



COMMunity BUZZ

News for the Department of Communication
Studies

May 7, 2012 – Volume 1, Number 8

CHAIR'S CORNER - The close of another academic year offers the opportunity for reflection and excitement for upcoming opportunities in the year to come.



I wish the best to graduating seniors who have accomplished a lot while at USD and are ready to be leaders in their chosen profession. I hope that the class of 2012 will keep in touch and let us know how things progress!

Next year, the department is excited to welcome two new full-time faculty. Dr. Bradley Bond received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois where he focused his research on the relationship between media exposure and health. It is his hope that his research can influence the media industry to produce messages that promote a healthy sexual identity. He has currently been working at the Children's Digital Media Center at Georgetown University as a post-doctoral research fellow. Dr. Bond is a committed teacher as evidenced by his College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by a Graduate Student Award. He is committed to creating an atmosphere that is based on mutual respect and understanding. We are excited to welcome Dr. Bond to USD. Next year he will be teaching Comm 265, Introduction to Research and Comm 330, Media, Process & Effects.

Dr. Antonieta Mercado will join us as a full-time faculty member in the fall. She completed her Ph.D. at UCSD where she studied the communication practices of immigrant communities highlighting the way in which specific organizations use communication to support collective action. Dr.

Mercado has various professional experience in journalism and public relations, which will complement the information in her courses. An experienced teacher, she is committed to creating an inclusive classroom that supports student learning. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Mercado to USD. Next year she will be teaching Comm 130, Introduction to Media Studies and Comm 338, Media & Conflict.

We will look forward to the continued success of our majors and hope to complement your course work with exciting events throughout the year. Be sure to stay connected with the department through the website:

www.sandiego.edu/cas/commstudies

and with our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/USDComm>.

DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

2012 Senior Surveys

WE WANT YOU — May, Summer, and December, 2012 grads

You're graduating this month, this summer, or in December. You're completing class assignments and prepping for finals. You might be trying to turn that internship you have into a job, you may already be working at a paying job too much as it is, and, dangnabit, you've completed more USD surveys than you can count (including the dreaded "exit" survey required to get a cap and gown). Still, there's nothing more important than completing the Communication Studies' Senior Survey. Why? Because we are what you want us to be.

The annual Senior Survey taps students' feelings about and suggestions for the Communication Studies program. The results of

the survey provide among the most important feedback we get toward improving the quality of studies in the major. For example, such feedback has contributed to the development of new courses in the major, the creation of more course sections, the development of a wider variety of courses provided, and a general freeing of students' course options overall. Hence, those who have completed the survey report a greater sense of personal freedom and life fulfillment, and enjoy a longer life expectancy, than those who bagged the survey. Okay, these last claims may be exaggerated. The point is, the future quality of the major is shaped by feedback from people like you — USD's finest.

Please get a survey from an instructor in class this week, drop by the Comm. Studies office in C 126 to fill one out, or snag one from one of the satellite Comm. Studies suites (love that word) in C 121 or C 105. Then simply leave your ALL IMPORTANT completed survey with said faculty member or in the envelope provided in C 126. Such a simple way to show you care. And, our many thanks!

Summer at USD

Still looking for a summer class? Consider taking Comm 380: International Media in August with Dr. Moran. The summer schedule and small class size with offer students the opportunity to participate in events not possible during the semester. Field trip trips to immigrant communities, cultural events, and film screenings will be included as part of the experience!

Fall 2012 – COMM 265

This Fall, be sure to take COMM 265, a required class in the updated major. COMM 265: Introduction to Research is the new lower-division course that will be integrated into the new curriculum. If you take COMM 265 this Fall, you'll be eligible to move forward under the new major, which offers more freedom and flexibility in course selection! COMM 265 will be offered on Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays at 9:05 am and will be a required course for all future undergraduate majors in Communication Studies! CRN: 4098

USD Vista – Open Positions

ATTENTION ALL COMMUNICATION MAJORS!
The Vista newspaper staff is looking for a few new

editors for next year's staff. Open Section Editor positions are News, Business, Arts & Culture and Sports. Other open editor positions are Copy Editor, Website Editor and Photo Editor. For application and more information please email Taylor Cabalse. Applications are due by May 8.

tcabalse@usdvista.com

2012 Departmental Awards



Congratulations to Allison Schneider for being awarded the "Outstanding Academic Performance Award" in Communication and to Callie Gallagher for being recognized for "Outstanding Service" to the department. Congratulations to all the students who earned a major GPA of 3.5 or higher and therefore received departmental honors.

Lambda Pi Eta – Spring 2012 Initiation



The Department of Communication Studies would like to congratulate the Spring 2012 initiates to Lambda Pi Eta, the national communication honor society! Congratulations on your recognition

of excellence:

Megan Blaich * Paige Brewin * Haleigh Grisandra *
Chris Hanneke * Nate Heinz * Shannon Hopkins *
Christine Horsman * Tara Iguidbashian * Anna
Kincaid * Kristin Jones * Elizabeth McDonough *
Kasha Patel * Catherine Quirk * Jonathan Sanchez
* Paige Stables * Kayley Stumpe * Chelsea Sullivan
* Kaila Weedman * Kathryn Zambon

Creative Collaborations 2012



A total of 19 research projects were on display. Many students conducted research in Dr. Brinson's research methods course and presented findings. Other research projects were the result of independent studies or honors theses. For example, Cara Jorgensen presented the results of her investigation into the news coverage of male and female athletes during the Olympics. Cara will start an internship with the Olympic Committee in the fall and credits her research with giving her an advantage over other applicants.

Screen Free Week



Students in Comm 482W, Children & Media, celebrated Screen Free Week with families at Manchester Child Family Development Center on Wednesday May 2, 2012. "Screen-Free Week is an annual celebration where children, families, schools, and communities turn off TV, video games, computers, and hand-held devices and turn on life." Specifically, the students organized activities to promote alternatives to media use and created informational flyers that were distributed to parents.

Advanced Journalism Visits KGTV Studios



On Friday, April 20th, Professor Gina Lew took her Advanced Journalism class (COMM 421) to see the 7:00 p.m. newscast being aired at KGTV, channel 10. The photo above shows the group with anchors Steve Atkinson and Kimberly Hunt. USD students got to see up close and personal the behind-the-scenes world of the pros in broadcast journalism. First, they saw the news from the perspective of the producer and director in the production booth. Then, they watched the airing of the newscast from the studio viewpoint. Fun and learning in the real world!

CAMPUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Club on Campus

The Entertainment Industry Club, formed by Alyssa Rodrigues ('12), is for those students interested in pursuing a career in any facet of the entertainment industry. The goal is to foster an open and inclusive environment for those with shared interests, and to be better prepared for work in these types of professions. The club seeks to do this through guest speakers, presentations, workshops, and networking events. In Spring 2013 the club hosted events with those who have worked

at Fox News, VH1, International Creative Management, Paramount Pictures, Sleeping Giant Music, and Entertainment Tonight. The club has also reached out to USD alumni who have found success in the industry. If you are interested in getting involved in the club, or wish to get more information, please feel free to email us at usd.eic@gmail.com.

***And in Conclusion...
parting words from Professor Ron Bonn***

I figured I'd give it a couple of semesters, maybe three.

When June and I arrived in San Diego from the East coast, just before the century turned, I realized I'd had a great working life. I'd wrapped up 40 years in television news and, coincidentally, those were the 40 years when television news was inventing itself—the years that saw Ed Murrow's triumph and tragedy, the years that brought the half-hour nightly network news program—still the gold standard of the industry—the years of the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam war, Apollo to the moon, America's civil rights revolution, LBJ, Nixon, Reagan, Clinton, the years when Don Hewitt invented '60 Minutes'...

I understood that I had done what the Brits tell us to do: "Find a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life." So I decided I ought to pay something back—find a school where I could spend a couple of semesters passing on what I'd learned about television journalism. I marketed myself around San Diego's Big Three, and Beth Dobkin, at the smallest of the Bigs, said, "Let's talk."

That was 12 years ago. With some time off to mess about with a book, I'm now completing my 20th semester teaching Comm.220 at USD...nice, round figure. A while ago, I blew into my ninth decade on the planet, and I find I'm getting just a bit tired. And I thought I should go away before my students realized that I was getting tired.

The reason that "a couple of semesters" turned into 20 is, of course, that I liked it. Maybe, a little, loved it. Perhaps the greatest single advantage of a career in journalism is that you never stop learning. Every new story requires that you learn something you didn't know going in. And teaching shares that marvelous quality. It's one of Hammerstein's crummiest lines, and it doesn't scan, but it's true, nonetheless: "If you become a teacher, by your pupils you'll be taught."

Actually, I think my 350 or 400 students and I have taught each other some good stuff.

There's this one great difference between the professions. Producing "The CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite," my colleagues and I could, each night, have a very fleeting impact on a vast number of Americans—11 or 12 million at our peak. But then, all the hard work of that day and preceding days was just a swirl of electrons, headed out beyond Jupiter, never to be seen on earth again. Here at USD, I have a genuinely intimate relationship with a couple of dozen young Americans, lasting over months—and, if I'm lucky, beyond. Seriously enriching, certainly for me and, I hope, for them.

When I arrived, Beth didn't tell me how to do a journalism class (I'd given guest lectures, but never taught before). Instead, she handed me a mission statement and said, "Write a syllabus." I still build Comm. 220 around that mission statement, and it still leads the syllabus:

"...to find a good blend of basic journalism skills, such as strong writing, solid research, and story development with an introduction to journalistic ethics and the importance of the news media to democracy."

I thought that a pretty good description of what I'd been working at for four decades.

But that first semester produced quite a culture shock. Journalism is a craft; it's not one of the learned professions and it's certainly not rocket science. I aimed to teach my students enough in our one semester (a year would have been better) so that when they got that first journalism internship, or entry-level position, at a newspaper or TV affiliate, they would be of some real value to their employer their very first day on the job—they would understand what those folks in the newsroom were doing, and have an idea of how to do it. For these brand new adults, I wanted to produce a class that would be no harder than, but certainly no easier than, their first real job in journalism.

But I found that the students and I were on different wavelengths. Basically, they were astonished at how much work I expected them to do, and I was astonished at how little work they expected to get away with. So I added this sentence to that mission statement, starting with the second semester syllabus:

"A word of caution: To accomplish the goals of the previous paragraph is not easy. *This is not an easy course.* Even though it is described as introductory, you will be expected to learn a

discipline called journalism. That discipline is *rigorous, demanding* and *unforgiving*, and this course will be the same.”

what a tough semester they'd be facing—after I shook my rattles at them—I told them I would make them only one promise: If you stay with this class, *writer than you are today*.

Of course, my astute colleagues will see the sleight-of-hand here. I never promised to make them *good* writers. Writing *well* is part art, is at least in part genetic. Only a minority—a fairly small minority, I think—will ever achieve it. But writing *better*—writing well enough to get a job doing it—that I could promise. And that's because of the high schools.

The real shock to my system, this past decade, has been the failure of the high schools. At USD, we don't get the kids from the ghetto schools. We get the best and the brightest, products of the premier public and Roman Catholic high schools throughout California and beyond. And the absence of learning among those best and brightest was (and still is), to me, shocking.



When I do the session on The Bill of Rights—in my own mind, the single most important session of Comm. 220—I find that very few of my students have ever seen the thing. Almost none understands it in any depth. As to English grammar, spelling, usage—as we to say back in The Garden State: fuhgettabadit! The level of writing deemed acceptable—deemed A-level—in this country's high schools came as a genuine shock, a shock that renews itself every semester.

And, truth be told, that's one of the reasons I've gotten tired: I'm tired of teaching tenth grade

English to university sophomores, juniors and seniors who are supposed to be learning journalism from me.

But I've learned something else: our students are capable of far greater effort, far better work, than has ever been demanded of them. In that first session, I like to quote Emerson: “Our chief want in life is for someone who will make us do what we can.”

I find most of my students have never worked flat-out—never been pushed to the limits of what they CAN do, once they set aside the idea that “I'm an A student,” and learn what it takes to do work that *merits* an A. And when they finally DO IT—they love it. They thank you for their misery.

I had a remarkable moment with a student last week. From the beginning, I've offered students two bites of the apple on every graded paper they write. They turn in a news story or TV script; I go over it and mark every single error in grammar, spelling, usage, structure that I can find (I find a *lot*; I've been editing copy for a long, long time). Then I write a cover page—sometimes two—of overall comments, and I write a grade in pencil. This, of course, mimics what happens in a newsroom: you give a story or a script to an editor, who'll throw it back at you with comments and corrections. The student then has the same opportunity the journalist does: she can, if she wishes, rewrite the story in the light of my comments, and the old (usually pretty bad) grade will go away. Strictly voluntary, but if she doesn't, the pencil grade turns to ink.

I found students aren't used to rewriting, but they'll usually try for the better grade. And that's when, in my experience, they learn to write English—between the first and second drafts.

Last week one of my students walked into the office, and showed me a paper she had just gotten back. And she said, quite indignantly, “He only put two marks on this whole paper. *This does me no good at all!*” The two marks that so annoyed her were an ‘A’ and a ‘+.’

I do, after these 20 semesters, believe: They want to be pushed to their limits—they just don't know it, yet. When I ask students, on TE's, what was the single MOST VALUABLE thing about Comm. 220, the one you WOULD NOT, under any circumstances, change, the feature they mention far and away most often is the chance to rewrite stories—to *have to* learn from their mistakes. (I know, at this end of a lifetime: the only thing I've

ever really learned from has been my own mistakes. Luckily, there've been plenty of them.)

When Kristin asked me to write this *ave atque vale*, I had a couple of ideas, but I wasn't sure I'd say the right things. I'm still not sure. I knew I wanted to thank my Comm. Dept. colleagues and of their company this decade. I won't name names, for fear of hurtful omissions, but you know who you are, and your guilt will never go away.

Indeed, I'm finding that a lot of my terminal thoughts here are generational:

When we beat the odds and advance into our 'eighties still marginally *compos mentis*, too many of us octos find that our social and intellectual contacts are restricted to other octos. There's nothing inherently wrong with that; a lot of my contemporaries are still pretty good company. But to work with, and knock ideas around with, smart educators a generation or two less sclerotic—that's been a rare privilege.

But the rarest privilege of all, these ten latter years—*'the privilege and pleasure that we treasure beyond measure,'* to quote Willy Gilbert—has been the challenge of mixing it up with a gaggle of America's brightest 19, 20, and 21-year-olds: to enjoy their irrepressible youth, admire their irresistible optimism, wonder at their selfless volunteerism (so notable at USD), and to try to stay just one mental step ahead of them. Those 350-odd undergrads (some, admittedly, odder than others) have given me a great deal more than I could possibly give them. And all of them, but especially those who actually chose careers in journalism, have made me feel that I have, after all, paid back some dues to the profession that got me here.

A little traveling music, Maestro!
*Bless 'em all, bless 'em all,
The long and the short and the tall....*

