In Fourteenth Century Rome, there was a conflict between the Catholics and the Jews . . . for those of you who have been students of mine; you know where I’m going with this. Not only have I facilitated this activity in just about every class I teach or training seminar I run, this activity, which illustrates the communication process, was my teaching presentation for my role as basic course director at Illinois State University, my home of 17 years. Why do I make reference to the Pope and the Rabbi in this essay? Because it was while participating in this activity at the University of North Texas that I decided I wanted to become a basic course director (much thanks to Brian Spitzberg and Michael Bruner). I fell in love with the teacher training process during my experiences in preparation for becoming a graduate teaching assistant during my master’s program. I knew then that this was my career path. Since this time, the basic course has been my passion. It is in this role, that I get to prepare future teachers and scholars of communication—teachers who teach every first year student at our institution and thus, every major in our department.

As Steven Beebe so aptly states, the basic course is the front porch of our discipline (Spectra, 2013). He argues that in many cases, the basic course is the course that welcomes students to general education as well as the study of communication. When Dr. Beebe identified the basic course as his NCA presidential initiative, I was delighted. When he requested that I chair the task force on strengthening the basic course, I was honored and humbled. During a brainstorming session with the members of the task force, I was asked to write this essay on getting tenure and becoming full professor as a basic course director. I am happy to do so.

Let me begin by discussing my role as a communication scholar. I received my Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma in Communication Education. My mentor, Gus Friedrich, nurtured my passion for teacher preparation and clearly distinguished this program as one that would prepare me to study both communication pedagogy (how to teach communication and be a BCD) and instructional communication (how to use communication to teach in all disciplines). Both of these areas would situate me to become a basic course director and communication scholar. In my role as a BCD, I train instructors how to teach communication specifically, but I also need to train them how to communicate effectively in the classroom. These domains of Communication Education have become my program of research and both inform my duties as a BCD.

As a basic course director, I have attended the Basic Course Director's (BCD) Conference (my training ground) over the years and recently, we compiled a list of BCD duties and responsibilities. As we compiled this list (hire, train, and supervise instructors; manage conflict; develop curriculum; develop workbooks and textbooks; research basic course issues; assess student learning and the program; serve on departmental, college, or university committees related to the basic
course), I was astounded at the magnitude of these tasks, but I was also encouraged as I realized these duties fit nicely within the teaching, research, and service responsibilities that are required of tenure and promotion at my institution.

As I reflect back on my experiences at ISU, I am most proud of the relationship I demonstrate between teaching, research, and service. I have used my experiences as basic course director as the impetus for research and my research to improve my teaching and teacher training. For example, when I first started preparing teachers to teach, my instructors had difficulty getting students to prepare for class. My curiosity about these student behaviors led me to begin a program of research on using certain instructional tools (reading objectives, extended comments, participation sheets) to motivate students to prepare to participate in class discussions (Rattenborg & Simonds, & Hunt, 2005). This research culminated in a training packet that all instructors could use to do the same. This packet includes a video on Leading Classroom Discussions, which has received a national Telly Award (Simonds, Simonds, & Hunt, 2004).

As a course director, I (and my co-director, Steve Hunt) wondered about the fairness and consistency of how multiple instructors evaluate student speeches. This line of research resulted in several publications as well as a criterion based training packet and series of videos that we have shared with numerous other universities (Stitt, Simonds, & Hunt, 2003; Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009; See Simonds, Simonds, & Hunt videos in vitae). Additionally, as course director, it is my responsibility to account for student learning and program effectiveness. This responsibility and curiosity led to a line of research on using student portfolios for authentic assessment (Hunt, Simonds, & Hinchliffe, 2001; Jones, Simonds, & Hunt, 2006; Meyer, Kurts, Hines, Simonds, & Hunt, 2010; Mazer, Simonds, & Hunt, 2012; and others). This research has resulted in several presentations, publications, and teaching awards. Additionally, these efforts positioned my co-directors (Steve Hunt and John Hooker) and me well in the application process for the 2008 NCA Inaugural Program of Excellence Award.

In addition to the many research opportunities that being a BCD provides, there are multiple service commitments that are a direct result of the role. For example, I have served on the General Education Task Force, the Council for General Education, the Committee on Critical Inquiry, the Foundations of Excellence Task Force, the Illinois Articulation Initiative, the NCA Resolution Committee on the role of Communication in General Education, and now as chair of the NCA Task Force on the Basic Course. And while these service commitments have kept me quite busy, they have also allowed me to advocate for our department and our course in general education; thus, solidifying our position as the model for general education revision at our institution.

So you ask, how did I get tenure and become a full professor as a basic course director—I did it by being fully committed to fulfilling my duties and responsibilities as a BCD in terms of teaching, research, and service. I have found that my role has provided many opportunities to demonstrate balanced and sustained efforts in all of the required areas to get tenure and promotion. I realize that I may be an anomaly in that I have always wanted to be a BCD and that this role is my passion, but this role has served me well, which is why, I am delighted, honored, and humbled to
serve as chair of this most important task force. Because now, at this juncture in my career, it is time to give back. When asked if I would share my tenure and promotion dossier as a BCD, I was happy and delighted to do so. So, with this essay, I provide my vitae which demonstrates the relationship between my role as a BCD and my efforts toward promotion and tenure. In this document, I include only those entries that relate directly to my role as a basic course director or clarify that published pieces relate to the basic course (communication pedagogy) or the training of basic course instructors (instructional communication).

I could not have done any of this without the support of my department and university. Members of my department and university valued my role and our course such that they supported my efforts toward promotion and tenure. Thus, my journey has implications for the structure of a tenure track position for basic course directors. I have been given reassigned time to perform my duties, another tenure track co-director and a graduate teaching assistant to manage the implementation of the course, and summer pay to plan and implement the intensive teacher training program. Additionally, I was encouraged to conduct research and assessment in basic course matters, serve in departmental and university level committees to advocate for the course, and was never made to feel that this work was not important or worthy of scholarship equal to that of other faculty members conducting scholarship in other areas. In fact, I have been rewarded for my efforts to make our program the model of excellence that it has come to be. None of this would have been possible without that unwavering support.

Moreover, I could not have done this without guidance from my teacher mentors, Gus Friedrich, Brian Spitzberg, and Michael Bruner; my Co-Directors, Steve Hunt, and John Hooker; my graduate student associate directors; my fellow BCDs; all of my students, teacher trainees, and fellow researchers; and my department chair, Larry Long. My commitment to and passion for being a BCD is shared with these individuals. It is through their support that I continue to thrive in this role. For that, I am forever grateful. And, while I will continue to facilitate the Pope and the Rabbi activity to teach the communication process, I will also continue to be a BCD. For me, the basic course in not only the front porch of my career, but it is the back porch. I started as a BCD and I hope to retire as a BCD. With that, I’ll continue to try to solve this conflict between the Catholics and the Jews, take my lunch (an orange and a piece of flat unleavened bread) and eat it, too.
Curriculum Vita
Cheri J. Simonds

Educational Background
Doctor of Philosophy; University of Oklahoma, 1995
Master of Science; University of North Texas, 1990

Professional Experience
Professor  2008-Present, Illinois State University, Director of Basic Course.
Associate Professor  2003-2008, Illinois State University, Director of Basic Course.
Assistant Professor  1997-2003, Illinois State University, Director of Basic Course.
Adjunct Professor  Fall 1996, University of North Texas, Responsible for teaching a graduate seminar in Organizational Communication.
Adjunct Instructor  1990-1996, University of Central Oklahoma, Responsible for teaching Public Speaking and Classroom Communication for Teachers.

Publications
Books (Most recent editions)


Book Chapters (related to the basic course)


Journal Editorship
Journal Articles (18 of 26 relate to the basic course; others are instructional communication pieces that inform basic course training)


**Conference Proceedings**

**Instructional Materials (related to the basic course)**


**Videos**


**Competitively Selected Presentations (related to the basic course)**

**Simonds, C. J. (2013, April). Basic Course Top Panel: Nationalizing the Core Objectives: (Re)Evaluating What is Possible in the Basic Communication Course. Presented at the Central States Communication Association’s annual conference in Kansas City, MO. (with others).**


Mazer, J., Simonds, C. J., Hunt, S. K., & Jones, A. (2007, November). Authentic portfolio assessment in the communication classroom: Two studies exploring the use of application essays as an effective tool for assess instruction in the basic course. Presented at the meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Simonds, C. J. (2007, November). Faith, intellect and ethics: Managing faith-based topics in the basic course. Panel presentation at the meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL. (with others).


Simonds, C. (2003, April). The basic course at a crossroads: Promoting the basic course to multiple constituencies. Panel presented at the Annual Central States Communication Association’s Convention in Omaha, NE. (with others).

Note APA Format Change Hereon


GTA Training for the basic course: What are we doing and how do we know if we are doing it well? Panel presented at the Annual Central States Communication Association Convention in Detroit, MI, 2000. (with S. Hunt, M. Beall, and R. Smith).

**Critical issues for socialization and training master’s level communication GTAs. Panel presented at the Annual National Communication Association’s Convention in Chicago, IL, November, 1999. (with Carol Cawyer, Scott Myers, and K. David Roach).**

What should we teach in the basic course. Panel presented at the Annual National Communication Association’s Convention in Chicago, IL, November, 1999. (with Don Yoder, Lawrence Hugenberg, and Jackie Buckrup).


Generation next in communication studies: Considering the future of communication teaching, research, and service. Spotlight program presented at the Sixty-Seventh Annual Central States Communication Association Convention in St. Louis, MO, April, 1999. (with others).

**Denotes Top Paper/Panel

**Guest Lectures and University Presentations (related to the basic course)**

Simonds, C. J. (August, 2013). Aligning Common Core Standards with General Education: One-Day Faculty Immersion Seminar with Follow-up Sessions presented to area faculty (Heartland Community College, University High School, Illinois State University) as part of an Illinois Board of Education grant at Illinois State University.


Simonds, C. J. (July, 2012). Classroom Communication and Pedagogy Workshop presented as part of the CTLT Faculty Fellows Program at Illinois State University.


Simonds, C. J. (January, 2010). Teaching portfolio workshop. Presented to the faculty of Lincoln College, Lincoln, IL.


Assist in the implementation of the General Education Critical Inquiry Colloquium, Semi-Annually in January and August, (with others).


**Honors and Grants (related to the basic course)**

Recipient of the College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Service Award, Illinois State University, 2012.

Recipient of a $500 grant for planning and presenting a CTLT Faculty Fellows Workshop on Classroom Communication and Pedagogy.

2010 2nd Place Winner of the National Broadcasting Society’s professional video competition in the Instructional, Corporate, or Training category for *Using Presentation Aids* (with B. Simonds and S. Hunt).

Recipient of the 2009 Team Excellence Award for Success 101, Illinois State University.

Recipient of the 2008 Inaugural Program of Excellence Award sponsored by the National Communication Association’s Basic Course Division.
Recipient of the 2008 School of Communication Graduate Student Association Faculty Service Award.

Recipient of the 2008 Rives Excellence in Undergraduate Education Award (with Steve Hunt).

Recipient of the 2007 College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s Award for Outstanding Teaching.

Recipient of the 2006 Outstanding University Teacher—Category I, Illinois State University.

Recipient of the 2005 College of Arts & Sciences Outstanding Teacher Award, Illinois State University.

2005 Bronze Telly Award Winner for Leading Instructional Discussions. (w/ Brent Simonds and Steve Hunt).

Recipient of $30,000 grant to produce videos for Prentice Hall Publishing Company on facilitating instructional discussions (with Steve Hunt and Brent Simonds).

Recipient of the Center for the Advancement of Teachings $1,200 Teaching & Learning Development Grant to conduct departmental assessment.

Recipient of $25,000 Grant to produce a video for Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company on “Using Presentation Aids”

Recipient of Illinois State University’s Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grant for $1,500 (w/ Allison Rattenborg and Steve Hunt)

Recipient of the 2000-2001 Illinois State University Teaching Initiative Award.

Recipient of $380 Supplemental Travel Grant from Illinois State University’s Assessment Office (November 2000).

Recipient of the 2000 Outstanding New Teacher Award, Central States Communication Association

Recipient of a $2000 Teaching/Learning Development Grant from Illinois State University’s Center for the Advancement of Teaching (Summer 2000). “A content analysis of student portfolios to assess learning in Language and Communication, COM 110,” with Steve Hunt.

Professional Service Activities (related to the basic course)

Chair of NCA President, Steven Beebe’s, Task Force on Strengthening the Basic Course.

Invited Guest Speaker for the 2013 NCA Summer Chair’s Conference on the Role of Communication in General Education in Washington, D.C.

Member of the Graduate Faculty Retreat Work Team, 2013.

Member of the Faculty Dimension Team on Illinois State University’s Foundations of Excellence Task Force, 2012—2013.

Member of the Illinois Articulation Initiative, 2012 to present.

Attended the Illinois Articulation Initiative Bridging the Gap: Using the Common Core for Secondary/Postsecondary Alignment workshop (April 2012) at Heartland Community College.

Co-Authored NCA Resolutions on Communication in General Education and Communication Across the Curriculum.

Attended the NCATE Colloquium and participated in the Communication Education showcase session in preparation for NCATE Accreditation visit.

Hosted the 50th Anniversary of the Basic Course Director’s Conference in Normal, IL.

Editor of Communication Teacher, a National Communication Association Journal.

Chair of the Outstanding New Teacher Award Presented at the meeting of the Central States Communication Association, Cleveland, OH.

Editorial Board and Reviewer for The Basic Communication Course Annual.


Served as Chair of Central States Communication Association’s Outstanding New Teacher Award, 2003.

Elected Secretary, Basic Course Division, National Communication Association, November 2000.

Served as Chair and Program Planner, Communication Education Division, Central States Communication Association, 2000

Elected Vice-Chair, Communication Education Division, Central States Communication Association, April 1999

Elected Nominating Committee, Basic Course Division, National Communication Association, November 1999.

Elected Secretary, Communication Education Division, Central States Communication Association, April 1998


Chapter Consultant and Editor for St. Martin’s Press.

Script Advisor and author of Leader’s Guides for three supplementary videos being produced by St. Martin’s Press.

**Teaching Interests**

- Public Speaking
- Classroom Communication
- Communication Pedagogy
- Instructional Communication
- Communication Assessment
- Social Emotional Learning

**Research Interests**

- Teacher Clarity, Credibility, and Immediacy
- Student Initiated Challenges
- Portfolio Assessment
- GTA Training
- Speech Evaluation and Feedback
- Student Engagement

**Association Memberships**

- National Communication Association, 1992-Present
  - Instructional Development Division (Nominating Committee, 2000)
  - Basic Course Division (Nominating Committee, 2000; Secretary, 2001)
- Central States Communication Association, 1992-Present
  - Communication Education Division (Secretary, 1998; Vice-Chair, 1999; Chair, 2000)
  - Basic Course Division (Secretary, 1999-2001)
  - Communication Division (Chair, 1997)
- Illinois Speech and Theatre Association, 1998-Present