

### **Connect to alumni through facebook**

The speech communication department is making an effort to increase communication between the department and its alumni. The main forms of communication between alumni and the department have been the speech communication department's website and now the use of their new Facebook page.

A major drawback to the use of the current website has been the ability to update speech communication alumni contact information. Currently, the department is in the process of creating a page on the website to allow alumni to update their own information. This new website feature will be available by the end of the year.

"Our goal is to maintain relations and to link new students with old students," stated Dr. Sofia Zamanou-Erickson, an associate professor in the speech communication department.

Associate Professor Duff Wrobbel suggested the idea of a Facebook page to the faculty because it seemed ludicrous to be a communications department and not have one. The staff chose Facebook because it is an efficient communications tool for linking students, graduates and current faculty. Wrobbel also said it was chosen because it does not require on-going maintenance since the users maintain it themselves.

"We haven't had it long enough to determine if it is being effective, but we have had a decent turnout," said Wrobbel.

Currently, the Facebook page has over 270 members and is growing steadily.

One of the long-term goals of using the Facebook page is to receive feedback from alumni currently in the workforce. The speech department wants to know what tools are being used in the workforce in order to change the department curriculum accordingly.

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## Alumni Facebook

The page is also being used to network, post job opportunities and publicize events.

“We’ve had a number of people post jobs for interns,” said Wrobbel. “Students are also using it to find Ph.D. programs through our alumni.”

One success story was an event publicized on Facebook that drew about 40 speech alumni to a gathering at the Villa Maria Winery in Collinsville. At the event, alumni networked with faculty and other graduates in addition to updating their personal and career information. The event was so successful that Erickson indicated it would continue on a bi-annual basis.

Once the website changes have been completed, alumni will have a more convenient way to update their own information and gain easier access to information about upcoming events. The department hopes this will provide more opportunities for speech department alumni to reconnect.

To find the department on Facebook search Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Speech Communication Department.

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