

*Hello and welcome to 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 conversations 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 and Elizabeth Chupp, director of academic advising here in the School of Communication. Welcome!*

EC: Thank you!

LL: Yahoo! I'm not sure.....fun is a good word for it. I, it's an interesting place, and we certainly take a few moments to enjoy life. Do you have fun in the School of Communication?

EC: I do have fun. Every day is a new adventure. I love it.

LL: This coming from working parents, both of you, and I guess, my son is gone, but you guys had your hands full. I don't know how you all do it, that's all I'm saying. Working parents and trying to, you know juggle and tap dance. Pretty impressive.

EC: Every day is a unique challenge.

LL: I just had lunch with Reggie Redbird and, I'm just saying, so I have time, I take time, you know to.....

EC: Oh my gosh.

LL: Yeah, and, of course, people don't think tenure-track professors work, anyway.

EC: My kids would love to have lunch with Reggie Redbird.

LL: Really?

EC: They love Reggie!

JN: Can you arrange that?

LL: Yes, maybe during COM Week, we could do this or some other time. So, I am connected. Birds of a feather.

EC: And I'll hold you to that.

LL: So, here you go. Why did Reggie cross the road?

EC: To get to the other side?

LL: Well only that was where Illinois State is. To get to Illinois State. And here's one. You ready? Knock knock.

EC: Who's there?

LL: Reggie Redbird. There you go. These were Reggie's. None of these are any good so it could only get better from here.

JN: You're slacking.

LL: OK this is from Reggie. How does Reggie feel, Reggie Redbird feel, when he loses his feathers?

EC: Oh boy I don't know. How does he feel?

LL: He feels plucking terrible. Can I say that? This was him! This was a little bit, I'm back, I'm sorry, I just he wanted me to get these out of the way, but, I teased, obviously and we're here to talk. This is why we have so much fun. I don't get out of the house much, so it's here, home, and work, and...

JN: Just your lunch with Reggie.

LL: So, you have known this person here for quite a while.

JN: I have known Liz for a very long time, that's true. Liz, why don't you tell us a little bit about your start here in the School of Communication?

EC: OK, happy to. Well, honestly my history in the School of Communication goes back a long time, many years. I actually started my time in the School of Communication as an undergraduate student. I was a Public Relations major back in the early 2000s. I graduated 2005 with my PR degree, my bachelor's degree in PR, but I kind of came into the School of COM in a different way. I started off in a different major when I was a freshman here in Illinois State, but, like so many freshmen, I took COM 110 my first semester, and I absolutely loved the class. I had a great experience in the course. I loved everything about COM 110, so when I found myself during my sophomore year thinking about *well, gosh, I need a change in my career path and my major*. I didn't really know what to do next so I actually talked directly to my COM 110 teacher, and she helped open my eyes to all the really neat things in the School of Communication and PR really resonated with me so I picked Public Relations as my major and had a great experience and I loved every minute of it. After I graduated with my PR degree, I worked in the corporate sector for a little while. I started in nonprofit and worked at a local nonprofit organization here in town, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and I mostly did a lot of fundraising and development work, some volunteer organization, event planning, those types of things, and then, after my experience there, I transitioned to a small technology organization here in town as well, and, since it was a small organization, I got to do a lot of different things, which was really exciting. I managed their PR and marketing, I did customer relations, media relations, but then I also kind of stumbled into training and development as part of my role which was new to me. I had never really done training before, but I loved it. It was so much fun. I got to work with all of our clients, all over the country, helping them learn how to use our products and leverage our products for their organizational needs, which was really exciting, but, you know, after two years of that, I decided *I think I need another change in my life* so, after a lot of conversations with my family and with my spouse, I was trying to figure out *what do I do next*. I wasn't really, I wasn't really happy with the career path I was on at the time. I needed a change and I remember having a very pivotal conversation with my sister at the time and she was an undergraduate student in college and she mentioned *you know, Liz, you remind me a lot of my speech teacher in college. I think you might be good teaching public speaking* and it was like a light bulb went on in my head and I was like *Oh my gosh, you're so right. I want to do that!*

JN: She was a smart lady

EC: She's a very smart lady, yes, so I applied to Graduate School here at ISU. I enrolled as a graduate student, and I was fortunate to get a position as a graduate teaching assistant and I got to teach my very own sections of COM 110. And it was just kind of a surreal moment to think about *That's where my COM*

*journey started with COM 110 and now I'm an instructor in that class and I get to have that opportunity to inspire students in the same way which was really neat*

LL: Who was your first, who was that COM 110 teacher that inspired you?

EC: Her name was Melissa Grant.

LL: That's pretty good, how people make a difference in our lives and how we build on that. But now you're still here. What's up with that?

EC: I'm still here, yeah, what's up with that? You know, I did leave and come back again after my master's degree, I left and I went down the road to University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign for two years.

LL: starts coughing

EC: I know, I know. I know, it's coming back, I promise, it's coming back. In my second year at University of Illinois, I was teaching full-time in their Department of Communication, I got a phone call from our very own Dr. Hunt here in the School of COM and he said *Liz, we've got an academic advising job opening up. I really think you should apply!* Well, OK I've never done advising before but I'm happy to apply. And I interviewed and I got the job and, 12 years later, I'm still here. I love it. I sincerely love every minute of it and every day is a new challenge. There's something new that we get to do and explore and learn. We often joke a lot in the advising team that we are learning every single day. I learn something new every day, so no two days are the same, it's never boring. My colleagues are fantastic; two of my favorite people in this very room with me.

LL: Well, we usually put our guests and colleagues on the spot so who their favorite people are. But I have to also add to this that both of these folks, to my right, to my left, have won or are recognized university wide for their advising, their teaching, so they're well received, well respected, and they are recognized as one of the best on campus. And I think our advising is very, is among the best on campus. I don't want to say the best, but it certainly has created a unique..

EC: You can say the best.

LL: The best, ok, you never know who's listening. OK, it's the best. I think that you've created a new way of dealing with this and a better way that really makes it really student-centered. I really dig it. You guys have both done so well.

EC: Thank you. I appreciate it!

LL: I can't imagine what we, the School of COM, students, would do without advising. I like this model a lot. So, how many students do we have here?

EC: Gosh, we have about 700 students in the School of Communication, so, and we are hoping to continue to grow that number over the next couple of years as we've got some exciting new programs in development. But we do have about 700 students that we work with. And I love our advising model. We've got a team of advisors that work with all of our students, and we have advisors that are specific to every student's major. So, we have a specific advisor that works with PR students, a specific advisor for Journalism, advisors for Communication Studies and Mass Media. So that those students always have a specific point of contact, specific person that they can go to to get help when they need advising

assistance, and that can range from picking out classes for the upcoming semester, or it can just be *I'm gonna talk about opportunities. What can I do with this major? What opportunities on campus do I want to explore? Tell me about RSOs and internships* and I think it's really exciting when we get to share those opportunities with students and start to see them getting excited about all the different opportunities that we have available for them in the School of COM.

JN: And it's a good set-up, too. I've heard so many students and they comment, you know, as soon as they leave an advising appointment, they just have so much more clarity, they know what they're doing, they're happier....

EC: Definitely!

JN: Most of the time. Well, and like Lance mentioned, too, Liz, you know if you are an award-winning academic advisor. And, you know, personally, I've learned my skill set directly from you, teaching and advising. And I wonder, would you be willing to share a little bit about maybe your academic advising philosophy?

EC: Of course, yes, of course. I really do, I really view advising as a partnership. A collaboration between myself and the students that I work with, and the faculty in the School of Communication. It's very collaborative between all of us, and I really like to empower students to take ownership of their educational experience. I really believe that students get more out of their ISU experience when they are invested in what they're doing here on campus, and they can see the value in what they're doing as well. So, I love when I have conversations with students. We get to talking about all these really interesting, neat things and then to see them follow through and actually go out and get that internship or get involved at WZND or TV-10 or something like that. It's just really interesting to see their development, and one of the things I love about being an advisor in the School is that we get to work with students for two to three years throughout the course of their time here at ISU. So, a lot of students will come to us as sophomores or juniors, and I get to see them through till graduation so we get to really see a nice arc of their academic journey and it's really inspiring to just be even a small part of that journey, but I would definitely say collaboration is a big part of my advising philosophy and empowering them to take that ownership of their experience.

LL: I'm not saying that, you know, she should be happy with what she's looking.....I'm a little bit frustrated every time I come in she makes me wipe my feet on the rug outside her office. It says "this is the office of the best." So, I just, I guess I've learned I'm OK with that. Talk about having fun. Poor Liz's office is right outside of the men's restroom or our gender-neutral bathroom. And so I tell you some of us, you know *hi – hi – hi-hi-hi*, and you're kind of close to that, so, we see a kind of bump into people in the hallway.

EC: You know, we have interesting hallway conversation outside the restrooms. That's where the best magic happens.

LL: It's interesting to watch, well I can't go into details about that...

JN: Please don't!

LL: But, I, the hallways! What are you talking about??

JN: What are you talking about?

LL: Because it's where that best magic, you say fun. There's a lot of work that gets done as we socialize and interact so it's very important, I think, that we do bump into each other IN THE HALLWAYS to kind of start get that creativity flowing and see how everybody's doing and then really apply it so I think that's a big part of our atmosphere, our culture, and the climate we try to create. She's like this every show, Liz!

JN: You are the one that brought up the men's restroom.

LL: I said she's right across from it and we bump into each other. IN THE HALLWAY.

EC: Emphasize the hallway part.

LL: Well, we have a great advising program and again, we've expanded into social media, recruitment, scheduling. We try to do what's best for the students; but, again, it's really, and we have certain policies that we have to adhere to, but we want to make it about the students, and I'll be interested over the next 10 to 15, 20 years to see what higher ed evolves into.

EC: Absolutely. I think higher ed has a lot of, we've got a lot of room for growth, we've got a lot of exciting things that are in development, a lot of challenges that we're facing right now, but I really think we're very well poised in the School of Communication. I feel like we're taking some really good positive steps forward to meet those challenges and I'm excited to see what the future brings.

LL: You have a trivia question.

JN: I do.

LL: For her, that that maybe she might know or not know

JN: I think if there's anyone in the School of Communication that's gonna know this answer, it's gonna be Elizabeth Chupp. Here's why. Liz, you have the most unique challenge, I think, out of everyone. You build the schedule every single semester

EC: I surely do.

JN: Undergraduate classes, graduate classes. You are the sole person responsible for figuring out that master plan. So, my question to you and I guarantee you're going to know this just right off the bat here.... how many classrooms are on the first floor of Fell Hall?

EC: Oh, Julie. What a great question! There are 13 classrooms on the first floor. That includes our general use classrooms, seminar rooms, and lab spaces.

JN: Look at you.

LL: And, so she knows these, she has to schedule all these rooms, right, and other people, other departments in places, they want to use our building so as a place as well. If you want to see people, every person on campus, just stay in the first floor of Fell and people walk right through and, almost, at some point. It's kind of like standing long enough in a river and it'll come past you again and, they say. So, it's an interesting spot, so is it, I take it we have to wrap up here, but it must be challenging to schedule this stuff, isn't it?

EC: It is challenging. It is challenging. But I will be totally honest. I love doing the schedule. I know that sounds probably pretty crazy, but I really love the doing the schedule. It's always a different challenge,

it's just like putting a big jigsaw puzzle together. You've got all these different pieces that you have to put together and not only our major classes but all the COM 110 classes that we serve for the university and, I just love it. It's a lot of fun. It's a lot of challenge, keeps me on my toes, but I get to a lot, I get to work with a lot of different constituencies on campus, too, through that process. Not just my colleagues here in the School of COM, but our colleagues in the Registrar's Office and the Provost's Office and University College so it's a very nice way to collaborate with others on campus too.

LL: So, she keeps her on her toes. She's the School of Communication ballerina.

JN: Fun name change!

EC: I like it!

JN: I'm gonna change your name plate outside your door.

EC: Absolutely. You know, I did take dance lessons for 13 years of my life, so.

JN: You did?

EC: Maybe I could do that.

JN: Singing, dancing, theater?

LL: Any polka?

EC: No polka, no. It was mostly tap and ballet

JN: Did you do polka?

LL: Of course!

EC: Oh, I would love to see the polka!

JN: We're gonna put that on social media.

LL: You know. Where I'm from, the polka is a forbidden dance. It's not like they're, you know, public dances.

EC: Is that in Kansas?

JN: Yeah, you don't do polka in Kansas.

LL: Well, that being said.

EC: I learned something new today!

LL: So, listen, I'll just move away from that. I'm sorry. Are we ready to go home?

JN: I think we're ready to go home. Are you done, Liz?

EC: I think so! I loved being here today. I appreciate the time.

LL: And contact anybody in advising – students, parents, alums, if you have any questions about how things work or want to know. Great advocate, great colleague, and it was about the students, so, thank you.

EC: One last shameless plug I'll make about our advising team. One thing that I think makes us super unique is that all of our advisors are alums of the School of Communication. And I think that puts us in a really unique position to be able to provide some awesome insights for our students and help get them inspired and motivated to really do their best and to take advantage of all the really cool opportunities that we have in the School of COM.

JN: Absolutely! Actually, I think are we all two-time alums?

EC: We are! Actually, you're right, Julie, two-time alums! Isn't that fantastic? I think that's really neat.

JN: It is!

LL: All I know is I wish I would have gone here.

EC: You should have!

JN: You should have!

LL: I didn't even know this existed, so yes, so many opportunities. So, thanks!

EC: Thank you! Thanks for having me. This was a lot of fun!

JN: A lot of fun, for sure, and more fun coming up next. On our next episode, we are gonna be talking to Dr. Nathan Carpenter and he is going to share a little bit about his role in the Social Media Analytics Command Center. We can't wait to share a fun conversation with him, so, thanks for listening!