UNDERGRADUATE NEWSLETTER '08
UCSD COMMUNICATION

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UCSD Alumni Association Event
June 6, 2009
Contact Suzi Sterner
ssterner@ucsd.edu

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

THE CHANGING FACE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Written By Teresa Wu

Who are the power players of today’s marketing world?
“Mommy bloggers,” says Jeanette Liang, account executive at Golin-Harris, a top public relations firm. “PR people spend thousands of dollars courting mommy bloggers — it’s insane.”
Why are these 40-year-old women in front of their laptops suddenly some of the most influential people on the internet?
The rise of digital media is changing the face of every Communication-related industry, from journalism to PR to marketing. More importantly, for the crop of soon-to-be-graduates, it’s creating a new sector of jobs — positions that require skills with web 2.0 tools like blogs and social networks. These are areas in which our generation is inherently savvy, so why not take advantage of your in-depth knowledge of Facebook?
In some ways, Jeanette is your standard public relations professional. Like the rest of the team, she does the standard PR duties: client meetings, research, pitches to the press, etc. However, her specific knowledge and

THE RIGHT WAY IS THE WONG WAY

Written By Hai Lam

The story of Wong Fu Productions is a Cinderella tale of young alums embarking on new entrepreneurial ventures in the field of communications.
What started out as making “fun-films” at UCSD, grew into something much greater.
Today Wong Fu is a well-established production company with a fan base consisting of millions around the world. The Representing Communication class sat down with the faces of Wong Fu Productions — Philip Wang, Ted Fu, and Wesley Chan — at the premier of the Asian Film Festival.
We asked questions focusing on racial and gender identity in American film.

We also touched upon financial issues that Wong Fu Productions faces in their creative endeavors. Watch the full-length interview at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpu7hp0uUbA&feature=related, or simply search “UCSD Wong Fu Production Interview” on YouTube.
THE REBIRTH OF A SOCIETY

UCSD’s Undergraduate Communication Society makes a strong comeback

Written By James Yi
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The Undergraduate Communication Society (UCS) is an organization run by and for students interested in careers related to communications. Meeting every other Monday over tasty treats, they pursue internship opportunities, plan student socials and generally provide an alternative to wandering around campus. This year, the organization changed its strategy for building their community by privatizing its membership, thus giving birth to a new society with interesting implications.

Last year, the UCS membership only consisted of cabinet officers. All majors in Communication were considered members of the club. So why adopt the ways of a private organization? Nicole Elias, President of UCS said, “The turnout wasn’t very high as students came and went as they pleased, and the officers felt a lack of recognition for the work that they did.” The efforts of the officers were underutilized and there was a lack of community. Under new leadership, the officers have privatized the club. “By making the club exclusive with some rules and requirements, we wanted Communication students to feel a sense of pride and belonging,” said Nicole.

Privatization does change one’s access to public resources yet may also create and sustain order and structure within this particular student body. “We now have a small membership fee of $10, membership cards, requirements to attend at least one event and one fundraiser, and to attend the meetings,” said Nicole. The implementation of membership fees are used to assess some of the costs for bigger and better activities that the club hosts. Paradoxically, privatizing the organization seems to have led to UCSD’s Undergraduate Communication Society makes a strong comeback

Written By Ben Wisan
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This quarter’s networking event, sponsored by the Communication Society and the Representing Communication class, brought together alumni from different professions from the field of communications. Panelists included Bob Hansen (NBC Universal KNSD-TV), David Mirisch (Event production, PR), Julie Herrmann (Lead, Information Technology-EMR Training Program), Joel Estrada-Gonzalez (Intern for a lawfirm), Janet McCulley (Co-founder & Chief Marketing Officer – Muttropolis), and Ian M. Stone (Senior Account Executive, Russo Partners, LLC).

Key highlights from the evening came from journalist Bob Hansen, who in response to the question of “how do you think interns could improve their performance?” declared “I hate interns — most of them are lazy and do more hurt than help.” He went to say that most interns do not attempt to be helpful; rather, they are uninterested and lack motivation. Hansen’s intern strategy is to never take them on himself, but instead, watch his coworkers’ interns and pick out the good ones. He also explained that any intern worth his salt should always be available when they are asked to work and not ask questions, but just complete the duty. Hansen said that the very few interns who are motivated and aggressive he takes on himself. Afterwards, they are practically guaranteed a job, if not with his station definitely another high-ranking television station.

While Hansen’s delivery was a bit of a jolt, he brought up a very good point. College students often see internships as solving the problem of not having professional experience. Many students get the idea that as soon as they have an internship their search for future work is over. However, getting an internship is only half of the battle. In many ways, the work has just begun. Once you have an internship, it doesn’t mean that you automatically have a job with the company — it’s a possibility, but you have to be available, motivated, aggressive, and interested in your work. Hansen said that the very few interns who are motivated and aggressive he takes on himself. Afterwards, they are practically guaranteed a job, if not with his station definitely another high-ranking television station.

Continued on page 4
When Joy Kim was a senior, she took part in Academic Internship Program (AIP) and started looking for an internship to get experience in her field interest. She gave us her insight on what it’s like to get an internship in today’s competitive economy.

How did you acquire your first internship? How long did the whole process take?

Maybe six months? I went to a number of Alumni Association/Career Center events on a job search. I also looked at Port Triton (UCSD job search engine) and Craigslist. I found my first internship through Craigslist, its free and easy to use, so many companies post their job openings there. You can also check whether a company is good or not through Port Triton. So, use both sites!

What kind of job was it?

Search engine marketing intern. There are many kinds of marketing jobs, such as web analytics and social media like Facebook. It’s more complicated than what most people imagine.

Do you get paid or do you need an additional job?

I get paid enough, so I don’t need another job. I work 40 hours a week.

How did you find your current internship?

I used to use this company website for marketing tips when I was working as a marketing intern at [a travel agency]. I wanted to learn more about specific marketing skills, so I changed jobs.

Are you willing to continue to work at the same place?

I am still exploring the work environment, and it depends on what kind of offer I get from them. I’d rather stay in San Diego, so that’s my priority.

Do you have any problems at work?

As an international student, language is both an advantage and a disadvantage — participation, hard to follow jokes, social scenarios, but other than that, I think I’m doing well, and I like this job.

Although she did not enjoy writing AIP’s mandatory 10-page paper every week, doing so gave her a broad perspective on what she was doing. “Don’t do it twice, because it’s hard,” she laughed, “but I recommend doing it. It’s worth a lot.”

PUBLIC RELATIONS & PROCRASTINATION

So you think those countless hours you spend on Facebook and YouTube might just be a waste of time? Well, think again. The time you spend reading blogs and online gossip may come in handy for your post collegiate job ventures in public relations.

At least that’s what Rachel Kay, Principal of Rachel Kay Public Relations will tell you. "When interviewing new candidates for a position, one of the questions I always ask them is what kind of media they read on a daily basis. Some say none, which is bad, obviously. And some may say the Wall Street Journal or The New York Times, which is a necessity. But I’m also looking for them to say Perez Hilton, Glamour, People, and Cosmopolitan. You have to be up on your pop culture because it sure is important, too."

In order to play in the field of PR, one must have a vast knowledge of the current social media. The cultural literacy Kay speaks of consists of both popular media (books, film, television) and knowing how to navigate social networking technologies (Myspace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook).

So for students looking for a career in PR, there’s no need to limit your UCSD experience to classrooms and books. You must have a variety of cultural literacies; watching television, keeping up with fashion, trends, and popular culture are more critical to harnessing a career in PR than one may think. The social tools needed to excel in public relations are not always taught in the classroom. Rachel Kay suggests that students should take their procrastination skills more seriously considering they can develop them into a real professional career later on.

Kay also stresses the importance of confidence. Being shy is very costly in this business. That “bad idea” might just turn out to be the fresh young take that the client was looking for.

“No idea is a bad idea; if someone tells you it is, then you are in the wrong place. When PR professionals start out they may not be as aggressive at suggesting ideas and being creative, but the best thing they can do is to be confident and not worry about it.”

When entering the world of PR, working with high level executives and clients can be intimidating. Rachel’s advice is to be very vocal and stand out in the crowd. “PR is very personality based and about how you present yourself and command an audience.”

So the next time you procrastinate, take it seriously.
Within the communication alumni and guest speakers the chance to speak with like-minded students in pursuit of similar career goals. The club conducts career panels, giving students the chance to speak with alumni and guest speakers within the communication field. UCS also holds field trips and social events for members, in which they can shadow communications professionals at their workplace. As for the future of UCS, “I’m excited [about] the better and brighter results this year has in store,” said Vice President Eun Je Kim. What will be in store for you?

For any questions regarding the UCS, please email (Nicole Elias, President of UCS) Nelia@ucsd.edu or sit in on one of their meetings on the second or fourth Monday of the month in MCC 201 at 8:30PM.

In fact, Hansen’s first job came about as a result of shadowing professionals at a TV station. He went on to secure an internship that later became his first reporting job. Panelists also discussed attitude in the workplace. As Mirisch said, “You hire for attitude, and you train for skill.” This goes hand-in-hand with what Hansen had talked about. Employers realize that you are a college student with limited experience, and this is why attitude is so important. In an internship, you may be asked to perform tasks you don’t understand, but you’ll reap the benefits if you stay positive, willing, and available. The internship experience often involves menial work, but the real value behind interning is developing a professional relationship with an employer that will reward you later. For example, as Hansen suggested, if you’re working at a TV station, inquire about why certain decisions are being made, ask the cameraman if you can watch him for a day — show an interest.

In the end, your brief performance at an internship could either get your foot in the door for your future career, or purely be a waste of your and your employer’s time — so make sure you’re making the most of it.

### Professor Spotlight

**BARRY BROWN**

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**What do you like most about your career?**

I think constant change is the most enjoyable part. I keep surprising myself with how wrong some of my thoughts were and so having the privilege to rethink them is wonderful. On a more basic level, working with people who get really excited about things is just great.

**Where do you see yourself in the next 10 years?**

I’m interested just now in what I call ‘techno-social forms of life’, so I’d be excited if I could work out what that means. There’s so much stupid stuff written about technology, I’d like to play a part in fighting that. And I’d like to become a better teacher.

**What accomplishment are you most proud of in your career thus far?**

I worked in a baked potato shop for a year, so around 7:30am every morning I often think to myself how glad I am that I didn’t end up in a dead end job. In terms of my career, I’ve done a couple of pieces of research that got a start on something interesting. I’m Scottish; we don’t really go around doing self-pride.

**What were some challenges you’ve faced?**

Well, I went to a pretty lousy high school where I never had to try very hard. That has probably made me far too laid back for my own good! My undergraduate degree was in a very narrow flavor of computer science, so moving to do post graduate work in the social sciences was quite a challenge. I think I would have really enjoyed the flexibility that undergraduates have here to take courses from different departments.

**What does Communication mean to you?**

I think it works to bring together an interesting constellation of people around some similar issues. I’m suspicious of it as a grand unifying theory of what it is to be human. You can put too much weight on the term, but it does preserve diversity in the study of the social, so that’s good.

**What vision watching and sport speculating.**

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Written by Xue Bai

Barry Brown is currently an associate professor of Communication at UCSD. He graduated with a degree in Computer Science from the University of Edinburgh and a Ph.D in Sociology from the University of Surrey. Prior to UCSD, he was a researcher on the Equator Project at the University of Glasgow and a research scientist at Hewlett-Packard’s research labs in Bristol.

Brown’s current work focuses on the sociology and design of leisure technologies, particularly in computer systems. He has recently published studies of activities ranging from games, tourism, museum visits, usage of maps, television watching and sport speculating.

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PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHT

BARRY BROWN
with solid training and good background. However, she adds, there’s also a plus to starting somewhere small. “You get more responsibility quicker, and you’ll leave with strong experience and maybe a better title than you would have had at a larger agency.”

Every client requires a specifically tailored strategy. “We analyze who the target demographic is and through what channels we’ll reach them.” Of course, the team will reach out to the typical media outlets: dailies, magazines, newspapers, and broadcast. Increasingly, however, clients are looking to expand their brand presence in online media — that’s where Jeanette comes in.

Blogging is an alternate form of word-of-mouth marketing because bloggers often have a loyal following. For example, Jeanette says, often she will coordinate giveaways with mommy bloggers or tech bloggers, in which a product — say, a newly released phone — is given to bloggers for review or for contests with their audiences. “For example, even though bloggers don’t have the same reach as, say, Time magazine, if 90 people comment on a post, that’s 90 people who looked at the product and went to the web site to check out its features.”

The golden question still remains: How much salary can one expect to start out with? According to Jeanette, an average person with a PR or Communication-related position in Los Angeles can expect around $26,000 annually. “$30,000 is generous, but in the Bay Area, you can make at least another $5-10,000 easily.” In addition, higher executives, after about 10 years of experience, can make $90,000 and up. However, she notes that having tech and new media as a specialty means that it’s easy to work your way into a higher salary because you can bring something new to the table.

She stresses the importance of scoring internships early on for students interested in this field. “You can think until you’re blue that you know what you want to do, but until you’re actually in the trenches, you don’t know.” Beyond that, she points out the value in reading blogs. “There are blogs on PR, new media — if I started doing all that in college, I would be so much more knowledgeable now.”

No matter where you start out, there are plenty of things to learn in any internship or job. “How to write a god client email, how to develop a client relationship. Writing skills, organization — some of that stuff I learned in my first advertising job in LA. Some of the stuff they taught me that was just a part of the standard work routine I still apply today.”

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**ALUMNI ACCESS DENIED**

Written by Yvonne Chen

UCSD is comprised of many divisions that each execute business strategies in ways that affect students’ ability to get an education. These strategies are increasingly based on a privatized model.

I encountered this strategy when contacting an alumni recently. As a student looking for professional experience outside the classroom, I was searching for internship experience, and what better way than to connect with a UCSD alumni? I made an appointment with the Alumni Association was on my way to a great networking opportunity — or so I thought. Before I could gain access to alumni through the Alumni Association network and I was asked to sign up to be a member, which came with a membership fee of $25. Included in the $25 membership is Career Access Network search privileges, a $25 UCSD bookstore coupon, a $75 discount off Kaplan courses, two free Price Center movie passes, discounts at California attractions, special events invitations, an @UCSD magazine subscription, and free blue books.

The private business goals of different corporations are embodied in the $25 membership. I am essentially being asked to partake in multiple business relationships - Kaplan and UCSD, UCSD and the bookstore. As I have not yet received access to the alumni network, this student is still trying to reap the benefits of this strategy.