

Communication

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Communication Professor Ready to Offer New Emphasis

Professor Adolfo Garcia has been teaching at UW-Green Bay since 2007. He was born in Spain, and came to the United States at age 7. This inspired his interest in intercultural communication and conflict resolution. Professor Garcia has been hard at work developing a new area of emphasis for the Communication program. He has also been working on a website designed to inform students about the new emphasis and the opportunities available with it. We sat down with Professor Garcia to discuss his role in the Communication department and the new emphasis.



For those students who may not know you, could you give us a little background on your career? Sure. I got my Bachelor's degree in International Business from the University of Connecticut. After that, I lived and worked overseas for a while. After returning to the U.S., I did my Master's work at UW-Milwaukee. I got my Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico.

Could you tell us about the new Conflict Resolution emphasis? Sure. First, I want to say that I'm pleased with the recent changes to the Communication curriculum. **I really believe in the new system.** I hope, because of the new system, people who choose the Conflict Resolution emphasis will have some knowledge of it. There are several core values of the emphasis and the field that I want students to be aware of things like justice, fairness, respect, dialogue, ethics, and self-determination. What I mean by self-determination is having control over your own choices. If this is missing, it is hard to have the potential for conflict resolution.

What inspired the department to create the new emphasis? It was largely based on student feedback. A variety of factors went into the decision, but student feedback on surveys and course evaluations indicated an interest. We've always known that conflict resolution is an important part of communication, but did not have the staff available to develop the area. With two new faculty members coming in, we are able to expand our program. Also, conflict resolution is my area of research and interest.

How has your role in the Communication department changed with the creation of this new emphasis? For starters, I'll be the primary advisor for the Conflict Resolution emphasis. This means that I will have academic advising duties, such as helping students choose their classes, but I'll also be working to find internship opportunities for students in the emphasis. I'll also be the advisor for all of the Communication minors. I'm looking forward to this because I'll be able

to help students choose classes to really enrich their degree program. I'll still have teaching duties as well. I'll teach Mediation and Conflict Resolution as well as Service Learning in Conflict Resolution.

Tell us about your interest in campus mediation centers. What experiences have you had with campus mediation centers? I first encountered the idea of a mediation center when I was at UW-Milwaukee. However, I had firsthand experiences with mediation centers at the University of New Mexico. There, I worked in the mediation center and did some training for faculty members. But most importantly, I learned a lot about setting up mediation programs. These experiences prepared me for the work I am doing here. When it comes to mediation centers, there isn't anybody who has the same expertise that I do on this campus.

What are your plans to open a peer mediation center here at UW-Green Bay? We will be opening a peer mediation center that will be available for all students to use. The students who were certified as mediators in the Mediation and Conflict Resolution course will be able to work in the mediation center to gain experience. This is still in the planning stages, but we hope to have it up and running soon.

We know that conflict resolution skills can be used in a wide range of jobs. What are the top three careers that someone with a Conflict Resolution emphasis could have? The top three would definitely be Human Relations (HR) work, managerial work, and anything related to law.

What is your advice for Communication students? Remember the core values such as justice, fairness, and dialogue, and be mindful about making communication choices. Communication in the interpersonal setting is very important because it can affect how others think of you, so be mindful of these choices as well. Finally, remember that good communication is just as much about listening as it is about speaking.