

Journalism Advisory Committee Meeting

5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11, 2023

Santa Rosa Campus, 1501 Mendocino Ave.

Garcia Hall, Rm. 106

Voting members in attendance:

Gabe Meline, online arts editor, KQED

Matt Villano, freelance writer/editor (via Zoom)

Karen Hart, freelance

Greta Mart, KRCB radio (via Zoom)

Ani Weaver, publisher, La Voz Bilingual Newspaper (via Zoom)

Martin Espinoza, reporter, Press Democrat

Allison Gibson, Sr. Editor, Business / Editor / North Bay Business Journal

Sr. Editor/Multimedia and Innovation, Press Democrat

Members Attending as Proxy: None

Voting members absent: None

Faculty, staff and administrators in attendance: Anne Belden, journalism faculty and Oak Leaf adviser, Santa Rosa Junior College,, Jennifer O'Mahony, Communication Studies Dept.

I. Call to order.

Anne called the meeting to order at 5.09pm.

II. Roll Call / Introduction of all members

All attending introduced themselves.

Allison is a new member of the committee.

III. Approve minutes of Dec. 6, 2022 meeting

Gabe motioned to approve the minutes and Allison seconded.

IV. Program Director's report (Anne Belden)

A. Report on Spring and Fall 2023 journalism classes —JOUR 1: Intro to Journalism; JOUR 2: News Gathering & Writing; JOUR 59: Photojournalism; JOUR 56: Editing for the News Media; and JOUR 5: Multimedia Reporting

B. Oak Leaf (JOUR 52A/B/C/D: News Media Practice) general update, including budget, ad revenue, newsroom, awards, conferences

C. CTE equipment update

D. London 2024

Anne gave an update on the journalism classes and The Oak Leaf in general.

Spring '23 saw the first photojournalism class since Spring 2020, when it was interrupted by Covid. The department hired a new instructor, Brian Frank, who freelances for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and other publications. This was a highly successful course that students completed, having made impressive strides in their photography skills. We are now looking into how we might have him come teach both semesters. Michael Combs, just won first place in online photo essay for his final JOUR 59 photography project on Shone Farm. The department has used grant money, obtained through the career education program, to purchase cameras – Sony A7III and A7IVs. As a result, we were able to loan the students great equipment to use for the class.

In Spring students also attended the journalism conference, organized jointly by the ACP, SPJ and CMA. This combination of organizations attracted more high-profile speakers. As the conference was in San Francisco, we were able to bring 20 students to attend. Students competed in multiple competitions, and did very well, especially in the on-the-spot competitions. We won a pacesetter award, which is given to colleges who win most awards. The coming Spring conference is in San Diego, and given the distance, we may have a smaller contingent attending.

In Spring we also produced a 52-page magazine, including a profile of Maia Kobabe, author of *Gender Queer*, America's most-banned book. Every student had to write an article – several had to be rewritten several times as students are new to the field. Taking what we learned from this edition, and from the reintroduction of podcasting, which had stopped during the pandemic, we gave Fall students the option to do one or other. We now have a smaller magazine – resulting in some necessary cost savings, and we also feature several pod casts on the Oak Leaf web site. In the Fall edition we sold enough ads to cover printing costs.

Allison remarked that the article on Maia Kobabe was notable.

This Fall we offered Journalism 5, formerly Journalism 55, which is now UC transferable. We also debuted the first JOUR 56 editing class. This was the first time since the pandemic that we had enough students to make a class, as with more students on campus it became easier to recruit. We have class of 14. Anne taught the first eight weeks, focused on print editing and Gina Baleria from Sonoma State, taught video and audio editing. A lot of the institutional knowledge had disappeared during the pandemic, and it's nice to see that skills regrowth.

We now have five former students working for Sonoma Media Group, including several photographers. We also have a couple of interns at KQED.

Over the break we plan to start work on website redesign. We also have some marketing money that we want to use for campaigns within the JC and area high schools.

In Fall '24 Anne is going to London to teach in the Study Abroad program for three months. SRJC is hiring a full-time replacement, and the hiring process will begin in early '24. Anne is also hoping to apply for a sabbatical, though would return between the London program and a potential sabbatical.

V. Discussion items

- A. Update on area job market, needs of news organizations
- B. New student opportunities for internships and jobs
- C. Reporting partnerships, especially for breaking news

We went around the group to hear what attendees have to say about the job market and internship opportunities.

Gabe – hasn't hired anyone in a long time. He is trying to shift money around to enable hiring but definitely sees a hiring slowdown at KQED. The team is being cautious at the moment with hiring. Some positions are not being filled when people retire. One of the challenges for KQED is that the San Francisco Standard is paying 25-35% higher than KQED and attracting recruits. The main competition in the past was the SF Chronicle, which paid a little less than KQED. This creates a new issue for KQED. Internships have not been affected and the six-month rotations continue. Gabe noted KQED gets 200+ applications for each opening so it is very competitive.

Martin/Allison - The Press Democrat has a new executive editor from the Houston Chronicle who starts in Jan. "We've added some interns but no new reporters. We lost some positions through attrition and haven't replaced those. We have an intern doing layout for North Bay Business Journal, which is new for that position but somewhat driven by staff attrition. There still is a Napa intern position but we're not sure what the future holds. We will be looking for a business journalism intern for next summer."

Karen – "As a freelancer, I'm out of the loop on hiring. I imagine that the North Bay Business Journal would welcome inquiries. Jason Walshe is the contact there." Anne thought that they were hesitant to pay interns and added that JC students are usually working multiple jobs and can't afford to take unpaid positions.

Greta – "We need interns, we have a paid program and welcome applicants. However, we have no jobs currently."

Matt – "In my field as a freelancer the outlook is still the same with fewer and fewer opportunities in traditional journalism and more opportunities for writing projects telling stories in non-traditional areas. I am really surprised by the number of random

regional opportunities that are one-offs, SF Gate, SF Chron, AFAR magazine for example. The SF Chronicle continues to expand its custom publication division and that is paying reasonably well.”

Ani – “I am trying to retire and don’t have any hiring opportunities currently.”

Reporting partnerships/Breaking news partnerships

Anne shared that she has about 25 student reporters this semester, probably half of them are in their second or third year or the journalism course. She would like to discuss the opportunity to consider setting some kind of partnership up for breaking news. Greta – “KRCB would definitely want to be part of that, and we have a budget for freelancers. In 2017 we had an intern who wrote for The Oak Leaf and also did freelance for the Press Democrat.”

Martin – “When we get an intern from either SSU or SRJC, the institutional knowledge they bring and their connections with the local community are invaluable. We saw that when we covered the issues around the SSU president.”

VI. Action items

Anne explained that, as Journalism falls into the career education track, it results in being able to apply for grant money for equipment and other needs. Part of the requirements for those grants is having an advisory committee. This group, based on their input and background, helps shape the courses the discipline offers. If there are areas where we should offer a class, Anne encouraged the group to please bring them up.

Martin – “Why do you have a whole class for editing?”

Anne “We’re trying to teach students the gamut of skills, especially since needs are broader now. Students coming out of the pandemic are arriving less skilled. We are hoping an editing class will help them catch up to the level of pre-pandemic years. It’s not just skills, it’s their work ethic. This is an issue across the college, not just in journalism. Grades don’t seem as important to students as in the past. Also, in the past reporters worked up the ladder to become editors but this is no longer necessarily the case. There also isn’t as much class time to teach editing skills. Students arrive with rougher basic skills; they are not as good at interviewing, nor do they arrive with the strong writing skills we experienced in the past.”

Gabe – “Social media jobs are growing ever closer to reporting jobs – and those are the jobs that are open. The fact that JOUR 56 has the audio/video element is an advantage.”

A. Approve course schedule options for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Journalism Course listings:

J1: Intro to Journalism

J2: News Gathering and Writing (advanced)

J5 (Previously 55): Multimedia Journalism

J52A/B/C/D: News Media Production (Oak Leaf)

J54A/B: Magazine Production

J56: Editing for the News Media

J59: Photojournalism

Current Spring 2024 schedule: J1, J2, J59, J52A/B/C/D

Proposed Fall 2024 schedule for sub: J1, J5 J52A/B/C/D

Anne in London: J2/J52A

Proposed Spring 2025 schedule: J1, J2, J59, J52A/B/C/D

We may do the next meeting of the Committee in late August given Anne is going to London for the Fall semester.

A motion to the approve Fall '24 schedule was proposed by Gabe. Karen seconded it. Everyone was in favor.

VII. Adjournment

Anne adjourned the meeting at 6.10. pm.