

# Strategic Communications Academy

## for UF Leaders & Scholars

### MEET YOUR FACULTY

#### DIRECTOR



**ANN CHRISTIANO,**  
**MPAP**  
[@aechristiano](#)

Ann Christiano is the Frank Karel Chair in Public Interest Communications at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications. She was most recently named UF Teacher of the Year (2014-15). Her role within the college is to develop a curriculum in the newly emerging discipline of public interest communications, which uses the tools of public relations and journalism to create positive social change. Christiano teaches courses in public relations and public interest communications (PIC) at UF and in the spring, will direct the first online PIC graduate program. As a lead organizer of the frank gathering, Christiano is bringing together a growing community of people who use and study strategic communications to drive social change. In 2016, she launched frank scholar, a conference designed to unite researchers from various academic disciplines to collaboratively cultivate research that ignites lasting behavioral, institutional and social change.

Prior to her appointment at UF, she directed communications for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Vulnerable Populations portfolio. This portfolio creates new opportunities for better health by investing in health where it starts and grows--in our homes, schools and jobs. The social innovations portfolio supports work in the domains of education, housing or corrections, but always addresses health needs of people who are vulnerable. As part of her work, Christiano oversaw communications strategies for programs like the Greenhouse project, which is a radical reinvention of the traditional long term care model, and CeaseFire, which uses a public health approach to reduce gun violence in America's most violent neighborhoods. Earlier in her career at RWJF she developed a robust government relations program that helped Foundation grantees build productive relationships with their elected officials and significantly increased the Foundation's profile among Washington policy-makers. She has also worked with the Washington Business Group on Health, now named the National Business group on Health.



**CLAIRE BARALT,**  
*M.S.*  
*@ClaireBaralt*

Claire Baralt is a communications strategist with more than 15 years of experience spanning the nonprofit, philanthropic and academic sectors. She is passionate about inspiring action, expanding collaboration and engaging stakeholders to enhance community health and quality of life. Claire joined the UF Clinical and Translational Science Institute and UF Health Communications teams in 2011. As the CTSI's director of strategy and communications, she helps facilitate the institute's work to speed the translation of scientific discoveries into better health. Prior to returning to her alma mater, Claire served for 11 years as the communications officer and an elected officer of the board for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, a \$1.8 billion national foundation in New York City with five grant programs supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research, child well-being, and understanding of Muslim arts and cultures, as well as three properties open to the public in New Jersey, Rhode Island and Hawaii. Prior to that, Claire worked in the White House Social Office, where she provided writing, editing and logistical support for events that included the America's Millennium celebration. Baralt holds a master's degree in strategic communications from Columbia University and bachelor's degrees from UF in magazine journalism and advertising.



**ANNIE NEIMAND,**  
*Ph.D. Candidate*  
*@annieneimand*

Annie Neimand is the Communications Manager at the College of Journalism and Communications, where she works closely with the communications team to raise the research profile of the college through creative projects. A doctoral candidate, she also teaches sociology at the University of Florida and is the research director for the growing frank community of public interest communicators housed in UF's College of Journalism and Communications. Through her award winning dissertation research and her work with frank, Neimand works to provide evidence-based insight on the effective use of strategic communications to drive social change.



**ELLEN NODINE,**  
**MAE**  
[@enodine](#)

Ellen Nodine received her master's in Education from UF, with a specialization in Education Technology. Her master's thesis researched the ability to establish social presence in an online community through the use of Twitter. She works as the College of Journalism and Communication's Special Project Coordinator and is the event director for frank, the annual gathering for social change communicators. Her instructional You Tube video "How to Embed a You Tube video into PowerPoint 2013" has received more than 1 million hits.



**MATT SHEEHAN,**  
**MBA**  
[@mattsheehan](#)

Matt Sheehan is a journalist who has spent his career working in established and emerging media. Currently director of UF's College of Journalism and Communications' Innovation News Center, he serves as news director and executive editor for the University's seven media properties, including the NPR, PBS and ESPN affiliates. He is a former assistant news editor at *The Washington Post*, was COO of a digital media startup in D.C. and previously worked in administration at University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism.



**DAVID WESCOTT,**  
**Principal,**  
**Wescott Strategic**  
**Communications**  
[@dwescott1](#)

David Wescott started Wescott Strategic Communications after 12 years serving as vice president/ director of digital strategy at APCO Worldwide. David established APCO's social media practice in 2006. He specializes in stakeholder engagement, social media, and crisis communications. He has served as a legislative aide to a United States Senator, an executive director of a statewide business advocacy group, and administrator of a pediatrics department at an academic medical center. A pioneer in social media outreach, David served on the original steering committee for the Institute for Public Relations Online Research Center for the Science of Social Media, as well as an instructor for IPR's Public Relations Leadership Forum. He also serves on the advisory board for Blog With Integrity. He was a finalist for PR News' PR Blogger of the Year in 2009. He earned a BS in political science with honors from Northeastern University and also studied at Boston University Graduate School of Management. He lives in Durham, North Carolina with his wife and two children.



**SCOTT BLADES,**  
**M.Ed.**  
[@swblades](#)

As assistant director of UF Training & Organizational Development, Scott brings over 17 years of teaching, educational technology, instructional design, and multimedia production experience to his role. Scott's position requires him to interface with UF subject matter experts to produce first-rate professional development opportunities for faculty and staff, oversee numerous campus-wide training programs, manage a team of talented instructional designers and trainers, and teach a series of business communications and leadership courses. As a professional who wears many hats, Scott is passionate about teaching the importance of prioritizing, planning, and communicating as key skills for effective professionals and leaders. Prior to joining T&OD, Scott served as the coordinator of instructional design for UF's College of Pharmacy where he worked with faculty to translate their subject matter expertise into instructionally sound lesson plans and learning materials that included presentations, animations, live action video, longitudinal case studies, and alternate reality gaming. Scott has also worked in the corporate world as an instructional designer, most notably for the medical company, Regeneration Technologies, Inc. Scott began his career teaching high school English in Pennsylvania. When he is not working, Scott puts his creative and communication skills to use as an amateur singer, songwriter, and recording artist.