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Alumni Newsletter | Summer 2021

**Meet the New School of Communications
Director Mark Callister**



Mark Callister took on the role of director in June of 2021. Prior to joining the BYU faculty in 2005, he taught at Western Illinois University. He received his baccalaureate degrees in International Relations and in English, and earned a Masters in Business Administration at BYU. In addition, he received a PhD in Communication with emphases in theories of persuasion and marketing communications at the University of Arizona. In 2020, he received the Brigham Young University Alumni Professorship Award, the 2016 School of Communications Forsyth Award, the 2011 University Randall L. Morgan Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellowship Award and he's a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. His general research interests include adolescents and the media, visual imagery in advertising, and the role of persuasion in nonprofit fundraising and storytelling. He teaches courses in research methods, media effects, persuasion, world religions and the media, and theories in storytelling and charitable giving. He has published over 20 articles in the field.

"Dr. Callister is a hard-working and dedicated faculty member who has a deep commitment to the mission and aims of a BYU Education, to his students, to his responsibilities as a colleague, and to producing excellent scholarship," said Ed Adams, Dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communications.

Get to know Mark:

BYU employee since: 2005

A favorite experience or memory of my time in the School of Communications is: I

love the repeated experience each year of greeting graduating seniors at the School of Communications' convocation, and then watching graduates, families, and friends mingling in the Harris Fine Arts Center's gallery and celebrating the moment together.

In my free time, you will usually find me: Cycling or reading early American history and biographies.

During my time as Director, I hope to: Build on the accomplishments of past directors, with a focus on strengthening our labs, develop our alumni outreach efforts, create more experiential learning opportunities, and further develop a culture centered on Christ-like values.

One item on my bucket list is: To visit historical sites in Israel.

A favorite quote is: Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life's coming attractions.—

Albert Einstein

The most exciting part of my job is: Interacting with amazing students, faculty, and staff.

My favorite way to unwind is: sitting on my balcony in the late evening with a good book and classical music playing in the background.

Alumni Profiles

Maurianne Baker

MA Mass Communications 2011

Director of Curriculum Development

The Good and the Beautiful



Why did you choose to study communications?

I have always been interested in mass communications, but I was initially drawn to this topic for my master's degree when I was working on the editorial staff for a magazine, and we had many discussions about what content to provide online vs. in the print magazine, what content to give away for free vs. what readers would pay for, and what our readers were really looking for in magazine content. These questions, particularly those related to deciding what media to use for different types of information, led me to mass communications.

Because my bachelor's degree was in another field (English), the study of media and how audiences interact with media opened my eyes and has informed my professional decisions related to these questions since completing my master's degree.

Which current industry trends excite you?

I'm always interested to see how various social media outlets mature. It's fascinating to see how each outlet finds niche content types, audiences, and purposes. Because I currently work in educational publishing, it's interesting to consider how social media can be used for educational and pro-social purposes.

What is a rewarding experience that you've had as a result of your study of communications?

Since receiving my degree, I have moved to a small city outside of Utah and have used my communication skills to work with our stake's communication committee to interact with the local media as a Church representative by writing press releases and newspaper articles, and providing information to media outlets for Church events and a new Church building that was constructed in our stake. I love that I can use my professional skills to "go forth to serve" in many ways.

Communications is a constantly changing field. How have you adapted to these changes within your profession?

I often consider how to use the constantly changing educational publishing formats to provide the best educational experience for students. The pandemic has taught us a lot about how and when to use digital content for education and how and when more traditional print publishing is most effective. Understanding audiences and how they interact with these platforms is always key to using the best platform in various circumstances.

Maurianne Dunn Baker received a BA in English and an MA in Mass Communications from Brigham Young University. She has worked in publishing for nearly 20 years and has worked as an editor and a writer for various publications in the education, history, and business fields. She and her husband, Nathan Baker, currently live in Casper, Wyoming, where she works from her home office as a director of curriculum development for The Good and the Beautiful—an educational curriculum publisher.

In her spare time, she teaches an institute class with her husband, pieces quilts, dabbles in landscape photography, and explores nature near her home (while avoiding threatening wildlife such as rattlesnakes, aggressive wild turkeys, black bears and herds of pronghorn that enjoy running through parking lots).

Patrick Hernandez

Communications/Public Relations 2011

Director of People (Employee)

Communications, North America

Ericsson



I like to think that communications chose me. After returning from a church mission in Tonga, I decided to veer from my previous career path in technology and explore opportunities in

International Relations. My time in the Pacific had changed my perspective, and I thought that better opportunities would come through diplomatic or non-government organizational work. After reviewing my intentions and the major plan with a counselor, I was surprised when she recommended that I try applying for the comms public relations program instead. It was a competitive program and there was a chance that I wouldn't be accepted, but she felt it would be best. I could always come back to IR if I didn't get in. I still remember walking into my Intro to Public Relations class with Dr. Laurie Wilson. I specifically asked if this degree would help me do international relations work. She promised me that it would, and I sat down expecting that this would be a slight detour back to International Relations. That was 13 years ago. Now I'm a director of People (Employee) Communications at a global telecommunications company. It's been quite a journey.

Which current industry trends excite you?

I am very excited about the increasing importance of data and organizational psychology in communications, specifically employee communications. Communications has always been considered a soft science, even an art, but we are changing our approach by better tailoring our communications and changing management efforts using data and a better understanding of human behavior.

I am also excited about AI and Machine Learning in communications work. These innovations will help improve my efforts.

What is a rewarding experience that you've had as a result of your study of communications?

There are too many to count. From launching globally recognized vehicles to working alongside incredible people from across the world, communications is an amazing field to specialize in. I often find myself acting as translator, helping two parties understand each other and drive some type of action from both. I love the opportunity to help drive change and to help people connect over a spectrum of topics.

Communications is a constantly changing field. How have you adapted to these changes within your profession?

As the old saying goes, "the only constant in life is change." I've really had to remind myself to stay curious to stay on top of things. The core of strategic communications hasn't changed at all. It's media, technology, and audiences that have changed. I read a lot and try to stay connected to my communications colleagues. I have also tried to experiment with new tools, social platforms, and technology to better understand potential benefits in my field.

Patrick Hernandez is the director of People Communications for Ericsson North America. His focus is developing and executing communications strategy for all employees in the U.S. and Canada, including executive communications and employee engagement. He previously supported the Networks team as internal communications manager.

Prior to his time at Ericsson, Patrick held a variety of positions on the communications team at General Motors Company. He's a native Californian and currently lives outside of Dallas with his

wife and sons.

School News

Professor Links Communications with Cancer Research



Last month, [Kevin John](#) was selected to become a fellow of the [BYU Simmons Center for Cancer Research](#). The Simmons Center (SCCR) is a partnership between several labs on BYU campus focused on researching cancer prevention methods. Most members of SCCR are from the College of Life Sciences or College of Physical & Mathematical Sciences, but Kevin's research on skin cancer prevention and health communication linked the work of the [BioComms Lab](#) and the [School of Communications](#) to SCCR.

Journalism Students' Project Documents the Lessons and Challenges of Reporting During a Pandemic



With help from their professors, four broadcast journalism students — Emma Benson, Joseph Carson, Halston Robinson and Karani Namuno — created a documentary ... covering their adjustment to working remotely as journalists in a quarantined world. The thirteen-minute documentary, "[Covering News in a Pandemic](#)" explains the impact that the worldwide shutdown had on journalism students at BYU. [Read more ...](#)

Alumni News

Comms Alumna Wins Diversity Research Award from AEJMC



Autumn Linford of the University of North Carolina is the winner of the 2021 Diversity in Journalism History Research Award. The award – presented by the History Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) – recognizes the outstanding paper in journalism or mass communication history that addresses issues of

inclusion and the study of marginalized groups and topics. The award winner is selected from research submitted for the annual conference paper competition. [Read more ...](#)

90-year-old Woman Graduates with Comms Degree and Makes BYU History



Oneita Sumsion made history in June 2020 as BYU's oldest-ever graduate when she received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications (journalism) from BYU at 90 years old. [Read more ...](#)

Connect With Us

The [BYU School of Communications Internship and Career Services Office](#) aims to create meaningful connections with Communications alumni, providers, faculty/staff, and current students. We strive to be a valuable resource in creating opportunities for applied learning, feedback, reflection, growth, and professional development.

"As a student at the School of Communications, the internship office was a very helpful resource for me. Since graduating I have stayed in touch and utilized it to hire for several entry-level positions. I appreciate Nicole and her team for their responsiveness and eagerness to connect the right student with the right company. I have been able to hire and work with some amazing comms alumni over the past few years!" -Erica West, Director of Marketing, Nena & Co.

We invite our alumni to connect with us in a variety of ways:

- Join our [BYU Connect](#) page. Through BYU Connect, students have the opportunity to reach out to comms professionals like you to receive guidance and foster mutually beneficial relationships.
- Visit our [online jobs board](#) where we post internship, employment, and project opportunities directly from our approved providers. It's especially rewarding when School of Communications alumni reach out to us directly as they seek to recruit BYU students.
- [Check out our website](#) to learn how you can: receive our newsletter, follow us on social media, post to our jobs board, or get in touch with us.

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