

Journalism Times

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A Publication for Alumni and Friends of the Department of Journalism

CSU, Chico

The Orion Online Adds Breadth, Expands Readership Base

Gone are the days of reading the daily paper while sipping a cup of coffee at the breakfast table. Today, our lives are continuously changing because of technology. The Internet has become a staple in our lives. We depend on the Internet daily for everything, from shopping to banking, to corresponding by e-mail to learning about current events.

The Orion Online, the Internet version of California State University, Chico's award-winning newspaper, The Orion, was established in 1994.

"It was a shovel site," said Glen Bleske, The Orion Online adviser. "Somebody just shoveled the print edition online, and it has



O'Neill strives to attract a larger audience by providing readers with breaking news.

been fairly popular, especially with alumni and prospective students."

Current students can easily grab a copy of the print edition on campus, but for those who are not on campus on a regular basis, The Orion Online offers a way to remain connected with Chico State.

The Orion Online posts every edition of The Orion, yet is more than an archival Web site. It provides student journalists with the

opportunity to expand on Orion stories, cover breaking news and reach a wider audience.

Within hours of posting information on The Orion Online, Amy O'Neill, online editor, receives feedback from readers in

Texas, Germany and other places around the world.

"It's cool to see how far reaching The Orion really is," O'Neill said.

The Orion Online staff can use the online version in lieu of paper copies to show friends and prospective employers current work.

The Orion Online offers readers the opportunity to stay informed by signing up for news updates.

The ability to stay current is essential in the fast-paced world of journalism, and the flexibility of the online version of a newspaper allows revisions to be made daily, as compared to the one-week turnaround of the print edition.

"Journalism, in many ways, has always been driven by the idea of timeliness. There are lots of stories that need to be covered in a timely fashion, and the print version, since it's weekly, can't do that," Bleske said.

Visit *The Orion Online* at www.orion-online.net.

Alumna Reaches For Stars, Wins National PRWeek Award

At 26, Christine Cefalo, an alumna of the journalism program, is more accomplished than many people twice her age. As a public relations manager at PeopleSoft, an application software provider, Cefalo recently was named one of PRWeek's "Ten Rising Stars of PR." She recognizes this as the greatest accomplishment of her career thus far.

Cefalo graduated in 1999 and went to work at PeopleSoft. She has become an asset to the company. This year, she led a global public relations effort for CeBIT, the world's largest computer trade show, held in Germany. Cefalo succeeded in getting more than 70 stories for PeopleSoft included in top business and trade publications worldwide.

"Public relations requires a creative

mind and the willingness to do what it takes to get the job done," Cefalo said. "The ultimate reward is seeing hard work turn into positive media coverage for your company."

Cefalo's hard work prompted PeopleSoft's senior management to nominate her for the "Ten Rising Stars of PR" award. Cefalo said she was flattered when PRWeek chose her as a "Rising Star" after a rigorous selection process.

"It is quite an honor to be recognized among peers in your industry," Cefalo said. "It is very rewarding."

At Chico State Cefalo was active in student government, her sorority, Alpha Gamma Delta, and Community Action Volunteers in Education. Cefalo was a member of Tehama Group Communi-



cations and had a marketing internship at Wells Fargo Bank in the Bay Area, which helped her prepare for a job in public relations. She credits some of her success to the public relations and marketing professionals she works with.

"One of the things that attracted me to this company was its amazing ability to attract and retain top industry talent," she said.

Cefalo's award proves she is no exception.

Public Relations Students Take Bite Out Of The Big Apple

Three California State University, Chico journalism students took a bite out of the Big Apple this summer when they interned in New York, honing their public relations skills and exploring the city.

Howli Ledbetter worked for Cohn Davis Associates, an arts public relations firm. Lisa Bagley worked for Meredith Corp., a magazine and book publishing company. Nellie Price worked for the American Red Cross.

Ledbetter wanted a public relations internship in Manhattan and sent her resume to 30 companies. Ledbetter said what impressed her Cohn Davis Associates interviewer the most was one specific detail of her resume.

"She was shocked when I told her about Tehama Group because she had never heard of anything like it," said Ledbetter, general manager of Tehama Group Communications. "It really set me apart from other applicants."

Like Ledbetter, Bagley is also a member of TGC. Bagley pursued Meredith Corp. for an internship after a recommendation from a family friend. She did media relations for the magazine division, which includes Better Homes and Gardens, Ladies' Home Journal and MORE. She wrote news releases, planned special events and helped with the company's internal communications.

"I gained experience pitching to the media," Bagley said. "It is not something that you can necessarily learn in a classroom, and now I am using these new skills with my clients in TGC and sharing them with the other agency members."

Price's internship incorporated planning special events, media relations, working with Web sites and creating a strategy to target black and Hispanic communities.

"I had to really learn to think on my feet

to pitch to the media," Price said. "Once I warmed up to the media, pitching became easier."

Ledbetter's internship with Cohn Davis Associates was also comprehensive. Ledbetter's responsibilities included updating media kits, arranging plans for members of the press and launching a combination arts and journalism program for Syracuse University. Ledbetter's favorite part of the internship did not entail working with clients, but rather working with her bosses.

"I actually learned the most by listening to Lois and Helene pitch stories and deal with clients over the phone," Ledbetter said. "It is interesting

to learn how to deal with difficult clients and how professionals form and maintain their relationships with clients and the media. I now find myself using these skills every day in TGC."

Bagley learned a similar lesson. "It is important to remember who you are talking to and who you represent," Bagley said. "Public relations professionals must be versatile in their roles. I have learned how to adapt to my surroundings."

Keith Sheldon, public relations professional in residence and adviser to TGC, said that this kind of experience is exactly what he hopes his students will gain.

"You can't put a price on the value of internships," Sheldon said. "Students who complete an internship return to the classroom more mature, more confident

and better prepared for their first job in the real world."

Although all three Chico State students were busy with their full-time internships, they still found time to enjoy New York City. Ledbetter and Bagley shared a New York University-owned apartment in Manhattan while Price sublet an apartment in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn.

"We got to see more things as residents than we would on a visit," Ledbetter said. "We took advantage of all that the city had to offer by wandering through the different neighborhoods."

Price spent time soaking in the atmosphere. "My favorite thing about the city is the energy," Price said. "There is so much diversity, you see all walks of life."

Ledbetter and Bagley graduate in December 2004. Ledbetter's internship was such a success that she plans to become a full-time publicist with Cohn Davis Associates in February. Bagley is still exploring her options and is continuing to work for Meredith Corp. as a freelance writer.

"Because I was working with the public and public relations professionals, I met a multitude of people," Bagley said. "Networking in this field is so important

when it comes time to find a job."

Price said the most valuable part was gaining a firm grasp on what she wants to pursue when she graduates in May 2005. All three students agree that their internships gave them more confidence as future public relations practitioners and confirmed that the field is ideal for

the skills that they have acquired.

"I would encourage everyone to have an internship so that they can put their classroom knowledge to good use in real settings before beginning a career," Bagley said.



Bagley (left) and Ledbetter explored the city's charms when not working at their internships.



Price (left), with Kirsten Xanthippe, the press office coordinator for the California Democratic Party, attended the Democratic National Convention in Boston after her internship ended.

News Ed Students Demonstrate Chico State Is A Cut Above

For the past three years, students in the journalism and English departments at California State University, Chico participated in internships at The Modesto Bee. This summer, four students joined the newspaper staff.

Kristina Seward, Rosario Ahumada and Gitzel Vargas, journalism majors with a news editorial option, were reporters for The Modesto Bee and competed for the front page on a daily basis. This fall, Seward is the managing editor for The Orion, while Ahumada and Vargas both work for the paper. Ahumada is extending his internship through the end of the year as a night police reporter for The Modesto Bee.

Hallie Gorman, an English major and former Orion chief copy editor, worked on call for the copy desk. Gorman made such a strong impression in Modesto that she still works for them, putting in a full weekly schedule.

Department Strong

Recent budget cuts in higher education have taught students and faculty how to use all resources to maintain a strong journalism program.

California State University, Chico has one of the few accredited journalism programs in the state. The tradition of excellence and award-winning student work has shaped one of the finest programs in the country.

The Orion and Tehama Group Communications are two examples of the department's commitment to excellence. These hands-on learning experiences separate Chico State's journalism department from other universities.

In January, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed cutting \$240 million from the California State University system for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The CSU system has to limit enrollment and could potentially turn away 20,000 students in the next year.

The budget cuts affect Chico State students from tuition hikes to canceled classes.

"While I had no problems being admitted to Chico State, getting my classes

"This is huge," said Dave Waddell, The Orion adviser. "They're obviously impressed with what our journalism students are able to do."

Although it may seem rare to have four students from the same school interning at one newspaper, Dave Peterson, internship coordinator for The Modesto Bee, was not surprised after visiting Chico State.

"I think that it is a testimonial to the quality of the journalism program at Chico," Peterson said. "I came away very impressed with the program and the students."

The three reporters covered stories ranging from local crime to the county fair. The variety of experiences helped them discover what kind of stories they preferred to cover.

Seward began her internship covering shifts of night police and listening to police and fire activity. This beat was the most exciting part of her internship.

Despite Budget

has become a huge issue," said journalism student Jamie Ohanessian. "Both of the journalism classes I registered for were canceled by mid-summer so I had to rush to find other classes to fill those spaces."

Complicating the budget situation is the significant growth in majors. In 1996 there were 267 journalism majors, now there are 347.

"Our success encourages many outstanding students to come to Chico, so we're working hard to meet their needs," said Katie Milo, journalism department chair.

Journalism instructor Debra Johnson thinks the department has done its best to combat the budget cuts.

"We are very resourceful as a department. I used to photocopy all of my handouts, now I send them through e-mail or WebCT," Johnson said. "The students are still getting the same information; unfortunately, they have to use their own resources to print out the documents."

"I'm concerned how we'll continue to operate an exceptional journalism program without funding or support from other sources," Johnson said.

"I covered car accidents, fires, a police shooting, a suspicious death, a blackout, gang violence and more," Seward said.

Other students had equally stimulating experiences. Vargas wrote articles for the features, business and local news sections. Her favorite assignment was interviewing alternative singer Franky Perez, whose music includes a mix of both Latin and rock.

"I was able to talk with Franky, and we had a few laughs," Vargas said.

The Orion provided the students with the experience they needed to flourish in their internships. Now their experiences at The Modesto Bee will help them take their journalistic skills to a higher level.

The Modesto Bee is looking forward to another summer of interns from Chico State. Peterson has already scheduled appointments to interview prospective students for next year.

Student Wins \$3K From RollingStone

California State University, Chico alumnus Jon Miller recently won the RollingStone College Journalism Competition in the features category for his story "Caught in the Web." The prize is \$3,000 from RollingStone magazine and publication of the story.

"I completely forgot about the contest," Miller said. "I must have submitted that article more than a year ago."

Miller wrote the story during an advanced feature writing class with Dave Waddell, The Orion adviser. A version of the story was picked up by the San Francisco Chronicle a few years ago.

"Jon is a gifted writer," Waddell said. "I don't know that I've encountered another student who enjoys writing quite as much as Jon seems to. When he worked for The Orion he wrote a hilarious satire column that kept the campus laughing."

Miller is the lead editor for College Sports Online Inc., a division of College Sports Television.

New Dean Delights in Department

Now at the midpoint of the semester, Phyllis Fernlund is settling into her



new position as dean of California State University, Chico's College of Communication and Education.

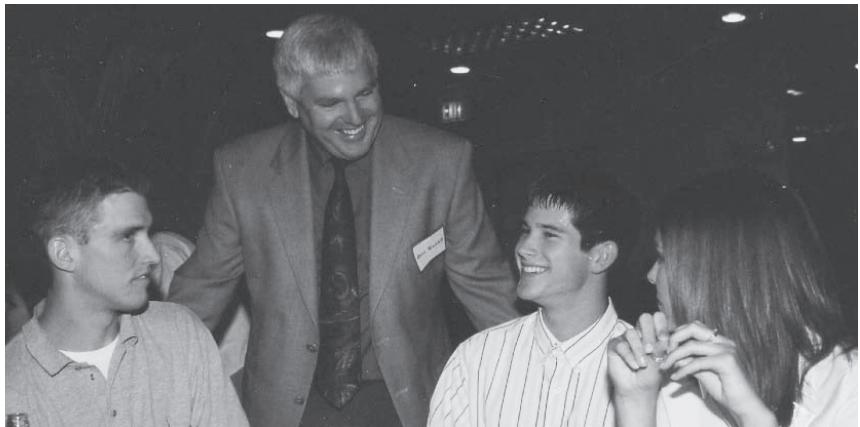


Fernlund supports a plan for its progress that includes updating technology used by students, remodeling the lab used by The Orion writers in Plumas Hall and increasing regional recognition of the quality of the journalism program.

The journalism department has not disappointed Fernlund. She attended The Orion and Tehama Group Communications meetings and is pleased with what she has seen.

"I am so impressed with the accomplishments of the journalism department," Fernlund said.

Top Journalism Students Earn Recognition



Dave Waddell (standing) chats with students at the 16th annual School of Communication Academic Achievement Dinner. From left: Ryan Saballow, recipient of the School of Communication Outstanding Student Award; Scott Jason, recipient of the Waddell/Bleske Orion Award and A.H. Weibel/A.W. Bramwell Scholarship; Kristina Seward, recipient of the Tom R. Hennion Scholarship.

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Department of Journalism
CSU, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0600

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Copy Editors: Jessica Bearers, Holly Lebedter
Nelle Price, Kristin Saladow, Tima Zemlyak.
Contributors: Naomi Angel, Emily Bartaglia,
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