

# Jen Peeples - Head of the Department of Communication Studies & Philosophy

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## New Department of Communication Studies and Philosophy

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Utah State University's Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication is being split into two separate departments. Jennifer Peeples is taking the position of head of the Department of Communication Studies and Philosophy.

Peeples has been at USU for 21 years and teaches a variety of communication studies classes. Her current research focuses on the use of visual rhetoric in environmental concerns. Peeples was the inaugural director of the communication studies master's program, which had its first cohort graduate this year. Tim Curran and Kaitlin Phillips are the current co-directors of the communication studies master's program.

With the split into two separate departments, both the communication studies and philosophy programs are able to offer more focused resources and attention to students and their individual needs. Both programs are looking forward to being able to emphasize public engagement more in their research and classes.

"We are going to take everything you appreciated and continue to enhance and improve," said Peeples.

The communication studies program is discussing two new centers. The first would give USU students a place to talk through the conflicts they have in their day to day lives with members of the program. The second would focus on

research related to stigma surrounding topics of substance use disorders and mental health.

The philosophy program is focusing on getting back into the classroom and having their students tackle life's big questions in and out of the classroom. Philosophy club events are being designed in order to give students and faculty the chance to socialize together after a time apart, while also diving deeply into philosophical topics.

"We are excited to be able to involve more students in our research projects and bring in students that may not have had the opportunity before," said Peeples.

With a smaller and more focused faculty, these two programs will be able to better meet the needs of students and better help them achieve their goals. As these programs continue to grow, this focused attention will help all students gain both quality education and research opportunities within the new department.

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