "La Raza" NCA group this year as a reviewer.

**Section 5: Student Club Activities**

Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is an undergraduate club within our department that offers its members chances for more hands-on experience with PR and social media campaigns, marketing research, and maintaining client relationships. Because this club has a hand in assisting the next generation of PR professionals, they emphasize the importance of DEI in all of their practices. Activities that center on DEI specifically are:

Identifying and fostering chances for diverse leadership with prominent PRSSA board members reflecting various identity markers.

Inviting and hosting guest speakers in the PR and communications industry who prioritize DEI.

Encouraging opportunities designed to support students of diverse backgrounds through mentorship, internships, scholarships, and awards. One such award is the Dr. F. H. Teahan Chapter Diversity Award.

Lambda Pi Eta (LPE) is the honors society for Communication majors and pre-majors. During 2021-2022, they held a number of events that center on DEI.

At the beginning of each academic year, LPE organizers reach out to their members to get their input on what topics and professional industries they are most interested in learning about. They continually check in with the undergraduate members in order to create events that are diverse in topic and speakers to best serve their interests. During 2022 alone, they have hosted at least 6 speakers with many discussing DEI and social justice within their respective fields:

This includes our very own Dr. Jennifer Stevens Aubrey discussing the grad school application process and how DEI is prioritized within our graduate school program. Dr. Aubrey also highlighted the many scholarship and financial aid opportunities available to best serve our undergraduates.
Renick Townsend (Founder of Renick), Isabella von Habsburg (from Interscholastic Equestrian Association), and Ellie Beeck (from V Magazine) were invited for a panel discussion on how to prepare for working in for-profit and non-profit sectors. These young women professionals discussed diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and opportunities within each of their fields.

Amy Heidbreder (Account Coordinator, ANDERSON Advertising and Public Relations) and Natalie Skehan (Account Manager, Apex Systems), both recent UA alumni, discussed their transition from collegiate to corporate life. As two young women in the advertising and PR industry, they shared their insights on inclusion and equity in the workplace. During their presentations, they shared how future alumni can network and secure experiential experiences in college that may help them in the corporate world.

Steve Harding (Development/Producer/Writer, SH Productions) is an eight-time Emmy nominated professional with more than 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry. Outside of how well he engaged with each member of LPE and the practical tips he shared regarding networking, he also discussed the importance of inclusion in his field and his practices.

Maddy Rueda (Global Project Manager of Music, Youtube) has worked multiple roles within the music industry and professional sector, creating a diverse background in human resources, marketing, and project management. In addition to sharing her experiences of being the youngest person on her team, and working with a culturally diverse team, she also addressed diversity in workplace location and in her previous and current jobs. She shared the many advantages of diversity, including the increased creativity that inevitably results from it.

Association of Graduate Students in Communication (AGSC) is the graduate student council within the department. During 2021-2022, the AGSC cabinet has prioritized DEI in a number of ways.

First and foremost, the past two AGSC cabinets have kept an open forum to encourage all of the graduate students to participate and contribute to graduate student resources and activities as they see fit. They have also made a push to cater to graduate students’ needs by polling them at the beginning of each school year, specifically for the type of support and activities that they would find most useful. They do our best to hold workshops and activities based on these suggestions.

There has also been a large push for mental health/wellness prioritization during this time period. They held a yoga class on the lawn in front of the Communication building, hosted a mindfulness workshop led by a representative from Campus and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), and asked representatives from CAPS and Health Promotion and Prevention Services (HPPS) to lead a conversation on prioritizing mental/physical wellbeing in graduate school.

In spring 2022, their philanthropy committee held the Project Period Drive in support of the YWCA Southern Arizona. The committee cited a number of factors that inhibit people who
menstruate from accessing period products. They asked people within the department to
donate new pads, tampons, and reusable menstrual cups.