David Cratis Williams, Professor and Director of the SCMS, attended the Fifty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the Southern Conference on Slavic Studies (SCSS) in Birmingham, Alabama, March 17-19, 2016. He served as a program respondent/discussant for the program, “Chernobyl Retrospective at the Thirtieth Anniversary.” As a follow-up, Williams also attended the 2016 Summer Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEES) and The International Association for the Humanities (IAH, or MAG in the Ukrainian acronym). He served as respondent/discussant for the program, “Chernobyl Retrospective - 30 Years On.” In addition, he stopped in Kiev with other panelists on the program and toured the Chernobyl Museum. In between these two discussions of public and rhetorical memories of Chernobyl, Williams co-directed the Biennial Wake Forest Argumentation Conference held in Venice, Italy, May 30-June 2. The conference featured twenty-two invited papers by argumentation scholars from twelve different nations.

Dr. Deandre Poole has been selected as a 2016 recipient of the Leadership Award for the Hispanic Education Coalition of Palm Beach County for his contributions and dedicated service toward promoting educational equity for Hispanic and Latino students.

Associate Professor Christopher Robe recently published two articles. “Rewiring the Apparatus: Screen Theory, Media Activism, and Working-Class Subjectivities” was published in the Spring 2016 issue of Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture and Society and was co-written with Todd Wolfson and Peter Funke. This fall, Robe published “Criminalizing Dissent: Western State Repression, Video Activism, and Counter-Summit Protests” in Framework: Journal of Cinema and Media.

Ilene Prusher, a member of the journalism faculty and an advisor for the University Press, recently published articles in the New York Times, TIME, and The Christian Science Monitor. Prusher also contributed to the TIME cover story on the Orlando massacre.

Emily Creighton, the former Features Editor of the University Press, spent Summer 2016 as an intern at Good Housekeeping magazine in New York City. Also during the summer, Gregory Cox covered breaking news at the Palm Beach Post, Amanda Hicks wrote for the Stuart News, and Wesley Wright wrote for Chalk Beat, an education news website in Colorado.
Professor Shane Eason amasses awards for PAPA

PAPA, a documentary film produced by Assistant Professor Shane Eason, has won several awards since its release in April 2016, including Best Editing of a Documentary and Best Story, both awarded by the Madrid International Film Festival. Additionally, the film has been selected for the upcoming Key West Film Festival and the YES Film Festival, for which the film has been nominated for Best Feature Documentary. Recent screenings include: XVIIth Biennial International Ernest Hemingway Conference (Chicago & Oak Park, IL), Filmed in Broward - Take 2 (Fort Lauderdale, FL), Jerome Indie Film & Music Festival (Cottonwood, AZ), 6th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival, and the 21st Annual Palm Beach International Film Festival. PAPA is a feature documentary about the annual Ernest Hemingway Look-Alike Contest held in Key West.

Singapore and Stanford: Following up with Dr. Gerald Sim

Associate Professor Gerald Sim was a Visiting Senior Research Fellow funded by the Henry Luce Foundation at the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore where he advised and mentored this year’s cohort of Asian Graduate Student Fellows. This Fellowship funds his research and writing for two chapters of his current monograph on the postcolonial poetics of Southeast Asian cinema, contracted with Indiana University Press. Sim was also invited to deliver several talks, including one to the Cinema Studies Colloquium organized by the Singapore Center for the Study of the Moving Image at Nanyang Technological University, where his spoke from his essay in The Netflix Effect: Technology and Entertainment of the 21st Century due out in August 2016 with Bloomsbury Academic. Additionally, Sim spent his Fall 2016 sabbatical at Stanford University, as the Lee Kong Chian National University of Singapore-Stanford Distinguished Fellow on Contemporary Southeast Asia for 2016-17.
Carrie Pyle Lawrence ’04 has been working in television for the past 8 years. She has produced content for an array of formats including competition elimination shows, documentaries, game shows and docu-reality shows. Her credits include big network shows like Dancing with the Stars (ABC) and Big Brother (CBS) and cable shows including Intervention: Codependent (LMN), Basketball Wives (VH1), Redneck Island (CMT) T.I and Tiny: A Family Hustle (VH1) and many others. Carrie is a three-time Telly Award winner with documentary projects she produced for Al Gore’s Current TV. She is currently working as a Co-Executive Producer on Revenge Body with Khloe Kardashian for E!, which will air in January 2017.

Emiliana Molina ’13 is currently a reporter for Univision in Washington, D.C. Molina anchored her first newscast of the 11 PM news in October. After earning her Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from FAU, Molina attended the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University and received a Master of Science in Journalism in 2016. At FAU, Molina was a multimedia journalist and anchor for OwlTV.

Betsy Badell ’15, was hired in May as an on-air news reporter for Noticiero Telemundo Boston after working for two years at the assignment desk for Telemundo Network.

Behind the Cake, a film directed by Sasha Buljovic ‘10, was selected for film festivals in Romania, Philadelphia, and Croatia. In addition to being an official selection for the Trash Film Festival in Croatia this fall, Buljovic placed second in the “Director of the Month” category in the 12 Months Film Festival in Romania last spring and was nominated for the Claw Award in the Terror Film Festival in Philadelphia. Buljovic is planning a final premier for the film next year.
The 86th Annual Florida Communication Association Conference took place in Orlando this October. In attendance were several SCMS faculty, graduate students, and alumni. During the conference, Dr. Laura Winn was elected as the Vice President of the Florida Communication Association for 2017 - 2018 and will serve as President in 2018 - 2019. Adjunct Professor Cynde Carrico was elected to the office of Secretary for 2017 - 2018. Haley Swartz, an M.A student and current graduate teaching assistant, was awarded 3rd place for competitive communication scholarship in the graduate student division for her paper, “Student-led Activism in the Testing Resistance and Reform Movement: Persuasive Functions of Rhetoric in the Providence Student Union Campaign.”

Several SCMS faculty, graduate students, and alumni attended the 102nd Annual National Communication Association Convention in Philadelphia this November. Within the conference theme, “Communication’s Civic Callings,” our SCMS representatives presented the following research:

**FACULTY:** Dr. Stephen Heidt, *Echoes of Peace: Presidential Appropriation of Eleanor Roosevelt’s Memory from John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama*; Dr. Laura Winn and Dr. Bill Trapani, *Patriotic Prepping: Rebuilding the American Dream After it Burns (or floods or radiates or…)*; Dr. Matthew Sobnosky, *Rhetoric, Ignorance and (Un)civil Communication*

**GRADUATE STUDENTS:** Cynthia Carrico-Rausch, *Gullah Haint Blue: Representing Rural Enclaves in Charleston Community Cookbooks*; Kaitlin Graves, *Wrecking Ball My Hometown: Rock, Re/membrance and Reorigination in the Working Class Imagination*

Mirta Ojito ’86, the keynote speaker at the fourth annual Robert J. Bailyn Symposium, is Director of New Standards at Telemundo and a former assistant professor in the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. As a staff writer at *The New York Times*, Ojito was part of a team that won a Pulitzer Prize for a series titled, How Race is Lived in America. In 2013 she published her second book, *Hunting Season: Immigration and Murder in an All-American Town*. Ojito has been named one of the “100 Most Influential Hispanics” in the U.S. by Hispanic Business Magazine.

After her keynote speech, Ojito answered a few questions for us about her time at FAU:

Your BA from FAU is in Communication. How did you decide on this department and major?
I decided to become a journalist when I was an adolescent. However, I gave up on that dream once I moved to the U.S. at 16 and realized I didn’t know any English. By the time I got to FAU, four years after I arrived in the U.S. in 1980, I knew enough to write a letter to the editor of the *Atlantic Sun* when a piece praising Communism in Cuba caught my eye and made me angry because it was full of factual errors. The “letter” ended up being a two-part Op-Ed and it got me an offer from the editor, an offer I immediately accepted. That made me run to the Registrar’s Office and change my major to Communication. I thought: if they are willing to pay me $10 to write, I can do this.

Which communication class at FAU do you remember as being your favorite? Which has been most relevant to your career? Did any courses help you to solidify your idea of your career path?
My favorite classes were all taught by adjuncts who were reporters for local papers and taught us how to structure stories and how to think like journalists; however, I very much enjoyed a class taught by Professor Becky Mulvaney. In that class, we read *The Clan of the Cave Bear*. Her ideas, her interpretation of that book and of political events continue to mold the way I look at politics and the world today.

Were you involved in any on-campus activities? Any student media activities?
I was a reporter, then the News Editor and, eventually, Editor in Chief, of the *Atlantic Sun*. I was a founding member of the Center for Peace Education, and of a student movement to divest from South Africa. I was also a member of Phi Theta Kappa.

How did FAU prepare you for your graduate study at Columbia?
My graduate work at Columbia was many years after graduation. What prepared me for that was my years working at *The Miami Herald* and *El Nuevo Herald*. However, I did go to graduate school right after graduating from FAU. I went to the University of Miami, a degree that, regrettably, I didn’t finish because I traveled a great deal...
as a reporter and it just became impossible to do both. I was doing fine at UM and that I attribute to FAU. Professors at FAU taught me to evaluate all material and information critically, an essential skill for a researcher and, I might add, for a journalist.

How else did FAU help you to achieve your goals as an undergraduate?

An administrator took me under her wing and helped me graduate not only because she hired me to work for her as part of my work-study financial aid package, but also because, with her example, she taught me important lessons about integrity and hard work. I had learned these things from my parents as well, but Olga Moas, the former Director of Financial Aid, managed to always get the best out of me. She was one of the first adults, after my parents, that I deeply admired and whose behavior I modeled.

What advice would you give to undergraduates who are pursuing a degree in Communication? What do you wish you had known as an undergraduate?

Practice, practice, practice! Get an internship or, better yet, an actual job as quickly as you can.

* Editor’s Note: The Atlantic Sun is the former title of the University Press, the Florida Atlantic University student newspaper.

In October, Ojito served at the keynote speaker for the fourth annual Robert J. Bailyn Symposium on the First Amendment. Ojito spoke about immigration and the First Amendment in the context of the 2016 presidential election. A panel, including Rick Christy from the Palm Beach Post, Eric Roby from WPEC CBS12, Lisa Daftari from Fox News Florida and Kevin Wagner from FAU Political Science, responded to Ojito’s remarks. Professor Susan Reilly moderated the event.
On October 22, 2016, FAU alumni Robert Palmieri and Rebecca DePisco along with graduating student Claudith Saint-Jean attended the MIA Animation Conference & Festival. Our three Owls were finalists in the conference’s annual Pitch to the Industry competition, where entrants from around the globe submit pitches for animated series for a chance to pitch in person to active industry executives from major networks such as Fox Animation, Cartoon Network Studios, and Disney Animation. Out of nearly 700 entrants, the trio’s series pitch, Troll Patrol, made it into the final six to pitch their show to executives from Fox Animation.

Palmieri and Saint-Jean both co-wrote the series’ pitch bible that got them into the finals while character artist Rebecca DePisco was conscripted under high recommendation from FAU Multimedia professor Brad Lewter. The trio received much praise, with the concept hailed as “ingenious”, Much to Rebecca’s surprise her artistic style was compared to the likes of animation legend Bruce Timm (Batman: The Animated Series).

Having initially entered on a whim, the three have agreed to attempt pitching again for next year’s conference, but with an added caveat: Each of them would submit their own idea independently and also work collaboratively on a single project together.

The MIA Animation Conference and Festival is hosted by Miami-Dade College’s Miami Animation & Gaming International Complex (MAGIC) at the downtown MDC Wolfson campus’ MAGIC building. For more information on the conference, visit their website at http://www.miaanimation.com/.

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Do you have contact information for any SCMS Alums who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? If so, please email the information to scms@fau.edu. Please send us your stories for our alumni updates section.

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