

UNDERGRADUATE NEWSLETTER '09

UCSD COMMUNICATION

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**31st ANNUAL ALUMNI
AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**
UCSD Alumni Association Event
June 6, 2009

Contact Suzi Sterner
ssterner@ucsd.edu

2009 COMMENCEMENT
UCSD CAMPUS EVENT
June 13, 2009 - June 15, 2009

WHY NOT PUT ON A GREEN COLLAR?

Written By Julianna

The big question on every undergrad's mind is, "What should I do with my degree?" Such anxiety is in part due to the endless number of fields that one can pursue af-

ter graduation. I spoke to Mark Sanderson '97, about the path to a happy professional life. A former Communication major, Sanderson works in a career he never considered while at UCSD. Mark is not involved in

a blue collar or even a white collar job; rather he is involved in a career currently in the spotlight for its importance to the global economy- Sanderson works a "green" collar job!

Mark works with The Nature Conservancy as Regional Director of the

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THE WIRED PATIENT

CHANGES TO HOSPITAL TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

By Christina Peng

Say you suddenly found yourself ill and stuck at the hospital, waiting hours for lab tests. Would you rather be stuck in a room with just-your-average television, or would you rather get CONNECTED? I talked to Sean Lara, '98 who is a Communication alum working on this very problem. Sean Lara is General Manager of the Western Region for GetWellNetwork, whose mission is "to transform the care process into an interactive patient care environment that drives an optimal quality experience." GetWellNetwork is reshaping the medical institution. Imagine, checking your email, surfing the net, watching the latest blockbuster film, or

ordering room service- all accessible with the push of a button. This is what Sean and GetWellNetwork aim to achieve with their software program, PatientLife.

With a degree in Communication, Sean uses digital media to reorganize how communication happens within the realm of medical care. Communication plays a significant role within hospital operations. Through the PatientLife software, Sean is helping hospitals transition from sterile, cold, and a business-only-institutions to a more modern environment where the necessities of home and work are still within reach. Soon, wired hospital rooms will become a normal part of the experience of being a patient.

This new technology

will also change the nature of hospital work, as it allows workers to care for more patients efficiently. The older methods of hospital communication are in the past. Instead of leaving a note on the door that patient rooms need to be cleaned, nurse assistants can now use communication systems to notify housekeeping which rooms need to be cleaned immediately. By using this new system, patient check-in, room cleanings, and check-out are becoming more automated.

Sean Lara is fusing the growing need for patients and workers to stay connected with digital technology. Sean currently resides in San Diego with his wife whom he met at UC San Diego.

AN END TO UNCERTAINTIES

A Clearer Understanding of Public Relations

By Hannah Chang

Public Relations is a career path that many Communication students want to pursue. Yet, few know what the industry entails day-to-day. Public Relations sounds like a pretty vague category despite the fact that there are many theories of successful public relations strategies. As a Media Coordinator Intern at ChicExecs PR, I am currently gaining insider's knowledge of the industry

by working on discrete PR projects. Here are some of the professional experiences I have had outside of the classroom.

ChicExecs PR is a division of ChicBlvd Inc. - a female-owned multi-media company that manages an online magazine (ChicBlvd.com) and a product development division (chicBuds.com). Founded two years ago, ChicExecs PR offers services in market research, branding, and awareness for over 40 clients.

As the company's Media Coordinator Intern, my tasks include celebrity gifting, social projects, and managing/updating editorial calendars. I have worked closely with PR executives to organize a Mother's Day celebrity gift basket. This campaign is centered around celebrity couples expecting newborns around Spring/Summer. Celebrities include Tim Allen, Tobey Macguire, Carnie Wilson, Julie Bowen, and Chyler



Leigh. The gift baskets will be filled with new cosmetics and lifestyle products. ChicExecs PR has also decided to do a gift basket giveaway through the popular magazines (US Weekly, Vogue, InStyle). I

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by Alyssa Prestige

Although students majoring in the social sciences and humanities have a variety of skills that are useful toward any career, we are all facing the harsh realities of the current economy. Whether your interest is advertising, journalism or high school counseling, we will all feel the impact of the real world upon graduation.

One field that is being greatly affected by the economic crisis is the world of non-profit organizations. A non-profit organization is an organization that either does not make a direct profit, or uses all of its earnings to enhance the social programs and services it provides. Sometimes referred to as foundations or charities, these businesses are vital in terms of conserving nature, social services and promoting our cities. These organizations rely on grants and dona-

tions in order to survive. Yet, in times when wallets are tight, these humble businesses are left in the cold.

David Mirisch, of David Mirisch Enterprises, has been working closely with non-profit organizations for thirty years. He has organized over 2,500 charity events and is responsible for booking celebrity public appearances. For him, celebrity appearances play an important role in an raising awareness for a variety of issues. Because they draw larger crowds and often times larger donations, non-profit organizations are increasingly dependent on public figures to support their work. David Mirisch Enterprises works closely with businesses such as The-Make-a-Wish Foundation, The American Cancer Society and other local charities of Mexico, Canada and Japan. While booking various types of celebrity talent for

NON-PROFIT ORGS IN A NON-PROFIT ECONOMY

non-profit events, his organization helps raise money for worthy charities large and small. Mirisch characterizes the current climate within non-profit organizations as,

"Now-a-days non-profit organizations simply don't have money to invest in promotional events, they can't afford to put up money for event expenses like food, drinks and decorations."

Without simple donations and gathering spaces, non-profit organizations are not able to host events where they traditionally gain lots of interest and financial contribution. The money needed to book venues and buy balloons has simply disappeared.

Mirisch's organization has noticed a great decrease in business as non-profit organizations are less able to organize events where celebrity talent is needed.

Mr. Mirisch also notes a great decline in ticket prices to high-profile events his company is responsible for hosting. Tickets for large charity-based golf tournaments with celebrity guests that usually sell for over two-hundred dollars are now being sold for around seventy-five as patrons are less able to donate.

Larger non-profit businesses are returning to grant dollars, as promotional events and other donations cannot cover all of their expenditures. As

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Southern California district. He truly loves his work and has been on an amazing journey since his time at UCSD. As an undergrad, Mark DJ'd his own jazz radio show, and was news editor for the UCSD newspaper formerly known as "The Triton." These activities allowed him to develop his oral and written communication skills. Yet after college, Sanderson found himself with a Bachelor's degree in Communication and no idea how to use it. He took a job at the Nature Store where he worked hard as a manager. After working for the Nature Conservancy for over 16 years he explains that, "Before, and even after graduation I had no idea I was ever going to end up working for a non-profit."

It was not until after graduation that what Sanderson thought was, "just a job and never a career path," became the career and political cause that he still shares a passion for years later. A professional and political relationship between the Nature Company and the Nature Conservancy led to a volunteer opportunity for Mark who points out that, "volunteer work is always a great way

to get involved, because you can find out if you are interested in the company or position without having to make a commitment." It was the professional and political relationship between the Nature Company and the Nature Conservancy that helped Mark bridge his way from one career field to the next. For Mark, volunteering at the Nature Company led to full-time employment. This reward is inseparable from his commitment to the environment and local animal habitats.

Mark Sanderson believes that it is not the degree itself, but the breadth of experiences that the degree allows you to encounter that makes one a competitive candidate for any job. Unlike a degree in biology or chemistry, a degree within the social sciences leaves a broad path of career choices that can be made. When interviewing and hiring new members to the Nature Conservancy, Mark Sanderson explains that when he sees a degree in the social sciences or liberal arts, he is always excited to interview the candidate, as they approach the world using a variety of perspectives. According to Mark, in any "green collar" job, it is the passion and the feeling of making a difference that keeps people in this career year after year. Whether you take on a blue collar, white collar, or the new trend of green collar jobs, keep in mind that a degree in the social sciences is actually an advantage.

UNDERGRADUATE COMMUNICATION SOCIETY UPDATES

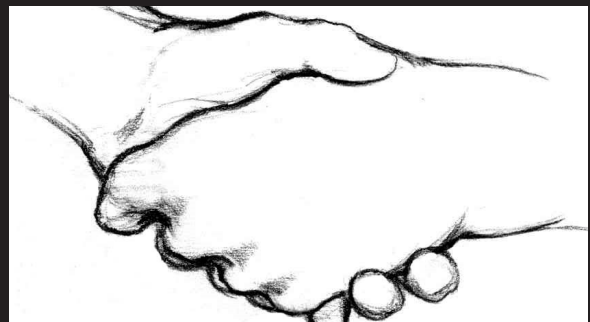
By Nick Morilla

UCS is currently looking to work with other student organizations to enhance its members' understanding of Communication-related fields such as PRSSA. Just this past Monday a representative of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) came to discuss the benefits of becoming a member of their organization. PRSSA is a national student organization offering its members a better understanding of current theories and practices in the Public Relations profession. It gives its members insight to current job openings, organizes events, panels, and workshops that help members develop professional skills. Interestingly, as UCSD does not offer at least five critical classes in public relations, we are ineligible to start our own PRSSA chapter. However, UCSD students still qualify to join PRSSA as individual members. UCS continues to look into it at this time.

Joining UCS is as easy as attending one of their general meetings and fulfilling

a few basic requirements that help promote involvement within the department. Some of the basic requirements involve attending the general meetings that are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month in MCC room 201 at 8:30pm, and paying a once-a-year fee of ten dollars that help allow UCS to have meetings and provide snacks/ beverages. The entire fee goes right back into the club. These general meetings are important for members because they allow UCS the opportunity to provide information about future event dates and announcements, and members to socialize with each other and make contacts with guest speakers and panelists.

For any questions regarding membership and events please feel free to contact myself (UCS Treasurer) at nmorilla@ucsd.edu or UCS President Nicole Elias at nelias@ucsd.edu. Come check out a general meeting and get ready to get involved. Dream. Network. Lead. UCS.



(PR continued)

am responsible for inviting magazine editors to feature the basket in different publications as a subscriber giveaway.

My work involves contacting celebrity agents to pitch the firm's gift basket. In return, ChicExecs receives a photo of the celebrity accompanying the basket, or a nice quotation featured in the magazine as part of the giveaway. This PR strategy fosters excitement among magazine subscribers, who either purchase or win products that celebrities have used themselves.

Projects such as this also require me to pitch to 40 clients about the gift basket opportunity. On the phone, I show how the gift basket contributes to good press for the client. ChicExecs Public Relations services are worth \$500. But, why so much work and money over a basket? In public relations, a simple idea or product is used to relate, establish, and maintain relationships between different companies. Celebrities receive free press from simple knic knacks! Magazines also construct readers' interests using the gift basket giveaway. Different products gain expo-

sure through magazines, and as more products end up in the hands of celebrities, public relations firms increase their client list as well. PR companies such as ChicExecs continuously think of new and exciting ways to further strengthen the relationships between profitable organizations and individuals. They serve as the conduit between the media and the clients. From my internship at ChicExecs PR, I have learned that it is not a career for everyone—the industry calls for individuals who have positive visions and a genuine passion for speaking persuasively.

(non-profits continued)

Mirisch explains,

"Today the larger non-profit organizations can't rely on fundraising anymore," says Mr. Mirisch. "Some of the smaller businesses do, but it's not as common today." Fundraising just will not bring in the amount of money required for these businesses to run smoothly.

Nevertheless Mirisch remains optimistic and sees a learning experience within economic troubles, "You have to love what you do, because when times get tough it has the ability to test our true character."

By Nicole Saari

PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT JOHN McCURIA

As a brand new professor to UCSD you won't find John McMurria on RateMyProfessor.com. But have no fear, I introduce him to you as a must-take faculty member of the Communication Dept. I sat down with McMurria to ask him about his work and path that led him to UCSD.

Professor McMurria earned his B.S. in Business Administration at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Next, he graduated with an M.A. in liberal studies from City of New York Graduate Center, where he took courses in social theory and American history. He earned his PhD in Cinema Studies from NYU in 2004. There he began to see television as a primary site to analyze world culture and politics.

Upon graduation, McMurria worked in the Department of Communications at

DePaul University in Chicago. During his four-year tenure, he helped the program transition from a Department of Communications to its own College of Communications. The new college opened up more resources and faculty funds to broaden options of study. He chose to leave the city that he enjoyed so much to join the faculty at UCSD. UCSD's Communication Dept. was exciting to him because it is interdisciplinary and takes a critical approach to studies of communication. McMurria says, "providing undergrads with a critical background in communication will give them the tools needed in whatever professional fields they chose to pursue."

McMurria's research focuses on television's role as a powerful medium. In

particular, he studies the way T.V. can shape different forms of citizenship, and television as a means of globalization. His written work includes the co-authored *Global Hollywood 2*, which highlights the two-way flow of television globalization. He shows how European countries challenge dominant U.S. television and create local programming by co-producing television content with other nations. Conversely, the emergence of satellite television has grown as a result of non-U.S. countries that show mostly Hollywood movies and other U.S. productions.

Professor McMurria sees the future of television proliferating through satellite distribution technologies, new cable channels, and Internet sites such as You-

Tube, which allows people to circulate audiovisual programs. Despite the promise of these new technologies, he feels that broadcast television as we know it will still remain a place where the majority of citizenry tune in. And though these new sites present possibilities for marginalized groups to get their voice out, there are still limiting factors: corporations still choose what gets broadcast and high speed internet remains inaccessible to many.

If you are interested in television media, one of his classes should be right up your alley. He teaches "History of Electronic Media", where he reviews media technologies and their uses from early radio to current Internet communication. Additionally, McMurria teaches "Television and Citizenship", which discusses television as a central space for defining and promoting types of citizenship through inclusion and exclusion.

BREAKING SCHOLASTIC HIERARCHY

A Look At The Practicum

Written by Leina Lin '09

From a young age, we are taught that the classroom is a hierarchical space—the teacher is in charge, and the students are to follow. Even in college, many classes follow this structure. Yet, hands-on experience is increasingly playing a crucial role in developing new educational experiences.

I sought out educational experiences outside the classroom this quarter by enrolling in COMT 175, Representing Communication. The purpose of the class is to develop practical and professional skills by planning a student-alumni networking event. Our TA stressed that since this was a practicum course, everything about the event would be “completely up to us”.

The thought of finally getting to do some hands-on work definitely appealed to my desire for practical experience, and I was excited to get this event going. As a class, we bounced ideas back-and-forth with each other, and it seemed like planning this event would be a fun and easy assignment.

But before we knew it, we were two weeks away from our event and engulfed in red tape. There were numerous bureaucratic hurdles we experi-

enced while planning our event. We were worried that there were not enough alums in the Alumni Affairs database for us to contact. Some alums never responded to our calls or invitations. Also, how would we fund the event? Campus parking for event panelists does not come cheap. Finally, as we were not a student organization, would our low status inhibit us from securing a venue on campus? We had to find an appropriate cosponsor.

Details remained uncertain. Group anxiety set in. Miraculously, the combination of panic and the concept of the practicum course itself propelled us into action. The key was initiative and dividing our labor efficiently. We decided we needed to find out for ourselves how to get past the red tape. We entered the practicum with pre-existing communicative paths between different organizations and people we wanted to bring together. However it was up to us to build new communicative paths or change ones that were not working. There was a sudden shift within the group, and people started to volunteer to take on specific roles.

Looking back on the process, I wondered why it took our class so long to

take responsibility. And why it was that when I started delegating responsibilities, it felt like I was encroaching upon the instructor.

The problem was not that we were lazy or that we wanted our instructor to do everything for us. It was that this class broke the conventions of the classroom. Even when the instructor explicitly told us that the structure of event was “up to us,” the student-teacher power relation was so entrenched that it made deviating from the hierarchical norm of the classroom extremely difficult and at times uncomfortable. The structure of the practicum allows these traditional relations to be bent. As a class, we shifted from focusing on the student-teacher relation, to focusing on the student-student relation, helping each other work towards a unified goal.

Retrospectively, this very well may have been one of the most difficult classes I have taken at UCSD. It was not difficult in the sense that I needed to spend hours on end memorizing

theorists' names and semiotic values per se, but it was difficult in the sense that it was unlike any other class I've ever taken at this school. The practicum taught me to move away from the confining power structure of a traditional student-teacher relationship, and has allowed me to find my role as a colleague in the student-student relationship.

It is strange that at a school that emphasizes individual leadership, there are so few practicum courses that allow students to find and showcase these skills. Through the chaos, I have become more comfortable with taking on responsibilities. I hope that in the future, UCSD will create other practicum courses where students can pave their own path of learning, and that more students will take advantage of the currently existing one, COMT 175. Practicum courses go beyond traditional educational experiences that are driven by the classroom or the professor. The offer hands-on and self-driven experiences that one carries into the future.

