

frank2023

Strategic Communications Academy

MEET YOUR COACHES

DIRECTOR



ANN SEARIGHT
MPAP
[@aechristiano](#)

Ann Searight is the founder and Director of the Center for Public Interest Communications and a clinical professor in the department of public relations at the University of Florida, College of Journalism and Communications. She developed the first-ever curriculum in public interest communications. Through the annual *frank* gathering, she and her colleagues in the center connect practitioners and scholars who are already working in the field and nurture and share research that can advance this emerging academic discipline. Public Interest Communications uses science-driven strategic communications, human centered design, systems thinking and storytelling to advance positive social change.

She completed a 10-year term as the inaugural Karel Chair in Public Interest Communications in May, 2020. Before coming to the University of Florida in 2010, Ann was a senior communications officer for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, directing communications efforts for programs that address social factors like housing, education and mental health that drive health and well-being.

Ann's writing has appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review, Barron's, Quartz and Scientific American. She has been a University of Florida Teacher of the Year, International Educator of the Year, and Entrepreneur of the Year. Her work through the Center includes partnerships with the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, the United Nations, the International Labor Organization, the Department of State, and several agencies who work in this domain. She has worked with several federal and state agencies, nonprofits, and foundations throughout the world.

She regularly trains scientists, senior military officials from around the world and other leaders to more effectively convey the importance of their work and ideas.



ELLEN NODINE,
MAE
@enodine

As the Center's Director of Programs and Training, **Ellen Nodine** oversees the curriculum development of the Center's workshops and trainings as well as providing leadership in the strategic direction of the unit. As a member of the Strategic Communications Academy team, she designs and delivers training for the various constituents. Ellen teaches professional speaking as adjunct faculty for the College of Business. Ellen has served as the lead organizer for the *frank* gathering since its inception in 2014. Ellen received a Master's of Arts in Education from UF, with a specialization in Education Technology and Curriculum Design. Her area of study is community building, social media and social presence.



MATT SHEEHAN,
MBA
@mattsheehan

Matt Sheehan is managing director of the Center for Public Interest Communications. Matt is a journalist who has spent his career working in established and emerging media. Currently on UF's journalism faculty, he served as director of UF's College of Journalism and Communications' Innovation News Center serving the University's seven media properties (including the NPR, PBS and ESPN affiliates for North Florida) and as the director of stories and emerging platforms. He is a former assistant news editor at The Washington Post, was COO of a digital media startup in D.C. and previously worked in administration at University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism.



AARON ZEILER
@aaronjzeiler

Aaron Zeiler (he/him) is the director of partner strategies for the Center for Public Interest Communications. In this role, Aaron maintains existing projects with internal and external partners as well as steward and engage new relationships with potential partners.

Aaron's background has centered on building the communication capacity of organizations and foundations working on issues ranging from public interest technology, prison abolition and public health. He has helped build social media and media relations strategy, facilitated trainings and coachings on storytelling and strategic communication, and led the communication efforts of a national non-profit.