

## Making 'real world' community connections

**M**aking "real world" community connections for Communication Studies students at Sacramento State makes perfect sense.

Given the university's geographic advantage of being in the capital city of California, students are accessing important links to community resources that not only enhance their degree program, but also deepen the connection of Sacramento State to its region.

The importance of community connections is emphasized in Sacramento State's formal "anchor university" initiative undertaken by President **Robert S. Nelsen**.

### STUDENT NEWS

"As the leading university in our community, Sacramento State, its students, faculty and staff have a long-established and unique role to play in improving Sacramento and its neighborhoods," Nelsen said.

Nelsen stressed the university's deep roots must be tied to promoting, facilitating and advancing community building that is not only beneficial to Sacramento, but also to Sacramento State University students.

Dr. **Sheree L. Meyer**, dean of the College of Arts and Letters, affirmed that effort this fall by bringing together new faculty with potential community friends and partners.

"We recognize that particularly for those faculty who are new to the community, it is sometimes a challenge to create those relationships without some kind of authentic introduction to those who might facilitate such engagement," Meyer said. "We also know how important it is for our community friends and partners to know about our new faculty—their interests, expertise, scholarly and creative activities."

In big ways and small, Communication Studies faculty and students are taking up the opportunities of being an "anchor university" and applying those to course work and degree completion.

opportunity this fall to have their stories picked up for publication in newspapers owned by McClatchy.

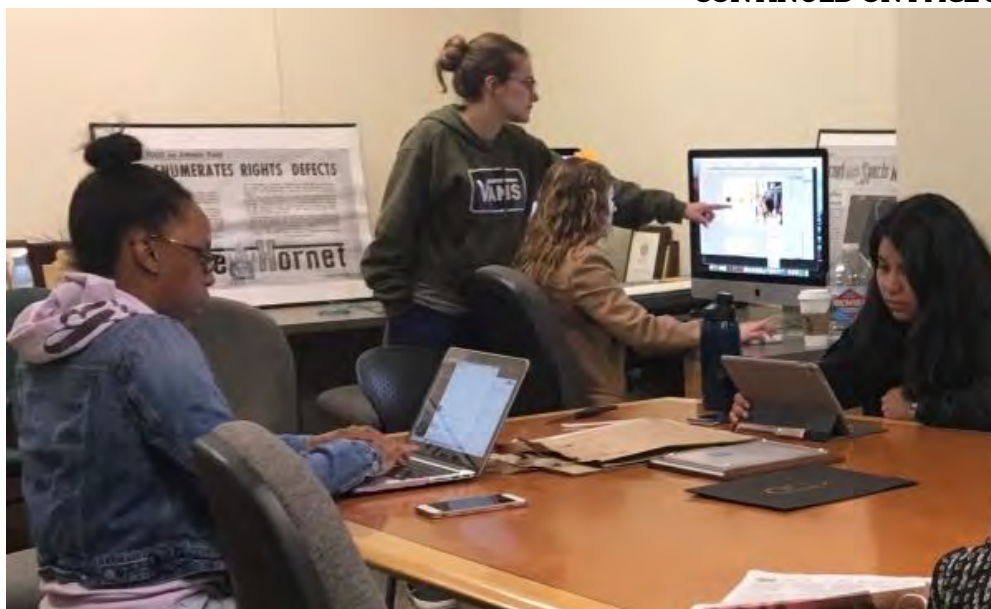
The journalism program is partnering with McClatchy to publish students' stories about the California legislature, under the guidance of Assistant Professor **Phillip Reese**. Students in this fall's Public Affairs Reporting class will work in teams to report, write and edit articles, data visualizations and videos about the effect of new state laws on California communities.

"The idea is to localize impact of the new law based on each market," Reese said. "We want to pair them into small reporting teams and have them become experts on the new law they are writing about, have them turn in drafts, critique each others work, and then submit the final product for possible publication."

The stories may be published in each of the five California-based McClatchy newspapers including *The Fresno Bee*, *The Merced Sun-Star*, *The Modesto Bee*, *The Sacramento Bee*, and *The San Luis Obispo Tribune*.

The laws they are writing about cover a broad range of topics such as efforts to improve safety in youth football amid growing evidence of the potential dangers of the sport, or offering financial aid for summer school.

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



### ■ Journalism Connections

Students in journalism reporting classes, for example, will have a new

**REAL WORLD WRITING** — Journalism students at Sacramento State University are getting "real world" reporting experience this year thanks to a partnership with McClatchy that will consider student articles for publication in their newspapers.

# Elizabeth Earle joins Communication Studies faculty

**T**he Communication Studies Department welcomed one new faculty member for the Fall 2019 semester, Dr. **Elizabeth Earle**. Earle, assistant professor of rhetoric, completed her Ph.D. in rhetoric and public affairs at Texas A&M University in 2019. She holds two masters degrees from Louisiana State University, one earned in 2014 in rhetoric and public affairs, and another completed in 2010 in Hispanic studies. She also completed a dual bachelor's degree in communication studies and philosophy from LSU in 2006.

## FACULTY NEWS

For her dissertation, Earle wrote "With Weapons of Burning Words: The Rhetoric of Miguel de Unamuno's Journalistic Writings." While at Texas A&M, she served as a graduate teaching and research assistant in the Department of Communication.

Earle is the author of "The Rhetoric of *Kairos*: Paul Tillich's Re-interpretation" in the *Journal of Communication and Religion*, and was the winner of a Professional Development Award from Texas A&M University in 2019. She is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



■ Dr. ELIZABETH EARLE

# Farewell to a friend: Jackie Morris-Henderson

**A** long-time member of the Sacramento State family, and well-known Communication Studies alumna, **Jackie Morris-Henderson** passed away Aug. 26, 2019.

Jackie gave more than 30 years of her life to Sacramento State, completing her bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1987, and a second bachelor's degree in Communication Studies in 1992. In 1999, she earned her master's degree in Human Resources and Organizational Development from the University of San Francisco.

Prior to her death, Morris-Henderson was named a 2019 Distinguished Service Award winner by the Sacramento State Alumni Association. The award specifically recognized her leadership in establishing the Black Alumni Chapter at Sacramento State.

An employee of the university for many years, she worked in several departments, including Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Outreach and Retention, and University Advancement. In University Advancement, she



was passionate about helping create scholarship opportunities for students.

"Our students will benefit for generations to come from Jackie's work to create a positive and active alumni association," said President **Robert S. Nelsen**. "She loved her work and took great pride in her role."

## ALUMNI NEWS

■ JACKIE MORRIS-HENDERSON



# Department of Communication Studies recognized

**A** new report from the U.S. Department of Education recognized the nation's top communication schools for Hispanic and Latinx students.

Sacramento State University was listed as No. 13 on the list of 25 colleges and universities serving the largest number of Hispanic and Latinx students in the nation. The story was reported by *Hispanic Outlook on Education* magazine.

The report highlighted that in 2017, Sacramento State awarded 137 degrees to Hispanic students, 49 degrees to Latino students, and 88 to Latina students. Florida International University led the list compiled by the Department of Education.

Other California universities on the list were California State University campuses in Dominguez Hills, Fullerton, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, and San Jose, and the University of Southern California.



## NABC honors Communication Studies student-athletes

**F**our student-athletes from the Department of Communication Studies were among an elite group honored this summer by the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

The NABC recognizes outstanding academic achievement with its "Honors Court" each year in men's basketball programs from across the U.S.

In order to be named to the "Honors Court," a student-athlete must meet a high standard of criteria, including a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or higher, and be a member of a team at a NCAA Division I, II or III or NAIA school.

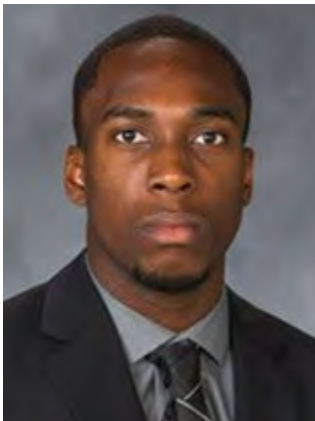


### STUDENT NEWS

Two graduates in the Class of 2019 were honored, including **James Herrick** and **Justin Strings**. Fellow Class of '19 graduate **Marcus Graves**, also a Comm Studies major, was named the Sacramento State University "Student Athlete of the Year.."

Two current students, **Chibueze Jacobs** and **Izayah Maurihooho-Le'afa**, both juniors, were also named to the NABC "Honors Court."

The NABC established the award "to recognize the talents and gifts that these men possess off the court and the hard work they exhibit in the classroom."



■ JACOBS



■ MAURIHOHOHO-LE'AFA



■ HERRICK



■ STRINGS

# Postcard from France: A student perspective

**F**or the first time ever, Communication Studies Department students were given an opportunity to study abroad during the summer of 2019.

Dr. **Jacqueline A. Irwin's** COMS 168 class, Approaches to Rhetorical Criticism, spent a week studying at the La Muse Artists and Writers Retreat in Southern France. The course was so popular, it will be offered again in Summer 2020.

A total of 10 students participated, and we invited Communication Studies major **Analise Aguilar** to share some of her experiences:

**Q: Why did you choose to go to France?**

**Aguilar:** I had never travelled to Europe before and thought it would be a good experience. But most of all, I have always wanted to do a study abroad class but didn't have funds to do a whole semester or year. It was a perfect span of time where I got to experience France and also get the feel for studying abroad. Plus doing homework and having class outside in the south of France sounded amazing.

**Q: Did the experience meet your expectations?**

**Aguilar:** I would say it exceeded my expectations. Preparing for the trip, Dr. J showed us pictures and I had done research myself of La Muse and other areas that we would be visiting. The pictures alone do not do it justice. Being immersed in an 12<sup>th</sup> century rural village often left me speechless.

**Q: What is perhaps the most important or significant part of the trip for you?**

**Aguilar:** Part of our group had made friends with a neighbor of La Muse. One person in our group was able to communicate with her because he spoke Spanish and so did she. She invited us into her home and we sat in her patio for hours. She and her husband showed us parts of her home, told us stories of how she toured all of Europe in an RV, served us wine and cookies, and answered her questions about Sacramento State and our lives in California. We still keep in contact with her and she looks forward to seeing a picture of our group at graduation together.

**Q: Does your trip inspire you to want to explore other parts of the world, and if so, where?**

**Aguilar:** I travelled to France alone — four airports, hours of layover time, and even a middle seat for 10 hours. I was nervous about finding the correct gate, going through security and ticketing and the possibility of them telling me my carry on was too heavy, foreign currency, shopping in a foreign grocery store, etc. But I did it and it was so much fun. I am so eager to continue to travel. I plan on going to Australia next with my best friends after graduation.

## STUDENT NEWS



**TAKING IN THE SIGHTS** — At left, COMS 168 students on a "day trip" to see the sights in Southern France. Above, **Katie Guest** and **Analise Aguilar** in an outdoor class.



# Communication Studies connections —



**WHY I WALK** — Students from Dr. **Timothy Howard's** COMS 158 class display their "Why I Walk" signs used to help promote the annual Out of the Darkness Walk for suicide prevention.

## ■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

### ■ Public Relations Connections

In the public relations sequence, students in the PR Campaigns class, COMS 158, are afforded regular opportunities to assist both on- and off-campus organizations and companies.

In Dr. **Andrew Stoner's** COMS 158 class, students have selected seven non-profit organizations across Northern California to assist in public relations projects, including Meals on Wheels of Sacramento County, the Medicine Horse Project, the E. Claire Raley Studio for the Performing Arts, the Sacramento Region Community Foundation, the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, TLCS—Hope Cooperative, and Women's Empowerment.

Dr. **Alan Ray** is also teaching a section of COMS 158 where students are working with the Sacramento SPCA to help plan their annual "Pup Crawl" in December.

Students in COMS 118, Ray's PR Survey course, are also producing social media and video news releases for the Front Street Animal Shelter, My Sister's House and Sacramento Food Bank.

Last spring, students enrolled in COMS 158 with Dr. **Timothy Howard** coordinated campus and community public relations and promotion for the annual Out of the Darkness campus walk for suicide prevention. The walk continues to set records for participation and involvement.

"While working with NPOs benefits them, it also benefits our students in important ways," Stoner said. "Students gain actual experience, but also witness smaller organizations up close, and can make important connections."



**STEPS TO PROGRESS** — Sacramento State students walk each year in the annual "Out of the Darkness Walk" to raise awareness of suicide prevention, promoted in part by Communication Studies public relations students.

*"An anchor university is the opposite of an ivory tower and is driven to improve the community in which it lives .... It wants to see true, lasting change through civic engagement .... It marshals all of the university's knowledge and expertise and strives to solve real-world problems."*



— President Robert S. Nelsen



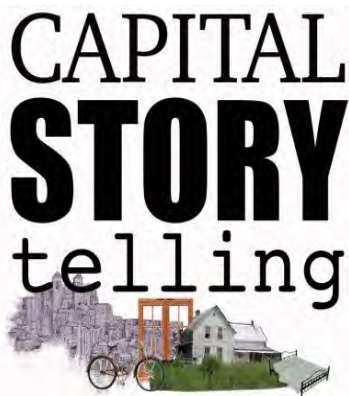
# Capital Storytellers take a new direction

**C**apital Storytellers, an idea launched in the College of Education has taken a new turn, involving several Communication Studies students.

**Victoria Boston**, who completed her degree in Spring 2019, participated in the new audio version of Capital Storytellers, a project started by Dr. **Lisa Cantrell**, assistant professor in the College of Education.

Previously a project using a stage and live audience, Boston was among the first students to participate in a version of the project that used audio recording instead. Boston was one of seven students equipped with a microphone and sent out “on assignment.”

For four weeks, Boston and her classmates recorded and edited stories, learned interviewing techniques, and gained experience in podcasting. At first, students were assigned to seek random people on the street and ask a question, and edit a montage of their responses.



Boston asked her subjects in Midtown Sacramento about how they felt about technology, and about pursuing what you love in a career versus money. A worker at the KSSU student radio station, Boston saw value in the assignment.

“I’m learning how to interview people better, to get myself out there,” Boston said. “What I’m learning here is definitely going to help me out in the future and with what I’m doing now.”



■ **VICTORIA BOSTON**

Cantrell believes storytelling builds empathy by helping people to relate better to one another,

and with the audio version, to do so without the fear of being on stage in front of a live audience.

## A new year, a new graduate cohort

**T**he start of a new year brings a new cohort of graduate students to Communication Studies.

Ten new master’s students began their studies this fall according to Dr. **Shawna Malvini-Redden**, graduate program coordinator.

The new students met just as the semester started with faculty members and the unofficial “mascot” of the group, Winnie, a guide-dog-in-training owned by Dr.

**GRADUATE NEWS** **Kimberly Aguilar**, assistant professor.

In a recent interview with the online site [mastersincommunication.com](http://mastersincommunication.com), Malvini-Redden discussed the importance of faculty in the graduate experience: “Faculty mentorship plays a huge role in our program. Students work closely with faculty, whether in classes, as research assistants or as teaching assistants/associates. We encourage students to work with faculty members on research projects and to get to know them in formal capacities like committees for culminating experiences, as well as for more casual mentoring.”



**DOG DAYS OF SUMMER** — As the warm summer came to an end, the 10 new masters students in Communication Studies gathered with members of the Graduate Program Committee for an informal meet and greet. Joining the meeting was Winnie, front left, a new canine friend and the cohort’s unofficial mascot.



# SPJ honors Sacramento State chapter

**E**ach year the Society of Professional Journalists honors a select group of campus chapters for their outstanding work in supporting SPJ's mission, members and journalism.

The 12 regional coordinators of SPJ from across the country select a campus chapter and a campus program in each region that has shown overall excellence.

The SPJ chapter at Sacramento State University was recently

honored with two awards, one as the Region 11 winner of the "Outstanding Campus Program of the Year" for 2018-19. The award recognized journalistic reporting on issues related to immigration and refugees.

In addition, Sacramento State was named the National Runner-Up in the "Campus Program of the Year" competition for 2018-19, also for work on immigration and refugee-related issues.



STUDENT NEWS

## PRSSA chapter off to a fast start for 2019-20

**T**he Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter is off to a fast start for the 2019-20 school year.

For fun, PRSSA members started the year off with an outing to TopGolf, but got down to serious business quickly with a well-attended forum with the public relations pros for the NBA's Sacramento Kings. **Alexander Sigua** (a Sac State alum) and **Rahsaan Gethers** shared with members their work and how their coursework applies now to their careers.

Another forum welcomed **Patrick Storm**, CEO of the Lemon Tree PR Agency, who talked about his experiences in opening his own firm.

Coming up quickly is the PRSSA International Conference happening Oct. 18-22 in San Diego. A large contingent of Sac State members are expected to participate.



STUDENT NEWS



**BIG TURNOUT** — PRSSA's first meeting of the fall term brought out a big group of new and returning members.

# Professor as inspiration

## Elaine Welteroth credits Professor Foss-Snowden as important role model

**E**laine Welteroth BA '07, lists Dr. Michele Foss-Snowden among her most important role models. "It was game-changing for me to have a teacher I identified with and looked up to, who took me under her wing," Welteroth said about her interactions with Professor Foss-Snowden. "She made my dreams seem possible."

The "dreams" Welteroth has reached are noteworthy. A judge on season 17 of "Project Runway" on the Bravo television network, in 2016 she became the youngest-ever editor-in-chief of *Teen Vogue* magazine.

Welteroth recalls a lot of late nights working on the staff of *The State Hornet* while she was an undergraduate at Sacramento State where "the journalism bug" bit her.

Published in magazines such as *Ebony* and *Glamour*, Welteroth, now 32 years old and based in Brooklyn, New York, is also the author of a new memoir, *More Than Enough: Claiming Space for Who You Are (No Matter What They Say)* (2019: Penguin Books). The book was listed among *The New York Times*' best-selling non-fiction books.

Speaking to *Sactown* magazine writer **Marcus Crowder**, Welteroth said Foss-Snowden gave her "one of the greatest gifts you can give anyone. I'm forever indebted .... I don't want to imagine a world in which there was no M. Foss—where would I be? What would I be if I didn't have a woman like that to tell me what I wanted was in reach?"

Having confidence in reaching for high goals is at the center of her new memoir. "The inspiration for the title came when I was reflecting on this stat that I came across that an American girl's confidence peaks at age 9. It just made me wonder why that is, and I reflected on my own journey and how similar it is to so many other young women's."

Welteroth said "you're born into this world with this limitlessness. Anything is possible. But as years go by, the world chips away at that—it labels you and puts you in boxes."

A major force on social media with more than 300,000 followers on Instagram, she wants to use that influence as a force for good. "Social media is a place where lies are told, but I also think it can be a tool with which to tell the truth and



Photo: Renell Medrano

### ■ ELAINE WELTEROTH

amplify conversations that are important and aren't being held in more traditional media."

Welteroth was at Sacramento State at the same time as **Ryan Coogler**, director of the award-winning 2018 film, *Black Panther*. "We've talked about our Sac State days," she said. "It's kind of surreal."

In January 2018, Welteroth stepped down as editor of *Teen Vogue* just two months after the publication announced it would go completely online, and no longer be offered in print.

"That was both a very hard decision to make and one that I absolutely knew I had to make," she told ABC News. "My ultimate bucket list of goals had all been checked and I was ready and eager and yearning for more."

She added: "I have always been a hustler, a really hard worker and what I've learned in that's never going to change. Just because you reach a certain level of success that you define for yourself, there's no finish line."



# Unseen Heroes helping tell Sacramento's story

**Y**ou can't tell the story of Sacramento's growth without telling the story of **Maritza Davis BA '07** and **Roshaun Davis BA '08**.

The couple's award-winning events agency, Unseen Heroes, is responsible for some of the region's biggest public events, including GATHER: Oak Park and the Midtown Farmers Market.

But change has come as the agency moves into its second decade. After 10 years with the company she founded with her husband, Maritza recently took on a new role as the vice president of experience and social responsibility for the Sacramento Kings. Her responsibilities will include managing the Kings' events team, which puts on more than 350 events annually, and the community impact team, which runs programs such as the Junior Kings and supports and participates in a wide variety of community activities and initiatives.

Maritza and Roshaun recently spoke about Maritza's new job, Sacramento State's role in the community, and the next big thing for Unseen Heroes.

**Q: Why did you feel now was the time to move on from Unseen Heroes and take the role with the Kings?**

**Maritza:** I felt like it's a pivotal time for our city. Sacramento is like a teenager. We're trying to get into the running with our cool older sister Los Angeles and older brother San Francisco. Teenagers are a little bit awkward. We are learning how we fit into California. The time is now for us to grow into adulthood. The Kings are the only major league team that we have in the city. The NBA is progressive and evolves at the rate in which a sports team should. My expertise in community development and event production are two unique worlds. I want to share that with the Kings organization and support the vision of our ownership and leaders. Ultimately we are one big family as a city and it is our time to shine.

**Roshaun:** I think it's amazing. Sometimes when you develop a concept and kind of push it into reality, you get bogged down by that concept or that role. For her to be able to grow into another position and still have Unseen Heroes run is just a testament to the well-oiled machine that we've become. This business has become bigger than both of us.

**Q: Looking back on the past 10 years of running Unseen Heroes with Maritza, what are you proudest of?**

**Roshaun:** I think the thing that I'm proudest of is actually being able to see things come to fruition now with such ease that weren't attainable 10 years ago. I sit at different events and I see different things happening in the city that we aren't producing but I know that the work we put in over the last 10 years indirectly or directly has attributed to

that thing happening. That's a cool space to be in because it makes me proud of all the hard work and determination we pushed. We believed in the city in a way not a lot of people did 10 years ago, and to see the city actually living up to the belief that we put in, that energy that we put in, that love that we put in, that's amazing.



■ ROSHAUN and MARITZA DAVIS

**Q: Why is being involved in your community so important to you?**

**Maritza:** We all need each other, whether you recognize it or not. The connection to other people, the connection to how we all live, is monumental. It's great to have resources like parks, but what makes the park come to life and be relevant are the people. To me community means everything. It's what makes the world go 'round.

**Q: How do you view Sac State's role in and impact on the community?**

**Maritza:** Sac State, especially in recent years, has done such an amazing job of getting involved. It is not a university that is just watching from the sidelines, instead they get involved with what's happening in our city. For a university like Sac State to get involved with existing students and alumni is strong evidence of the dedication they have to the growth of their student body both past and present.

**Roshaun:** Sac State produces a lot of graduates who are doing some cool things right now. A lot of the people who we work with are actually graduates of Sac State. That's just a testament to being open, to educating the community, and then developing them in a way that allows them to contribute back to the community. It's a vital role and Sac State plays that perfectly.

■ Jonathan Morales

# Billingsley named Special Assistant to the President

**S**arah Billingsley MA '13, was recently named Special Assistant to the Office of the President of Sacramento State University.

A graduate of the Communication Studies program, since 2014 Billingsley has worked in the College of Continuing Education as the marketing communications director.

As President **Robert S. Nelsen** noted, it has been a year of “significant transitions” in the leadership of the university, and so “it became evident that additional support would be needed ... (and so) I am pleased to share that Sarah will be joining our office.”

Nelsen said Billingsley brings years of experience in communication, project management and marketing. “She has worked with stakeholders across campus on a variety of

projects, including Project Attain!,” Nelsen said.

Before joining Sacramento State University, Billingsley was a communications and media manager at the Public Health Institute; a communications director for Hanzlik Media Management; and an advertising director for *Sacramento News & Review*.

Billingsley is currently completing her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership in the College of Education, with an expected graduation date of May 2020.



■ SARAH BILLINGSLEY

## ALUMNI NEWS

### Arturo Reyes to lead Rio Hondo College

**A**rturo Reyes has been named the 10th superintendent and president of Rio Hondo College in Whittier, Calif.

President of Mendocino College since 2013, Reyes earned a dual bachelor's degree in Communication Studies and Spanish at Sacramento State in 1984. He holds an Ed.D. from UC Davis.

“This is a key moment for Rio Hondo College,” Reyes said. “The college has developed a rich array of programs to support students who are grappling as never before with barriers to success. Our job is to knock down those barriers even as we continue to expand high-value academic and career training opportunities.”

Reyes previously served as vice president of academic affairs at Solano Community College, and interim president and vice president of academic affairs at San Jose City College.



■ ARTURO REYES

### Kaci Boyd working to insure success and community

**C**ommunity involvement has been a lifelong interest of Kaci (Barnes) Boyd BA '09.

As a child, Boyd split her time between leadership at school and her local 4-H and FFA clubs. Originally planning to focus her career on communication in agriculture, Boyd expanded her horizons after graduating from Sacramento State University.

As a PR director professional, she noted, “I was handling events, and I got to write press releases and I was doing PR, which is what I studied,” she said.

“That was great, but soon, after my husband and I got married, we wanted to start a family, so working around the clock wasn't conducive to what we wanted.”

Boyd shifted gears and worked for several years for the State of California, but earlier this year took a bold step and started her own Farmers Insurance Agency in Galt, Calif. Since then, she's earned distinction as one of the top three Farmers agents in northern California.



■ KACI BOYD



# ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

**Michael Ault BA '92**, is the executive director of the Downtown Sacramento Partnership. Ault noted upon the opening of the new Downtown Sacramento State University campus, "Downtown Sacramento is undergoing an urban renaissance where culture, business, develop, and now, higher learning collide to create energy and enthusiasm we haven't seen in decades."



■ AULT

**Anne Descalzo BA '11**, was of the "40 Under Age 40" honorees of *The Sacramento Business Journal* for 2018. She is an assistant vice president for SAFE Credit Union.



■ DESCALZO

**Christine Mahon BA '10**, was one of the "40 Under Age 40" honorees of *The Sacramento Business Journal* for 2018. She is associate vice president for marketing and communications for Associated General Contractors of California.



■ MAHON

**Kelly O'Brien BA '13**, is the Corporate Sponsorship Activation Manager for the NBA's Dallas Mavericks. She recently spoke on a special panel about women in sports, sponsored by Texas Rangers. While an undergrad at Sacramento State, she worked an internship with the Sacramento River Cats.



■ O'BRIEN

**Sarah Pollo BA '06**, was one of the "40 Under Age 40" honorees of *The Sacramento Business Journal* for 2018. She is president and CEO of Pollo Communications, Inc.

**Dallas Smith MA '16**, is the director of Ticket Operations and Fan Engagement for Sacramento State University. A former gymnast for the Hornets, she qualified for the NCAA regional finals in 2014. She previously worked in the office of sports compliance in the Sac State Athletic Department.



■ POLLO

**Demairyé Smith MA '17**, is currently completing his Ph.D. in the Department of Communication and Film at the University of Memphis. Smith, who also completed his BA in Communication Studies at Sacramento State, is focused on rhetorical traditions in higher education related to African-American students.



■ DALLAS SMITH



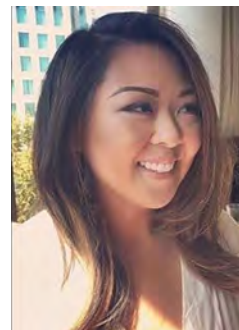
■ DEMAIRYÉ SMITH

**Travis Jacobson BA '19**, died unexpectedly on Aug. 13, 2019 in Los Angeles. A graduate of the public relations sequence, he was an avid outdoor sportsman and member of the PRSSA while at Sacramento State University. He was 24 years old.

**Chona Sarte BA '08**, passed away June 10, 2019. At the time of her death, she was working as deputy director of external affairs in the office of California Governor **Gavin Newsom**. A native of Sacramento, she completed her BA at Sacramento State before completing graduate work at UC Davis. Sarte, 32, suffered from heart disease and was, according to Governor Newsom, "a respected and talented colleague" and "a passionate defender of the environment. Her colleagues remember this passion, matched only by her generosity as she



■ JACOBSON



■ SARTE

would happily lend a hand to any teammate in need."

## IN MEMORIAM



**Alumni news to share? Let us know!**

**Email to: [Andrew.Stoner@csus.edu](mailto:Andrew.Stoner@csus.edu)**

# 'El Chicano' director Joe Carnahan recalls Sac State



## ■ JOE CARNAHAN

**J**oe Carnahan BA '95 has written and directed several movies that feature high-octane action sequences designed to get your heart pumping and adrenaline running.

But he doesn't consider himself an action director.

"I guess that's what I'm known for, but what makes any film interesting, what makes any genre work, ultimately, is the characters," said Carnahan, whose credits include *Narc*, *The A-Team*, *Smokin' Aces* and *The Grey*.

Carnahan hopes that the characters in his latest film, *El Chicano*, which opened May 3, connect with audiences in a big and very important way. The film is the first superhero movie to feature an all Latino cast, something Carnahan and his co-writer **Ben Hernandez Bray**, who also serves as the director, hope can address a major problem in Hollywood: the underrepresentation of Latino individuals in movies.

## ALUMNI NEWS

"Ben for years had been saying, 'I don't see myself represented. I don't see brown faces. I don't see those movies,'" Carnahan said. "The only balm I could supply, as his best friend, was to say, 'We need to go make this movie now.'"

Carnahan credits much of where he is today to Sacramento State, from which he says he received a "blue collar" film education – one that prioritized hands-on learning over theory – in a diverse environment that exposed him to individuals from all backgrounds.

A native of Vacaville, Carnahan had become involved with creative writing while a teenager, which morphed into an interest in film while attending Solano Community College. At 19, he wrote his first screenplay.

"It was terrible, but it was a good learning process, and so I wrote that and began to write another one, another one, another one, and through attrition and just being stubborn about the process and understanding that I was learning even though it wasn't stuff I was ever going to do, I just kept slogging forward," he said.

He continued to take film courses, raised his GPA and transferred to Sacramento State, where he enrolled as an English and film

studies double major. Working at a moving company to help pay for college, he also got involved in the local theater and film scene, and staged a one-act play in the Playwrights' Theatre.

The campus itself even made its mark on Carnahan's career. The tunnel below Arboretum Drive at the front of campus was used as a filming location for an early version of *Narc*, which eventually became one of his first commercial films.

Carnahan eventually saw a string of success with several big-budget action films and thrillers, but getting financing for *El Chicano* proved difficult. He and Hernandez Bray eventually had to go to Canada to secure funding.

The film, based in part on Hernandez Bray's personal experiences, tells the story of a Los Angeles police detective who discovers that his deceased brother had planned to become a masked vigilante known as El Chicano in an effort to fight the influence of Mexican drug cartels in East Los Angeles, and eventually assumes the mantle of El Chicano himself. Billed

as a superhero film, Carnahan says it also touches on issues of identity, including what it means to be both an American and a Mexican American.

*El Chicano* aims to make a dent in a severe underrepresentation of Latino characters in Hollywood. A 2018 USC study found that just 6.1 percent of speaking roles in films in 2017 went to Latino characters, despite Latino individuals making up nearly 18 percent of the U.S. population. The disparity is even greater when looking at who is spending money at the multiplex: Latino individuals bought 23 percent of all movie tickets in 2016, according to the Motion Picture Association of America.

Or, to compare apples to apples, *El Chicano* came out just one week after the highly anticipated *Avengers: Endgame*, the culminating film of a 21-movie superhero series that featured just one prominent Latino character.

In talking about how to address the issue, Carnahan circles back to what he loves most about making movies: creating characters that can connect with an audience.

"If you watch *Black Panther*, you don't say, 'Well I'm not African American or African so I can't possibly understand what that story is about.' It's absurd," he said. "Of course you do. It's a great movie. Great movies transcend."

The approach Carnahan took with *El Chicano* – to make the movie, whatever it took – stems from lessons and values he learned at Sacramento State, which were imparted by faculty members who also were working professionals in the film industry.

"I didn't go to film school. Sacramento State was my film school, and I'm very proud of that," he said. "It had a blue-collar approach to it. It wasn't so steeped in film theory. It was, 'Get out and do it.'"



# Communication Studies faculty news

**F**aculty members in the Department of Communication Studies are continuously busy fulfilling the “research and scholarly activity” portion of their duties. Here are some highlights of our faculty’s recent activities:

■ *Capitol Weekly* website celebrated its 10th annual “Top 100” movers and shakers in communications, public affairs, public relations and journalism at the California state capitol. **Sigrid Bathen**, lecturer, a writer for *CW* since its inception in 2005, joined the honorees at a special reception. Professor **Molly Dugan** is president of the board of directors of Open California, the non-profit policy organization that published *Capitol Weekly*.

■ The films of Dr. **Diego Bonilla**, professor, were the subject of an article represented at the Plural Forms of Literary Genericity conference organized by Sorbonne University in France. Dr. **Hector Perea** authored an article entitled, “The Plots of the Plot in the Reconstruction of Time: Diego Bonilla’s Unlimited Cinema,” which will be published by the journal *Colloquia*.

Bonilla’s most recent film was highlighted in *El Mercurio*, a newspaper published in Ecuador. The film, *Uku Pacha*, was shot on-location in Ecuador on July 2019 and was financed by the film program from the Universidad de Cuenca. “The movie will be virtual reality,” Bonilla said. “People will put on visors and be sitting next to the characters to see what they do. We want them to see the rivers, valleys and high walls that are in the desert. We are very proud to make this film in Ecuador. The nature and landscapes lend themselves to the interpretation we want to give *Uku Pacha*.”

■ Dr. **Kathryn Kasic**, assistant professor, delivered the 2019 STEM Scholars Lecture at Sacramento State. Her talk, titled “Beneath the Ice: Exploring a Subglacial Lake in Antarctica” details the documentary films of the Subglacial Antarctica Lakes Scientific Access expedition from last year. Kasic was one of 20 scientists and 30 support staff that explored a site 300 miles from the South Pole for 21 days.

■ **Dan Janos**, assistant professor, is the director of a new film from Strong Eye Shorts titled *Apotheosis*. The film is about life after the after life. During the summer break, Janos was assistant director on a short titled *Flight of the Heron* which will premiere in November at the Crest Theater in Sacramento.

■ *Inside Sacramento* magazine recently highlighted Dr. **Virginia Kidd**, professor emeritus, in a story about her efforts to provide “sanctuary” to her feline friends, and her work as editor of the Ella K. McClatchy Library newsletter. Kidd is also a published author and playwright.

■ **Donna Knifong**, lecturer, was in the spotlight recently for the National Communication Association’s “Inside & Out: Five Questions for a Scholar” online column. Knifong fielded questions about the Listening to Students project started in 2014 that has surveyed more than 1,500 students about their educational experiences at California State University.

■ Dr. **Edith E. LeFebvre**, professor, presented three paintings judged in a show at the Mills Station Art Gallery in the Rancho Cordova City Hall. The works, titled “The Storms That Rage Thru Your Mind,” “Reflections of Spewing,” and “Goodness, Women, Cosmos,” will remain on display until Oct. 20.

■ Dr. **Shawna Malvini Redden**, assistant professor, is co-author of two recent articles. “How Metaphorical Framings Build and Undermine Resilience During Change: A Longitudinal Study of Metaphors in Team-Driven Organization Change,” published in *Communication Monographs*. She also was a co-author on “There Is a Fine Line Between One Man’s Personal Life and Professional One: Handling Sexual Harassment on Facebook from the Victim’s Perspective,” in *Qualitative Research Reports*.

In addition, Malvini Redden joined with Dr. **Ryan Fuller**, a professor in the Department of Business, to offer a year-long Faculty Scholarship Community, “Overcoming the Challenges and Embracing the Opportunities of Qualitative Research.” The presentation was made possible by the Office of Research Innovation and Economic Development.

■ CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

## Mendocino Mentions



SACRAMENTO STATE

# More Mendocino Mentions —

## ■ CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

■ **Trinette Marquis**, lecturer, conducted full-day workshops on public relations measurement and research for the National School Public Relations Association in Washington, D.C. this summer. She was also the keynote speaker for the Oregon State Public School Relations Association in October. She is scheduled to speak before the California School Public Relations Association, and school public relations associations in Kentucky, Michigan and Oklahoma.

Marquis is also the co-author of *Engaging Data: Smart Strategies for School Communication*, published in 2018 by Rowman & Littlefield in partnership with the National School Public Relations Association.

■ **Dr. Fred Molitor**, adjunct professor, is the lead author of an article accepted by the *Public Health Nutrition* journal that explores how dietary behaviors and overall diet quality improved from 2015-17 among mothers, teenagers and low-income families across California. The study surveyed more than 14,000 mothers, 3,000 teenagers, and 6,000 children over a three-year period.

■ **Pam Sanger**, lecturer, was recently honored as the "Sacramento State Faculty-Staff Member of the Week" at a Hornets football game. Sanger was nominated for the honor by a student athlete who described her as a supportive and inspiring professor.

■ A new digital journalism class started this fall under the direction of **Phillip Reese**, assistant professor. A data reporter for *The Sacramento Bee*, Reese is helping students see how data can be used to inform or create news stories using databases from government and other official sources.

■ **Dr. Carmen Stitt**, professor, recently published two-peer reviewed journal articles. The first was a content analysis of pregnancy websites published with co-author and Communication Studies alumna, and UC Davis doctoral student, **Karen Vang**, in the *Journal of Consumer Health*. The study was first presented by Vang and fellow Communication Studies students **Lisa O'Maicin**, **Sean Walsh**, **Savannah Hanks**, and **Jacob Guinn** at Sacramento State's Student Research Symposium. Funding for this research was provided by the CSUS College of Arts & Letters Student-Faculty Research and Creative Activity Award.

Stitt's other article was an experiment to determine the influence of presenting women with information about services provided by midwives and doulas published in the *International Journal of Childbirth Education*, co-authored by **Kiersten Brockman**, an alumna of Communication Studies and currently a graduate student at the University of Memphis. Funding for the second study was provided by the Sacramento State Research and Creative Activity Faculty Award program.

■ **Dr. Andrew E. Stoner**, associate professor, has made several appearances related to his new book, *The Journalist of Castro Street: The Life of Randy Shilts* (2019: University of Illinois Press). He appeared this summer on C-SPAN3 as part of its "American History TV" series; on *Forum*, a daily interview program on KQED public radio in San Francisco; and has conducted book readings in Sacramento, San Francisco, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Toronto.

■ **Dr. John L. Williams**, professor, is proving it's never too late to get going—participating in for the second year in a row in the 5K Fun Run sponsored by the WELL. He noted he finished third in his age group (which he acknowledged had only three entrants).



**SANGER HONORED** — **Pam Sanger**, an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies, was honored at the Sacramento State-Northern Colorado football game as the "Faculty-Staff Member of the Week." She's shown here with the Sac State mascot **Herky the Hornet**, and **Markus Jennings**, associate athletic director.



# Just what the doctor ordered

## *Foss-Snowden launches new podcast offering TV for what ails you*

**O**ne famous TV theme song used to suggest, “Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name.”

Who knew that maybe the TV shows themselves were what was needed? That’s the idea behind a podcast unveiled this fall by Dr. **Michele Foss-Snowden**, professor.

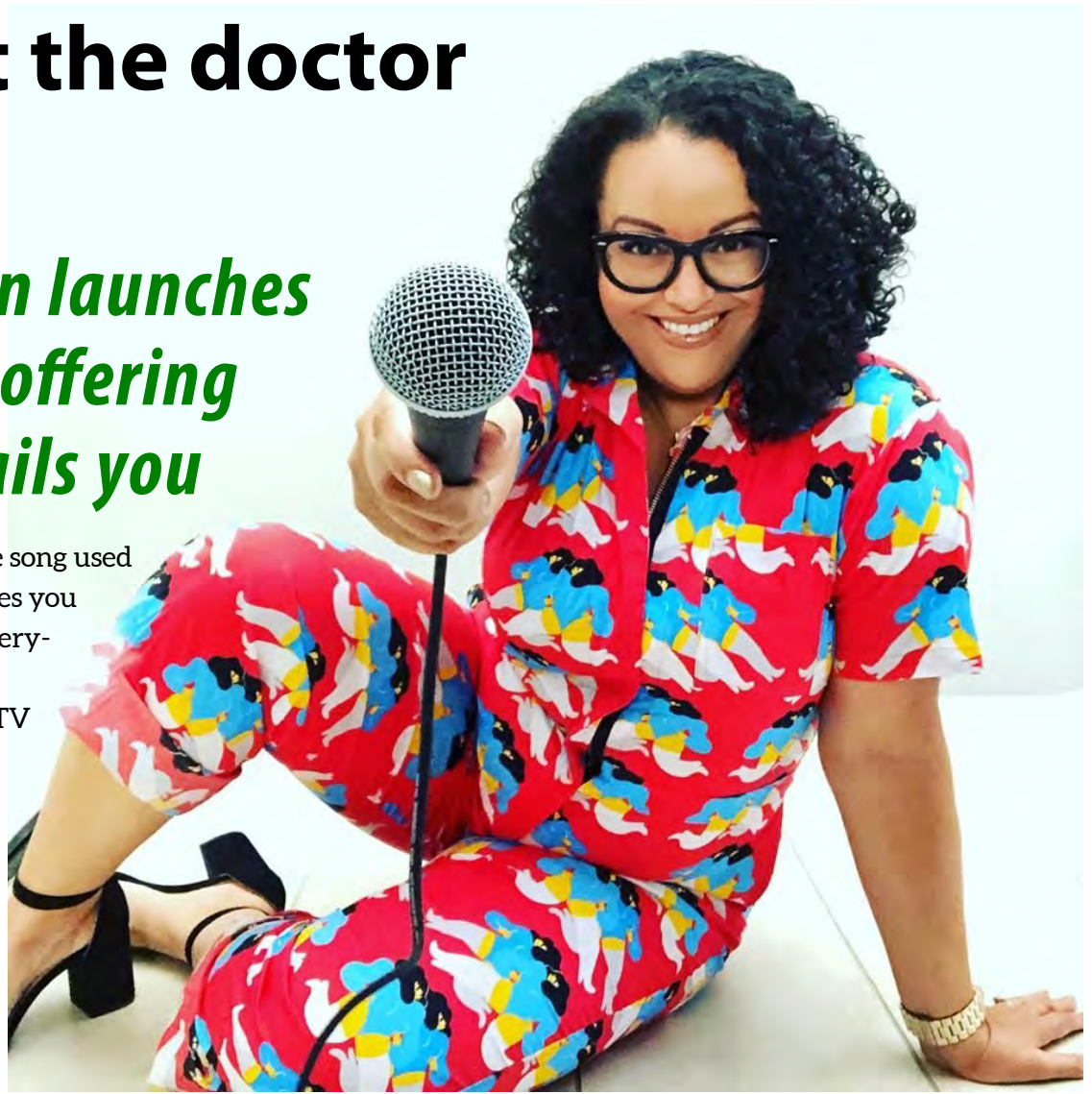
“The TV Doctor,” as its known, started Sept. 5 with a “live launch party” at the Brickhouse Gallery & Art Complex in Sacramento.

**FACULTY NEWS** “I’ve been playing around with the idea for at least 10 years,” Foss-Snowden said. “But I let speed bumps (large and small, real and imagined) slow me down to a near standstill. I even threw this car in park, but I kept the engine running.”

Foss-Snowden said she’s spent the time developing all of the technology needed, “And now, I’ve developed go-go-gadget legs, and this vehicle can elevate and roll right past the self-doubt and excuses.”

The podcast tagline is, “I’m not a doctor on TV, but I play one in real life” and allows participants to bring their concerns and worries—whatever is ailing them—to Dr. Foss-Snowden. Her prescription will include the exact TV show you should be watching to deal with your problem, or to learn how to cope.

“For example, what if your family hates your significant other, your boss gave your incompetent co-worker the raise you deserved, whatever the issue, I’ll ‘prescribe’ what you should watch to help you through it,” Foss-Snowden said.



**GOING LIVE** — The launch party for Dr. **Michele Foss-Snowden**’s new “TV Doctor” podcast.



# Five questions about Listening to Students

**T**he Listening to Students program at Sacramento State has a key driving force behind its success — **Donna Knifong**, a lecturer in the Department of Communication Students.

The NCA recently asked Knifong to participate in its “5 Questions with a Scholar” column — an edited transcript of which follows.

In addition, Listening to Students has a new web site complete with a long list of available resources for students and instructors alike. The new site is at:

<https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/retention-academic-success/spotlights/listening-to-students.html>

## **Q1: What was the inspiration for Listening to Students?**

**A:** Students. Class discussions, presentations, projects and papers. We are more privileged than most disciplines to hear our students’ personal perspectives about, for example, what it is like to be a person of color or of immigrant status, with physical or learning disabilities or psychological struggles, or someone who is a veteran, LGBT, multilingual, or undocumented in our classroom, community and country. Listening to Students brings the perspectives of students directly to those who serve them in education, using the power of student voices to expand minds, touch hearts, and contribute in profound ways to inclusivity, equity and student access. This work aims to make higher education and our world a better place for all.

## **Q2: Why is this project important to you and the broader communication discipline?**

**A:** The goal of bettering human relations is fundamental to our discipline, and the social construction of reality makes communication the foremost vehicle of change. Listening to Students adds to social awareness and discourse regarding diversity. The advocacy of voice is a tenet of the social justice spirit soaring through the discipline, in recognition that sharing lived experience helps us to see more clearly each other and the beliefs and practices that marginalize and disadvantage groups. Throughout the myriad informational sections written for this work, as well, are woven numerous principles of Intercultural Communication, Interpersonal Communication, Group Communication, Public Speaking, Instructional Communication, and more. It’s a real opportunity for those in the field who want to take what they know about communication and make a difference in a new and significant way.

## **Q3: You have expressed an interest in expanding the project to other institutions. What are your long-term goals for the project?**

**A:** This work is very likely the first of its kind in the nation, and something every campus needs in the fight to lower the achievement gap, raise graduation rates, and enhance our students’ life-time prosperity and well-being. Right now, awareness of the project is growing: Its innovations have been featured by different national organizations and this work can be done at any institution of higher education, in a number of different ways and to any degree, larger- to smaller scale.

The university website for Listening to Students shows the project itself and, for those at other institutions wishing to take part provides further information about the process taken and the student surveys and other forms used.



■ **DONNA KNIFONG**

## **Q4: How have the survey responses been received by the faculty and administrators?**

**A:** The project received warm support from the beginning to end. The public nature of the work, directly disseminated to hundreds and displayed for thousands, means this project can have real reach and impact, directly and indirectly, professionally and personally. Student voices are most truly honored when they are really heard.

## **Q5: What was the most surprising response to your survey?**

**A:** The most astonishing thing to me was — and continues to be — the power of student voices. The student survey responses make me want to be a better educator and a better person. I believe that student voices can reach us and teach us in ways that are unlike any other—and they deserve to be heard in higher education.





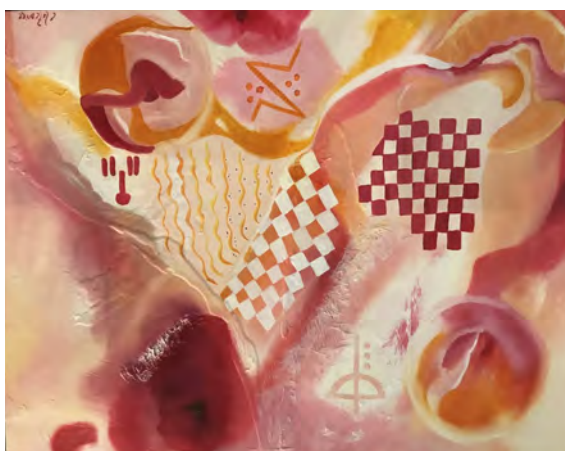
# Parting shots —



**O**n pages 13-14 of this newsletter is more information about these depictions of faculty research and creative activity.



**ON DISPLAY**— Three new paintings by Dr. **Edith LeFebvre**, professor, are included in a display at the Rancho Cordova City Hall. Far left is “The Storms That Rage Thru Your Mind”; top right is “Reflections of Spewing” and bottom right is “Goodness, Women, Cosmos.”



## FACULTY NEWS



**ON LOCATION** — Actors in Dr. **Diego Bonilla's** fourth film, *Uku Pacha*, appear on location in the Jubones Desert, which is in the middle basin of the Jobones River in southern Ecuador. Filming took place during the summer of 2019.



# More parting shots —

A

few more images of events and happenings involving the Department of Communication Studies.



**TENTH YEAR** — *Capitol Weekly* presented its “Top 100” list for the 10th year recently. Attending the event (above) were **Sigrid Bathen**, lecturer, who has written for CW since its inception. Shown with Bathen are **Chuck McFadden**, former Associated Press Capitol correspondent, and **Bertha Gaffney Gorman BA ’74**, a Sac State alumna, and former reporter for *The Sacramento Bee*. At right, **Molly Dugan**, professor, president of the board of directors of Open California, the non-profit which publishes *Capitol Weekly*.



## FACULTY NEWS



**DIRECTING THE ACTION** — **Dan Janos**, assistant professor, working as an assistant director on the film, *Flight of the Heron*. The film features Chinese lantern dancers (above). It premieres in November at the Crest Theatre in Sacramento.



**BOOKED** — Above left, **Trinette Marquis**, lecturer, in a recent book talk about her 2018 book, *Engaging Data: Smart Strategies for School Communication*, and (at left) **Andrew Stoner**, associate professor, in a screen shot from his appearance on C-SPAN regarding his new book, *The Journalist of Castro Street: The Life of Randy Shilts*.