

UCSD's Communication Department Presents



Alumni Newsletter



Academic year 2007-2008 Number 2

A Night of Networking: COMT1 7 5 Has It's Second Event

By Grace Wu

It was a night of new and old united. Students from COMT175: Representing Communication held a networking event for current and former UCSD Communication majors. Alumni from as far back as 1981 were present at the Communication Information Night with undergraduates who wanted to discuss possible career choices in the field of Communication. Hosted at the new Price Center Forum, the event gave Communication alumni the opportunity to reacquaint themselves with a campus that some had not set foot in for years. Ten alums, whose class years ranged from 1981 to 2006, forty-five undergrads, plus Michelle Segall, a representative of the Alumni Association were all in attendance. Professor Michael Cole welcomed past and current

Communication students with recent research findings that show converging interests and concerns among student and alums. "The profile of undergraduate interest almost perfectly matched those of the alumni who responded to the survey. We hope there's a convergence of interest in needs, particularly people interested in mentoring students, and offering internships. I can teach you how to do research but I can't teach you the things that these [alumni] do. The 'u'berpurpose of these events is to have students and alumni together," Professor Cole said, giving a quick overview of what the COMT 175 is about. Senior Shayda Naeim from the COMT 175 class moderated, guid-



ing the panelists in questions about the necessity of graduate school, how to network, professional etiquette, and common mistakes those new to the job market make. From a selection of entrepreneurs, those in the marketing, advertising, public relations, and even the communication management field, there was a smorgasbord of input and perspectives. Some of the questions addressed concerned graduating students and their future, such as what kind of professional experience the alumni had

Cont'd in page 2

Inside this Issue:

- A Night of Networking 1
- A Change to Hands on Media 1
- Student Spotlight 2
- Communication through Technology: An Interview with Josh Polterock '88 3
- Professor Spotlight 4
- A look at international Research with Carol Padden Ph.D 4

Stay tuned for Winter 2009...

• The Rady School of Management (MGT) is creating a minor in business and management science. It should be available by Winter 2009.

• All majors are open to take undergraduate courses in Marketing, Finance, Business Management and Leadership.

• Great opportunity to take classes that offer hands-on experience in fields not offered by the Communication Department.

• Work on current case studies with experienced professors who are working in the industry.

• Take classes like: MGT 103 Product Marketing and Management, MGT 121A Innovation to Market, MGT 164 Organizational Leadership, MGT 172 Business Project Management, and MGT 181 Enterprise Finance.

For more info and enrollment visit MGT on tritonlink.com

A Change to Hands on Media

By Kenna Thomas

One of the few practical classes available through the Communication department is COGN 21 with the attached 22 lab. Yet, depending on what year you are, you might have received a different version of this introductory class compared to other Communication students because of a change in production curriculum. COGN 21, Methods of Media Production, has recently changed quite drastically in regard to the attached lab. In the winter quarter of 2007, the Communication administration enacted the plan to make the production lab (22) optional. Professor Zeinabu Davis, who is currently teaching the class, explained that this decision was made because the class was extremely over-enrolled

so that mostly juniors and seniors were taking the class. Since the class is considered introductory, the juniors and seniors weren't able to take other COMT production classes afterwards and the class seemed out of order with the other classes that they were taking. Also, because the lab primarily



consists of group projects, many students who were not interested in production did not contribute equally with other members. The purpose of the class, to introduce younger communication majors to the practical side of media by actually using a camera, was not being fulfilled. Now that the lab is optional, there are more sophomores in the lecture, but less people are taking the hands-on lab. Prof. Brian Goldfarb, who has taught the class both before and after changes was made, has noticed that "the students who choose to be in the lab are more

Cont'd in page 3

A Night of Networking (Cont'd)

before and after graduating. As the alumni offered advice based on their experience, the students copiously took notes that would assist them in their career and internship-finding endeavors. Ian Stone, who graduated in 2006, stated frankly what kinds of expectations there are in interviewing for a company. "If I see a spelling error in a résumé or cover letter, it's almost an automatic disqualification. If you misspelled information, why can I trust you to do anything for me? A lot of times I won't do a second interview if I don't get some kind of response. If I'm on the fence about [hiring] someone, a hand-written thank you letter is usually the make-or-break." Stone, who works in public relations, also highlighted the importance of do-

ing research on the company you want to work for before the interview; at least know what the company is about before the interview. A tip Stone gave was to search for press releases on the Internet before the interview and reference in the interview. Kate Lee from the class of 2006 recalled interviewing a potential intern for a public relations position but the interviewee did not even know what the relations was about. That simple tidbit from an employer's perspective, made students aware of real world professional standards. Through this event, the alumni were able to reconnect with the alma mater. As one alumnus said during the panel, there is no reason for them to set foot onto the UCSD campus after graduation. They want to come

back, but without an invitation it is difficult to find a reason. As the event drew to a close students and alumni continued one-on-one cultivating what promises to be a start of a sustainable relationship. The

Communication Information Night was more than just an exchange of business cards— it was the start of creating long-lasting connections between the alumni and the students who seek their expertise.



Student Spotlight: My Internship at Donate Life

By Ellyne Dudkowski

Christina Courtney shares a personal connection with Donate Life because of her fifteen year old brother's donation when he passed away three years ago. Her family was faced with the option to donate her brother's organs which saved five people's lives. Her family soon started volunteering at Donate Life and they became involved in the organization. Christina is a Mayorathon

of organ donation and facilitates organ/ tissue donation. Nearly one hundred thousand people are currently waiting for life saving organ transplants. One person's tissue donation may enhance up to fifty lives and organ donations can save up to eight people's lives. This year Christina assisted in putting on the Donate Life Run/Walk event that took place on April 26th in Fullerton, California. The event benefited organ donations and spread awareness.



Exhibitor Coordinator Intern at Donate Life. Donate Life is a non-profit company that conducts many community outreach programs that educate people about the facts

Six thousand people attended the Donate Life Walk/Run, half of the participants were families of people who had donated organs. Families would unite wearing shirts with pictures of their lost

loved ones. A Dove ceremony embraced happy memories and fosters a special place for families to remember their loved ones in a positive manner while helping others. The internship gave Christina practical applications of her Communication major: a strong written communication, valuable networking skills, and some database management. Christina's responsibilities for planning the Donate Life Run/Walk event were divided between facilitating vendors, coordinating the BMX bike show, and the Mayorathon Challenge in which twenty-two civic leaders attended. Christina was also able to obtain proclamations from thirty-three of the thirty-four cities in Orange County designating April to be Donate Life Month and seventy-one counties state wide. Even Governor Schwarzenegger chimed in to proclaim April as Donate Life Month in a press conference the following week. The DMV has also collaborated with Donate Life by adding an organ donation option on each Driver's License application and incorporating one test question on the driver's license exam. Now driver's education courses must spend time educating students about organ and tissue dona-

tions to prepare them for the exam. As a result Donate Life now has over three million people on the donation registry in California alone and it continuously grows daily. Christina is a prime example of how a rewarding internship can be found by networking with family and friends. Her internship has led to a full time position after she graduates this spring and she will become a Donate Life Events Coordinator. Christina looks forward to planning the Rose Parade in December and going to Pittsburg for Transplant Games in July. Transplant Games are a nationwide event where transplant recipients compete in sporting events to celebrate life and how happy and healthy they are post surgery while recognizing donor families. This is an example of one of our recent graduates who has used written communication, database management, and networking skills learned at UC San Diego in supplement to practical skills learned at her internship that led to a full time position.

Communication through Technology: An Interview with Josh Polterock '88

By Ching Young

Immediately I knew Josh Polterock '88 had quite an interesting story to tell. A Communication major working in the San Diego Supercomputer Center? Before meeting up with Josh I had the idea that Communication graduates usually go into communications related fields such as marketing, public relations, advertising, and so forth. Yet Josh, manager of a group in the San Diego Supercomputer Center where he works with a group of programmers and network specialists, has gone in a different direction. I was eager to hear what role his studies in communication play in his current profession. As we sat down on a high-rise table in the lobby next to a set of full-length windows overlooking Ridge Walk, he began to explain to me how he ended up where he was today. A bright light suddenly sparkled in his eyes as he told me that his Communication degree has helped him every step of the way to get him to where he is now. It was essential, he said, to learn how to be able to communicate, both on a larger scale using technology as well as on an interpersonal basis. In fact, he claims it is the only thing he is qualified to do. After graduating in 1988 with a B.A. in Communication Josh went on to earn his Masters in Communication Management at the University of Southern California in one year. Josh then worked for

various technology firms in the North County area. After his work in the private sector, he returned to UCSD and taught a few extension program classes in HTML as well as a Communication class alongside Bruce Jones and Professor Michael Cole at UCSD. In



2005 he served as the Rady School of Management Chief Technology Officer. He now works at the San Diego Supercomputer Center, housed here on the UCSD campus. He manages teams in various data and network projects—all the while never having taken a single computer science class at UCSD! Currently he is working on a project commissioned by the Department of Homeland Security that maps Internet connections. How did he get caught up in all this technological business then, I asked? He explained to me that when he first came to UCSD as a freshman, students had to pay a fee for the campus's network

services, yet most students did not have access to their own accounts. He wanted to make the most use of his money while at school, so he figured out how to set up a printer account on his own. This was a great advantage for him because he could then e-mail his

assignments to his professors without coming onto campus, saving himself precious time that could be spent doing other things, like hanging out at the beach with friends. This first step towards working in technology has launched him on this career path ever since. He eventually took a few extension classes at UCSD in computer programming and networking in order to build a few basic skills, but he still would never consider himself a computer programmer. Now here was an accomplished man that had a world of opportunities open before him even right after he got his Masters at USC. Yet

he choose to come back and work at UCSD. When I asked him what brought him back to campus, he pointed right out the window at Ridge Walk and told me, "It was that spot right there. I truly believe the best temperature and weather in the world can be experienced right there." I bumped into Josh again a few weeks later at the Communications Info Fair, an event put on by the COMT 175 class, in which he served as one of the panelists. Again, dressed simply in a plaid shirt, shorts, and sneakers, he nonchalantly wandered around the room and casually struck up conversations with a few of the students around him. During the panel session, his insight and advice to the students was both captivating and entertaining as he clearly took the spotlight that evening. One of the most encouraging things he told the students was that everything they needed to succeed was available to them at UCSD. After the event, some of my classmates came up to me and asked in amazement, "Is that the guy you interviewed? He's so cool!" If what I saw in him on the outside was casual, on the inside was anything but. He had passion, dreams, confidence and self-assurance. He loves what he does yet never once imagined himself to be where he is today. And it all started here at UCSD

A Change to Hands on Media (Cont'd)

interested and enjoy the projects more. These projects have even been made more ambitious because the students are more motivated." Because the class is group-based, TA's such as J.R. Osborn have noticed that "it is important for the students to be on the same motivational level." In this way, all members of the groups participate equally and all receive the same satisfaction with their resulting media piece. Some students have no

interest in taking a practical class, some are too nervous to actually hold a camera or participate in a production class, others hear that a class is optional and figure that life would be easier without it. Many people do not know that without this lab, a communication student is not allowed to take any other further production classes or even check out any equipment, such as a camera. Many COMT classes (the only hands-on type of classes available to Communica-

tion students) have COGN 22 as a prerequisite. Also, as a TA, Osborn explained, "Any communication student should have an idea about how media is technically made." It is difficult to obtain this knowledge without this class. Osborn goes on to say, "This production class is not only useful for future filmmakers, but also for anyone who wants to have a career in any part of the communication industry." The class also gives its students the rare opportunity to

obtain hands on production experience. So if you intend to take this class in the future, do not hesitate to take the optional lab to learn new skills that you might not learn in any other course. As a communication student, the theoretical basis of so many classes can sometimes be daunting. This lab is one way to apply your studies of such things as social forces and the culture of communication by creating a piece of media.

Professor Spotlight:



Nitin Govil

By Grace Wu

Professor Nitin Govil's tricontinental upbringing serves as a perfect breeding ground for his research and role in the Communication Department. Professor Govil was born in India, later lived in Japan and England, and then finally settled down in the United States in high school and earned his PhD at NYU in Cinema Studies. Professor Govil's background shapes a lot of the international work he is doing. His research now takes place in India, the United States, and Britain, between UCSD, University of Southern California, University of Westminster, and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, India. The collaboration

that Professor Govil does with these universities is a four-way international consortium that identifies, promotes, and makes possible the research on globalization of South Asia in the 20th century. Given his fluency in Hindi, publishing in international journals is not a difficult part of the job for him. Although his work such as "Bollywood and the Frictions of Global Mobility" is published in various English-language book series and anthologies, his language fluency has enabled him to facilitate more research. In addition to research, Professor Govil's focus on globalization makes him a global academic as well. Professor Govil tries to spend his time abroad during his summers and winters. In the summer of 2007, Professor Govil taught at JNU and wishes to continue teaching media and film studies graduate seminars during the summer in the future. International work is something Professor Govil finds valuable,

and especially supports how UCSD's general education requires one to take classes about countries other than the United States. For him, it's always a matter of thinking in terms of connections and comparisons. "I can't help but think about things in [an international] way after spending my life in different places. You're always comparing things to each other. It's important to my research and what I teach," Professor Govil said. Studying globalization and emphasizing the importance of international work is not closed off to just his individual research. It is something Professor Govil tries to instill in his students as well. He teaches the course Comparative Media Systems: Asia (COSF 140A), which focuses on the development of Asian media systems as well as the issues that surround it, such as censorship, regionalism, media piracy, and identity politics. In teaching about Asian media systems, the aim is to educate

students about Asia— especially those who are not familiar with the region. Furthermore, Professor Govil's goal is to make his students think critically about ideas that appear to be their common sense— why do they believe what they do? Professor Govil actively tries to assign readings from both Asian and North American writers to underscore the importance of looking internationally for academic resources. Beyond simply class work, Professor Govil encourages his students to think internationally by thinking critically about the information they receive and not be passive about what they learn. And of course, studying abroad and travelling as much as possible is always emphasized by Professor Govil. "[It's] not just a way to understand yourself, but a way to understand the world that you live in."

A LOOK AT INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH WITH CAROL PADDEN PH.D.



By Crystal Veraskin

A Communication Major at UCSD will take a variety of courses with professors that have distinct research fields. The places these professors travel and the topics they explore are amazing. One only needs to schedule office hours with a professor like Carol Padden to see how education opens up windows to the world. Padden received her B.S. from

Georgetown University and her Ph.D. in Linguistics from UCSD. She has taught in the UCSD Communication Department ever since. Padden is a perfect example that scholars of Communication have the opportunity to travel far and wide in a search for answers. Padden's current international research is of the Bedouins, a small culture of 3,500 people in Southern Israel that have started a brand-new sign language. Out of the 3,500 residents in Al-Sayyid, Padden notes that 150 are deaf,

a larger proportion than here in the United States. The 70 year old language is brand new and gives researchers a look at how humans create languages. The Bedouins are unique in that they are a "veritable island of the deaf" (Discovery 68). For example, the Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (ABSL) is not influenced by the outside world and it is only found in this village. Emerging language in general is

unique and is allowing researchers to study language without doing the Forbidden Experiment, which is the isolation of children to see how language and thought develop. The next stop for Padden is a keynote address in Oslo, Norway for a 90th Anniversary held by the Norwegian Deaf Association. Professors at UCSD do so much more than just lecture!

