The Communication Studies department has lost a dear friend and colleague, Multi-Media Technician Pablo Balancio. In honor of Pablo, a CommClub Scholarship will be named in his honor as well as a dedicated classroom. Pictured left to right Denise Besson Silvia, Pablo Balancio, and Shelley Giacalone at the 2013 Western States Communication Association Conference in Reno, NV.

Which is it? Communication or Communications?

Nearly every day I hear the words interchangeably used. Students will say, “I’m majoring in Communications or is it that they should be saying, I’m majoring in Communication?” Well, if they are declaring it as a major or minor, they should be able to clearly answer the question and differentiate between the two.

Tim Larson at the University of Utah defines the terms in the following way:

**Communication** - The communicating of information. The exchange of information between individuals, for example, by means of speaking, writing, or using a common system of signs or behavior.

**Communications** - The technology and systems used for sending and receiving messages, for example, postal, telephone, radio, TV, and the Internet. The tactics used to execute a marcom (marketing communication) strategy, for example, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, events.

The Communication Studies department at Gavilan focuses on teaching the communicating of information. While we often address the impact and necessity of using technology and systems for sending and receiving messages, we are focused on teaching the formulation of messages, the means by which they are conveyed, and the application of theory and practice in your real world interactions. With that said, a student graduating with an AA degree in Communication Studies is specialized with training in the area of communication without the “s.”

Earning a degree or certificate in Communication establishes a strong foundation for students who plan on working in fields that require them to work with others. In the book entitled, The Apple Experience: Secrets to Building Insanely Great Customer Loyalty, author Carmine Gallo cites that the ideal Apple Store candidate for employment knows a little about computers and a lot about people. Apple doesn’t hire for technical knowledge, it hires for personality. Gallo goes on to say that the company cannot train for personality. Communication is key to opening the door to employment at Apple, the technical side of it can be trained in due time. So even at Apple, Communication is key to success in the field of Communications!
Trust Walk: A Lesson in Perspective Taking and Life
By Joel Manriquez-Hannon

There are many constants in life. For example, objects fall at 32 feet per second due to gravity, water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit and at 180 degrees Fahrenheit, and taxes are due on April 15th. But what one is never guaranteed is quality of life.

Less that 6 six years ago, I was an international corporate trainer and instructional designer for a major Fortune 500 company. I had accumulated over 100,000 miles on United Airlines alone, I directed a staff of 15,000 people, and kept three full time assistants employed. In the blink of an eye my world darkened and changed forever. I was forced to make a life altering decision.

A few years ago, I was happily returning from work, looking forward to the Christmas Holiday. I had just stopped at a local shop to pick up some gifts for families at my church that were struggling that Christmas. I was within two miles of my home when it happened. A young person, in an SUV, ran a signal and t-boned me on the driver’s side of my vehicle. The last thing I remember seeing was the bottom half of his license plate rushing toward my head.

I can only compare it to the shows on TLC during shark week. The driver descends in the small cage and the mammoth great white slams into it and pierces through. Only the drivers usually escape through the floor. I was not given that option. My seatbelt trapped me in the driver’s seat and I was forced to endure the entire impact of the massive hit. The entire left side of my body was crushed and the impact to my skull was so intense that my eyes were immediately disconnected from my brain.

After two years and multiple eye surgeries later, I am a member of the Blind Community. I was devastated. All of my hard work, years of higher education, and years of struggling to create a nitch for myself in an industry that holds very few Mexicans as industry leaders were gone and I did not understand why? Everything I had struggled so hard for was suddenly gone or at least that was my perception of the situation.

Three years ago, I signed up for my first communication class with Ms. Besson-Silvia. It was an Interpersonal Communication class that changed my life. During the course of the semester I developed a great deal of respect for my instructor’s instructional methodology. She knew her subject matter and had the ability to develop a safe community setting in the classroom. We would chat after class and one day we discussed perception. I had been open about being blind, the accident and we both wondered how we might better cover the topic of perception.

I drafted an educational experience learning activity and was delighted when Ms. Besson Silvia reviewed and agreed to implement it in her classes. The Trust Walk was born! What made our trust walk different was that it was created and facilitated by a blind individual. The activity defines and illustrates basic forms of blindness, allows all students the opportunity to experience being blind as they walk across campus and a very frank debrief following the trust walk regarding living the remainder of one’s life in the dark. Students’ response to the activity has been overwhelmingly positive. This experience not only connects the cognitive, affective and kinesthetic but also makes a “real life” connection for students by putting a face to the topic.

I was not sure what or if I had anything to offer my community following the accident, but after three years of trust walks and studying communication studies, I realize now that I am not done yet. I plan to pursue a Masters degree in Communication Studies and Education. The idea of working with students to learn new skills in traditional and nontraditional ways excites me. I hope to be a role model in overcoming life changing events. I hope to teach and demonstrate that life is simply a matter of perception.
Knowledge of communication can be beneficial to any career. In fact, strong communication skills have always been in high demand and may be more of an invaluable skill than ever before. When polled, employers often cite strong verbal and written communication skills as the top skills they look for in college graduates.

In the first installment of a three-part series entitled, Careers in the Fields Related to Communication: Business, Education, and Health will be explored. In upcoming issues additional careers will be featured courtesy of the National Communication Association. Visit them at www.nca.org for more information.

BUSINESS:
It is well recognized that communication plays a vital role in the functioning of any government, business, or industrial organization. A national study indicates that the essential skills needed by a competent employee to get a job and to succeed and be promoted are primarily communication skills.

Careers in business and communication include: sales representative, executive manager, personnel manager, public information officer, industrial and labor relations representative, negotiator, director of corporate communication, customer service representative, newsletter editor, communication trainer, human resources manager, mediator, and buyer. (Also see Law, Media, and Public Relations and Advertising.)

Communication subjects that can enhance a business career include: public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to mass media, business and professional communication, organizational communication, small group communication, interviewing, and listening.

EDUCATION:
A teacher of any subject has to effectively organize and deliver material to students. Communication skills are necessary to facilitate comprehension and understanding no matter whether the subject is math, science, reading, or English. Great teachers are great communicators. Besides teaching, there are other education-related careers.

Careers in education include: teacher (elementary and secondary), school counselor, educational researcher, audiovisual specialist, educational administrator, school/university information specialist, director of college news, director of a collegiate information center, educational tester, development officer, educational fund-raiser, alumni officer, college placement officer, college admissions director, and college recruiter.

Communication subjects that can enhance an education career include: oral communication, public speaking, interpersonal communication, introduction to media systems, communication theory, communication research methods, communication in the classroom, intercultural communication, teaching the language arts, linguistics, sociolinguistics, nonverbal communication, small group communication, performance studies, forensics, family communication, conflict resolution, argumentation, communication ethics, rhetorical theory and criticism, listening, persuasion, and communication disorders.

HEALTH CAREERS:
Communication is a key tool that health care providers must use in dealing with clients and patients to prevent illness, diagnose disease, and manage treatment and patient care. It is necessary for developing and maintaining trust between provider and client, their families, and other health care providers.

Equally important in health careers is the use of communication to educate and train a population in healthy behaviors such as nutrition, sexual health, and family planning.

Careers in health and communication include: health educator, school health care administrator, medical grants writer, hospital director of communication, clinic public relations director, health communication analyst, research analyst, medical training supervisor, communications manager for federal health agencies, health personnel educator, medical center publications editor, hospice manager, drug rehab therapist, health care counselor, activities director, marketing director, and health facility fund raiser.

Communication subjects that can enhance a health career include: health communication, interpersonal communication, family communication, interviewing, business and professional communication, public speaking, research methods, small group discussion, conflict resolution, public relations, listening, nonverbal communication, persuasion, and communication ethics.
I received the text on a Saturday afternoon. Little did I know an email sent out that day communicated the same shocking news. We are very sad to have learned that our friend and colleague Pablo Balancio passed away yesterday following heart bypass surgery. I think I reread that statement a few times, stunned with disbelief. I continue to mourn the loss of my friend, my colleague, and strong supporter and believer in the Communication Studies Program here at Gavilan College.

Pablo Balancio was the Multi-Media Technician for 8 years at Gavilan. He was known as the guy on the golf cart, moving across campus from class to class troubleshooting technical difficulties, setting up equipment for presentations, and videotaping games, speakers, theatrical productions and our annual commencement. Pablo could always be relied upon, he was your go to man. Since Communication students and faculty rely so heavily on audio-visual equipment, when it fails us, we feel the impact immediately. Pablo on a number of occasions came to the rescue so to speak, without reservation, hesitation, or attitude. In fact, as he entered the room, you would see his big smile and you just knew, everything would be all right. And it was.

In February 2013 the Communication Studies Department won the Western States Communication Association Model Communication Program award for the entire Western State region. The conference held in Reno, NV required the Communication Studies faculty to attend and present an hour-long presentation on the program in addition to attending a luncheon to receive the honor. Pablo on his own “time and dime” drove to Reno, set up all Audio/Visual equipment, and video taped the presentation and award ceremony. His unwavering commitment to Communication Studies was instantly recognizable. His kindness unlike no other. His nature genuine.

The loss of our friend, colleague, and supporter will be heart felt for a long time. These final thoughts serve as a reminder to all of us that the way you give of yourself to others, the way you communicate to others, leaves a lasting impression. While clearly taken too soon, Pablo left a legacy that he may never have intended to leave. He left an impression in our hearts, gratitude in our minds, and memories that will forever be cherished with a void that will simply be hard to fill.

I miss you friend . . .