

The Journalist

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Students examine journalism from Senator's view

By Scott Brady

Two things that Senator Dale Righter feels passionately about are helping others and increasing access to higher education.

These were two topics he spoke about at length during a recent visit to Professor Wanda Brandon's advanced reporting class Oct. 30.

Righter discussed everything from the state budget to his opinion of the media.

Righter began his discussion by talking about the most rewarding and important thing he feels he does as a senator — helping people in need. He discussed the time he spent in Lawrence County after the flooding this year.

According to the senator, being unable to help a constituent is the most difficult thing to deal with. Often times, it is child support cases crossing state lines that cause these types of problems. Dealing with other state offices is sometimes difficult, said Righter. The reasons vary. Sometimes the staff just isn't very good,

and other times it is because of differences in state laws. Whatever the reason, it is never easy to tell someone you are unable to help them, he said.

When asked what he thought the biggest problem in Illinois was at the moment, he remarked that the state budget was a mess and that needed work more than anything else first.

In the senator's opinion, the state is simply throwing money at problems without actually fixing the problem itself. Medicare is having lots of money thrown at it in an effort to increase the number of insured citizens in Illinois, but it is being done at the cost of higher education.

Senator Righter stated that he believes continued cuts in state funding to higher education programs are going to create a bigger class divide in this country. The cost of education will rise to fill the gap left by the reduction in state funding. This will limit the number of people who can afford to pay for education.

As a result, it will per-



Senator Dale Righter speaks to professor Wanda Brandon's advanced reporting class in Buzzard hall.

Photo By Christina Guadiana

petuate and worsen the class divide that already exists.

Senator Righter emphasized his point by stating that the problems facing the education system need to be handled by the state and

local governmental bodies because too many strings are attached with federal money.

Additionally, the senator

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Simek takes journalism skills to Consolidated Communications

By Catherine Bocke

Michelle Simek's internship with Consolidated Communications this semester has taken her skills from the classroom to the real world.

Simek's concentration is in public relations and the internship specializes in internal communications.

Simek works three hours a day at Consolidated Communications, typically doing many tasks that involve writing. One of her main responsibilities is helping to write a weekly newsletter called "E-Connection."

Simek is also responsible for writing "customer

compliments" in the weekly newsletter. Customer compliments are comments that customers write in to compliment an employee or the company itself.

Another task that Simek handles is writing "service anniversaries" about employees that have served an impressive number of years. These announcements let the readers know about other employees and their years at Consolidated Communications.

Though Simek works mainly for her boss, Corporate Communications Coordinator Sarah Greider, she also helps with advertising and design. Simek says she

has also taken pictures for the weekly newsletter.

So far, Simek has learned a lot of skills that aren't always easy to learn in a classroom.

"I have learned how to use AP style religiously," said Simek.

Simek says she has learned to work quickly under pressure on deadline. She is often required to get work done during her short workday. Simek says she has also learned how to write in a style specific to her company.

Although Simek applied for four internships in the area, including Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital, Consolidated Communications is the only company that called her to arrange an interview. Simek's boss offered her the internship at her first inter-

view.

Simek found out about her internship from her professors. Simek said that one of her professors, Terri Johnson, e-mailed her class about

internship opportunities.

"Terri Johnson is really good at networking and has worked with hundreds of people," said Simek.

For students currently seeking out internships, Simek

recommends using the resources you have available.

"I would recommend either going online or talking to your professors because journalism and communications professors have a lot of networking experience," said Simek.

Simek also recommends applying at any companies you know of that may be hiring interns.



Michelle Simek

Submitted Photo

I have learned to use AP style religiously.
— Simek

A Senator's perspective revealed

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stated that the responsibility of running individual school districts should fall upon the local governments because they are best suited to evaluate the needs of the community and each school.

When asked what the senator's opinion was of the media, he stated that he is generally very pleased with the local news outlets in his

region. However, in Senator Righter's opinion, journalists with some of the larger media companies decide the slant or view their articles will take before they even begin writing. This is both unprofessional and unfair, said Righter.

He also stated that he would like to see more reporters carrying and using digital recorders. Being misquoted is one of his biggest

problems with the media.

Senator Righter mentioned that he has not been pleased with the media during this presidential election. Bias on both sides of the political spectrum and time spent on irrelevant information has made most of the election coverage poor.

Overall, it was an interesting question-and-answer session. Senator Righter's discussion gave students a candid examination of the ideas and views of the dis-

trict's senator while also giving them an opportunity to think critically about the role the media plays in political coverage.

Senator Righter is the representative of Illinois' 55th district which includes Coles County. He is an Eastern graduate with a degree in accounting. He was first elected to office in 1998, when he won a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives. Righter has served on the Senate since 2003.

Downward spiraling economy may affect paid-internship opportunities for students

By Emily Zulz

No one can catch a break from current economic troubles. Besides rising food and fuel rates, students may face another hardship: finding an internship.

According to a recent panel, the failing economy may have an effect on upcoming internships for journalism students.

The panel, hosted by The Agency and the Society of Collegiate Journalists, Nov. 10, featured four senior EIU students who shared their experiences about various internships they worked during the past summer and answered questions from the audience.

Speakers were Michelle Murphy, Kristy Mellendorf, Leah Vaughn and Juliette Beaulieu.

Murphy is a communication studies major who interned in broadcasting at E! network's "True Hollywood Stories" series.

Mellendorf, a journalism major, served as a reporting intern for the Decatur Herald and Review.

Vaughn, communication

studies major, had a public relations internship with Gateway Racing.

Beaulieu, also a communications major, had a copy-editing internship at the Daily Herald.

Sophomore journalism student, Barbara Harrington, served as the panel hostess.

The question about the economy was raised during the panel by John Ryan, student publications director, who said there is far less money for the journalism co-op internship program than ever before. Ryan said the program currently has about \$10,000. In years past, the program has had \$30,000.

Ryan said he has had to line up potential newspapers for internships and at least two have said no, stating that there is not enough money in the budget. According to him, the state of the economy will likely result in fewer opportunities for paying jobs.

Still, Mellendorf said she was optimistic about students getting internships in an economic downturn. "Talent outshines the economy," she said.

Harrington gave each panelist a chance to share her intern experience. Murphy talked about her internship in Los Angeles, where she worked for approximately three months. She said she went on interviews and edited stories.

According to Murphy, one episode of "True Hollywood Story" takes three months to make, and she got to see an episode called "Serial Killers on the Loose" come together from start to finish. She also worked on stories about Heath Ledger and Britney Spears.

Mellendorf worked as a reporter from May to August with the Herald and Review. She often worked on news or life stories.

Vaughn helped at over

200 racing events. She said her work sometimes required travel to Nashville, Tenn., and locations in Indiana. She contributed to race reports and highlights on local stories.

Beaulieu worked at the Daily Herald, the third largest daily newspaper in the state. She was a rim editor when she first started, which meant she edited stories for inside pages. She said she advanced to slot editing and pagination, where she got to edit front-page stories and design pages.

When the panel opened to questions, the first question asked was when to start applying for internships. Murphy said it's never too early to start. She said she started the November before looking online and e-mailing out to prospective places. Mellendorf said she started in the spring before interviewing in the journalism department for potential internships.

Despite economic problems, internships are crucial. Paid or unpaid, they allow opportunities for students to improve weaknesses and discover hidden talents.

**Talent
outshines
the
economy.**
— Mellendorf

Pack the Place

The Agency's campaign, a huge success, attracts record number of students to basketball game

The Dec. 4 Pack The Place basketball game against Tennessee State had the highest student attendance of the '08-'09 basketball season with more than 200 residents in attendance and is set to draw in even more students at the final competition on

Thursday, Jan. 15.

The final Pack The Place residence hall competition on Jan. 15 will take place at the women's basketball game against Eastern Kentucky at 5:30 p.m. in Lantz Arena. Residents who attend will receive a free EIU rally

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Students brainstorm with branch manager of local Red Cross

By Danielle Ruggiero

Eastern students were given an opportunity to give back to the community when local Branch Manager of American Red Cross, Valerie Karr came to speak to the Daniel Thornburgh chapter of PRSSA.

Karr recently gave a presentation to the PRSSA chapter meeting about what the Red Cross does locally and discussed what possible partnerships could exist between PRSSA and the local Red Cross.

The group brainstormed and one idea that was conceived involved PRSSA creating a marketing piece aimed at EIU's campus population to recruit donors

and volunteers for upcoming fundraising events.

Karr later visited Professor Terri Johnson's public relations techniques class. Students and Karr discussed several marketing campaigns the American Red Cross had undertaken and she highlighted the challenges and successes of those campaigns.

She also discussed the immediate emergency relief fund that the American Red Cross sponsors. "This fund al-

lows relief for those throughout the country," according to Karr. She explained the

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— Karr

Media Awareness Day that the Red Cross held on Nov. 25 to help raise awareness of the need for donations to replenish the immediate emergency fund.

A resident of Springfield, Ill., Karr began volunteering and helping with the Red Cross many years ago. "I fell in love with the organization and what it stands for as soon as I got in-

involved" Karr said.

After her own efforts in volunteering, Karr eventually became branch manager. She and her team work mainly on local disaster responses, providing health and safety training programs in addition to giving free disaster preparedness presentations all around the area.

The American Red Cross is a worldwide organization created to help others and reach out to those that are less fortunate. Anyone can help, they just need to take the first step and contact someone like Valerie Karr and volunteer. Opportunities are available. Anyone is invited to help volunteer and make a difference in someone else's life today.

Pack the Place (continued)



towel and a free EIU athletic T-shirt upon check-in and can enter to win a new Samsung Digital Camera, compliments of the EIU athletic department.

The drawing will take place at halftime and will be open to all resident hall stu-

dents in attendance.

The drop box will be located at the Pack The Place table at the student entrance of Lantz Arena. The winning student must be present at halftime to receive the digital camera.

As with all previous Pack The Place competitions, a free pizza party will be held for the residence hall with

the highest percentage of its residents in attendance. Check-in for the Jan. 15 game will begin at 5:15 p.m. and will end at halftime.

The Agency just recently started working with the athletic department to promote student attendance. Their campaign has held drawings for prizes at two previous home games.

The Journalist

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