

**TED BOOKS AND CONVENTIONAL** teaching methods are obstacles for students with varying abilities to see, hear, speak, read, write, focus or understand English. Part of the California State University's Accessible Technology Initiative, which aims to eliminate barriers to learning for students with disabilities, San José State is promoting a different teaching strategy: Universal Design Learning. "Universal" does not mean a one-size-fits-all solution, says Hilary Nixon, assistant professor of urban and regional planning, and coordinator of the faculty-in-residence for accessible instructional materials program. Rather, UDL is a way of creating a flexible classroom experience. "The way I learn best is not the way everyone in the class learns best," says Nixon. "By implementing these strategies, we are providing learning opportunities that will enhance the educational experience of all students, not just those with disabilities."

### Learning for change

An ideal class offers students a variety of ways to access course materials and to demonstrate understanding. Through the university's Center for Faculty Development, faculty members are getting UDL training and discovering how their old course materials cause frustration and hinder progress for students like Melissa Boldrey. "It's tough," Boldrey is left in the dark when she doesn't get audio or digital equivalents of textbooks and classroom materials in advance. She simply cannot participate without using the screen reader on her "talking" laptop. In addition to adapting to progressive vision loss, which now means reluctantly using a cane, Boldrey says that she and other students with disabilities have to regularly "jump through hoops" to make it through school.

"You have to push so hard and be an advocate for yourself," Boldrey says. "A lot of the problem is communication. If we could have all departments on campus talking and they could work as a team, that would be awesome."

DisABLED Students Association co-presidents Soledad Rodriguez, journalism major, and Daniel Pinto, history major,

collaborate with the Disability Resource Center, the Center for Faculty Development and other groups on campus to open up communication and create awareness about disabled students' needs.

"People with disabilities have a responsibility to make themselves be understood, because it's hard for someone without a disability to relate to them," says Rosas, who has cerebral palsy and is looking forward to a career in broadcast journalism. "However, building understanding takes a lot of work from everyone in the community."

### Universal culture

Increased awareness has contributed to a change in campus culture, says Cynthia Rostankowski, associate professor of humanities and faculty-in-residence for the College of Humanities and the Arts. She says, "People are talking to each other peer to peer, one on one, faculty to student—and really connecting to make this happen."

Although much of the Accessible Technology Initiative focuses on remediating inadequacies in existing course materials, such as digitizing documents and making them screen-reader ready, UDL involves thinking ahead. Once a professor determines what the learning objective or goal is, everything leading to it can be varied.

In Hilary Nixon's urban planning graduate courses, for example, students who learn best by lecture *get* lecture, those who prefer interacting with colleagues in class get that experience, and students who need course materials in digital format get everything posted online in advance. Versatility is built in to allow multiple ways to learn.

Behind all the communicating and collaborating are the dedicated instructional designers and administrators at the Center for Faculty Development who provide the seminars, workshops and resources the university faculty needs to move forward. According to Rostankowski, having this support is making all the difference.

"San José State is about supporting its faculty—and thereby supporting its students to make pathways to learning multiple and rich," she says. "We're maximizing the ways in which all students will be able to thrive as learners." ❖

—Jody Ulate '05

SJSU STUDENTS WHO STUDY ABROAD  
RETURN WITH CHANGED PERSPECTIVES  
ON THEMSELVES AND ON THE WORLD

# Journeys of discovery

**IMAGINE CLIMBING THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA**, exploring the African bush, being wowed by huge Danish windmills, or lazing around exotic Australian beaches. Add some gelato by the Coliseum, mocha in a Parisian café, narezushi in Japan, tapas in Spain, or paani puri in India—along with rigorous academic instruction—and you have a kaleidoscope of experiences that more than 450 San José State University students sign up for every year.

## A certain level of risk

In a cosmopolitan city like San José where you can have dim sum for lunch and injera for dinner, where 100 languages are spoken on the San José State campus alone, why would students opt to go abroad?

“There is a difference between being culturally aware, having a cultural understanding, and having cultural competence,” says Dave Rudel, study abroad and exchange coordinator. “You really need to come out of your comfort zone and go somewhere different to gain cultural competence.”

What study abroad offers, he says, is a unique opportunity to do just that—to place yourself in the shoes of an outsider looking in.

Veronica Malki, '08 Psychology and Spanish, appreciates the wealth of multicultural interactions at San José State. “But when I went to Spain,” she says, “I was a foreigner. I had never experienced that before.” Reflecting on the year she spent in Granada, she adds, “To live in a place where you don’t know the language, you don’t know how things work, you don’t know the customs, you aren’t aware of little cultural

nuances—like wearing gloves prior to touching produce on a grocery cart—it can be daunting.”

But a learning experience nevertheless. Malki continues: “I knew it would be hard, but I wanted to go through the whole spectrum of emotions—the elation, the excitement, the homesickness, the frustration, the loneliness ... Now, I feel like I am prepared for anything. The experience really helped me trust myself and understand that you can’t control everything ... it made me a stronger person.”

Now working as a study abroad adviser in the SJSU Office of International Programs and Services, Malki had a variety of new experiences in Granada which, in time, became routine.

She bought fresh fruit and vegetables every other day from the corner grocery store and had a gas cylinder delivered every month. “Sometimes I would be taking a shower and the water would turn cold,” she says. “That was always an interesting experience!” She learned how to teach music to children along with a host of local students. During the course of the year, she realized that Spaniards take time to relax and really enjoy life at a slower pace.

“They took siestas,” she says, her eyes widening for emphasis. “They worked to make a living, but then they actually enjoyed life.” A lesson that she’s brought back with her.

## Transformed by travel

“All through middle and high school, I used to say I want to travel, without really knowing what the term meant,” says Tam Anh Nguyen, '09 Graphic Design, who recently spent a year in Florence, Italy. “Living in Florence and traveling dur-





WE SHALL NOT CEASE FROM EXPLORATION  
AND THE END OF ALL OUR EXPLORING  
WILL BE TO ARRIVE WHERE WE STARTED  
AND KNOW THE PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

—T.S. ELLIOT





ing winter break and weekends to Paris, Rome, Amsterdam, London, Brussels, Prague and Budapest definitely pushed me outside my personal boundaries.”

Nguyen, a first-generation Vietnamese-American, had only been on one international trip before—to her home country when she was 17. “But I was just babied along by my parents and relatives,” she recalls with a shrug. “They were there to do everything for me. I was seeing all these wonderful, amazing things but I wasn’t really *experiencing* anything...it was more like sightseeing.”

When she landed in Florence, Nguyen didn’t know any Italian and certainly didn’t know any of the other European languages, but managed to “talk” to locals and find her way around new cities.

Hand gestures and a smiling face helped.

“It made me a lot more social,” she says. “Now I am more willing to put myself out there and just do things.”

Nguyen also surprised herself by learning a fair amount of Italian. “I didn’t think I was capable of doing that in such a short span of time,” says the gregarious 20-year-old. “The first day the teacher walked in, I thought we’d get a grammar sheet or listen to a tape and repeat it; but instead, the teacher asked us to have a conversation with each other in the little bit of Italian that we knew. That was really different for me.”

Soon Nguyen was chatting with local artists on the sidewalks, asking them questions about their inspiration and choice of colors. “They would be surprised at how well I spoke Italian and it was reassuring to hear that from a local,” she says proudly. “Toward the end of the conversation, some of them would even lower the price of their paintings for me.”

## Experiential learning at its best

While they made memories to last a lifetime outside the classroom, these students also had some different experiences in class. “Over here, you know that as soon as the week of the semester is over, you’re constantly behind,” Malki. “Reading is the last priority because you’ve got papers, quizzes, projects, presentations *and* you have to study for the test. But in Granada, 80 to 100 percent of your grade is based on your final exam. It took a lot of getting used to, but I liked the freedom.”

Cory Grenier, ’02 Business Administration, experienced a similar format in Nottingham, England. “I liked them in that they didn’t have as many check points,” he says. “I was able to adapt to that teaching style only because of the rigorous training I had received at San José State. I was used to doing my homework regularly and participating in group discussions, so I kept myself on track.”

Nguyen never bought a single textbook during her semester in Florence. “It’s all about experiencing the art ... and I was surprised at how much I could understand even without the instruction in the second semester was exclusively in Italian,” says the graphic design student. “We wouldn’t just talk about some work of art. We would actually go to the museum and stand in front of it. Our professor was a curator for the Uffizi Gallery, so she would take us there on days it was closed to the public and we would walk through all the restoration labs and storage areas. I wouldn’t trade those experiences for anything.”





Snapshots from the albums of students Tam Anh Nguyen, Cory Grenier and Veronica Malki. SJSU Study Abroad Coordinator Dave Rudel says, "What students learn when they live abroad is that anything is possible. Often without knowing it, we limit ourselves at home. But when we're put outside our comfort zones, we have experiences that amaze and enrich us."

## tapas, pasta and live fish

One of the students' best stories revolve around food. Though a McDonald's, Pizza Hut or Subway wasn't hard to come by, they tended to stay away from "American" cuisine. "We had more Algerian, Indian and Lebanese food in our house than crepes, paella or hamburgers," reveals Malki, who shared an apartment with two French students, with Indian and Algerian heritages respectively, and a Mexican student. "I would go out for tapas, though, since Granada is the only city in Spain that still offers free tapas with every drink."

Malki grew up eating Lebanese food such as lamb tongue, so experimenting with Spanish cuisine didn't scare her. But one thing came as a surprise: cured pig legs hanging in the meat section of grocery stores with little cups plugged onto them to hold the dripping grease. "One of those legs could easily sell for 100-200 Euros," she says. "They would have them on the shelves in restaurants and bars and just shave the ham and serve it with bread—it doesn't get 'fresher' than that."

Oh! But it does.

"I've been to 30 countries in my life, but China was the hardest to adjust to," says Grenier, who had spent two years in Nottingham, England, first as a study abroad student and then as an MBA candidate, before landing in Beijing for a semester. "The HR person took me to a local restaurant from the airport and there were frogs jumping around in this container waiting to be eaten. Then the server brought me a live fish and asked if this was the one I wanted to eat ... while I was still looking at it, the fish jumped and slid onto the already dirty floor. The server just scooped it up and we were eating it 10 minutes later."

## Eating his words

At the same restaurant, Grenier was asked if he would like pork, duck, beef, lamb, chicken or vegetables and he said, "It's all okay," which was interpreted by the server as, "I want everything." He ended up getting enough food for a party of 10. "I felt really embarrassed and guilty," recalls Grenier, "The HR person graciously paid for it without batting an eye."

Grenier has since eaten everything from donkey to snake to silkworms—but he doesn't get flustered anymore. "You start to appreciate the Chinese way of living," he says. "You don't think of it as strange because now you're part of that culture ... you've made friends with the locals and you accept them just as they accept you."

Rudel, the SJSU study abroad coordinator, observes that varied as their experiences are, students who study abroad discover that all you need to become a citizen of the world is an open mind, the spirit of adventure and a thirst to learn. "They're changed in so many ways after these experiences," he says. "They come back with different self- and world-perspectives and they're raring to make meaningful contributions to the world."

Cory Grenier is well on his way. He is now executive assistant to the vice president at the Beijing offices of Lenovo, an award-winning world leader in personal computers and major sponsor of the Beijing Olympics. ♦

—Mansi Bhatia



# news in transition





WILLIAM REIGNER

any reporters can claim getting a colt revolver as part of the onboarding package on their first day on the job? “That was my introduction to the newspaper business,” recalls Dwight Bentel, former reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News* and founder of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at SJSU. “The day I was receiving threats from bootleggers and Merle Gray, my managing editor, said if anybody was giving trouble here, pull out. So I sat on my desk and tried to blow the middle out of everybody.”

That was 1928. Over the course of 80 years, Bentel has

seen bootleggers and this valley’s orchards disappear. He has witnessed the replacement of metal tables, clacking typewriters and cigarette smoke-infused newsrooms with ergonomic desks and flat-panel computer terminals. Now, he is observing the gradual demise of newspapers.

### A dying breed

The State of the News Media 2009 Report, by the Project of Excellence in Journalism, estimates that roughly 5,000 full-time newsroom jobs were cut in 2008. The report predicts that by the end of 2009, the newsrooms of American

daily newspapers may employ between 20 and 25 percent fewer people than in 2001.

According to Paper Cuts, a website that tracks newspaper layoffs, on April 27, 8,484 newspaper staff had been laid off in just the first four months of 2009. As we went to print, the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* had closed shop and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the 12th-largest paper in the United States, and the second-largest in California, was struggling to stay afloat.

“A lot of newspaper companies are reducing the number of days they publish the print edition,

some are cutting back on home delivery, or delivering only on certain days of the week,” observes Carole Leigh Hutto, a former editor of the *San Jose Mercury News* who is now CEO of United Way Silicon Valley. “These are drastic changes from the days when a newspaper came to your doorstep was a given. But now we have a generation of consumers who have grown up with computers—they don’t feel the need to hold the printed product in their hands.”

For Bentel, it’s a heart-breaking transition. “I have journalism develop, not just Silicon Valley but also at the



an Daily," he says. "These writers have done a responsible thing in being the voice of their audience, be it the local community or students on campus." And that voice, insists Hutton, needs to be preserved. "When we don't have journalism going to meetings, scouring records, examining the behavior of public officials and big businesses, and figuring out what's going on, corners will get cut," says Hutton. "When no one's watching, things go unchecked."

## WHY 10 TRAIN JOURNALISTS IS WHAT PORTING WHAT IS OPINION WHERE ARE THE WHEN WILL IT BREAK FACTS

### zen journalism efined

you may ask, aren't there more people watching now than before? Thanks to cameras in cell phones and desktop publishing software, ordinary citizens are able to partake in what was once the exclusive domain of the qualified to get a press pass. There have always been citizen journalists—they used to be called "Letters to the Editor" writers—says Michael Stoll, lecturer at the SJSU School of Journalism and Mass Communications. "The problem is that a lot of what is called citizen journalism is in the guise of opinion making in the guise of professional writing. Very little of what passes for citizen journalism actually rises to the level of care, transparency and

thoroughness that we consider to be professional journalism."

Samie Hartley, '08 Journalism, adds: "What people capture with their camera phones is one moment in time. It's the whole idea of 'I knew it first and now I need to let the whole world know' and there's a market for that. The public wants to know what is happening as it's happening and these people are willing to satisfy that need without caring about accuracy. They think that someone will sort it all out for them later."

And who is this "someone"?

The trained journalist.

"Incidents and accidents can be reported by anyone," says Stoll. "Scandal, social ills, misappropriation of funds, bad public policy decisions or good decisions that may have gone unrecognized are much more difficult to unearth."

Are today's Internet consumers savvy enough to make the distinction between news reporting and the patchwork of unverified narratives commonly found on blogs? "The fact that anybody who has an opinion, a keyboard and access to the Internet can publish to the world what they know and what they think makes for a lot of noise on the web," says Hutton. "I don't know if people have the time and energy to thoughtfully sort through all the various sources of information."

The research done by the Project for Excellence in Journalism finds that even with substantial increases in the number of people who rely on the Internet regularly for their news, online news outlets are viewed with more skepticism than print, radio and television. Only Google News and Yahoo News, which derive much of their content from traditional news organizations, received positive marks for credibility by most users. The Drudge Report, Huffington Post, Salon and Slate were popular, but not viewed as dependable.

"Perhaps the only thing that journalism and journalists have is trustworthiness," says Stoll. "Journalists no longer have a monopoly on the means of production of mass information. What they have is a methodology and a culture of providing timely, important information that is well-researched and accurate."

Increasingly breaking news appears on online media channels before it is broadcast on TV. When US Airways flight 1549 crashed into the Hudson River on January 15, Janis Krums, a regular guy from Florida, posted the first photo of the crash on Twitter.

### Classroom education evolves

For most San José State students, going online is second nature. But how many of them know how to maximize the tools at their disposal?

John Hornberg, '09 Journalism and executive editor of the *Spartan Daily*, is a self-proclaimed Internet junkie who relies exclusively

on Google alerts, RSS feeds, Facebook updates and Twitter "news" to get his fill of national and international affairs. "These are tools that we need to be using more effectively," he says. "Journalism students can do so much more with their Facebook accounts—they can promote their stories, find sources, look for events to cover, network with organizations... and use it as a research and promotion tool, just to connect with friends and family."

Hornberg is leading his team's advent into the world of web 2.0—the *Spartan Daily* has more than 200 fans on Facebook, has a steady Twitter stream and updates on its sports, photo and news blogs.

Very different from the traditional Dwight Bentele first introduced the newspaper in 1934. "They're evolving," says the silver-haired centenarian matter-of-factly, leaning forward in his brown leather recliner at his San José home. "They're giving the audience what it demands."

And that will be the mantle for success, thinks Richard O'Connell, journalism professor and advisor to the *Spartan Daily*. "Whatever form the newspaper takes, whatever is going to be successful is something that fulfills a perceived need and draws people," he says. "Maybe everyone will be walking around with a Kindle (a wireless electronic reading device) in their hands. Or, if print survives, there maybe it's a thin membrane that looks like paper... who knows. We can equip our students with the latest tools and multimedia skills, but what we really want to teach them is the ability to ac-



when training students  
 s that don't yet exist,  
 ships are important. "For  
 alism students right now,  
 e absolutely indispensable,"  
 raig who is also serving  
 J-school's internship  
 inator. "In a time when  
 dustry is changing so  
 tically, internships are  
 st chance students have to  
 quish themselves from the  
 ."

nie Hartley is a case in  
 She interned at *The Brent-  
 Press*, the local newspaper in  
 metown, and upon gradu-  
 was offered a part-time  
 reader job. "In time they  
 me if I would be interested  
 king on a story or helping  
 the web and then I was  
 phased in as a full-time  
 ial staff member."  
 roofreader on Wednesdays,  
 content manager on Thurs-  
 and Fridays and a reporter  
 other day, Hartley is thank-  
 at she did not just stick  
 pen and notebook while  
 pol. "The professors kept  
 ng that you need to have  
 y skills as possible," she  
 s. "And I'm glad I listened."

## 's in the future?

nuch of broadcast news  
 d to sound bites and 140-  
 ter messages on Twitter,  
 in the journalism industry  
 i viable?  
 e a huge gap between  
 rint collapses and when  
 rnalism industry reinvents  
 says Suzanne Yada, '09  
 ine Journalism. "We are  
 gap right now and people  
 now what's going to

happen. I think there is still a  
 future for print but only in niche  
 circumstances."

Yada may be on to something.  
 The State of the News Media  
 2009 Report confirms that, in a  
 difficult year, niche magazines  
 such as *The Economist*, *The New  
 Yorker* and *The Atlantic* were the  
 only ones with readership gains,  
 while *U.S. News* has become  
 a monthly guide instead of a  
 weekly.

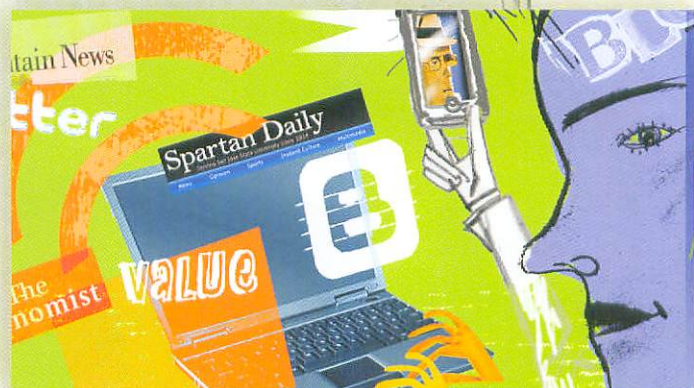
A number of new ventures that  
 showcase original reporting are  
 gaining ground online. Websites  
 like the VoiceofSanDiego.org,  
 staffed by nine professional jour-  
 nalists, MinnPost.com, launched  
 by Joel Kramer, former publisher  
 of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and  
*Global Post*, manned by foreign  
 correspondents, provide investiga-  
 tive journalism, original reporting  
 on the government, public affairs,  
 the arts, business and sports, and  
 in-depth international coverage—  
 everything that you would expect  
 from mainstream media, but in a  
 format that's now increasingly in  
 demand.

Locally, Michael Stoll,  
 J-school lecturer, is taking the  
 noncommercial route for news  
 publications. He, along with  
 volunteers and a national board  
 of advisers from journalism, aca-  
 deme, business and the nonprofit  
 world, has formed the Public  
 Press, an innovative nonprofit  
 enterprise that hopes to produce  
 an advertising-free daily newspa-  
 per and website in the Bay Area.

"We want to flip the [existing  
 business] model [of newspapers]  
 on its head," he says. "If you have  
 a nonprofit organization that  
 cuts out the advertising, which is

typically 60 percent of the paper  
 by bulk, you've just slashed one  
 of the biggest costs of the news-  
 paper, but you've also eliminated  
 one of the biggest sources of  
 income. If you can make up the  
 difference by boosting the price  
 by 10 percent, maybe saving by  
 not having any ad staff, maybe  
 delivering by bicycle because  
 now the papers are lighter ... this  
 is just one experiment in trying  
 to re-envision what we do as jour-  
 nalists and trying to re-center it  
 on journalism, on the real issues,  
 not the sensation and fluff that  
 makes advertisers feel better."

Whatever the outcome, it's  
 certain that journalism students,  
 faculty and professionals are not  
 going to be sitting idly by. "The



important thing to remember is  
 that the means of distribution  
 does not matter," says Bentel  
 emphatically. "What's important  
 is that the public be informed  
 honestly and adequately by a  
 responsible source. These are good,  
 able, hardworking, honest report-  
 ers and editors losing their jobs.  
 They'll figure something out." ♦

—Mansi Bhatia





SPART