

# Journalism Times

Fall 2002

A Publication for Alumni and Friends of the Journalism Department

CSU, Chico

## Graduate Makes Capitol Hill Home

Rebecca Hanks never planned to work in politics. It took a summer internship in the state capitol to change her mind.

After graduation in May 1999 with a double major in journalism and political science, the Sacramento native moved to Washington, D.C., intent on pursuing a career on Capitol Hill. She arrived just in time to secure a job as press aide for Sen. John McCain's 2000 presidential campaign.

"Working for Senator McCain has been the most rewarding experience of my life thus far," Hanks said. "Other than being a student of professor [Glen] Bleske's, of course."

Since McCain's 2000 presidential campaign, Hanks was promoted to press secretary where she writes statements for the senator, briefs the media on policy areas in which the senator is involved and organizes the senator's daily interview schedule.

"As press secretary, my main objective is to see that every written word about Senator McCain is favorable to his positions as well as factually correct," Hanks said. "I try my best to get the correct information into the hands of the journalists before they turn in the story for tomorrow's papers."

In a field largely populated by men, Hanks has to prove herself on a daily basis and continue to fight for her position.

"As a woman I have definitely had to fight for the position I now hold, but I believe that almost everyone in a position of power on Capitol Hill has had to do the same," Hanks said.

Although the myriad of experiences Hanks has had on Capitol Hill have changed and refined her professional skills, Hanks still considers her



education at Chico State to have an important influence in her personal and professional life.

"Chico State, I believe, definitely shaped me into the person I am today," Hanks said. "My professors gave me the confidence to move to Washington, D.C. to pursue my desire to work on Capitol Hill."

## Journalism Department Prepares for Reaccreditation Review

Since 1998, the journalism department at Chico State University has been recognized as a nationally accredited program.

Changes in curriculum, class size and student advising were made before the initial program accreditation. Two of the department's core classes, "Theory/Principles of Communication" and "Communication Research," were cut after reaccreditation was granted, and replaced with visual communications courses. Writing class enrollment was scaled down to allow only 18 students in each class.

Because the journalism department hopes to be reaccredited in

2004, faculty and staff have begun preparing for a visit from the review panel scheduled for fall 2003.

"Accreditation gives journalism students the opportunity for scholarships geared specifically toward our program," said department chair, Dr. Katie Milo. "It also provides them with a higher level of learning and connections that will help in their employment search."

The review panel will visit the campus for four days to determine whether the department is meeting the 12 standards required for accreditation established by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications. The

standards include specific attention to faculty scholarship, student records and advising as well as instruction and evaluation. During the visit the panel will attend classes, interview students and faculty and review department records. The panel also will contact employers of alumni, as well as program graduates.

Next fall, the journalism department will begin a required section of curriculum made up of visual communication courses, one of which will be mandatory for students.

The journalism department at Chico State continues to be the only accredited journalism program north of San Francisco.

# Chico State Public Relations Student Goes International

In a country where public relations is not yet widely accepted, former Chico State University student Sorana Savu is breaking down barriers by establishing her own public relations firm, Premium Communication, in

Bucharest, Romania.

Savu came to Chico State from Romania in 1995 on a government grant for one semester to study journalism.

She chose a few classes in public relations, which were not offered in Romania.

"I fell in love with public relations quickly and forgot about my journalism career," Savu said.

Upon returning to Romania, she could not find a public relations agency that would allow her to apply what she had learned in the U.S. According to Savu, public relations in Romania was about personal relationships with journalists, minor lobbying and some nongovernmental programs with huge budgets.

"As time goes by and the journalists become more and more professional and independent, things are slowly changing. It is a slow and steady process," Savu said.

At the time Savu graduated from the University of Bucharest, Romania was not yet ready for the world of public relations, and the only communication field that was developing was advertising.

"I wouldn't have landed my first permanent job with Ogilvy if I hadn't

shown them the strategy book I put together for Bob Vivian's public relations writing class. Surely, the press kit I prepared for Colgate-Palmolive was helpful when I started to work for the company."

The need for freedom pushed Savu in the direction of starting her own firm. "[I wanted] the freedom to set my own rules and to define the relationship with the clients the way I felt was right," Savu said. "We work with them, not for them, and the results we get are great."

Savu has quite an impressive client list, including Allied Domecq Spirits and Wine, the world's second largest manufacturer of spirits and market leader in Romania, Colgate-Palmolive, MasterCard International, Sony Ericsson and Ericsson Telecommunications.

"When we started, there was just my husband and me, and now we have a team of six people, which makes us a medium-size agency by Romanian standards," Savu said.

Savu believes she is fortunate to be one of the pioneers of public relations in Romania and plans to soon be at the top of the field. Premium Communication was started at the right time, so it will have plenty of room for development.

"We will probably get to the top five, in terms of fee billings, in a couple of years, and then we will develop specialized public relations shops for specific issues," she said.

"We are still at the beginning."

## Students Learn the Law and Love it

Learning about the legal system is not always fun. Many law professors teach the theory of law by lecturing for hours while students gaze into oblivion. But not in Dr. Lyn Lepre's class.

"She puts a different twist on teaching media law," said senior Alexis Dias, 21. "I never knew how powerful the first amendment is."

The "Media Communications Law" class at Chico State University has a new curriculum because Dr. Lepre revised the course after holding an experimental mock trial in her law class last semester.

"I liked the argument part of it," Lepre said. "It's how you present your research. Sometimes it comes down to how well one attorney's done his homework."

Lepre redesigned the curriculum to include five mock trials covering the First Amendment, libel, slander, privacy and negligence. The course aids students in applying the law to situations that they may experience later in their careers.

"Burning the American Flag is an act, not an expression of feeling," Dias said after her first trial. "The

defendants argued that flag burning isn't a criminal act. We became really passionate about our topics."

Lepre says she is happy about the interest her students express about the new curriculum.

"It's all about involvement," said Lepre. "We've all been in classes where the teacher talks at you. In this class, the students learn by doing."



Senior Megan Keenan quickly writes notes for her final rebuttle in the mass communications law class.

## Faculty Scholarship Extends Worldwide

Professor Peter Gross, a member of the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., has written a new book on international communication. *Entangled Evolutions: Media and Democratization in Eastern Europe* is published by the center and Johns Hopkins University Press.

## Rebooting the Journalism Mac Lab

Since 1988 Journalism 151, "Public Relations Publications," has been a key component of the journalism program at Chico State University and has contributed to producing thoughtful and creative public relations professionals.

"Most students are increasingly determined to be good writers," said department chair, Dr. Katie Milo. "This class helps them create a more distinct message to stand out in all of today's media clutter."



The Mac Lab used by the 1988 class was located above where Celestino's pizzeria is today. A tattoo parlor occupies the space now. Macintosh computers resembling toaster ovens powered the lab. Even though the entire communications school shared the lab, there was only one dot matrix black and white printer available for students. Most documents had to be split between floppy disks to be created and printed separately. PageMaker always has been the primary program for the class, however in 1988 the only graphics or artwork students could use was jagged, pixilated clip art.

Times change and so does technology. The present Macintosh Lab, located on the third floor of Tehama Hall, currently includes two scanners, two color ink jet printers, two laser printers and 20 nearly new computers.

The course curriculum has advanced with the Internet age and digital photography. Students always have been asked to create advertisements, newsletters and brochures for this class. Beginning in 2000, students started crafting a corporate philanthropy and fully interactive Web page.

Social marketing is another new concept the course requires students to consider. Students design an advertisement that will change behavior for society's benefit. In addition, to meet accreditation program standards, the course includes targeting ethnic audiences. Students learn how to see through another person's eyes and create a message that will reach them. These changes have helped students who graduate from Chico State to research the communication challenges, issues and audiences of a project more in-depth than ever before.

The bulk of the learning and hands-on experience occurs in the lab. Milo said student lab assistants have been a part of the Mac Lab from the beginning and are often saviors for students. Lab assistants are highly skilled in technology and provide daily assistance to help students.

## Tehama Group Helps Launch National Campaign

In spring 2002 Tehama Group Communications helped promote One Day's Pay, a national effort dedicated to establishing Sept. 11 as an international day of volunteerism. Tehama Group worked in conjunction with Paine Public Relations in Orange County.

"Working with One Day's Pay enabled Tehama Group account executives to work head-to-head with a real public relations firm," said former Tehama Group General Manager Greg Yatman.

One Day's Pay is a non-profit enterprise co-founded by David Paine of Paine Public Relations that encourages people to set aside Sept. 11 to support a charity or volunteer organization of their choice. According to an article in PR Week, participants have made pledges on the organization's Web site to do everything from training seeing-eye dogs to sending care packages to local firehouses.

Former Chico State University public relations student Cynthia Rude, senior vice president of Paine Public Relations in Irvine, Calif. recruited Tehama Group for the campaign.

"Chico State has one of the best public relations programs out there, and Tehama Group is as close to a real public relations organization as you can get," Rude said. "We were very excited to have them participate in the campaign."

Tehama Group's work on the campaign included sending out news releases and public service announcements to the local and national media. On the local level Tehama Group's efforts were rewarded with stories in The Orion and The Enterprise-Record.

"This campaign gave Tehama a taste of real-world public relations in the not-for-profit sector," said Tehama Group faculty adviser Keith Sheldon. "We gained experience in national media relations that otherwise wouldn't be available in a traditional classroom environment."

## Alumni: Let Us Hear From You

Visit the Journalism Department Web site:

[www.csuchico.edu/jour](http://www.csuchico.edu/jour)

Alumni and friends interested in supporting the journalism department may send checks to:

Journalism Department

CSU, Chico

Chico, CA

95929 - 0600

# Chico State Orion Continues Tradition of National Excellence

What started as regional success has grown to national recognition benefiting all journalism majors at Chico State University.

In the 2002 statewide competition, the Northern California Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists presented The Orion with the James Madison Freedom of Information Award in the Student Journalist category.

To date, the newspaper has won the California Newspaper Publishers Association Better Newspapers Contest award for General Excellence seven times, including the 2002 competition.

"When you win an award, it's a prestigious thing," said Dave Waddell, faculty adviser to The Orion. "Every award on the list is nice to win."

To enter a competition, The Orion must submit a certain number of

issues of the newspaper to judges. In all of the competitions, college newspapers from around the country are placed into either a daily or weekly category and are critiqued in a category called General Excellence.

The Orion placed first in the National Newspaper Association's Better Newspapers Contest for General Excellence in 2002. Prior to this year's finish, The Orion earned the National Newspaper Association's recognition in 2000.

The Orion has received the Associated Collegiate Press National Newspaper Pacemaker Award six times in the General Excellence category for university non-daily newspapers. Having won five national Pacemaker Awards in the 1990s, The Orion received more awards than any other school newspaper in the university non-daily division for that decade.

The Orion also won the prestigious Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence award in 2000 in the university category.

In the midst of its journalistic success, the staff of The Orion has maintained a modest perspective on its accomplishments and has stayed true to its commitment to good journalism. Jennifer Cooper, managing editor for The Orion, said a sense of student ownership has given those who work for The Orion a common bond because they believe that what they do matters.

"We don't do it for the money, we don't do it for the awards, we do it for the love of journalism," Cooper said.

A current issue of The Orion, information about the newspaper and a staff contact list are available on The Orion's Web site at <http://www.orion-online.net>.