

Poly Press Association:
Unifying a Department Through the Development of a Student Organization

A Senior Project
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I. Introduction.....	1
Problem Statement	1
Background of the Problem	1
Setting for the Study	2
Statistics	2
Research Questions	3
Definition of Terms.....	4
Organization of Study	4
Chapter II. Literature Review	6
Reputation of Journalism	6
Information Through Social Media and Blogging.....	7
Benefits for Students.....	8
Unifying the Department	9
Chapter III. Methodology	10
Interview Design.....	10
Participants.....	11
Data Presentation	12
Delimitations.....	12
Chapter IV. Data Analysis	14
Student Survey	14
Tables	15
Answering Research Questions	18
Chapter V. Discussion	23
Summary	23

Study Findings	23
Conclusion	25
References	26
Figures.....	27
Appendix A.....	30
Interview Transcripts: Harvey Levenson.....	30
Appendix B	35
Interview Transcripts: Bill Loving.....	35
Appendix C	40
Interview Transcripts: Linda Halisky	40
Appendix D.....	46
Interview Transcripts: Brady Teufel.....	46

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: What year are you?	15
Table 2: What is your concentration?	15
Table 3: Are you male or female?.....	15
Table 4: Are you satisfied with the journalism education?.....	16
Table 5: Have you ever seriously considered switching your major?	16
Table 6: How passionate are you towards your major?	17
Table 7: Are you presently involved with any organizations?	18
Table 8: Would you be interested in contributing to a website?.....	18

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Poly Press Association logo	27
Figure 2: Poly Press Association website	27
Figure 3: Poly Press Association Twitter page	28
Figure 4: Email request sent out to faculty members	28
Figure 5: Email request sent out to students	29
Figure 6: SurveyMonkey survey done by students	29

Abstract

The Poly Press Association is designed to help students who are enrolled in the journalism department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California as they go through their academic years in the university. The goal of this project is to unite all three of the department's concentrations – Public Relations, News Editorial, and Broadcasting – to create a more holistic environment. With the help of faculty intuition and student opinion, this student organization is centered on helping and building a stronger department.

Chapter I: Introduction

Problem Statement

The reason for this study is to determine whether or not creating a student organization will help diminish the segregation between concentrations and staff members in the journalism department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. By examining what students need in order to gain the utmost experience and knowledge in the university as well as creating a unifying work environment for staff, the development of the Poly Press Association aims to complete both the needs of the students and faculty members.

Background of the Problem

California Polytechnic State University thrives itself on being the best. For the nineteenth year in a row, Cal Poly has been named the best public-master's university in the West, a title deemed by the U.S. News and World Report's 2012 America's Best Colleges guide. A good reason for this has to do with the university's College of Engineering program, which was dubbed second place in the best public master's engineering program in the country. Undoubtedly, there is much to be proud of and appreciated at this university. However, because of the success the university has to offer, its celebrity limelight seems to outshine some of the other departments the school has to offer. For instance, the College of Liberal Arts has been hidden in the shadows. More specifically, the journalism department is not something that receives too much discussion around the university. And when it does, it's usually not for the greatest reason.

In fact, it has appeared as though the department itself faces numerous disagreements and quarrels in the past. There were concerns regarding its current leadership from an administrative standpoint – which included staff and faculty.

In order to avoid further arguments and disputes between staff members in the department, the creation of this student organization aims to bring everyone – whether being in the news editorial, broadcast, or public relations concentration track – to unite as one department. The goal is to disengage the division that separates the three tracks and join together. The purpose of this study is to determine whether having a student organization such as the Poly Press Association within the journalism department can bring unity between staff and students as well as aid and provide an educational benefit for students interested in media.

Setting for the Study

This study is done as a Senior Project for the journalism department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. The interviews conducted were from faculty members in the department as well as those who have expert knowledge in the field. Each person interviewed were asked similar questions – if not to the exact same wording. A questionnaire was also passed out to all the students registered in the department via email. Students were asked to complete a survey that was operated by internet site, SurveyMonkey. Questions were based upon their academic position and whether or not they were satisfied with the educational experience they have received so far in their college career.

Statistics

The following statistics were provided by the journalism department. The following information indicates how many students are enrolled within the department and how many

students are within each concentration. The data is accurate as of May 2011, with a total of 334 enrolled students:

- Public Relations Students: 97
- News Editorial Students: 51
- Broadcast Students: 37
- Unreported Students: 67
- Undeclared Students: 82

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated in order to answer the different aspects of the journalism department and the field of journalism as a whole. It also questions what is beneficial for students as well as factoring in a way to diminish the siloing effect.

1. Will creating a student organization within the journalism department create a more unified department? Will faculty and staff get along better?
2. Will this organization be beneficial for students in the department? Will it increase student involvement? How satisfied are they with the education they are receiving?
3. How will students hear about this organization? Is the most effective way through social media (multimedia, blogging?)
4. How will this association make a change and a difference in the department? Would people even care about changing and improving the department? Will all three concentrations finally work together?
5. How can we strive to increase the reputation of journalism?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in order to explain a few of the issues that will be discussed throughout the study:

- Decentralization – transfer of planning, decision-making, or administrative authority from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, semi-autonomous and parastatal organizations, local governments, or non-governmental organizations (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983).
- Mustang Media – the journalism department is in the process of creating Mustang Media in hopes of collaborating all three concentrations together
- Silo effect – a lack of communication or common goals between departments in an organization (Lencioni, 2006).
- Social media – a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideology and technology foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan, 2010).

Organization of Study

This study will be separated into five distinct chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction, including the problem, the background of the problem, setting of the study, research questions, and definition of important terms. Chapter 2 is a literature review that goes in-depth on the different studies found regarding the reputation of journalism, the distribution of information through social media and blogging, benefits for students being a part of an organization, and unifying a department. Chapter 3 is the methodology of the study, including questions asked

during interviews and who was involved in the study. Chapter 4 is a collection of the data and how it answers the research questions; it is also compared to the literature review. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a summary of the complete study.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Reputation of Journalism

Journalism as a whole is slowly losing its reputation as a credible source – or so it appears to the outside world. With fabrication and phony stories being produced unexpectedly, readers are uncertain as to whether or not it is safe to trust the media with the news. In fact, in 2006, Ronald Suresh Roberts noted in his article in *Business Day* that “bad journalism itself threatens democracy.”

An example of indecency lies in 1995, when deception and false lies were being written and produced for publication in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* in relevance to the Unabomber. The two newspapers’ decision to publish the manifesto “marked a shameful episode in the history of U.S. journalism” (*Shameful Decision*, Serrin, 1995). This was due to the fact that the papers had “violated the canons of journalism on two counts: they gave in to the government, and did the government’s bidding; and they turned their news columns over to a killer” (*Shameful Decision*, Serrin, 1995). Serrin continues to inform that “newspapers have a public service role to perform; newspapers are at their best when they do this. But public service means publishing stories that inform, that educate, that expose. It does not mean becoming partner with government. It does not mean allowing one’s newspapers to be hijacked” (*Shameful Decision*, Serrin, 1995).

Another episode that tarnishes the reputation of journalism is in regards to international news. Recipient of four Emmy awards and retired journalist Tom Fenton is one of the most skilled and practiced reporters in America today. In 2005, Raymond Fischer wrote *Bad News: The Decline of Reporting, the Business of News, and the Danger to Us All* – a book review about

Fenton that includes some of Fenton's experience in the newsroom and what he has learned from his practice in the field. One of the issues Fenton addresses in his novel is the collision of the news industry after the September 11, 2001 incident. For more than a decade, Fenton claims that him and "his fellow American foreign correspondents had tracked Al Qaeda operations, but network news rarely reported what they had unearthed because the 'gatekeepers' did not consider the developments newsworthy. In failing to release Al Qaeda news from abroad, domestic media abrogated its obligation of public trust. America suffers a news gap, which, at this point, very well might present a danger for all Americans" (*Bad News*, Fischer, 2005).

Episodes such as these that revolve around the legitimacy of journalism are at stake – readers are reluctant to believe the truthfulness behind the words of journalists if what they report is not genuine news.

With the study of the journalism department, the Poly Press Association hopes to prove that journalism is still an important necessity in today's society and in Cal Poly, as well as being the main source for the way news travels around the university.

Information Through Social Media and Blogging

Social media is quickly dominating the way news travels. With the enhance use of social tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and blogs, news has expanded not only faster but much more conveniently. According to Chief Editor of *Electrical Wholesaling* Jim Lucy, "these communication mediums can be used as a legitimate business tool to inexpensively promote [one's] company" (*Electrical Wholesaling*, Lucy, 2009). He describes having a blog as "an online meeting place where people can communicate about a topic of common interest" (*Electrical Wholesaling*, Lucy, 2009). And the best part of being involved in this cyber

community is the convenience: there is no designated meeting place and everyone around the world can get together to be involved. Furthermore, blogs “work best when there is open and active communication between blog's publisher and visitors, or among visitors themselves” (*Electrical Wholesaling*, Lucy, 2009). With the intention of creating the blog specifically for those interested in furthering their career in the media field, this student organization is creating an open environment for those to express their thoughts, feelings, and insight in the journalism field.

Benefits for Students

Often times, students feel lost and disconnected with either their university or the department for which they represent. By developing this student organization, people will find studying and being a part of this environment more comfortable and enriching. This will become a “one-stop-shop” to all the information needed to learn more not only about the department but students’ experiences within the journalism field. In a study done at the Western Oregon University, researchers discovered that “overall general involvement is positively related to satisfaction with the college experience, self-confidence, development of social and leadership skills, and retention” (*To Get Involved or Not*, Strapp & Farr, 2010). When the researchers worked on major-specific experiences, students felt a “major satisfaction” in what they were studying. Because this study focused on one particular major, in this case it being psychology, Strapp & Farr also discovered that “students perceived psychology student organizations to be rewarding and beneficial for graduate studies and a career in psychology” (*To Get Involved or Not*, Strapp & Farr, 2010).

Unifying the Department

The overall goal to having the Poly Press Association is to successfully unite and have the journalism department disengage the tension and conflict that has been developed between them. This is not only to help the department and reputation itself, but to aid the students toward a more successful and enriching college experience – as a result of decentralizing the department. Unity helps faculty advisors to work together and with their involvement, helps students “to develop leadership skills and opportunities to become connected to professional networks” (*To Get Involved or Not*, Strapp & Farr, 2010).

Chapter III: Methodology

The purpose of the Poly Press Association is to improve the journalism department in order to fit the needs of the students and help make it as beneficial for them as possible.

Furthermore, with the development of this organization, the hopeful outcome is to also create a peaceful environment for the faculty members to eliminate the silo effect. Therefore, a survey was conducted to both students and staff in order to determine whether they were satisfied with the way the department was being ran and what the future had in store for the department.

Interview Design

A survey was conducted and released to all the students within the department via email. Using SurveyMonkey to conduct the questionnaire, students were asked to answer the following questions on a point-scale:

- What year are you?
- What is your concentration?
- Are you male or female?
- Are you satisfied with the journalism education you have received so far at Cal Poly?
- Have you ever seriously considered switching your major?
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least passionate and 5 being the most passionate), how passionate are you towards your major?
- Are you presently involved with any of the following: Mustang Daily, PRSSA, CPTV, and/or KCPR?

- Would you be interested in contributing to or visiting an online network that provided tutorials, internship reviews, blogs, and featured student work from all three concentrations?

On the contrary, interviews done with the staff of the journalism department were done in-person, and the following questions were asked during the interview:

- Basic Information
 - Name of staff member
 - How long have you been working in the department?
 - Which concentration?
- What do you see are the future plans of the journalism department?
- How much effort do you think students should put in to the department in order to make it more successful?
- What do you think would be the best way to collaborate all three concentrations? What can staff and/or students do?
- Do you think the journalism student organization could benefit the department? Why or why not?
- How many known-attempts have there been to form student clubs within this department? Why/how have they failed?
- Does size effect the way the department runs?
- What are some facts that contribute to the separation of the department?

Participants

The following staff members of the department participated in the study:

1. Dr. Harvey Levenson – Dr. Levenson is currently the head of the journalism department as well as the graphic communications department. He started working as chair of the department since 2010.
2. Professor Bill Loving – Professor Loving has been a member of the journalism department since 2008. He was the chair of the department starting in 2008 and left the position in 2010. He specializes in media law as well as reporting and writing.
3. Dean Linda Halisky – Halisky is the dean of the College of Liberal Arts for Cal Poly. She has been with Cal Poly for 28 years and has been in the dean position for the past eight years.
4. Assistant Professor Brady Teufel – Teufel has been with Cal Poly since 2006. He is currently the adviser for the school newspaper, *Mustang Daily*. He specializes in multimedia, visual communication, photojournalism, and news writing and reporting.

Data Presentation

The interviews that were done in-person were recorded with a digital voice recorder. After the interviews were conducted, the recordings from the device were transferred into an audio format and documented word-by-word. The transcripts – which can be found in the Appendix – follow the questions asked in the interview design, as well as additional query that would help the research. This process for collecting data was used in order to guarantee the data presented is completely objective.

Delimitations

There were some limitations when it came to researching this study. Because this analysis was designed to measure only one department within the College of Liberal Arts, only opinions

about the journalism department were asked and regarded. Moreover, in order to get in touch with faculty members to help be a part of the study, emails were sent out to all full-time staff members (see Figure 4). However, one professor was on sabbatical leave, one professor did not respond to the emailed version of the interview, and some chose not to participate – all this resulting in missed contributions. Furthermore, emails were reached out to the staff of the Mustang Daily as well as to the on-campus PRSSA organization in order to get more personalized viewpoints of students involved in department concentrations. A response was never given from both parties.

Also, an email was sent out to the entire student population within the department to participate in the survey (see Figure 5). Still, not every student answered the survey – a total of 54 students responded.

Lastly, all the material presented in the Appendix is a translated version of what was heard from the audio version of the interviews from the recording device. Due to clarity and detainment of emotions expressed, there will be limitations to the accuracy of the transcripts.

Chapter IV: Data Analysis

In this chapter, the responses of the interviewees will be analyzed and will address the research questions. Direct quotes and paraphrased responses from the interviews – which have been recorded on a digital voice recorder – will be used in order to enhance the purpose of the study. The data from the survey that the students participated in will also be examined and connected to the research questions.

Student Survey

Once again, the questions that were asked via SurveyMonkey to the students enrolled in the journalism department are the following (see Figure 6):

- What year are you?
- What is your concentration?
- Are you male or female?
- Are you satisfied with the journalism education you have received so far at Cal Poly?
- Have you ever seriously considered switching your major?
- On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least passionate and 5 being the most passionate), how passionate are you towards your major?
- Are you presently involved with any of the following: Mustang Daily, PRSSA, CPTV, and/or KCPR?
- Would you be interested in contributing to or visiting an online network that provided tutorials, internship reviews, blogs, and featured student work from all three concentrations?

A total of 54 students participated in the survey. The results are as follows.

Tables

The following tables represent the results of the survey:

Table 1: What year are you?

Year	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
First	16.70%
Second	11.10%
Third	33.30%
Fourth	29.60%
Fifth or higher	9.30%

Table 2: What is your concentration?

Concentration	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Public Relations	50.0%
News Editorial	20.4%
Broadcasting	18.5%
Undeclared	11.10%

Table 3: Are you male or female?

Male or Female	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Male	83.30%
Female	16.70%

Table 4: Are you satisfied with the journalism education you have received so far at Cal Poly?

Satisfaction Level	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Very Satisfied	5.60%
Satisfied	59.30%
Neutral	20.40%
Unsatisfied	13.00%
Unsure	1.90%

*Note: The following comments were written by students who took the survey in response with

Table 4:

- Unhappy with the inconsistency of the faculty (11/12/2011 9:22 PM).
- I just transferred to Cal Poly this quarter, I don't feel like I've gotten a good chance to get involved with it yet (11/10/2011 2:57 PM).
- Everyone needs to take multimedia classes (11/10/2011 12:03 AM).
- PR Classes range from too light workload and no structure, to poorly over-structured and unreasonable workload (11/10/2011 10:52 AM).
- I just started my concentration, and now that is why I am feeling more satisfied (11/10/2011 8:11 AM).
- There are classes in my concentration that could accomplish more (11/10/2011 8:06 AM).
- I am most satisfied with the hands on experience in CPTV, and with my main broadcast teacher (Patti) who has personally helped my out many times and has taught me a lot (11/8/2011 11:53 PM).

Table 5: Have you ever seriously considered switching your major?

Yes/No	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Yes	47.20%
No	52.80%

*Note: The following comments were written by students who took the survey in response with

Table 5:

- Seriously considering not switching major but switching concentration (11/12/2011 9:22 PM).
- I switched my major from English to journalism during my sophomore year (11/12/2011 11:07 AM).
- I currently am in the process for changing (11/11/2011 3:24 PM).
- I ended up double majoring because I got too far into Journalism it wouldn't have been worth it to fully switch majors (11/10/2011 8:11 PM).
- I am a minor in Child Development, and I once considered switching (11/10/2011 3:54 PM).
- I have thought about it, but I have never really considered switching majors (11/10/2011 12:15 AM.)
- I did want to become a grc minor, though, and wish we had to take more of those classes (11/10/2011 12:03 AM).
- Only adding a minor to enhance my major and/or increases my career opportunities (11/10/2011 11:23 AM).
- Yes, I've considered switching, but Journalism is what I ultimately want to do (11/10/2011 10:57 AM).
- Only because I didn't feel like I was getting the education I was paying for. Some of the teachers don't make you want to be a journalist. I like journalism and some classes have taught me a lot, but there is a lot of instability within the department which reflects upon the classes (11/10/2011 8:57 AM).
- The journalism department is so disorganized. Each professor/lecturer that is an advisor sends everyone to Tess instead of trying to help their students (11/10/2011 8:34 AM).
- But that was before I understood what really entailed in the profession (11/8/2011 11:53 PM).

Table 6: On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least passionate and 5 being the most passionate), how passionate are you towards your major?

Scale	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
1	3.70%
2	7.40%
3	16.70%
4	48.10%
5	24.10%

Table 7: Are you presently involved with any of the following – Mustang Daily, PRSSA, CPTV, and/or KCPR?

Yes/No	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Yes	55.60%
No	44.40%

Table 8: Would you be interested in contributing to or visiting an online network that provided tutorials, internship reviews, blogs, and featured student work from all three concentrations?

Yes/No/Maybe	Percent of Student Participants (Out of 54)
Yes	83.30%
No	5.60%
Maybe	11.10%

Research Question #1: Will creating a student organization within the journalism department create a more unified department? Will faculty and staff get along better?

Based on the information given from faculty members of the department, no matter what happens, interest in the department is still at large. Department head Harvey Levenson states that, “Yes, in the past, there were some issues, and some bad press. That’s one reason why I’m sitting in this position, as the chair. But in spite of that, it seemed like there was no change in the interest of the department. Did you know that last year, the department received about 450 applications for maybe 50 spots? In spite of whatever bad press there was out there, people are still applying to this department. It receives a very nice number of applications every year” (Appendix A). He also believes that developing a student organization will be “very helpful” to the department (Appendix A).

Furthermore, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Linda Halisky is aware of past disputes within the department but recognizes that this particular department is not the only one where faculty members may disagree – it’s an everyday common mishap. “I think it’s very important that faculty keep their own disagreements out of the teaching environment [...] Certainly journalism isn’t the only program in the college where some of the faculty don’t get along. Academics sometimes don’t get along” (Appendix C).

Research Question #2: Will this organization be beneficial for students in the department? Will it increase student involvement? How satisfied are they with the education they are receiving?

According to the student survey, 83.3% have indicated that they are interested in contributing or visiting an online network that would provide tutorials, internship reviews, blogs, and featured student work from all three concentrations (see Table 8). In terms of the satisfaction with the journalism department, 59.3% are satisfied with the education they have been receiving (see Table 4).

But, in the student survey, students have indicated that there are some organizational issues within the department and therefore, causing a slightly less satisfactory experience. Under “comments” in the survey, a student wrote, “The journalism department is so disorganized. Each professor/lecturer that is an advisor sends everyone to [the administrative systems coordinator] instead of trying to help their students” (see comments in Table 5). Another student also claimed that: “there are classes in my concentration that could accomplish more” and another said they are “unhappy with the inconsistency of the faculty” (see comments in Table 4).

Assistant professor Brady Teufel believes that creating an organization will be beneficial for students in the department. He states, “The organization could benefit the department because

it will ensure that news is being covered effectively, comprehensively. You know, there's definitely stories that the Mustang Daily misses that CPTV covers and vice-versa. So, comprehensive news coverage – it will get the word out about Mustang Media because students will be canvassing the campus and the community more effectively because we'll have more of them. Doing stories, writing press releases, collaborating with advertisers, etc. So, it will raise the profile of the department, it will provide more comprehensive news coverage that hopefully community members will tune into and utilize" (Appendix D).

Research Question #3: How will students hear about this organization? Is the most effective way through social media (multimedia, blogging?)

With the development of the Poly Press Association, the main goal is to create an intriguing blog that would interest students and get their participation. As mentioned before in Chapter 2, Chief Editor of *Electrical Wholesaling* Jim Lucy is an advocate of online blogging in order to expand and generate an audience. He describes having a blog as "an online meeting place where people can communicate about a topic of common interest" (*Electrical Wholesaling*, Lucy, 2009).

Additionally, Levenson advocates for technology to expand the world of journalism. "You can't just do broadcast, you can't just do news editorial, you can't just do PR, [...] you've got to use multimedia. Technology is part of what everyone's doing" (Appendix A).

Technology also incorporates the use of multimedia, which, according to Professor Bill Loving, has the ability to provide more in-sight to stories. "You cannot exist as a print person, you cannot exist as a broadcast person, or PR person, without doing multimedia. Multimedia includes streaming video; it also has the ability to provide depth. And as I said before, we have to

be able to promote it. Otherwise, we have no audience, and all our hard work is wasted”

(Appendix B).

Research Question #4: How will this association make a change and a difference in the department? Would people even care about changing and improving the department? Will all three concentrations finally work together?

Although the department will continue to have all three concentrations, faculty is working together to create Mustang Media – an entity that will incorporate all of the concentrations. As department head, Levenson hopes that students continue specializing in what they are interested in, yet gain some experience in the other two fields as well. He states, “There will be concentrations. Students will be able to specialize, but they’ll be required to experience all of the concentrations. Maybe they’ll want to change their concentration after they experience something else. They’ll have experience in all of them, while still specializing in one of their choice” (Appendix A).

Following Levenson’s belief, Dean Halisky supports the convergence of allowing students from different concentrations to step out of their comfort zone to try new things. She states, “Media course is sort of a capstone where you’re all doing all the bits, you know, you’re not just PR people, editorial people, or broadcast people, but everybody is doing all the bits, even if you’re specializing in one area, you get some really decent exposure and practice in the other areas” (Appendix C).

Research Question #5: How can we strive to increase the reputation of journalism?

According to Loving, the reputation of journalism is still intact. It serves its purpose around the Cal Poly campus and does its job of bringing together all aspects of the university to

deliver the news campus-wide. In the interview, he states, “We are the glue that binds the university together. We are the people who bring the stories about every different discipline into the common entity known as the Mustang Daily. I say to people that we serve democracy. And that’s what we do at Cal Poly. We let people know about those common interests that they’re not aware of. We show them how every student is – regardless of major or concentration – is still the same. The same sorts of concerns, the same sorts of aspirations. We are vital to the health of this university. We are the bridge” (Appendix B).

Chapter V: Discussion

Summary

The reason for creating a student organization within the journalism department is to get rid of the segregation between the three concentrations and work together as one team – to incorporate news editorial, public relations, and broadcasting to collaborate and unite. In order to do so, background information was needed. The research that was put forth for this study involved asking for the opinions of the faculty members as well as students who are currently enrolled in the major.

Study Findings

Based on the survey done regarding students in the department, 83.30% of students surveyed would be interested in going onto a website that sets up all the information they could need – a “one-stop-shop” if you will – about their major, including it provided tutorials, internship reviews, blogs, and featured student work from all three tracks. This was appealing to students who want to be active in their major and what they are studying – as shown in the 55.60% who are currently involved in either the Mustang Daily, PRSSA, CPTV, or KCPR. Not only that, but 59.3% of students were satisfied with the education they have received so far at Cal Poly; 52.8% have never considered changing majors since their time in the university; and on a scale of 1 to 5 – with 5 being the most passionate – 48.10% have picked the number 4 on the passionate scale about their journalism major.

It was also discovered that whatever disagreements the department had with each other is slowly being forgotten; they are all moving past previous disputes. In a statement by Dean Halisky in the interview, she states the following: “Quite frankly, I was ready to take it apart and

put its pieces in different places because you can't have a department where certain parts of it are being attacked by certain other parts of it -- whether it's faculty, or PR, or whatever, I mean, if you want it all then you must cherish it all, build it all, foster it all and I'm not in that place now. As I said, I have tremendous hope at the moment that this is going to pull out and that all parts of this program are going to be strong, respected, and that where there have been individual faculty differences, hopefully that will ease over time. If they don't, they don't, but the challenge of the department is to put its students first" (Appendix C).

Instead of concentrating on the past, faculty members are more concerned with the future. They are excited to set forth their idea of Mustang Media – which encompasses all three concentrations to give experience in each track for the students. In the words of Bill Loving, "We would have students doing stories in all platforms [...] That it would reflect the ability to reach the widest possible audience with content. And this idea that we are ticking around also includes public relations because one of the most important things we can do is promote content – that's how we stay in business" (Appendix B).

Furthermore, the future of the journalism department is looking bright. Levenson plans to continue with the department "by developing a curriculum that addresses the present and future needs of [the] students and the profession, and preparing students for the profession, and by making sure that the laboratories [at Cal Poly] are state of the art, representing current technology, and by positioning the department through faculty hires and curriculum that is looked upon as a resource for other universities and for the profession" (Appendix A). The department, too, is working on breaking down the silos. "We're presently in a new curriculum cycle, and we're coming up with a new curriculum. And the new curriculum is going to break down the silos, and it's going to get all of the concentrations integrated. So it doesn't matter what

your concentration is -- you have take courses across the board because today you have to have that knowledge, you know, facets in the field of journalism, so I've learned, in order to be successful" (Appendix A).

Conclusion

The development of the Poly Press Association would be one-step closer to helping the journalism department bridge its gaps and incorporate the need for all news editorial students, public relations students, and broadcasting students to work together (see Figure 2). Whatever issues may have occurred before, it is put in the past as the main objective of the department is to work towards effectively aiding and helping students with their academic career at Cal Poly. Bill Loving states that journalism is an important part of the way the university works, and that the department is a "vital to the health of this university. [The department is] the bridge. And some college and some departments don't necessarily like that. But we still report on them. We show how they are part of the campus as a whole" (Appendix B). Therefore, this study shows that bringing together all three concentrations within the department and disengaging the separation that divides the students of the tracks will effectively provide students with the utmost beneficial academic career and help slowing bring unity within the staff as they continue to put the students' best interest ahead.

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Figures

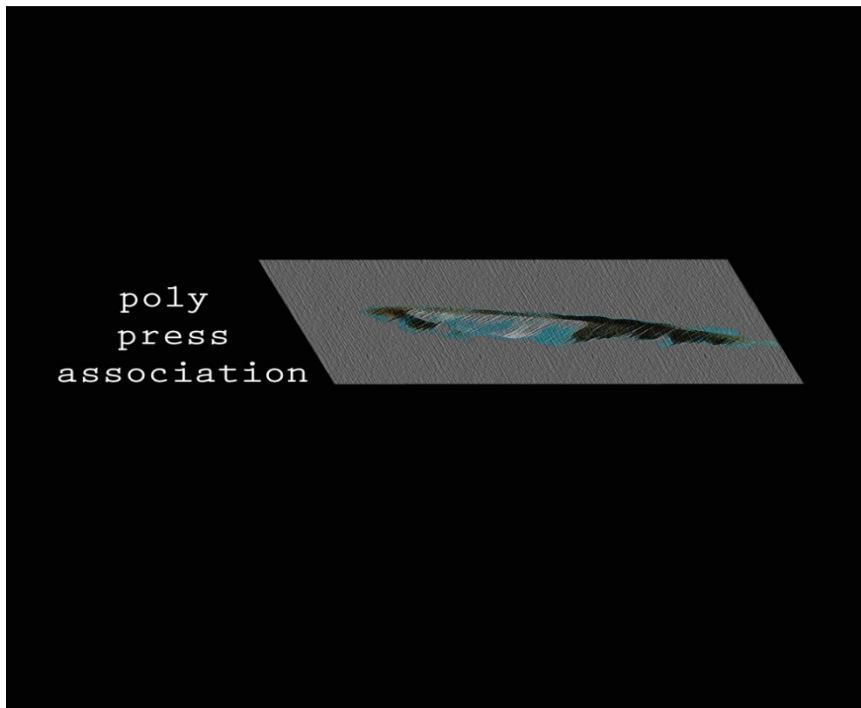


Figure 1: Poly Press Association logo

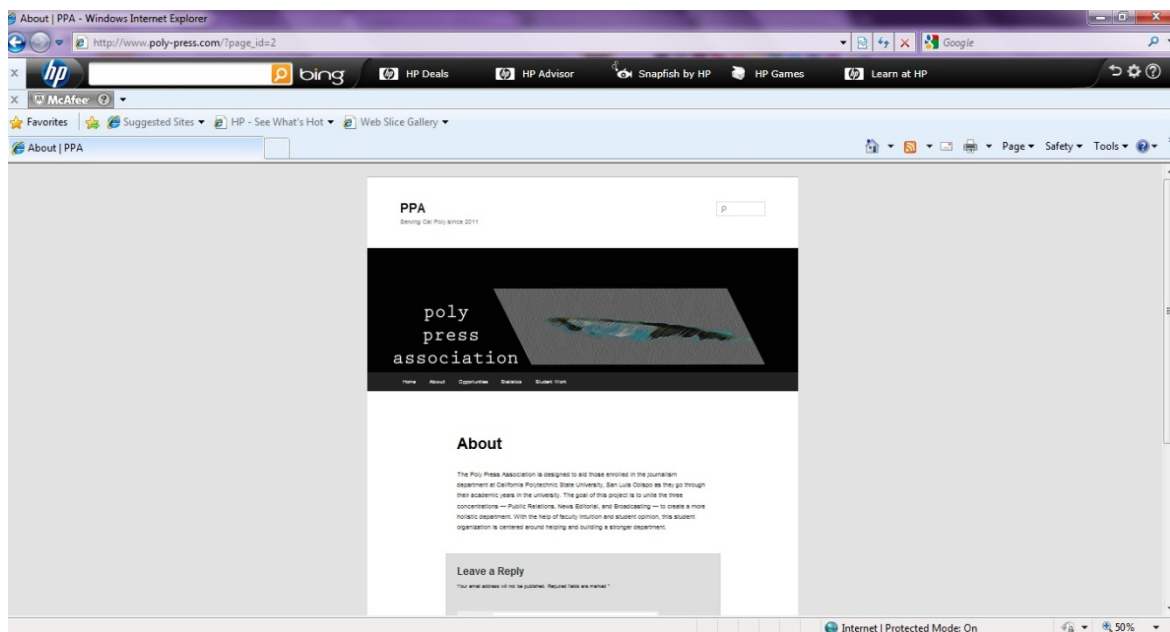


Figure 2: Poly Press Association website – <http://www.poly-press.com>



Figure 3: Poly Press Association Twitter page – <http://www.twitter.com/polypressassn>

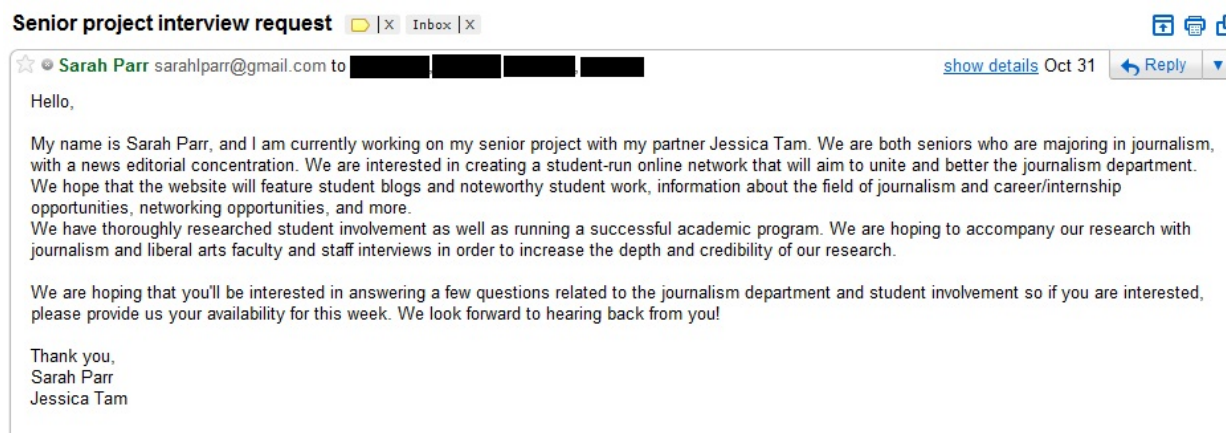


Figure 4: Email request sent out to faculty members of the journalism department

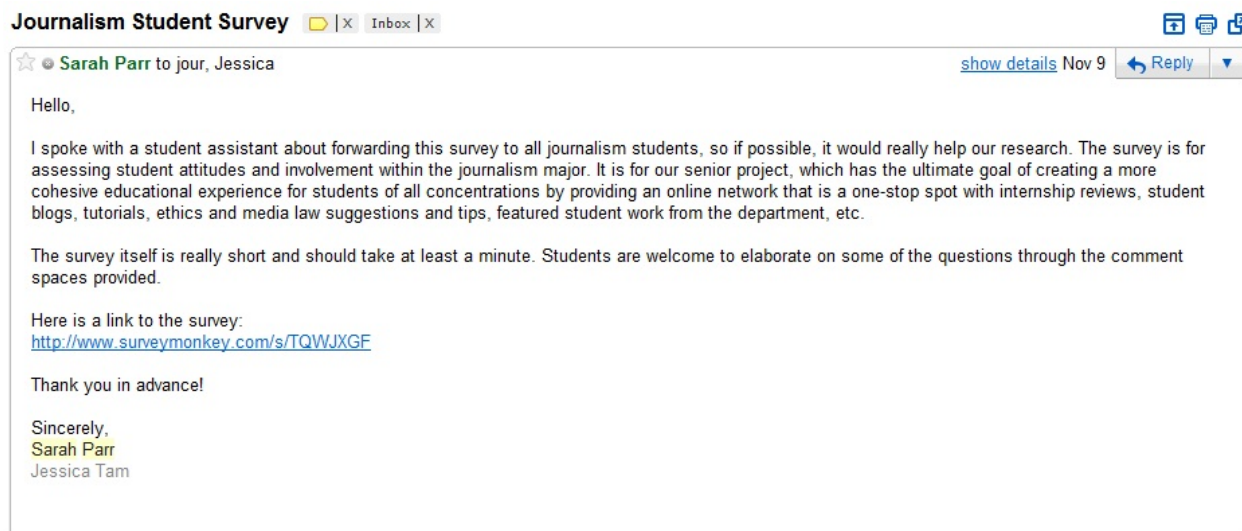


Figure 5: Email sent out to all the students enrolled in the journalism department as of November 2011

[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Journalism Student Survey - Google Chrome
 www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?PREVIEW_MODE=DO_NOT_USE_THIS_LINK_FOR_COLLECTION&sm=JvXB2BfKfKJVVGF76EB%2beP8%2fX5r5VlpcYlyq%2f6%2fpmk%3d

Journalism Student Survey [Exit this survey](#)

1. What year are you?

☐ First
☐ Second
☐ Third
☐ Fourth
☐ Fifth or higher

2. What is your concentration?

☐ News Editorial
☐ Public Relations
☐ Broadcast
☐ Undecided

3. Are you male or female?

☐ Male
☐ Female

4. Are you satisfied with the journalism education you have received so far at Cal Poly?

☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neutral
☐ Dissatisfied

Taskbar: 8:39 AM 12/5/2011

Figure 6: SurveyMonkey survey given to the students of the department

Appendix A

Interview transcripts: Harvey Levenson

The following interview was conducted in order to get expert opinion on the state of the journalism department, and what future plans are in store in order to eliminate the silo effect.

Interviewers: Sarah Parr and Jessica Tam

Respondent: Interim journalism department chair (Harvey Levenson)

Date of Interview: November 1, 2011

Interview Transcription:

Sarah Parr: Okay, so I guess, for the record, state your name and your position in the journalism department.

Harvey Levenson: Okay, My name is Harvey Levenson and I am the interim chair of the journalism department.

SP: And how long have you been working in the department?

HL: The journalism department?

SP: Yeah.

HL: This is my second year.

Jessica Tam: We were wondering in terms of the journalism department, what do you see as the future plans; what do you think will happen to the department?

HL: To be the best in the CSU and beyond -- that's the mantra of the department.

JT: How would you go about making it the best?

HL: By developing a curriculum that addresses the present and future needs of our students and the profession, and preparing students for the profession, and by making sure that the laboratories that we have here are state of the art, representing current technology, and by positioning the department through faculty hires and curriculum that is looked upon as a resource for other universities and for the profession.

SP: And how much effort do you think students should put into the department to make it that successful.

HL: Well I think that when students join a department, a university like Cal Poly in particular, the student is vested in it, has a major investment, a major commitment. And this is particularly the case at Cal Poly. This is not the case at other universities. Cal Poly has become -- you're both

seniors, right?

SP: Yes.

HL: So it's become one of the most selective universities in the country. Okay, one in ten get in, basically. And to be so committed as a student, to make the effort before going to college to be qualified to get in to a place like Cal Poly, once you're here you're part of the family. You're part of the infrastructure, and Cal Poly students are very, very committed not only to their major but to the university.

JT: How do you think that, in terms of Cal Poly being an engineering university, where do you think journalism stands?

HL: I've never personally thought of Cal Poly as an engineering university. Engineering is a major, is a college, but I've never thought of the university as being more engineering than architecture, than business, than liberal arts, or math and science. I just, I don't think in that frame. So I think the sense that Cal Poly is an engineering university is less today than it was in the past. The keyword that defines this university today is comprehensive. Have you heard that word before? Do you know what it means?

SP: It means everything is ... comprehensive.

HL: It means that one aspect of the university, one college, is just as important as any of the others. The combination of all the colleges, the comprehensive education of the liberal arts, the humanities, as well as math and science, is what's made this university what it has become.

JT: In terms of the journalism department, what do you think would be the best way to collaborate all three of the concentrations -- kind of get a piece of each one?

HL: Actually, we're talking about that, the faculty. One of the issues that the department faced is what we call the silo issue. You know what that means?

SP: Yeah, actually that's part of our research.

HL: So what we're working to is breaking down the silos. We're presently in a new curriculum cycle, and we're coming up with a new curriculum. And the new curriculum is going to break down the silos, and it's going to get all of the concentrations integrated. So it doesn't matter what your concentration is -- you have to take courses across the board because today you have to have that knowledge, you know, facets in the field of journalism, so I've learned, in order to be successful. You can't just do broadcast, you can't just do news editorial, you can't just do PR, you've got to write in PR, you've got to use multimedia. Technology is part of what everyone's

doing. You'll see in the future, you'll be graduated, but you will see that the curriculum is going to look a lot different in terms of integrating the three concentrations, and having students experience all three. And there may be a fourth concentration called multimedia.

SP: Right on, yeah. I like that. Do you think a journalism student organization could benefit the department? If one was created for the department?

HL: As opposed to -- there are some organizations.

SP: I guess one that encompasses all the concentrations -- not just like news editorial.

HL: Yeah, I think so. As an example in GRC, we have Mat Pica Pi -- you've heard of that?

That's for all the students; an organization for all the students.

JT: I think that would be good for us. Well, we just feel that with PRSSA, you know, that one leans more towards PR. Just something that would encompass all three.

HL: Yeah, I think that will be very helpful.

JT: You think the size affects the way the department is run because I guess in terms of this department, it's very small? Do you think that affects it?

HL: It's not small, it's average. There are 250 students, approximately 250 students in the journalism department. That's pretty average for a department here at Cal Poly -- 250 to 300 students.

SP: I didn't know that. That that's pretty average.

HL: Yeah, philosophy is small.

SP: Yeah, that's pretty small.

HL: History is small.

JT: Well we're just wondering because we've heard rumors about the health of the journalism departments. What were some of those contributions -- would it greatly affect the future of the department?

HL: Interesting question. First of all, when was the last time you heard bad press about the department?

SP: Like last year. A year ago.

HL: Haven't heard any this year, have you? There's only been good press. With the donations and the speakers and you know, hiring new faculty, and that sort of thing. But let me tell you something very interesting. Yes, in the past, there were some issues, and some bad press. That's one reason why I'm sitting in this position, as the chair. But in spite of that, it seemed like there

was no change in the interest of the department. Did you know that last year, the department received about 450 applications for maybe 50 spots? Alright. In spite of whatever bad press there was out there, people are still applying to this department. It receives a very nice number of applications every year.

JT: Do you by any chance happen to know the highest number of applicants?

HL: I don't know. I know last year there were 450.

JT: Sounds like a lot.

SP: Yeah.

HL: Yeah.

SP: Alright, I think we're good. Did you want to add anything else?

HL: I think this breaking down the silo situation is important. And I experienced the importance a couple weeks ago. The department received a major donation of broadcast technology and I sent out an email and we had a dedication, you know, and this company, they donated a bunch of this expensive equipment and you have to celebrate that kind of thing. We had the vice president of the company here, we had a plaque, a big presentation, and we were going to conduct a lecture, and I sent out these emails -- you probably received them -- telling students when and where and I expected standing room only. Eight students showed up. It was like on the brink of being embarrassing, and five of the eight were those involved in the demonstration that we conducted. So, I was shocked. In GRC, if we ever did anything like that, it would be standing room only. So some of the faculty asked their students, "where were you, why didn't you come?" So what they were getting was, "Oh, I'm PR. That was broadcast." You know, "Oh, I'm news editorial." That's not the way it's supposed to be. You're all journalism students in the department. So I got a sense of what the silo effect does. So I think we need to take care of that. We need to break that down.

JT: You think in the future, you know how you mentioned you guys were going to collaborate kind of all the concentrations, you think that thought of "Oh, I'm this concentration and this." Do you think it would go away?

HL: No, we don't want that. There will be concentrations. Students will be able to specialize, but they'll be required to experience all of the concentrations. Maybe they'll want to change their concentration after they experience something else. They'll have experience in all of them, while still specializing in one of their choice.

SP: Sounds great, thank you!

Appendix B

Interview transcripts: Bill Loving

The following interview was conducted in order to get expert opinion on the state of the journalism department, and what future plans are in store in order to eliminate the silo effect.

Interviewers: Sarah Parr and Jessica Tam

Respondent: Professor of journalism (Bill Loving)

Date of Interview: November 3, 2011

Interview Transcription:

Jessica Tam: We just need you to state your name, your position, and how long you've been working in the department.

Bill Loving: Oh, sure. I'm Bill Loving. I've been at Cal Poly since July of 2008.

JT: And what do you see as the future plans of the journalism department?

BL: Well, we're looking at adding a new department-wide capstone experience course called Mustang Media.

Sarah Parr: Okay. And can you explain what Mustang Media will entail?

BL: Sure. It's actually something that I helped put – let me see, let me rephrase that. I suggested to faculty at curriculum meetings to take a look at something that I helped put together at the University of Oklahoma back in the mid 1980s when we converged print and broadcast journalism. That was a converged newsroom where students would do stories in print platform, broadcast platform. And so, because we were starting in to multimedia and online, we'd also have an online component. So, that's the idea. Is that we would have a converged news room. We would have students doing stories in all platforms. So there wasn't just a matter of a story being in the newspaper, a story being on CPTV, or a story being on video, or a story being on a website. That it would reflect the ability to reach the widest possible audience with content. And this idea that we are ticking around also includes public relations because one of the most important things we can do is promote content – that's how we stay in business.

SP: How much effort do you think students should put in to the department in order to make it more successful?

BL: Well, um, students should work very hard in their degrees. But they should also recognize that we are no longer separate entities. You cannot exist as a print person, you cannot exist as a

broadcast person, or PR person, without doing multimedia. Multimedia includes streaming video; it also has the ability to provide depth. And as I said before, we have to be able to promote it. Otherwise, we have no audience, and all our hard work is wasted. So, students need to recognize that nobody is the lone ranger. Even the lone ranger wasn't the lone ranger. Students need to recognize that everything we teach has value for everybody.

JT: So, Mustang Media would be the way to collaborate all concentrations? Is that what the goal is?

BL: Well, in a word, yes. What is also is doing is that we send students out with not only appreciation of working in a multi-platform environment but with actual experience. When I was an undergraduate, my degree was in broadcast journalism. But I did most of my work in newspaper. So when I graduated, I went to work for a media conglomerate, Hard Hat Communications. Because I was going to help them try out a system in which they would have a cable television newsroom at a newspaper. So that they could offer content based upon the reporting sources of the newspaper but put it on cable so that we could reach a wider audience. Now, the vice president who had that as his pet project left the corporation the week before I started working. So, I was converted into a feature reporter and a police reporter. But even back some twenty years ago, well, let me see. Even back thirty years ago, it was something that I have been thinking about. When I was at my university as a teacher, a part-time lecturer, we created a television newspaper. We did sample broadcast, and broadcast, which we had the newspaper on the screen, and we had the camera focus on the paper. Then we brought up a particular picture from a story, and we went into a studio setting in which I talked to the reporters about the story about what they learned, how they reported it, the consequences of the reporting. So, this is something that I've been doing for a while. Longer than you guys have been alive. It's always evolving because things change.

SP: Right.

BL: It's a way to bring everybody together.

JT: When do you think that will take effect? Starting next year or...?

BL: It has to go through curriculum, and so we're looking at at least a year. And it would also need resources. My thought is that we could use 303, because there's room in the back to set up a set and a couple of lights for the TV portion. And the room has enough space so that if we reconfigured work stations, we would have a universal copy desk. And we would have portable

stations. And of course, with technology being the way it is, every computer is an editing bay. So, we could have full complement of reporters from the news-editorial and broadcast concentrations, editors from both PR students – either doing stories or working on promotions for the stories, helping to ensure that we have a strong audience – it’s just a matter of working out how it would fit for our particular department.

SP: Well, I guess we kind of touched on that. What do you think the best way to collaborate all three concentrations? We touched on that. And, oh yeah. We discussed starting a student organization with you, like on the first day of senior project class. And you said so many students have attempted that, like SPJ chapters. But, there clearly there isn’t an SPJ chapter here. Why do you think those student organizations, those types of professional student organizations, don’t work for our department?

BL: They don’t work because the students who want to start them are leaving.

SP & JT: (chuckles) Right.

BL: They finally recognize the value of that, but they are gonna graduate.

SP: Right.

BL: And none of the underclassman have been involved. It’s kind of like trying to fly with one wing.

SP: Yeah. I feel like in the journalism department, students don’t really get involved until they’re like later years. Like sophomore, junior, senior years.

JT: How can we change that?

SP: Yeah, how can we change that? What would be a good way to get younger students involved in the department?

BL: Well, we have some already. You didn’t go through 203 with me. You’ve seen the thing outside my office.

SP: Yeah. Right.

BL: 203 students are getting published in the paper. That’s one of the ways of getting younger students involved.

SP: Right. So, through curriculum.

BL: Yes. Classes, class assignments. And you know, recognizing that a class assignment or a course doesn’t operate in a vacuum. But they all have to be linked to what we’re doing as a whole. So, in the law class, we’ve talked about how you can libel someone in anything: a press

release, a broadcast story. We talk about – depending on the quarter – copyright, we talk about free expression; all those things cross curricular lines. In copyediting, I would like to see more multimedia copyediting. Because I have former students who have worked in online companies, and they say there's a different style of editing, a different style of headline writing. We should be doing that. Public relations students should be learning copyediting, so that they can understand when they're putting [out] their press releases or creating their websites that they follow. Incorporate style, understand best use of their language. So, it's a matter of doing that. And partly, it's also a matter of figuring out where you guys are going to hang out. You guys need a place to hang out.

SP: Great. Right. And it's tough to hang out in the newsroom – in the Mustang Daily newsroom – if you don't work for them.

JT: Yeah. You kind of feel, I don't know, like you don't belong.

SP: Yeah.

JT: But, I guess this is as a whole, in terms of Cal Poly being a polytechnic school, do you think journalism has kind of a low reputation at this university? I guess, liberal arts in general. How it's not really recognized in an engineering school?

BL: Saw the stories in the hallway. Two stories on stats, two stories on the bridge building competition, one out of [agriculture] and then soil science. We are the glue that binds the university together. We are the people who bring the stories about every different discipline into the common entity known as the Mustang Daily. I say to people that we serve democracy. And that's what we do at Cal Poly. We let people know about those common interests that they're not aware of. We show them how every student is – regardless of major or concentration – is still the same. The same sorts of concerns, the same sorts of aspirations. We are vital to the health of this university. We are the bridge. And some college and some departments don't necessarily like that. But we still report on them. We show how they are part of the campus as a whole.

SP: A few other people we talked to within the department said that in the past, siloing was an issue. Like, siloing of the different concentrations. There's a PRSSA and a Mustang Daily for news-editorial, and PRSSA for PR, and CPTV. And we're not all involved, it's just separated.

JT: Do you think the separation of the concentrations is what separates the department? Or...?

BL: You've got the tail-wagging of the dog. Faculty attitudes creates silos. Now, student attitudes come from faculty attitudes. Or they're being reinforced by them. In Oklahoma, when

we brought together broadcast and traditional news-editorial, broadcast students and faculty were saying, “Why should we have to do this dinosaur stuff? Newspapers are dying.” And news-editorial students and some of the faculty were saying, “Why do we have to hang around with the broadcasters who are shallow? And don’t provide any real news.” And when that came into the classroom, faculty could either decide to reinforce it, or to fight it and bring the students together. So, a lot of this depends upon whether faculty is willing to buy into this. And it needs to be every faculty member that buys into this. Because we have so few faculty.

SP: Right.

JT: How do you go about fixing that? Just the disagreements between the faculty. How could you go about fixing it so that everybody comes together in agreement?

BL: Well, if there’s a strong dean – that’s helpful. If there’s not a strong dean, you just gotta hope that by showing faculty how they can work together, that they start to work together. We’ve had some departures from the faculty. And so, it allows new blood to come in. People who – in the recruiting process – were helping to reassure [have] the proper attitude. We’re not looking to hire people who will say, “Oh, mine is the only one that counts.” Because that is not a good thing.

SP: Our department seems pretty small on faculty. Do you think the size effects the way the department is runned?

BL: Sure, it effects everything. If you have a giant faculty, it effects how everything is runned.

SP: Is it harder to conduct business? Like, based on the size? A smaller sized faculty?

BL: It’s both harder and easier. It’s easier because we have a smaller group of people to get together. It’s harder because everybody is doing so many different things. You know, if you’re teaching a full load, and coordinating a search, and working on someone’s tenure committee, and doing some other project, and having to do your own outside research, you are out of hours.

JT: Yeah. Definitely.

Appendix C

Interview transcripts: Linda Halisky

The following interview was conducted in order to get expert opinion on the state of the journalism department, and what future plans are in store in order to eliminate the silo effect.

Interviewers: Sarah Parr and Jessica Tam

Respondent: Dean of the College of Liberal Arts (Linda Halisky)

Date of Interview: November 10, 2011

Interview Transcription:

Sarah Parr: So I guess, for the record, state your name, your position at Cal Poly, and how long you've been working here.

Linda Halisky: I'm Linda Halisky. I'm the dean of the College of Liberal Arts. This is my 28th year at Cal Poly, and my 8th year as dean.

Jessica Tam: And so since this is focused on the journalism department, what do you personally see as the future plans of the department?

Linda Halisky: From what I see right now, the department is moving in absolutely the right direction. I'm very happy with the leadership that Harvey Levenson is providing right now. He is getting some really fine external support for the department, the reconstitution of this advisory board is huge. Thirty some people from all across the country absolutely dedicated to the future of this program is not bad. And this is a working group, they're not interested in coming and getting reports. They do things that will help. They're well-connected and I suspect that's going to pay off well for the department. Harvey as you probably know is very successful in his home department. He's really good at bringing in external support, very good at supporting his faculty, their professional development and I think things are moving well, I'm very happy with the hire that the department made last year. Richard Gearhart is a great addition. We have some more positions to fill in the department, and we want to be careful with that, we don't just want bodies in there. We want people with the expertise that the existing faculty find as they revise the curriculum toward a more convergent model of journalism so that we get people who have just the right expertise on the cutting edge of this thing, and we also need people who will really work together as partners in the department. So we want to go fast enough to build a program back, but we also need to hire well. We did have two searches last year, one successful and one

not and I'm fine with that. I think we really need to work for the right people. The lines aren't going away, at least under me, and the list I give to the new dean will start next year. That will include the commitments I've made, not just this department but for other departments, so that won't get lost when I'm not in this chair any longer.

JT: Is there still a continuing search for a new department head?

LH: We're not presently searching for a department head. That will probably be next year. Professor Levenson has agreed to stay for a total of three years, and so that will give us an additional year. The department's still pretty fledging, with all these positions still not filled. So it's a little early to pull in a new chair, and I think it would be better if we could build up the faculty first.

SP: You mentioned 30 people are part of this, I guess, advisory council. How are they picked, and who are they?

LH: Well, for some years, I think between 2003 and maybe 2006, I'm not sure, but there was an advisory board in journalism and that board disbanded when journalism was not successful at retaining re-accreditation. So some of the people on the new board are from that board. The chair of that board, Tracy Campbell, was the chair of the original board and it's quite wonderful that she has agreed to come back and chair this new board. The other members Harvey pulled together, when the department was flailing last year, I heard from a lot of people. Many of them alums from the department who were really distressed to see the department going through such angst. So they really wanted to do something. So Harvey called a focus group, he actually had two groups, two meetings of people who just said, probably cut this out of the thing, "What the hell is going on and how can we help?" So it's from that group of people -- not all of them came to campus for the focus groups. Some just continued to write in their advisements, their concerns. Most of the new board, as I understand it, is made up of the people who were either part of the old board, part of this new focus group, some of them overlapped, some of them were both, and some additional people that have come forward since.

SP: With students, how much effort do you think students themselves should put into the department in order to make it more successful and more cohesive and unified?

LH: Well, I can just say, in the strongest of the departments of the college, the students and faculty feel themselves partners in the success in their program. You can't make that up, you have to build towards that, and that's what I'm hoping will happen in this department as well. I

don't know why that wouldn't happen, really. The enrollment stays good, the application stays high, you're bringing in great students and that always bodes well for the health of a department.

JT: One of our main goals for our senior project is to kinda get all three concentrations within the department together, instead of really segregated and we talked to some of the faculty members and they talked about creating Mustang Media as sort of a way to collaborate that. Why now, and not before? Like, how come you're starting it now?

LH: Why now is because now the department is focusing on moving itself ahead in a very positive way, They've been -- I think the three existing faculty members before Richard Gearhart came on -- they went to this thing called the Poynter Institute last year, which is a national institute that studies cutting edge journalism education. What they discovered there was a good thing, and that Cal Poly is sort of ahead of the game in terms of the multimedia system that we have in our program here. I think that was reassuring to the faculty about kind of the right way to go. But when you have turnover in a department, and you have faculty leaving, and you have dissention in a faculty, it's hard to do anything, and so I'm very pleased that they're coming together around this idea. I mean, there's all kinds of potential for this program, and I think if the faculty and the students get excited about that potential and seize this moment -- My God, we're building a program almost from scratch here. We never get to do that very often, you know. Nobody else's college is hiring this many new people. So it's a marvelous opportunity to really kind of seize the day and create something great. You will not convince me that the program at this institution cannot be off the charts good. Just being here, with a kind of tech environment that you're in at Cal Poly, the amount of great students we continue to draw. Cal Poly, the rest of the colleges, is drawing really strong faculty so there's no reason we shouldn't draw really strong faculty in this program as well. I think if you -- this may sound simplistic -- if you keep your eye on that prize and go for it, I think the sky is the limit on what this program can achieve.

JT: Will this alter most of the curriculum? Will we still have the same curriculum, or just a new curriculum?

LH: They started working on curriculum last year. They made really nice progress but it's not done yet, and I am hoping for something -- you know, a finished proposal -- in front of me at the end of this academic year. It's not gonna throw out everything; that was one of the things they discovered at that institute is that a lot of the stuff you have is good stuff. It might need to be packaged more. The last I heard and I'm not sure where they are but there was some discussion

about introductory courses that sort of shape you toward the convergent model and the Mustang Media course is sort of a capstone where you're all doing all the bits, you know, you're not just PR people, editorial people, or broadcast people, but everybody is doing all the bits, even if you're specializing in one area, you get some really decent exposure and practice in the other areas.

SP: On that note, do you think a -- I know the journalism department already has three, I guess four, pretty big organizations within it, like the student media like Mustang Daily, KCPR, CPTV, the PRSSA. Do you think a comprehensive journalism student organization or network could benefit the department?

LH: I don't think I have enough wisdom to know that. I think that's something for the experts to figure out. But I think it's certainly worth exploring. I was with, actually the journalism advisory board met at Dow Jones in New York in August and I attended that. We were downtown and Wall Street Journal, you're talking convergence, I mean their desks are like this. They can talk to anybody. They're not on different floors, in different rooms. It's all happening right there. Above anything, a really exciting place to be. I know that Harvey is hoping one of his board members on the journalism board is one of the members that invited the GRC group to New York. He is with Dow Jones, and I wouldn't be surprised if Harvey is pushing for a visit of the journalism faculty to see that convergent model at work as well. I think getting out of here, you know, having -- one of the things Harvey said on the GRC board is one time a year one meeting a year they meet on campus and one meeting a year they meet off campus hosted by one of the members of the board, and that was this August's meeting. I think that's really good because the faculty are invited then to go off and see these things and talk to the people who are doing this work and that's a very enlivening and invigorating exercise because it's easy in a place as isolated as San Luis to kind of get support and it's really wonderful for them to have the opportunity to get out of dodge and see what's going on. I'm very hopeful for the program. I mean, we're not there yet but all the trajectories are strong and this new board is an amazing accomplishment. There may not be a bit of rockin and rollin going on yet, but you're going to be a container that this group provides to help steer it. These are very impressive people, and they're very committed to this program.

JT: Do you think in terms of I guess the journalism department's size, do you think size affects the way the department is run considering we're like an engineering school and journalism is a

small part of it?

LH: Yeah, we have lots of smallish programs in liberal arts. Music, for example, has somewhere between 70 and 80 majors. The music ensemble in any given year has between 650 and 800 students because they draw from all over the campus. I don't think it's the size per se, so we may see our programs in this college able to grow incrementally over time. Historically, 70 percent of the majors on this campus have been designated to be in the polytechnic discipline so that leaves 30 percent for science and math, us and business. So our enrollment were around 10,000 to 3100 students in this college divided into 17 programs. We have some big ones, English is big, psychology is big, but philosophy is small. Theatre is small, but they're very vibrant units on their own and so I'm not so concerned about this being small. There are advantages to being small because the faculty know each other very well usually in smaller programs and that can be a wonderful experience for students to be in an environment like that. What I want is that it's just a gem. I don't care how big the rock is, but I want it good.

SP: You're a professor in the English department so you, you're also the dean of our college, so you deal with students often obviously. I guess one thing we're also concerned about is passion within your major. Like how, what are the best ways to inspire passion among students?

LH: Oh goodness, my experience is that you get passionate faculty in a room with students and you don't have to worry about it. English has been blessed over the years with very inspiring, strong and inspiring faculty. I mean, my own personal experience is you give students a chance, they will give you their heart in a heartbeat and what that's dependent on is number one, them respecting that you know what you're talking about. They're understanding that you really care about them as human beings and also about, this sounds really geeky but I consider a classroom a sacred space. There are few places in our lives where we can risk our own growth in the way you risk in a classroom. You're risking emotionally, you're risking psychologically, you're risking intellectually, you know, you're challenging yourself to think, you're moving into areas of things that may change. Everything -- you think of something. This is a really special thing, and my reputation when I was teaching was that I was difficult, velvet hammer is what they call me but my experience is that if you set a very high bar and you're on the students' side and they know it, they will do everything they can to reach that bar. Here's a bar, OK, and you jump through this hoop and this hoop and then I'm going to move, you know, and that sets up a sort of antagonism between students and their faculty -- that doesn't work at all. Not once in all these years have I

found it difficult to trust my students in their own. My job is to open doors, to provide a safe environment, to push and then to get out of their way. And I believe that works like every time. Not for every student maybe, but you know. Mostly. It's been a joy to teach here because students are so bright and so eager to learn.

SP: Did we cover that one?

JT: I think so. Well we spoke to another faculty member and he mentioned that faculty attitudes kind of affect student attitudes.

LH: Sure.

JT: I guess as part of the separation of the department, and especially with last year and stuff, what do you think of that?

LH: I think it's very important that faculty keep their own disagreements out of the teaching environment. That's pretty much all I'm going to say about that. Certainly journalism isn't the only program in the college where some of the faculty don't get along. Academics sometimes don't get along. But you need to keep -- your sense of being as a professional is that if there are disagreements and differences of opinion, even outright hostilities -- those things need to be kept away from students. This fight is not about students and our higher calling is to you know, be the best that we can to the students we teach and try to work out our other stuff as best we can.

JT: Do you think it negatively affects students like have students decided to change majors?

LH: I honestly don't know how many students have left journalism in this. I know there was an incredible amount of student unrest and fear in what was going to happen to the department. Quite frankly, I was ready to take it apart and put its pieces in different places because you can't have a department where certain parts of it are being attacked by certain other parts of it -- whether its faculty, or PR, or whatever, I mean, if you want it all then you must cherish it all, build it all, foster it all and I'm not in that place now. As I said, I have tremendous hope at the moment that this is going to pull out and that all parts of this program are going to be strong, respected, and that where there have been individual faculty differences, hopefully that will ease over time. If they don't, they don't, but the challenge of the department is to put its students first.

Appendix D

Interview transcripts: Brady Teufel

The following interview was conducted in order to get expert opinion on the state of the journalism department, and what future plans are in store in order to eliminate the silo effect.

Interviewers: Sarah Parr and Jessica Tam

Respondent: Assistant Professor of journalism (Brady Teufel)

Date of Replied Interview: November 28, 2011

*Note: The following interview was completed via email due to inability to meet in-person. The following questions were sent out to Brady Teufel, and his responses were recorded on an MP3 file and sent back to the interviewers.

The email sent out the following questions:

1. Please state the following information:
 - a. Name of staff
 - b. Position
 - c. How long have you been working in the journalism department?
 - d. Under which concentration?
2. What do you see are the future plans of the journalism department?
3. How much effort do you think students should put in to the department in order to make it more successful?
4. We understand there is a development of Mustang Media that will try to incorporate all three concentrations. Please elaborate on that and how you think it will effectively involve print, broadcast, and PR.
5. Because the department is small, do you think size effects the way the department is ran? (Lack of enough professors, classes, etc?)
6. What else do you see can be improved about this department?
7. Do you think creating this journalism student organization could benefit the department? Why or why not?

Teufel's response is as follows:

Brady Teufel: Question one – Brady Teufel. Assistant professor in journalism. I've been working here about five or six years. Four-and-a-half full time, five-and-a-half part time. And I teach multimedia, and I'm the adviser for Mustang Daily. Two – question two. What do you see as the future plans of the journalism department. I think we're doing – uh, we have some great things on the agenda. I think we're going to be ushering in a new era of cutting edge journalism, incorporating the 'learn-by-doing' philosophy, and what we do best – which is effectively teaching stories – sorry, students how to tell stories with a dash. With a passion, and with energy. With accuracy and with ethics. So, I think the administration has indicated that they fully support that cause as evidenced by the fact that we're going to be putting three or four new professors on the payroll here in the next couple years – full time tenured professors, which is kind of a coup in this day and age – to get that many tenure track lines. So, I think the future of the journalism department is bright. And, I think that as journalism changes, we will be poised to put our students with the cutting-edge skills that they're gonna need to succeed in that changing industry. Question three – how much effort do you think students should put into the department. I don't think it's the responsibility of the students to advance the department's agenda. But I do think students will be well-served by engaging themselves in the learning process. And that basically means getting to know your professors, attending office hours, getting to know your profs on an individual basis – so that they can do things like write you letters of recommendation and support you in your future endeavors. So, I think students should be aware of what's going on, they should participate when we have things like town-hall meetings and speakers. But, I don't think it's ultimately their responsibility to shepherd the department's success. Number four – development of Mustang Media that will try to incorporate three concentrations. I think Mustang Media is still sort of in the formula stages. But, I think it can – it has potential to really accomplish a couple things. One of which is to break down the barriers between the concentrations at the in the department. Because everyone will be working collaboratively. And the way I sort of see it working is that we'll have an assignment desk that assigns stories based on the most appropriate medium. And then students with skills in those areas will cover the story. And then after – um, you're telling stories using the medium that you're most effective in doing so. You will then switch up. And so, broadcasters will be writing, public relations students

will be writing and producing video, editorial students will be doing press releases. So, I think there's a lot of opportunity to expand Mustang Daily, and CPTV, and PRSSA. So, I think this will provide opportunities to expand those things while insuring students work collaboratively and as a team – which I think will double the educational experience. What else can I see that can be improved by this department? I see – if you asked me that question three years ago, I would have had a lot of answers. Now, however, I think that with new staff and faculty being brought on-board, with new curriculum underway (we're submitting that actually in the next month), between new faculty and new curriculum, I think our improvements are just starting. And, we've also received generous equipment donations in the last year. Between those three things, I don't see much more – I can't think of much more that could be improved potentially. I think, like I said, we're right at the cusp of some major improvements and success. And number seven, question seven – do you think creating this journalism student organization could benefit the department, why or why not? Sorry, question six – what else do you see can be improved? I just did that. Seven, sorry. The organization could benefit the department because it will ensure that news is being covered effectively, comprehensively. You know, there's definitely stories that the Mustang Daily misses that CPTV covers and vice-versa. So, comprehensive news coverage – it will get the word out about Mustang Media because students will be canvassing the campus and the community more effectively because we'll have more of them. Doing stories, writing press releases, collaborating with advertisers, etc. So, it will raise the profile of the department, it will provide more comprehensive news coverage that hopefully community members will tune into and utilize. Because as other organizations are suffering from staff cutbacks, we're in the fortunate position of being very sought-after in terms of journalism programs. So, we have numbers, we have bodies. We have shoe that can hit the pavement and produce good reporting. So, I think that by strengthening the concept of Mustang Media and strengthening the organizational structure of our student media, and producing collaborative journalism, it can only benefit the department, and the community, and the university in a multitude of ways.