Graduation Gala 2019

The School of Journalism & Media Studies hosted its Graduation Gala on May 18, celebrating the Class of 2018-2019. Interim Director Dr. Noah Arceneaux led the evening’s ceremonies with assistance from Dr. Nathan Rodriguez, Dr. Amy Schmitz Weiss, and Dr. Rebecca Nee.

Over 200 guests, including students, faculty, staff and guests, came together for photographs, networking, dinner, and a formal ceremony. Graduates received individual recognitions, awards and academic honors. The program also honored graduates from the masters programs in Mass Communication and Learning Design and Technology.

Lauren Mapp ('19) was named as the Outstanding Graduate award for the entire school of JMS.

“To be picked for this incredible honor is such a great way to conclude my time at San Diego State University. I will carry the lessons from my professors with me as I embark on my career as a professional journalist, and I'm thankful to have had the opportunity to work with them over the past two years,” said Mapp.

Other graduates were equally thrilled to be participating in the ceremony.

“I loved being able to celebrate this exciting time with my family, and to have them meet the unforgettable professors and mentors that have guided me throughout my time at SDSU was truly special,” said public relations major and scholarship recipient Katie Weatherred ('19). “I sincerely encourage future classes to attend Grad Gala because it gives you the chance to celebrate your monumental achievement in an intimate setting where you can soak up every moment amongst those closest to you.”

Media studies graduate Daisha Currence Crutcher ('19) also had high praise for the event.

“I really enjoyed the opportunity to be in a space with my peers, professors, friends and family to honor and celebrate the graduating class of 2018-2019. Looking forward to attend many more,” said Crutcher.

The SJMS Class of 2019 formally graduated the morning after Graduation Gala on May 19 at Viejas Arena, along with the rest of the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts (PSFA).
One of the most enduring myths about educators is that we don’t work during the summer. Students imagine that we escape to the beach the moment the final exam is over, only returning to campus the morning the fall semester begins. In reality, even for those of us not teaching summer classes, this phase of the year is a time to conduct valuable research, travel to conferences, plan for upcoming classes, and the myriad of other necessary actions that ensure the best educational experience for students in the upcoming semesters.

The summer of 2019 is proving to be no different … Dr. Minjuan Wang, of our LDT program, is presenting at a conference in Morocco this month (June), along with recent LDT M.A. graduate Elizabeth Damiano. Dr. Barbara Mueller continues her tradition of productive summers, with presentations at international conferences in Germany and Austria. In August, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) has its annual conference. AEJMC is a major focal point for our research efforts, and work that is presented here often ends up in top-tier journals. This year, three of our professors have work accepted at this conference; Dr. Nathan Rodriguez, Dr. Amy Schmitz Weiss, and Dr. Hongmei Shen. Meanwhile, Dr. Yang Feng travels to Chicago to participate in the Advertising Educational Foundation’s Visiting Professor Program. We’re confident that multiple research publications, in top-tier journals, will follow from all this activity. Here on campus, serious work is underway to temporarily relocate the JMS offices and facilities. Our offices will be in the Adams Humanities building, once the dust settles, and we’re working with campus to shift our lab classrooms to the Gateway Center building, next to the College of Extended Studies. Much work remains to be done, but we are confident that our tradition of quality teaching – and research – will continue unabated.

In closing, I hope everyone is having a good summer so far – either in terms of productivity, or rest. Be on the lookout for plenty of exciting news about upcoming projects and events for JMS in the new semester!

Dr. Noah Arceneaux

Congratulations to Dean Sha!

After nearly 15 years at SDSU, Dr. Bey-Ling Sha, Ph.D., APR, is joining our sister campus of California State University Fullerton to serve as the Dean of the College of Communications. For this past year, she was the Acting Associate Dean of the College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts. Prior to this role, she was the Director of the School of Journalism and Media Studies, from 2013-2018, where she led us in launching a bilingual media writing initiative, growing the Glen M. Broom Center for Professional Development in Public Relations, co-creating the Area of Excellence in Digital Humanities and Global Diversity, earning re-accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, and updating school curriculum with cutting-edge courses in digital and social media.

As sad as we are to see her leave, we congratulate her and wish her continued success in this next phase of her professional life.
SDSU Public Relations majors in the senior capstone campaigns course, JMS 585 Professional Practices in PR, earned important media coverage for their clients this year. Dr. Kaye Sweetser, professor in the School of Journalism and Media Studies, believes the best way for young practitioners to put together the theories and skills learned in the JMS program is through application with real-world clients. In JMS 585, the students completed their first-ever campaigns through an agency-model in which they research, plan, implement and evaluate a campaign for a client. Using nonprofits as campaign clients allows the students to begin their careers as stewards to the community and to expand their skillsets.

Below are descriptions of the nonprofit clients, their campaign goals, and resulting media coverage.

Client: **Wildcoast**  
Campaign: Raise national-level awareness of the transborder sewage issue (client cared more about raising the issue than their name)  
Coverage in **Bloomberg**

Client: **C4 Foundation**  
Campaign: promote the newly acquired C4 Ranch to SEAL families  
Coverage in **Coronado Times**  
About this coverage: As a part of their JMS 585 Professional Practices in PR experience, students in Dr. Sweetser’s spring 2019 course supported the San Diego-based nonprofit the C4 Foundation. The charity, named after US Navy SEAL Chief Charlie Keating IV who was killed in action, focuses on strengthening family bonds of those serving in the elite special forces through special programs before, during and after deployment. The PR team held Operation Ohana at the newly-purchased C4 Ranch, hosting SEAL families for an afternoon of aloha-themed fun for the entire family. Given that the majority of SEAL families live and work in the Coronado area, the PR team targeted their media relations efforts on the hyper-local publication the Coronado Times. The PR team escorted a reporter during Operation Ohana at the ranch and set up interviews with foundation advisors to get the word out to the larger SEAL community.

Client: **Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve**  
Campaign: promote how the public can legally access the reserve (permit only)  
Coverage in: **Valley News**, **The Press Enterprise**, **Center for Regional Sustainability Newsletter**, and KUSI 6 p.m. Saturday news segment (no link).  
About this coverage: Working with the Sage Project at SDSU, students in Dr. Sweetser’s spring 2019 JMS 585 Professional Practices in PR capstone class promoted the Santa Margarita Ecological Reserve this semester. The students created the SMER Spring Splash campaign, working to promote how the public can safely and legally access the reserve. The cornerstone of the event was a guided hike to the Santa Margarita River, which is southern California’s last free-flowing river. Students successfully pitched local media and received coverage on KUSI and in local newspapers, in addition to internal SDSU coverage highlighting the students’ involvement in the SMER’s community outreach efforts. The Sage Project is a program within the Center for Regional Sustainability at San Diego State University whose simple goal is sustainable learning through community-based projects. Under the Sage Project umbrella, classes around campus participate in community-based service learning projects. Dr. Sweetser’s students worked with Sage in previous semesters for other classes and this is the program’s first time working with Sage for a capstone client where students implement their public relations campaign for the client.