Lecture Series Hosts Distinguished PR Practitioners

By Sofia Bert

Every year the SDSU School of Journalism and Media Studies hosts the Allen H. Center Distinguished Lecture, an opportunity for both students and professionals to gain top tier knowledge from the best public relations practitioners today.

This year, President and CEO of the Institute for Public Relations (IPR), Dr. Tina McCorkindale spoke at SDSU’s Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center on February 11th. McCorkindale’s talk was titled “What CCOs (Chief Communication Officers) Need You to Know in the Public Relations Industry.” Before becoming the President and CEO of IPR, McCorkindale taught as a professor for 15 years, and spent ten years working in corporate communications and analytics. She also has experience in digital media and behavioral science media with more than 150 presentations and publications.

McCorkindale was the second speaker to be featured during the Allen H. Center Distinguished Lecture in Public Relations. The lectures are named for Allen H. Center, founder of The Public Relations Student Society of America and former SDSU lecturer.

About Our Student Author Sofia Bert

Major and degree: Journalism major with a Public Relations emphasis, International Studies minor.

How SJMS is preparing me for my career: SJMS is preparing me for my career with all of the opportunities they have within the college. In addition to all of my classes, which provide real world insight to life as a journalist or PR professional, there are many different clubs and organizations that I have been involved with. I used to be a part of the Daily Aztec and KCR college radio. I’m still involved with PRSSA and with my internship in PSFA I’m able to gain even more real world experience.

Scholarship: As an international studies minor, there is a study abroad requirement. I have been lucky enough to study abroad in both Italy and Thailand. My most recent trip was to Italy to study Art and Anatomy. I found the Brenda and Dave Rickey Foundation Study Abroad Endowed Scholarship when it was posted on the JMS homeroom and decided to apply. The scholarship was so generous to gift me over $3,000 towards my study abroad trip which helped me immensely. With this scholarship I also have the opportunity to meet with the funders for lunch and I am so excited to begin to build that professional relationship with people who are interested in me and furthering my academics.
Since joining SDSU in Fall 2007, I’ve learned that every semester brings a new surprise. The surprise for Spring 2019, however, is one to remember. A few months ago, repairs began on the roof of the Professional Studies and Fine Arts building, the home to SJMS offices and many of our classes. This construction work triggered the release of fumes which made it difficult to work. In the middle of March, the building was closed entirely while these repairs could be completed and the fumes eliminated. (Here’s an FAQ for detailed information on the whole issue.)

Was relocating dozens of offices and more than 200 hundred classes, in the middle of a semester, a logistical challenge? The answer is an undeniable yes, though thanks to ingenuity, flexibility, and tireless effort, this dramatic relocation was accomplished. Despite this most unusual plot twist, our faculty and students continued to produce award-winning research, present at conferences, and publish their latest work. It is a testament to the dedication of the SJMS faculty and staff, along with staff members from the PSFA Dean’s office and other units on campus, that the educational mission of SDSU continued to move forward. The PSFA building will be open and functioning again very soon, and we look forward to returning to familiar surroundings.

We’re also looking forward to our Grad Gala on May 18, a ceremony to honor all of our graduating students this year, along with scholarship and other award winners. The event is open to community members, alumni, and anyone else in the SJMS family who wants to help us celebrate. If you haven’t already done so, put this on your calendar and RSVP soon.

Dr. Noah Arceneaux
Interim Director, School of Journalism & Media Studies
SDSU HACKATHON

By Amy Schmitz Weiss, Hackathon Organizer

The 3rd Big Data Hackathon was held on March 9 and March 16 at San Diego State University. This event brought together over 200 people from the SDSU campus and San Diego community to brainstorm ideas on how to make San Diego a better place through big data.

The School of JMS was one of the sponsors for this university-wide event in which participants were given the opportunity to work in diverse teams by discipline (ranging from marketing to engineering) to come up with an innovative idea, platform, app or technology related to the theme of Smart City. The Smart City theme incorporated subtopics that the teams could ideate from: smart education, smart environment, smart transportation, and smart health.

Teams had a week between March 9 and March 16 to formulate their idea and then pitch their final innovation to a judge panel the following Saturday. Those teams that had effective pitches were eligible to win one of several prizes (ranging from First Prize for Best Idea to Strongest Teamwork). Prize money totaled more than $3,200 to award to the winning teams.

Sixteen teams presented on the 16th and the ideas ranged from voice AI technology for the elderly in San Diego to affordable air quality sensors for San Diegans. Eight teams were awarded prize money.

This year’s event featured a special set of awards provided by the Zip LaunchPad in which teams that won would receive additional monies and support from the Zip LaunchPad to help get their idea onto the next stage of possible implementation.

The next Big Data Hackathon is scheduled for 2021.

NAHJ SDSU Welcomes Local Journalists

By David Santillan, NAHJ Treasurer


The National Association of Hispanic Journalists at San Diego State University hosted a panel of reporters on Feb. 21 to discuss how to maintain a “beat.” The reporters included Dana Littlefield, a public safety editor from the San Diego Union-Tribune, Lisa Halverstadt, a local government reporter from Voice of San Diego and Steve Walsh, a military reporter at KPBS. Each journalist spoke about the importance of cultivating sources and understanding the community they work in to maintain a successful beat. These types of panels help journalism students prepare for the field by hearing first-hand the challenges they’ll face and how to overcome them. While NAHJ’s foundations are in providing support for Hispanic journalists their events are open to anyone to attend. We encourage all JMS students to follow the NAHJ at SDSU Facebook page and @NAHJSDSU on Twitter to hear about upcoming events and chapter meetings.