

Journalism Advisory Committee Meeting

5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 26, 2024

Via Zoom

Voting members in attendance:

Gabe Meline, online arts editor, KQED

Karen Hart, freelance, former editor North Bay Business

Greta Mart, News Director, KRCB radio

Martin Espinoza, Sr. reporter, Press Democrat

Allison Gibson, Sr. Editor, Business / Editor / North Bay Business Journal
Editor/Visuals, Press Democrat

Amy Windsor, Community Journalism Team Lead, 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; Gina Baleria, journalism faculty SRJC; Rachel Smith, Career Education, SRJC; Albert Gregory, journalism faculty SRJC; Mark Fernquest, journalism TA, SRJC.

I. Call to order.

Anne called the meeting to order at 5.06pm. Gina Baleria supported the call to order and Karen Hart seconded.

II. Roll Call / Introduction of all members

All attending introduced themselves.

Amy is a new member of the committee.

III. Approve minutes of Dec. 11, 2023 meeting

Gabe motioned to approve the minutes and Karen seconded. Motion passed.

IV. Program Director's report (Anne Belden)

A. Report on Spring 2024 journalism classes —JOUR 1: Intro to Journalism;
JOUR 2: News Gathering & Writing; JOUR 59: Photojournalism

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.

She taught the first editing class in many years in Fall '24 (JOUR 56) and saw a great improvement in editing of The Oak Leaf Magazine issues published after the class. Editing skills had fallen off during Covid, and the class worked very well to renew and sharpen students' skills.

Anne, with help from TA Mark Fernquest, brought 20 students to San Diego in Spring for the annual JACC conference, which is paired with a national conference put on by ACP and the College Media Association. Students entered lots of on-the-spot competitions and did well. They won awards in Online General Excellence, Magazine General Excellence and a Pacesetter award for being one of three colleges to win the most awards. Every student who attended left with an award – many in categories where we haven't won before.

We reintroduced podcasting this past year. We now have a recording studio that is almost completely installed. We apparently did more podcasting than any other community college this Spring. This semester we are going to ensure that all students cover all facets of podcasting: recording, writing, editing.

We did a major redesign of the Oak Leaf web site using a service offered by the company that hosts the site. We had received a judging comment at the NorCal conference that the site was dated and somewhat mixed styles, a result of generations of students passing through, each with individual styles. We won online general excellence in spring, largely as a result of the site revamp.

SRJC started the first 'breaking news' internship with the Press Democrat. Amy Moore from the Oak Leaf did the first one and parlayed that into a summer job and then an internship with Cal Matters covering higher education.

JOUR 1 and 2 were somewhat smaller classes in Spring but this may have been a fluke as classes now have wait lists in Fall. We always have larger classes in Fall. Most of JOUR 1 students, however, joined The Oak Leaf and Anne had an amazing class there. JOUR 59 led by Brian Frank was also very successful, and students want to take more classes with him. We are now looking into offering an additional class stacked with JOUR 59 so that students can continue to develop their photography skills.

Anne just got a new equipment grant of \$75,000, which includes \$25,000 to finish the work on the recording studio. Having grant funds for equipment and marketing is probably a factor in increased class numbers as we now have marketing materials that increase the visibility of the program throughout college. Anne also did outreach at some high schools in Spring and was able to distribute swag bought through the marketing grant. Thanks to grant funds we were able to give every student taking Photojournalism a camera for the coursework. In Fall the same cameras will be used for JOUR 5 – Multimedia Journalism. This helps students become more rounded having audio and video skills as well as writing skills.

LONDON

Anne is leaving for three months, teaching a semester abroad in London and will be replaced by Albert Gregory. She is adding a London branch to the Oak Leaf for the semester. Anne has one current Oak Leaf student in London who will be reporting from there and serving as the London Bureau Chief.

BUDGET

Anne also talked about The Oak Leaf budget and how SRJC is the only community college that has to pay for its own magazine production, which the college organizes by loaning \$20,000 to the Oak Leaf annually. Other colleges are given anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 to cover costs. Last year we covered printing costs through advertising but there are additional costs for web hosting, software and travel. This means that we have an annual deficit. Anne just met with the president, Dr. Garcia to discuss this. We are starting this year down \$3,000 as we had to carry forward a deficit. The college had suggested not doing the magazine to save costs however that would impact students, and we would lose institutional knowledge where more senior students can help newcomers, so Anne persuaded the college not to cut the magazine with the intent that advertising would cover printing costs. She asked if anyone had ideas on how to raise funds?

Karen Hart suggested going to some large local community businesses with a request for funding – Redwood Credit Union, Ongaro & Sons, Exchange Bank, Simpson Sheet Metal, Friedmans. “I think they would be willing to support SRJC and student journalism.” Anne noted that they had reached out to some of those entities for advertising.

Anne: “We are looking for a steady source of funding, a multi-year commitment so that we’re not constantly looking for budget.”

Gina: “Chabot College had worked out a deal with Sony and had an amazing equipment deal and Cannon did that at Berkeley.”

Discussion items

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

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

Amy: “We are still in process of building our community journalism team. We are looking for reporters who can pivot between beats as we cover six different cities. Flexibility is a great skill.”

Allison: "Journalists need to be familiar with lots of areas as general assignments can cover items from budget to court appearances. We are still looking for data-driven reporting. We find students don't have exposure to that coming out of school."

Greta: "As an audio journalist, you have to be multimedia savvy, you need photo skills for the web site and video/reel. The reporter is expected to be comfortable doing all of these tasks. It increases the audience reach."

Gabe: "There is a craze on video lately and journalists are expected to post their stories on social media and have strong video skills. That's very attractive to hiring managers. AI is also a topic of discussion but for now KQED has a rule that nothing generated by AI can be aired."

Greta: "Same with us."

Anne: "I did get some AI generated work for student finals. I tried to use AI to generate an AP style quiz, and it was wrong."

Gina: "We did an exercise in AI generated stories last semester, and it was great for students to see how mistakes are produced and how awkward the content can be."

VI. Adjournment

Anne adjourned the meeting at 5:44. pm.