



From left, William Leguizamon, Peter Clune and Megan Burks discuss their career paths in entertainment, news and writing on Jan. 11. Photos by Farshid Bazmandegan

Finding a Roadmap to Success for Students

Four ‘Careers in the Humanities’ workshops highlight choices, concrete steps to successful futures

UC San Diego students attending a series of workshops last week learned that study in the humanities will benefit them in multiple ways—beyond opening doors to exciting jobs and careers.

Providing concrete career information and advice to all UC San Diego students, the Careers in the Humanities Workshops spanned four nights at the Career Center, each night focusing on a different path after graduation: law, nursing and medical school, fellowships, and entertainment, news and writing.

“The intention of the series was to really introduce students to some of the careers that are open to them after they finish their time at UC San Diego,” said Nancy Kwak, a Department of History faculty member who initiated and led the workshops.

“I know a lot of students come to college with the desire to succeed and do well, with parents often very influential in achieving that drive,” she said. “Yet sometimes there is no clear roadmap to understand what choices are available. We want to give students the right tools.”

Each workshop included a panel of industry professionals and admissions offers discussing their own career paths, with emphasis given to interacting with students one on one. To ensure a chance to network, the workshops were limited to 30 students each.

With 17 guest speakers in total, panelists included UC San Diego alumni Jerrilyn Malana and David Lopez; admission directors Estuardo Ponciano of UC Irvine and Alexis Elston of UC Davis, UC San Diego Health physicians Dilip Jeste and Jona Hattangadi-Gluth, and media professionals Megan Burks of KPBS and William Leguizamon of Fox Desportes.

“You’re in good company as a humanities major,” said Malana, a chief deputy district attorney at the San Diego County District Attorney’s Office. Malana is the immediate past president of the UC San Diego Alumni board and serves on the Board of Trustees for the UC San Diego Foundation.

“What’s great about the humanities is it teaches you how to write ... and to also think critically,” she said. “It helps you understand people.”

Kwak said the workshops were not only meant to give students a sense of the breadth of opportunity available, but also to provide time with industry professionals where they can learn concrete, practical steps to take while a student, in order to succeed after graduation.

Specific advice from the panelists included:

- Expect the first few years of employment to be steps in a long, successful career
- Anticipate working hard from the start, as a dream position—and dream pay—will take years to develop
- If freelancing, don’t forget about taxes
- Future employers will be paying attention to how you have presented yourself, so be mindful of your reputation now, especially on social media



Professionals in the medical field give advice on ways undergraduates can better prepare for nursing and medical school on Jan. 9.

- For graduate school, visit local institutions first to ask questions, before spending money on long trips to additional schools
- Rankings can be helpful, but are only one part in deciding where to apply to graduate school,
- Seize opportunities while in college, through volunteer work and internships
- Use your time as an undergraduate to grow as a person, as your future will be much more rewarding

One aspect that resonated with students was the focus on fellowships and working abroad. Colin Lober, a current Rady School of Management graduate student who received his undergraduate degree in English literature, spoke about his past experience in the Peace Corps. Humanities majors, he said, are constantly questioning and thinking about the world around them: volunteering abroad highlights these skills.

Students were particularly interested in talking with Michelle Monroy, the UC San Diego graduate fellowship advisor who focused her discussion on preparing applications, specifically for Fulbright Scholarships. Monroy encouraged students to reach out to her directly, and said there were a few opportunities for undergraduates to apply for Fulbright research grants.

“What they’re looking for is trajectory [and] that you’re painting a clear picture of where you’re going,” Monroy said. “They want to know how [the fellowship] is going to help improve your professional development. They want to know what they’re going to get in return.”



The workshops were capped at 30 students each to better give opportunities for one-on-one networking.

The workshops represent an ongoing, collective effort between the [Division of Arts and Humanities](#), the [UC San Diego Career Center](#) and the [Institute of Arts and Humanities](#).

In 2016, the university was awarded a \$2.59 million collaborative grant with the San Diego Community College District to help humanities transfer students transition to the university. Awarded from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Division of Arts and Humanities received \$1.42 million, the highest single-award the division has received in support of the humanities.

The career workshops stem from one initiative of the grant, focusing on student enrichment opportunities aimed, in part, at underscoring how humanities study is relevant to both the personal and professional ambitions of students. The intention is to continue these workshops, showing how humanities are a viable and valuable course of study.

“It is clear a degree in the humanities can lead to a successful, interesting and financially rewarding career,” Kwak said. “We are grateful for our guests, and equally grateful the students took the initiative to come and meet these incredible speakers.”

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