

DANIELLE R. MEHLMAN-BRIGHTWELL, PH.D.

“Pioneering Public Policy Educator & Community Outreach Architect with Diverse Academic and Leadership Experience”

College of Humanities, University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg

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Professional Summary

A seasoned academic professional, combining over 15 years of experience in public policy education, community engagement, and interdisciplinary research. Demonstrated proficiency in cultivating educational environments that promote policy analysis, technology integration, and leadership development. Adept at bridging academia and community initiatives, fostering inclusive and impactful outreach programs. Recognized for excellence in scholarship, with extensive publications and presentations in the field of political communication and public policy. An innovative educator, committed to advancing public policy discourse and nurturing the next generation of policy leaders.

Core competencies & Major Attributes

Interdisciplinary Curriculum Development: Expert in creating comprehensive public policy and communication courses at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, blending theory with practical application. Courses under stewardship, such as 'Social Sciences Capstone' and 'Public Policy Practicum', are noted for their innovative approach in addressing contemporary societal issues.

Research Leadership in Political Communication: Established a distinguished profile in political communication research across multiple academic institutions. Publications and presentations focus on areas critical to modern public discourse, including media credibility and political polarization, affirming a commitment to advancing scholarly understanding in the field.

Strategic Community Outreach Initiatives: At the forefront of developing the Office of Community Outreach at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg. Initiatives under direction demonstrate a unique blend of academic insight and social responsibility, particularly in empowering at-risk youth through leadership and career readiness programs.

Collaborative Academic Partnerships: Instrumental in establishing and nurturing partnerships with The Washington Center, facilitating real-world, policy-related internships and experiential learning opportunities. This role has significantly enhanced practical learning experiences for students in public policy and communication.

Effective Grant Acquisition and Management: Proven ability in securing and managing significant educational and community-focused grants. Skills in project conceptualization and execution have led to notable advancements in economic mobility and educational initiatives.

Technological and Multimedia Proficiency: Possesses advanced proficiency in a range of multimedia and technological tools, vital for modern education and research dissemination. Expertise includes the use of Avid, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Suite, WordPress, and Google Analytics, enhancing the impact and reach of academic and community engagement efforts.

Academic Contributions and Impact

Scholarly Publications

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R., & Piwinsky, M. J. (2024, March). Information warfare fostering political polarization: Facebook addiction, news credibility, and concern of foreign interference. In D. Schill & J. A. Hendricks (Eds.), *Social Media Politics: Digital Discord in the 2020 Presidential Election*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. [Link](#)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R., & McCool, J. C. (2023, August). A shift in norms: The impact of COVID-19 on class, access to technology, and social inequalities in higher education. In G. L. Wood (Ed.), *The Impacts of COVID-19 on Political Dynamics, Social Inequality, and the Wellbeing of Americans*. Lexington Books. [Link](#)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2023, June 8). The evolution of fake news on Facebook: Truth disagreements and a loss of common knowledge. In H. C. Schmidt (Ed.), *Issues in Contemporary American Journalism*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. [Link](#)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2022, January). Book review of *The Filing Cabinet: A Vertical History of Information* by Craig Robertson. *International Journal of Communication*, 16, 447-449. [Link](#)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2021, August). Facebook users' social media dependency, news credibility & concerns of foreign interference in 2016 and 2020 U.S. Presidential Elections. *ProQuest*. [Link](#)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2020, August). Book review of *Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President: What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know*. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 3496-3498. [Link](#)

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2020, July 27). Book review of *Technology Run Amok: Crisis Management in the Digital Age*. *Journal of Communication Technology*, 3(1), 73-75. [Link](#)

In Review with Editors

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R., & Yancosek Gamble, M. E. (2025). Leading through self-determination and goal setting: Exploring how to motivate the unmotivated. In S. Pensoneau-Conway (Ed.), *Leadership Communication: A Critical Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R., Piwinsky, M. J., Everett, S., & Fulton, L. (2025). Social media and politics: Young voters' perceptions and motivations. In M. Smith (Ed.), *Social and Mobile Media: Remaking the Political Marketing Paradigm*.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R. (2024). Book review of *Ethics and Politics of Free Speech of Pressing Societal Problems*. *Communication, Booknotes Quarterly*, Taylor & Francis Online.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D. R., & Ortiz Juarez-Paz, A. V. (2024). The emergence process of gender political parity: Women's motivation to run for election. *Women's Studies*, Taylor & Francis Online.

Conference Presentations

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Yancosek Gamble, M.E. (2024). Artificial Intelligence tools for experiential learning: Using Wikipedia to assist student research. Paper presented at Fairmont State University Artificial Intelligence Conference, Fairmont, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Piwinsky, M.J. (2024). How Technology Impacts Gender Differently: Exploring Behavior and Communication with 'Fake News' During Elections. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Cambridge, MA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Piwinsky, M.J. (2023). Information Warfare Fostering Political Polarization: Facebook Addiction, News Credibility, and Concern of Foreign Interference. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Communication Association, Slippery Rock, PA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2023). Exploring the Impact of Ad Populum in the 2022 U.S. Senate Candidates' Speeches. Panel presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Piwinsky, M.J. (2023). Social Media and Gender: Exploring Gender Differences in Facebook Addiction, News Credibility, and Concerns of Foreign Interference in Presidential Elections. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2022). The Evolution of Fake News on Facebook: Truth Disagreements and a Loss of Common Knowledge. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Communication Association, East Stroudsburg, PA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & McCool, J.C. (2022). A Shift in Norms: The Impact of COVID-19 on Class, Access to Technology, and Social Inequalities in Higher Education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Communication Association, East Stroudsburg, PA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & A. V. Ortiz. (2022). Women in Power: What motivated more women to run in 2018 Midterm Election? Paper presented at the International Conference on The Future of Women "Defining Women in a New Decade", Sri Lanka.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, October). Teaching Tools: Increase Student Engagement in-person or remote during synchronous instruction. Presented at West Virginia Art Education Conference, West Liberty University, West Liberty, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2020, October). Online News Pre-Crisis Framing of COVID-19. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the Ohio Communication Association, Youngstown, OH.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R., McCollough, R., McCool, J., Travis, E., & Reitz, D. (2020, April). Emerging Technologies and didactic methods: Strategies for technology use in communications programs. Panel submitted to the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD. (Conference cancelled)
- McCollough, R. & Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2020, April). Harboring innovation for programs, faculty, and students: and exploration of the efficacy of e-Portfolios in the communication discipline. Paper submitted to the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD. (Conference cancelled)
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2020, April). Processing persuasive messages using the elaboration likelihood model. Paper selected by G.I.F.T.S the annual meeting of the Eastern Communication Association, Baltimore, MD. (Conference cancelled)

Professional Presentations

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Yancosek Gamble, M.E. (2024). The Good, the bad, and the ugly of Artificial Intelligence. Keynote speakers at the Fairmont State University Artificial Intelligence Conference, Fairmont, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2023, October). Convening: Economic Mobility. Invited discussion at the Richard King Mellon Foundation, Pittsburgh, PA.

- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2022, December). Qualitative Research Methodologies: Data Analysis. Guest speaker at Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, March). Online and Remote Tools: Powtoon. Guest speaker at West Liberty University, West Liberty, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, March). Eat, Write, Defend. Panel speaker at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, January). Comparing Singularities: Social and Technological Disruptions. The Republic of Letters. Invited discussion at the Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University, Washington, D.C.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, May). Comparing Singularities: Social and Technological Disruptions. The Age of Spiritual Machines. Invited discussion at the Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University, Washington, D.C.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2021, June). Comparing Singularities: Social and Technological Disruptions. The “Age of EM”. Invited discussion at the Institute for Humane Studies, George Mason University, Washington, D.C.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2020, April 6). Original research on Online News Pre-Crisis Framing of COVID-19. Invited speaker at West Chester University, West Chester, PA.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2019, October). Production. Workshop speaker at John Marshall High School, hosted by West Liberty University, Moundsville, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. & Peck, J. (2019, April). Commercial Writing & Producing. Workshop speaker at MADFest, College of Arts and Communications, West Liberty University, West Liberty, WV.
- Mehlman-Brightwell, D.R. (2018, October). TV Industry. Workshop speaker at John Marshall High School, hosted by West Liberty University, Moundsville, WV.

Teaching Experience

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Department of Humanities (2022-present)

- **Public Policy & Communication:**
 - SOCSCI 1955 Social Sciences Capstone
 - SOCSCI 1905 Public Policy Practicum
 - SOCSCI 1955 Introduction to Public Policy
 - PS 1104/COMMRC 1104 Political Communication
 - COMMRC 1153 Rhetoric and Public Policy
 - Additional Courses in Communication & Social Sciences

West Liberty University, Department of Journalism & Communications Studies (2018-2022)

- **Communication and Broadcasting:**
 - COM 101: Oral Communications (incl. Online)
 - COM 231/232: News Writing & Reporting, Broadcast News Writing
 - COM 322: Writing for Radio & TV, COM 418: Broadcast Performance
 - Additional Courses in Media Sales, Journalism Internship, and Professional Internship Journalism

Bethany College, Department of Humanities (2016-2018)

- **Writing and Seminar Courses:**
 - FDST 095/098: Fundamentals of Writing I & II
 - BYFE 101/102: Freshmen Seminar, Learning Communities

West Virginia Northern Community College, Department of English (2017-2022)

- **English Composition:**
 - ENG 101: Composition I & II

Ohio University Eastern, Department of English (2015-2016)

- **Reading Fundamentals:**
 - UCD 998: Fundamentals of Reading

West Virginia Business College, Department of Humanities (2012-2014)

- **Humanities and Business Applications:**
 - GS 124: Interpersonal Communications, GS 123: Literature & Composition
 - Additional Courses in Business and Computer Applications

Belmont College, Department of Liberal Arts & Humanities (2010-2016)

Communications & English:

- COM 115: Speech, COM 110: Interpersonal Communications
 - ENG 101: Composition I & II
 - Additional Courses in Developmental Education
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Academic Appointments

University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Department of Humanities

- Founder & Director of Office of Community Outreach (2023-present)
- Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Communication (2022-present)
- Faculty Liaison, The Washington Center, Washington, D.C. (2023-present)

West Liberty University, Department of Journalism & Communications Studies

- Assistant Professor of Communication and Broadcasting (2021-2022)
- Instructor of Communication and Broadcasting (2018-2021)

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Department of Communications Media

- Graduate Assistant: Editor of Journal of Communications Media Studies (2018-2020)

Bethany College, Department of Humanities, McCann Learning Center

- Instructor & Learning/Writing Specialist (2016-2018)

West Virginia Northern Community College, Department of Humanities

- Adjunct Faculty: Assistant Professor (2017-present)

Belmont College, Department of Liberal Arts & Humanities

- Adjunct Faculty: Assistant Professor (2010-2016)

Ohio University Eastern, Department of English

- Adjunct Faculty: Assistant Professor (2015-2016)

West Virginia Business College, Department of Humanities

- Adjunct Faculty: Assistant Professor (2012-2014)
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Education

Ph.D. in Communications Media and Instructional Technology

Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, PA (2018-2021)

- **Summa Cum Laude**
- Major Areas: Political Communication, Mass Media, Production, Technology Policy
- Dissertation Title: "Facebook Users' Social Media Dependency, News Credibility & Concerns of Foreign Interference in 2016 and 2020 U.S. Presidential Elections"
- Major Professor: Zack Stiegler
- Committee Members: Mark Piwinsky (chair), B. Gail Wilson, James Lenze, Vicky Ortiz

M.A. in English: Professional Writing & Rhetoric

Bowling Green State University (Completed Aug. 2018)

- Major Area: Professional Writing & Rhetoric
- Minor Area: Editing
- Major Professor: William Albertini
- Committee Members: William Albertini, Gary Heba

M.Ed. in Education (Reading K-12 certification)

Muskingum University (Completed May 2010)

- Major Area: Reading
- Major Professor: Polly Collins
- Committee Members: Polly Collins, Kathy Brown

B.A. in Professional Communications and English

Wheeling Jesuit University, Wheeling, WV (Completed May 2007)

- Major Area: Communication and English (5-12 certification)
- Minor Areas: Production, Education

Comprehensive Service Contributions

Service to the University

- Developing an articulation agreement for the 4+1 Public Policy program, collaborating with GSPIA and Chair Dr. Geoff Wood at the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg.
- Campus Liaison and Coordinator for The Washington Center in Washington, D.C., enhancing academic-industry partnerships (2022-present).
- Chairing the hiring committees for Engagement Coordinator and Manager positions at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg (2023).
- Leading the hiring process for Public Speaking adjuncts, emphasizing academic excellence (2023).
- Researcher at the Pitt Disinformation Lab, part of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Cyber Law, Policy, and Security (2022-present).
- Faculty affiliate at the Center for Applied Research, contributing to innovative research initiatives (2022-present).
- Member of the Grant Committee, aiding in funding allocation and management (2023-present).
- Co-chairing the PURCS Committee, fostering undergraduate research (2022-present).
- Judge for Research Presentation Contests at PURCS, encouraging scholarly development (2022-present).

Service to Division of Humanities & Behavioral Sciences

- Academic advisor for Public Policy & Communication majors and internships, guiding student career paths (2023-present).
- Group advisor for Public Policy majors, providing tailored academic counseling (2023).
- Member of the Hughes Lecture Series Committee, representing Arts and Communication, West Liberty University (2021-2022).
- Representative on the Communications Curriculum Committee, enhancing academic standards, West Liberty University (2018-2022).
- Presenter at MADFest, sharing expertise in Commercial Writing & Producing (2019-2022).

Service to the Department

- Actively involved in Pitt Open Houses, Commit to Pitt, and SOAR events, engaging with prospective students (2022-present).
- Contributed to retention and recruitment initiatives at West Liberty University (2018-2022).
- Led recruitment efforts during John Marshall Invasion and Black and Gold Days (2018-2022).

Professional Service

- Advisory Board member for Lexington Books' series on "Contemporary Perspectives on Social Inequalities in the United States" (2023-present).
- Coordinator and Secretary for the Eastern Communication Association's Political Communication Division, overseeing event organization and administration (2023-present).
- Judge for the International Journal of Communication's Political Communication division (2020).

Service to the Community

- Board member of the Entrepreneurship Leadership Council, driving community development initiatives (2023-present).
- Director of Community Outreach, establishing a dual enrollment program for underserved communities and leadership training for at-risk youth (2023-present).
- Virtual Learning Academy teacher at Jefferson Educational Service Center, focusing on literacy and composition for at-risk youth (2008-present).
- Volunteer with Boys Scouts Troop 6, contributing to youth development and leadership (2008–2020).

Grants & Awards Achievements

Research Grants and Project Funding

- **Undergraduate Research Funding**
 - Role: Co-Principal Investigator
 - Institution: University of Pittsburgh
 - For: 5th Annual Pitt-Greensburg's Undergraduate Research Symposium (PURCS)
 - Amount: \$11,000 (Pending)
- **Economic Mobility & Educational Attainment Grant**
 - Role: Principal Investigator
 - Funding Body: Richard King Mellon Foundation
 - Awarded: \$250,000 (January 2023)

- **Community Engaged Scholarship Project Development**
 - Project: Expanding Future Minds through Career-Readiness and Leadership Trainings
 - Individual Award: \$1,200
 - Cohort Award: \$3,600 (March 2024)
- **Scholarship Awards from The Washington Center**
 - Sponsored by Pennsylvania State Legislature
 - Inside Washington Scholarship: \$23,950 (January 2024)
 - Academic Internship Program Scholarship: \$58,930 (May 2023)
 - Inside Washington Scholarship: \$23,045 (January 2023)
- **Pitt-Seed Projects**
 - Project: Career Readiness: Sophomore and Junior Seminars
 - Award: \$2,000 (Phase 1-3), Additional Funding (Phase 4) (February 2023)

Honors and Recognition

- **Best Presenter Award**
 - Event: International Conference on The Future of Women "Defining Women in a New Decade"
 - Location: Sri Lanka
 - Date: February 2022
- **Teach Grant**
 - Sponsor: US Department of Education, Jefferson Educational Service Center
 - Period: 2010-2015
- **Campus Teaching Award**
 - Institution: West Virginia Business College
 - Date: Fall 2013
- **eTech Ohio Grant**
 - Purpose: Podcasting for Assessment
 - Award: \$2,000 (April 2011)
- **Dorothy Day Publications Award**
 - Institution: Wheeling Jesuit University
 - Date: May 2007
- **The University Publications Award**
 - Institution: Wheeling Jesuit University
 - Date: May 2007
- **Glorium Award for Leadership, Service, and Academic Excellence**
 - Institution: Wheeling Jesuit University
 - Period: 2004-2005

Professional Memberships

- World Affairs Council Pittsburgh (2024)
- American Association of University Women (AAUW) (2024)
- Feminist Majority Foundation (2024)
- League of Women Voters (2024)
- Pennsylvania Communication Association (2022-present)
- Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society (2018-present)
- Eastern Communication Association (2018-present)
- National Communication Association (2007-present)
- International Communication Association (2019-present)

Research Interests

- Public Policy Analysis and Development
- Political Communication Dynamics
- Social Policy Impact and Solutions
- Empirical Research Methods in Policy Studies

- Leadership in Academic and Policy Contexts
- Systems Thinking for Complex Problem Solving
- Education Policy Analysis
- Comprehensive Policy Research and Analysis
- Program Evaluation Techniques
- Intersection of Technology and Policy