Frostburg, MD, December, 2013—Frostburg State University (FSU) senior, Taylor Vandegrift, completed her Communication Studies (CMST) capstone through a 3-credit internship within the department of Communication Studies. Specifically, she worked independently as the department’s undergraduate learning assistant (ULA) and completed assignments and events under the supervision of Dr. Kice, assistant professor and course coordinator for Communication Studies. Vandegrift is graduating with a degree in Communication Studies, with a concentration in Organizational Communication and Conflict Management, and is receiving a minor in Sociology. She is a member and president of Lambda Pi Eta (LPH), which is the Phi Upsilon chapter of FSU. She is the daughter of Ken and Judy Vandegrift, who have assisted her tremendously with her goals and achievements at FSU.

Vandegrift’s internship with the department of CMST consisted of a 3-credit experience under the supervision of Dr. Kice. The learning experience helped her to expand her knowledge and interactions with the Introduction to Human Communication (CMST 102) course. Throughout her last semester at FSU, Vandegrift worked independently to complete specific tasks designed to aid in the development of CMST 102. These tasks she completed are as follows: informative and persuasive sample speech videos, she assisted with the informative and persuasive speech workshops, a checklist for the informative and persuasive speeches, a survey instrument for CMST majors, a sample speech template, numerous pedagogies, and organized and implemented a focus group. Vandegrift also communicated with professors, students, and departments outside of CMST as a part of her internship tasks and events.

Looking back at her capstone experience as the department of CMST ULA, Vandegrift had many positive experiences to be grateful for. She stated, “I have learned from my opportunities of working with students, as well as professors, that I want to pursue a future in editing. I have truly enjoyed helping students in the Introduction to Human Communication with speech outlines, and putting together learning instruments for future CMST 102 students. My capstone experience showed me that I am capable of working independently and meeting deadlines and I could not be happier with the outcome of this internship.” Vandegrift went on to explain, “My communication skills have greatly transformed over the years being a part of this major. I feel more confident when speaking in front of an audience, and feel more confident when I am simply talking to a professor or student. Without the Communication Studies major and the learning experiences it offered, I would not be where I am today, genuinely excited to take on my future, wherever it may lead me.”

For more information regarding the Communication Studies major at Frostburg State University (FSU), please contact Dr. Elesha L. Ruminski (Department Chair), at 301-687-4480 or elruminski@frostburg.edu.

For more information pertaining to the course redesign of CMST-102 or pertaining to the Undergraduate Learning Assistant (ULA) position, contact Dr. Kice at 301-687-4709 or bkice@frostburg.edu.