

DEPARTMENT NEWS



TCNJ Students Showcase Outstanding Papers at Spring, 2022, National Health Communication and State Communication Studies Conferences

In spring, 2022, highly selected TCNJ students in public health and communication studies were honored with seven multi-authored papers accepted for presentation at national and state professional conferences in health communication and communication studies. All papers were completed in undergraduate and graduate classes in International Communication taught in fall, 2021, by Dr. John C. Pollock, Professor of Communication Studies and Public Health.

Three student papers, mostly created by undergraduates, were accepted in refereed competition for the biannual University of Kentucky Conference on Health Communication (KCHC) held April 8-9, 2022, where papers from TCNJ students (typically the only undergraduate papers accepted nationwide) have been presented every two years over the past 16 years (since 2006). The TCNJ student papers included the following:

Mia Gomes, Danielle Nicoletti, Jai Sookram, Jessica Farrell, John C. Pollock, & Courtney Sacco. (2022, April). *Cross-national news coverage of vaccine hesitancy: Community structure theory, political instability, and privilege*. Paper presented at the biannual University of Kentucky Health Communication Conference, Lexington, KY.



From left: Gabriela Valladares '23, Brielle LoBello '23, and Mia Gomes '23 at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication.



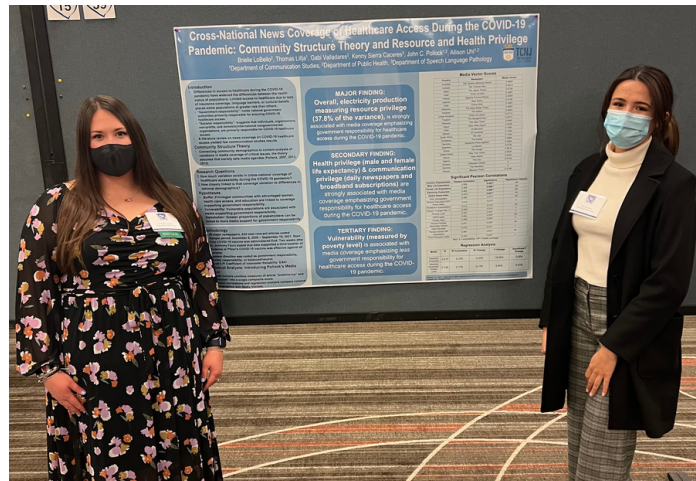
Meghna Krishnamurthy, Nicole Fenske, John C. Pollock, Allison Uhl, & Brielle LoBello. (2022, April). *Cross-national newspaper coverage of mental health during COVID-19: Community structure theory and privileged health access*. Paper presented at the biannual University of Kentucky Health Communication Conference, Lexington, KY.

Brielle LoBello, Thomas Lillja, Gabriela Valladares, Kenneth Sierra Caceres, John C. Pollock, & Allison Uhl. (2022, April). *Cross-national news coverage of access to COVID-19 healthcare: Community structure theory and health and resource privilege*. Paper presented at the biannual University of Kentucky Health Communication Conference, Lexington, KY.

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At the Kentucky Health Communication Conference, the three attending TCNJ undergraduates, Mia Gomes '23, Brielle LoBello '23, and Gabriela Valladares '23, expressed excitement at the opportunity to present their papers at the oldest health communication professional conference in the US. Mia Gomes, senior author of a paper on cross-national coverage of vaccine hesitancy, said "Thanks to the kind hospitality of everyone attending, I felt (very) comfortable giving my presentation which I believe went very well! I received many questions asking to explain the specifics of how we code articles, how my findings lead to future policy, etc. Additionally, I enjoyed helping (fellow TCNJ student) Brielle with the poster presentations, as well as the connections I was able to make with some of the professors attending. Overall, it was a very productive and insightful experience, and I am very thankful I had the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone and attend! Similarly, Brielle LoBello commented, "Attending the 2022 Kentucky Conference on Health Communication was truly the highlight of my academic career. It was an honor to present my group's research alongside distinguished scholars and students from throughout the world. I am continuously grateful for the support and guidance from Dr. Pollock and TCNJ." Gabriela Valladares added, "Thank you to KCHC for giving one of my co-authors, Brielle LoBello, and me the amazing opportunity to share our research, done under the advisement of Dr. John Pollock and Alli Uhl. Congratulations to Mia Gomes and all our fellow presenters who welcomed us so kindly to our first conference experience!"



From left: Brielle LoBello '23 and Mia Gomes '23 Presenting their Poster at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication.

In addition, two team papers written entirely by graduate students in the TCNJ Master's in Public Health program were accepted for the annual New Jersey Communication Association annual conference held online March 26, 2022.

Isabella Ciccone, Sofia Cartagena, Cristhofer Moreira, John C. Pollock, & Courtney Sacco. (2022, March). *Cross-national newspaper coverage of COVID vaccination access: Community structure theory, communication privilege, and resource privilege*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the New Jersey Communication Association, Mt. Laurel, NJ.

Denalerie Johnson-Faniel, Santiago Yacovino, Ivy Atte, John C. Pollock, & Courtney Sacco. (2022, March). *Cross-national coverage of COVID mental health access: Community structure theory and resource privilege*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the New Jersey Communication Association, Mt. Laurel, NJ.

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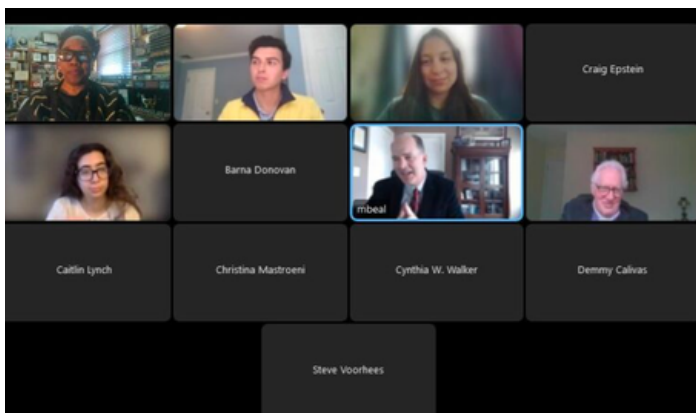


According to Isabella Ciccone, MPH candidate and senior author of a paper on cross-national coverage of COVID vaccination access, “I (was) thrilled to present on behalf of my research team at the 26th annual New Jersey Communication Association Conference on Saturday, March 26th! I want to thank my fellow co-researchers, Cristhofer Moreira, and Sofia Cartagena, for their contributions to our research paper, as well as Courtney Sacco for being the best learning assistant in guiding us through it all and Dr. John C. Pollock for the mentorship.”



Isabella Ciccone, MPH Candidate, presenting her NJCA paper at TCNJ's COSA alongside Mentor, Dr. John C. Pollock.

Summarizing his view of so many student papers accepted for presentation at state and national levels, Dr. Pollock expressed justifiable pride in the accomplishments of so many TCNJ students working in teams, praising in particular the leadership of student research assistants Courtney Sacco (MPH '22) and Allison “Alli” Uhl (BA '22).



A snapshot of senior author, Isabella Ciccone, & co-researchers, Cristhofer Moreira, and Sofia Cartagena's group presentation at the Virtual NJCA Conference.

