

Hello and welcome to the very first episode of COM-Versations: Your School of Communication podcast. Here in the School of COM, we know how to make Fell Hall fun. Tune in often to hear the latest COM-Versations among faculty, staff and students. After all, we're the best in the Midwest for a reason. I'm Julie Navickas, one of your hosts. And today I'm joined by Dr. Lance Lippert, Professor of Communication Studies, who is currently taking a selfie of us recording our very first podcast.

LL: Well, my arm's never long enough. These selfie sticks, I don't know, you know, people don't ask me to take their pictures anymore because everybody wants a selfie. So, we'll have to do a better job of this, Julie.

JN: Might need to retry that one a little bit.

LL: I think so. Either that or get a longer arm. But then my double chin always shows up. How are you today?

JN: I'm doing just fine, Lance. How are you?

LL: You know, the most privileged, happiest person in the world. I'm here at Illinois State University and get to be a Redbird and hanging with you. Life is good, man. I'll tell you. I like college, higher ed and get to meet some incredible students and great alums and...Good luck getting rid of me.

JN: Well, I would hope you're not going anywhere anytime soon.

LL: Not yet, no. I just. Some people confuse me. They think I'm Reggie Redbird. Even when I'm not wearing a suit. You know, I think it's the nose. But no, I'm not going anywhere soon, are you?

JN: I have no plans to leave anytime soon. I love it here!

LL: Good. Well, we love having you here. You're a great colleague. We got some great people working here. Now, this is pretty cool I think, because we, one, we've not done it before. We've done other versions of different media, but. So what's the name of this thing?

JN: So, this is our very first podcast called COM-Versations in Fell Hall.

LL: I love it, and that's where we are. We're second floor Fell Hall in one of the oldest buildings and most recognizable buildings on campus, right?

JN: Absolutely.

LL: Yeah. So, and this is something we decided to do. Actually, you came up with the idea and I thought 'wow, cool' - so who is this for?

JN: Yeah, so the idea behind this podcast is to speak to our current students, our faculty, our staff, but also spread the word about how amazing the School of Communication truly is. We want more students to come. We want more people to find out about the cool opportunities that we have here in the School of COM. So when we started thinking about how can we reach out to prospective students, a podcast was one of the top ideas on our list.

LL: You know, we used to call it AM radio, but now podcasting, anything streaming, and we have some students that have their own podcasts, some that have their own blogs. And we hope this is informative

but as well as entertaining. So, it's a podcast. What exactly does that mean? What are we going to do on this podcast - I mean, besides me taking selfies, yeah.

JN: Besides some selfie action. My goal is to really focus our first season on the incredible faculty that we have here in the School of Communication. My goal is to give everyone a bird's eye view of what we do, what we study, how we help students succeed and then we'll take it from there and hopefully get some current students on our show with us, because our students are incredible and they're versatile people. Outside of what they do in the classroom, they're involved in so many other incredible things on and off campus. So my hope is that in the future we'll have some students be joining us as well.

LL: That's tremendous. And I just came from one of my classes. We have a senior capstone in all of our areas as people transition from the classroom to their career. Now, how long have you been here?

JN: I guess just shy of 10 years in this role, at least.

LL: OK, you've been a student, in advising. And now you're the director of social media.

JN: Sure, that's a cool title. I like that one.

LL: I, so this is cool. I've been here for since 2000, came up from Carbondale, originally from Kansas. Oddly enough, a lot of people know me as Lance from Kansas because people don't tend to remember my name. I'm not sure why, but, so, I've been here for a bit. Came from western Kansas and I think Central Illinois is great, Illinois State. I wish I had the opportunity to go here when I was in undergrad. You said a bird's eye view. I think you mean a Redbird's eye view.

JN: Redbird eye view. You got it.

LL: Why did the redbird cross the road, Julie.

JN: Oh, Lance.

LL: No? Ok. You don't want , you want to know?

JN: I do want to know, but I have no idea. Lance, why did the Redbird cross the road?

LL: To show the chicken that it could be done. Now that's the kind of humor I bring. My son won't listen to me anymore, but my students are. I bet that's besides not being funny, it's at least offensive. So a Redbird eye view of what's going on here. So yeah, so we're going to move through, we'll be talking, like you said, to students, faculty, all kinds of interesting things, some alums. And we're going to kind of keep you evolving and moving forward. So, what are we doing today?

JN: Well, today, Lance, I would love to hear a little bit about you, your background, what makes you stay here as a Redbird for all these years. And then I would love to spend a little bit of time thinking about what we would like the show to look like in the future.

LL: That sounds great and there'll be an opportunity for feedback as well. Like I said, I'm from Western Kansas, so, I'm a little slow sometimes but if my family's listening they understand. But no, I, I we came here and my it's just been great watching my son grow up here. I teach organizational and leadership communication in Communication Studies. And in the School of COM, we have Public Relations, which we'll hear more about; we have Communication Studies; we have Mass Media; we have Journalism and we're looking to add other programs as we move forward and higher education continues to evolve. So

in Communication Studies, we have Organizational and Leadership Communication. We have Interpersonal Communication and now we have Culture and Advocacy, which involves political COM and studying social justice and understanding how we're part of the citizenry and the community. So it's fascinating. I've enjoyed it. Why have I stayed here this long? I don't know. I never grew up wanting to be a teacher. This is my 4th career, was in retail and broadcasting and farming, and it's been interesting. This is just a really nice place to be and I think we'll stay here as we move forward with my life and I like Illinois State. It's a big school but it's a small school and the Quad and the opportunity, the intellectual freedom and the students who get here from all over the world. I suppose, I don't know how different it is from other universities this size, but there's something here that is unique and that uniquely is ours, and maybe we'll be able to identify that.

JN: That's a really good goal, I think, because you speak the truth. I absolutely would agree with that. I've been on this campus since, well, 2006. I transferred here as an undergraduate student, and honestly, I never really left. I've been here in some kind of capacity ever since. In multiple roles and doing different things but...

LL: And really understand we're trying to get rid of Julie, ever since she wanted to come. No, I'm teasing. I couldn't be more privileged to work with people. I learn every day, have a chance to share and develop. Um, yeah. My wife always tells me the real education goes K-12 and what we do in college is a gift. So hopefully we can prepare people to move on. And I, it's not our job to get a job for somebody, but it's my job to help, our job to help you be prepared to have a career and we know things are showing us now that not everybody has to go to college, but it's an opportunity we suggest but there are other ways to continue to learn and develop skills but we sure like to see our graduates be ready to move on and so many things you can do with the communication degree and it's something we'll talk about.

JN: It's definitely something that I think we can unpack a little bit further. In my years as an advisor, I get asked that question weekly. What can you do with a communication degree? My answer is always - *honestly, anything*. It doesn't matter what industry you go into or organization, but there's always a place for a communication specialist or somebody who can work in that capacity to further a brand or an organization. So, so much potential.

LL: You know that's the case and... since college is a time for a discovery and people often change directions or paths and, you know, we're trying to say be creative in where you look for a job and sometimes parents want to know specifically, students do as well. But so many different industries, so many different organizations. For instance, healthcare, a place to look right now. Aviation, a place to look. You don't have to be a doctor or a pilot to find jobs in these industries. One that's really popped up lately as we come post-COVID and that's changed the whole landscape – recruiting. Logistics. So, we have students that are recruiters for medical companies, for hospitals, talent recruiters that come to campuses looking to hire. So, it's interesting where we end up. If you're interested in going to, check out the website and you can see what kind of jobs people have and where they've ended up. Sometimes that's a little challenging for somebody to not know where they're going. A destination. Like I want to be a lawyer. By the way, we have a lot of our students go on to law school, other programs and it's such a versatile degree. But the other, the gift of this is, I think, is that you can see where it plugs in and you can develop that, your skillset, your confidence, your knowledge.

JN: Yeah, without a doubt. You know, I often hear students who struggle right with.. I love communication. I love to write, I love to be, you know, with people. And I enjoy building those relationships. But it's sometimes hard to pinpoint exactly where it is that you want to go in the future. And I'll always backtrack and share my own experiences. As an undergraduate student here, I was a Public Relations major, and I thought, *yeah, I'm totally gonna move to the city after I graduate. I'm gonna work in agency. I'm gonna have a huge paycheck. I'm gonna love it.* And I didn't do those things. I wound up working in nonprofit marketing for several years. And then found my way right back to Fell Hall, right here on the 4th floor. But it just goes to show that your communication degree can take you on so many different paths that you truly never even imagined.

LL: And it's, enjoy the journey. It's about the process, not always the destination. And if you're open to that.....someone told me a long time ago *Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.*

JN: Such good advice.

LL: Yeah, it is. But it's daunting sometimes. So hopefully our students will leave here as good, effective communicators, critical thinkers, problem solvers, lifelong learners, good citizens. And in whatever community they're in and understand the global flavor of life. You know when we get out of here, at least in the West right now in the United States, we're looking at four generations, maybe five generations in the workplace at the same time. Who knows? Now part remote, part face to face. Virtual. Global work teams, you know, working with people from many different time zones remotely. Virtual leadership. So, what we provide, I think, is that of being able to be cross culturally competent. So, I think there's a lot to offer. I think that's one of the values that just going to learn and being a lifelong learner.

JN: Oh, without a doubt. You know, and you point out too, you know, our interest in helping our students become globalized citizens. You mentioned intercultural communication. And, while I have you here, I feel like I would be doing a disservice if I didn't point out that you get to teach at the ESSCA School of Management. In the summer. We're getting ready to go again, aren't we?

LL: Well, we have a great Study Abroad program. And by the way, how many? Can you tell me - you've been a part of this? How many Study Abroad programs do we have in the School of Communication?

JN: I do know the answer to that one. We have four.

LL: So, you mentioned me in Paris. And the good news is I made it without any "Ugly American" incidents, no international incidents. But, so, we have Paris and where else?

JN: We also have programs in the Netherlands, in Brazil and in Panama.

LL: Tremendous. I wish I could. I'm working on my French, but the best line I have is **imitates French accent**. But you know, I always, when I travel and we have a great international engagement program here at Illinois State. We really would suggest that. But when I travel, I realize how privileged I am and how much I don't know. And it's so good to open up to see what other people deal with. And it is fascinating. So, that and also another thing we offer. Internships.

JN: So many internships!

LL: A majority of our students, what is it? At least 3/4 of our students get one internship and we really pushed that and suggest that it is so important that you kind of figure out what it is, if this is something

you like or maybe you experience that and you being a part of our great advising staff. And so one-on-one, how crucial is that? So, when you come here with our students, I've been at a university before writing, taught and had an advising load which is interesting. So, here we have advisors dedicated to a handful of students and it's so one-on-one. But internships, so important. And Study Abroad, so important. Service, so important. We try to create all these opportunities.

JN: Absolutely. And there's so much more that can be said, and I know that we're going to get to explore that in the future. But for now, Lance, I really want to thank you for starting with our inaugural podcast opportunity.

LL: Do you know? Back when this building was built, you and I couldn't be sitting in a room by ourselves.

JN: Oh, really?

LL: Because this was a dormitory for women.

JN: That's true. That's true.

LN: Fell Hall was a dormitory. And if you come on campus, it's a building on the Quad, which is cool. It's, what do you call that white thing on top of? We'll have to figure that out.

JN: Steeple?

LL: Something like that. There's another name, but that's our task for coming up next show is to see what that thing on top of Fell Hall is called, named after Jesse Fell. But this used to be a dorm. And now they renovated it maybe 20 some years ago and we still have people walk through the building and say *this used to be my room*.

JN: Oh yeah, that's personally happened to me when I used to be in a different space on the 4th floor. I've had several alumni come back and they'll walk in and kind of look at my space and go *my bed used to be right here*.

LL: And now tenure-track faculty fall asleep in those rooms. No, I'm teasing. I like to make fun of myself, not my colleagues. Well, this is a great opportunity, Julie Navickas, you're the producer and the host, and we're going to try to involve all of our Redbirds. Any ideas let us know and thank you for sharing this opening show with me.

JN: Thank you. I appreciate it. And on our next episode, we're getting excited. We're gonna be knocking on Dr. Steve Hunt's door. He's the director of the School of Communication, and we can't wait to share a fun conversation with him next.

LL: Oh, he'll get it. He'll fire it up.

JN: Fire it up. You're right. Thanks, Lance.