



# IMC Connect

March 31 - April 1, 2022

**A two-day roundtable experience connecting you to some of the biggest names in IMC—including both academic researchers and industry practitioners!**



School of Journalism  
and New Media



# Schedule

## Thursday, March 31st

**2:00 p.m.** | Private tour of Rowan Oak

**4:00-4:45 p.m.** | Optional campus walking tour

**5:00-6:30 p.m.** | **Q&A Job Prep Panel: The Connection Between Research and Practice** hosted by PRSSA | **Overby Auditorium**

All invited speakers will come together in this informal conversational panel to share their words of wisdom and best career advice with interested students. This event will be hosted by the University of Mississippi Public Relations Student Society of America.

Moderator: Professor Scott Fiene, University of Mississippi

*\*This session will be live-streamed to allow our students at satellite locations or who cannot attend in person to be able to tune in.*

**7:00 p.m.** | Dinner for invited guests, leadership, and Planning Committee at the Isom Place

1003 Jefferson Ave, Oxford, MS 38655

*\*Students and/or faculty will transport invited guests to the dinner*

## Friday, April 1st

**7:15-8:00 a.m.** | Meet in Overby Room 249 for catered Chick-fil-A breakfast with the UM Provost and graduate students in the

Rowan Oak



Overby Center



Isom Place



## IMC 580 Event Planning and Management class

**8:00-8:15 a.m. | Welcome from University of Mississippi Provost, Dr. Noel E. Wilkin**

**8:15-9:30 a.m. | “IMC Curriculum Jam” Session led by Interim IMC Coordinator, Dr. Jason Cain**

**9:30-9:45 a.m. | Break**

### The Inn at Ole Miss



**9:45-10:00 a.m. | Walk to The Inn at Ole Miss**

**10:00-10:50 a.m. | Session 1: Crisis Communication: Keep Calm and Sail On! | The Ballroom at The Inn**

Moderator: Dr. Tim Coombs, Texas A&M University

Chris Chiames (Carnival Cruise Line), Renee Malone (KQ Communications), Reade Tidwell (Chick-fil-A), Steve Holmes (The Home Depot), and Jenny Robertson (FedEx)

This panel will involve a discussion on crisis communication. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Tim Coombs (Texas A&M University) will provide a ~10-minute topical introduction and background regarding his expertise in crisis communication and then serve as the moderator for the remainder of the panel. Practitioners with industry experience in this area will share their insights about leading trends in crisis communication.

**10:50-11:00 a.m. | Coffee and tea break**

**11:00-11:50 a.m. | Session 2: Social Media and Big Data Analytics | The Ballroom at The Inn**

Moderator Dr. Rebecca Britt, The University of Alabama

Chris Chiames (Carnival Cruise Line), Jenny Robertson (FedEx), Amy Rosenberg (KQ Communications), and Dr. Ike Brunner (The University of Mississippi)

This panel will involve a discussion on social media and big data analytics in IMC. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Rebecca Britt (The University of Alabama) will provide a ~10-minute topical introduction and background regarding her expertise and then serve as the moderator for the remainder of the panel. Practitioners with industry experience in this area will share their insights about leading trends in social media and big data analytics.

**11:50-12:00 p.m. |** Walk back to Overby Center, Room 249 for lunch

**12:00-1:00 p.m. |** Catered lunch for invited guests and select faculty

*Join us for some classic Mississippi cuisine: fried catfish and all the fixins from Oxford's own Taylor Grocery.*

**1:00-1:30 p.m. |** Dessert with Taylor Medalists and other award-winning students in Overby 249

**1:30-1:45 p.m. |** Break

**1:45-2:00 p.m. |** Walk back to The Inn for afternoon panel sessions

**2:00-2:50 p.m. | Session 3: The Role of Advocacy and Social Justice in Public Relations | The Ballroom at The Inn**

Moderator Dr. Candice Edrington, The University of South Carolina

Renee Malone (KQ Communications), Steve Holmes (The Home Depot), and Assistant Dean Marquita Smith (The University of Mississippi)

This panel will involve a discussion on the role of advocacy and social justice in public relations. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Candice Edrington (The University of South Carolina) will provide a ~10-minute topical introduction and background regarding her expertise and then serve as the moderator for the remainder of the panel. Practitioners with industry experience in this area will share their insights about leading trends in advocacy and social justice in public relations.

**2:50-3:00 p.m. |** Coffee and tea break

### **3:00-3:50 a.m. | Session 4: Advertising and Building Your Brand: Developing Consistent, Strategic Messages That Resonate | The Ballroom at The Inn**

Moderator: Dr. Debbie Treise, The University of Florida

Reade Tidwell (Chick-fil-A), Steve Holmes (The Home Depot), Chris Chiamers (Carnival Cruise Line), & Jenny Robertson (FedEx)

This panel will involve a discussion on advertising and building your brand. A leading researcher in this field, Dr. Debbie Treise (The University of Florida) will provide a ~10-minute topical introduction and background regarding her expertise and then serve as the moderator for the remainder of the panel. Practitioners with industry experience in this area will share their insights about leading trends in advertising and branding.

### **4:00-4:45 p.m. | Deep Dive Breakout Sessions | The Ballroom at The Inn**

Invited guests will disperse around the room to invite informal, one-on-one and round table discussions with students

**4:45-5:00 p.m. |** Closing remarks from Interim Dean, Dr. Debora Wenger, raffle for students who attend at least 4 of 5 panel sessions (counting the PRSSA panel), and presentation of the IMC Connect! Research Award in | The Ballroom at the Inn

**5:00-6:00 p.m. |** Break

### **University Museum**



**6:00-8:00 p.m. |** Reception with heavy hor d'oeuvres for invited guests, faculty, staff, and masters students at the University Museum (Pre-registration/RSVP required). The UM Chancellor will also be in attendance

University Ave & S 5th St, Oxford, MS 38655

# Our Guests



## **Chris Chiames**

*Chief Communication Officer*  
**Carnival Cruise Line**

Chris Chiames joined the world's largest cruise line in 2018 and brings a strong track record of accomplishment in communications leadership across travel and technology. Prior to joining Carnival, Chris held executive leadership positions in aviation (Airlines4America, American Airlines, US Airways), and travel technology and distribution (Orbitz Worldwide and Sabre). He also led the travel and tourism public affairs practice at Burson-Marsteller (now BCW) during the travel industry's critical response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and subsequent financial crisis. His assignments have included financial restructurings, IPOs, and mergers & acquisitions, major product and service rollouts, industrial accidents, terrorism and technology security events, government investigations and regulatory scrutiny, and labor negotiations and work disruptions. His scope of duties has included public relations, government affairs, employee communications, community affairs, investor relations and customer relations. Chris holds a Bachelor of Arts in journalism from California State University, Fresno, a Master of Arts in journalism from the University of Maryland, and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He has been honored by the Public Relations Society of America and the California State University, Fresno School of Media, Communications & Journalism, among others. He is a member of the Arthur Page Society for senior communications executives and has served on the academic advisory board for both the Southern Methodist University Department of Corporate Communications & Public Affairs and the University of Florida Department of Public Relations. Chris is also the co-host of the popular podcast "Airlines Confidential," which airs weekly on all major podcast platforms.



## **Dr. Timothy Coombs**

*Professor*  
**Texas A&M University**

Dr. Coombs received his Ph.D. in Public Affairs and Issues Management from Purdue University. Coombs is a full professor in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M

University and holds the Abell Endowed Professorship in Liberal Arts. He is the recipient of the 2002 Jackson, Jackson & Wagner Behavioral Science Prize from the Public Relations Society of America, the 2013 Pathfinder Award from the Institute of Public Relations in recognition of his research contributions to the field and to the practice, and the 2014 Business Impact Award from the Association for Business Communication and USC Marshall School of Business, Center for Management Communication. Dr. Coombs has won multiple PRIDE awards from the Public Relations Division of the National Communication Association for both books and research articles. He is also a member of the prestigious Arthur W. Page Society.

Dr. Coombs was a Fulbright Scholar in Estonia in the Spring of 2013. In the Fall of 2013, he was named NEMO Professor at Lund University, Helsingborg Campus. In 2015 he was invited to lecture at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. In 2015 he was designated an honorary professor in the Department of Business Communication at Aarhus University. He is the past editor for *Corporation Communication: An International Journal*.

Dr. W. Timothy Coombs' primary research focuses on crisis communication. In 1995, he published the first article that would lead to the articulation of the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT). SCCT is recognized as one of the most influential theories in crisis communication. His work has been at the forefront of establishing crisis communication as an identifiable research field within corporate communication. The recognition of his expertise is reflected in the variety of speaking engagements in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.



## **Steve Holmes**

*VP of Corporate Communications  
and External Affairs*  
**The Home Depot**

As comms chief, Holmes' responsibilities include managing internal and external communications for the company, digital communications, an internal broadcast team (HDTV) and a content creation team called "Story Lab." He is also responsible for the company's multi-million dollar branded merchandise program and events management, and he serves as president and a trustee of The Home Depot Foundation, the charitable arm of the company comprised of more than \$200 million in assets.

"One of the biggest comms efforts we have is around our \$11.1 billion in investments over the next three to four years," said Holmes, who oversees 100-plus staffers.

Holmes joined The Home Depot in 2007 as a senior manager and moved into his most recent role as vice president of corporate communications and external affairs in November 2018.

Earlier in his career, he worked as a PR manager for UPS for nearly nine years. The Home Depot had more than \$151 billion in revenues and ranked No. 18 on the Fortune 500 list in 2018.



## **Renee Malone**

*President & Founding Partner*  
**KQ Communications**

Renee Malone is the founding partner and president of KQ Communications. Known as the organization's guru of strategic communications planning and crisis media, she is Accredited in Public Relations and certified in Crisis Communication. Malone is

an Illinois native with an undergraduate degree in Communications and an MBA with a concentration in Marketing.

Before co-founding the agency, she worked as a broadcast news reporter, anchor and as a public information officer for a school district. In her role at KQ, Renee has spent more than 12 years leading award-winning projects for nonprofit, business and government clients. She's received awards from the Associated Press, PR News, Public Relations Society of America-Memphis and Georgia Chapters, and the National School Public Relations Association. Renee was most recently named the 2019 Executive of the Year by the Public Relations Society of America, Memphis Chapter.



## **Jenny D. Robertson**

*SVP, Integrated Marketing & Communication*  
**FedEx Services**

Jenny Robertson is the Senior Vice President of Integrated Marketing and Communications at FedEx Services. In this role, she is responsible for managing the global FedEx brand and reputation as

well as driving revenue growth through strategic communications, customer engagement marketing, public affairs, citizenship, sponsorships, media relations, social media, and advertising.

Since joining FedEx in 2004, Robertson has held a number of positions throughout the company, including Vice President of Corporate Communications and Director of Global Citizenship and Reputation Management for FedEx Services. She also served as Manager of Global Media Relations for FedEx Services and Senior Manager of Marketplace Communications for FedEx Office in Dallas. Her work in these roles has helped shape the reputation of FedEx as one of the 20 most admired companies in the world as ranked by FORTUNE Magazine. Prior to FedEx, Robertson worked in public relations and advertising for Memphis-based marketing firm Archer Malmo.

Robertson is a three-time winner of the company's prestigious Five Star Award and has won numerous industry awards for public relations, including being named a PRWeek Hall of Femme 2021 honoree. She is involved in various civic activities, including serving on the boards of the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, Regional One Health Foundation and the Levitt Shell. A graduate of the University of Mississippi, Robertson resides in downtown Memphis with her husband and two children.



**Amy Rosenberg**  
*Digital Media Director*  
**KQ Communications**

Amy Rosenberg is the Digital Media Director for KQ Communications. Amy is a passionate storyteller - something she picked up during her nine years as an award-winning television reporter, anchor, and producer. At KQ, she leads a team of creatives as they use research and strategy to find unique ways to tell clients' stories through social platforms and other digital mediums. She has successfully led some of the company's top projects and earned honors from the Memphis and Atlanta Chapters of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) as well as the Associated Press. The Wisconsin native lived in Texas, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Tennessee before making her home in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Dr. Rebecca Britt**  
*Associate Professor*  
**The University of Alabama**

Dr. Britt focuses on the use of large-scale web data and computational methods to inform health communication campaigns and chronic illness. Current projects include work on health disparities in Alabama, online communities of practice, and social media discourses of health, among other topics. Additional research lines include examining health narrative influences and social dynamics in online subcultures. Dr. Britt's work has been funded through university, state, and federal organizations. She serves on several editorial boards.



## **Dr. Debbie Treise**

*Professor*

**University of Florida**

Dr. Debbie Treise is a professor in the Department of Advertising and the coordinator of the Science/Health Master's track in the College of Journalism and Communications (CJC) at the University of Florida. She currently serves as the

Executive Director of the American Academy of Advertising.

Treise received her Ph.D. in 1992 from the University of Tennessee. She has raised more than \$1.2 million in grants from NASA/Marshall Space Flight Center to study science communications. She has received grant funding from UF's CTSI and serves as a member of the CTSI's Executive Operations Committee for Health Communications Research. She was the CJC's first recipient of the University of Florida's Research Faculty Fellowship in 1998, based on her research in science and health communication. She is the author of several book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations and national and international invited talks on science and health communications. She serves on the editorial board of several journals and serves on numerous industry, university, college and department committees.

Dr. Treise's community service includes serving with the Hippodrome's H.I.T.T program for at-risk youths and as an Angel Flight volunteer pilot. Professional affiliations include: the National Association of Science Writers, American Academy of Advertising, Association for Consumer Research, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, International Communications Association, Society for Consumer Psychology, Advances in Marketing and Health Care Research (treasurer), American Academy for the Advancement of Science, Association of Health Care Journalists, Association of Environmental Journalists.



## **Reade Tidwell**

*Director of Corporate Communication*  
**Chick-fil-A**

Reade Tidwell oversees the communication of company vision and direction to all internal stakeholders. Her role includes Strategic Projects, Executive Office, which focuses on supporting the CEO and President in strategic projects and coordination across the business. She also

leads Chick-fil-A's Corporate Communications team, which serves as a group of strategic communication advisors inside the company.



## **Dr. Candice Edrington**

*Assistant Professor*

**University of South Carolina**

Dr. Candice Edrington identifies herself as a scholar-activist. Her teaching and research focus on public relations, social movements, visual rhetoric, and social media. Before earning her Ph.D. in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media from NC State,

Dr. Edrington gained professional experience in the communication and public relations field via capacities such as: Adjunct Instructor, Independent Public Relations Consultant, Coordinator of Communications, and Director of Engagement.

Having over seven years of teaching experience, she has taught a variety of core communication and public relations courses. As an instructor, her goal is to not only prepare students for careers in Public Relations and Strategic Communication, but to facilitate the co-creation of knowledge through critical thinking, relationship building, and hands-on experience. In the classroom, she aims to foster a positive learning space where diversity and inclusion of all, and their ideas, are welcomed.

Much like her academic and professional experience, her research agenda is interdisciplinary in nature. Having experience in both quantitative and qualitative methods, she explores the intersections of social movements, strategic communication, and social media through a public relations lens. Her passion for social justice and change fuels the desire to uncover both visual and textual messaging strategies that promote action and build effective relationships. Her research is published in the *Journal of Public Interest Communications* and *Visual Communication Quarterly*.

**Thank you for connecting with us!**

