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New Life Leads to Linfield

Laura Davis
Linfield College

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New life leads to Linfield



Viktoria Putintsev '05, editor-in-chief of *The Linfield Review*, became involved with journalism by accident, after inadvertently signing up for newspaper class instead of yearbook at Dallas High School.

One cold March morning, 6-year-old Viktoria Putintsev '05 left life as she knew it behind.

It was 1989, and as the Soviet Union collapsed around them, Putintsev and her family left their home in Ukraine in search of a better life. They immigrated to the United States, settling in a Russian community in Lebanon.

"I remember going to school and people's mouths were moving but I didn't know what they were saying," said Putintsev of Dallas, whose sister, Julia '06, was also born in Ukraine. "I had no idea what was going on."

Now, 16 years later, Putintsev has flourished as a mass communication honors student and editor-in-chief of *The Linfield Review*. She manages the student newspaper much like the rest of her life, with hard work, integrity and focus, and balances other responsibilities as well. She is an academic assistant in the mass communication department, a colloquium peer advisor, and a member of Alpha Lambda Delta and SPURS honor societies.

"She's one of our finest students," said William Lingle, professor of mass communication. "She's taken the initiative to do practical work as well as academic work, and excels at both."

Putintsev, named Oregon High School Journalist of the Year in 2001, joined the *Review* staff as a freshman reporter and worked her way up the ranks to the top position this year. The journey has bolstered her self-confidence.

"I truly believe I can do anything," she said. "I used to be shy and timid, and journalism has really smashed all that. I can talk to anybody about anything, and I don't have a fear of much."

As a sophomore, Putintsev was the youngest of 12 Oregon students to earn a prestigious Charles Snowden Internship, and she spent 10 weeks at *The Tri-County News* in Junction City. Stints at the *Polk County Itemizer Observer* and the Grants Pass *Daily Courier* strengthened her journalistic skills as well.

"One thing I've taken away from Linfield is that no matter what job I get into, whether within my intended major or not, I will have the ability to write and that will help me wherever I go," she said.

She's built strong relationships with a number of Linfield professors such as Lingle, who is her advisor and *The Linfield Review* advisor.

"I feel free to come talk to him whenever, and that was one of the things I was hoping for when I chose Linfield," she said. "Not only does he know my name, he knows most everything about me."

During her years at Linfield, Putintsev has developed a strong interest in social work, particularly in Latin American countries, and she has traveled to Costa Rica, Cuba, Spain and, in January, Russia. She's fluent in Spanish, and can understand Russian.

Last spring, Putintsev and her family returned to Ukraine for the first time in 15 years. She visited the house where she lived, and where her aunt and grandmother still reside. The crowded city and muddy streets were a stark contrast to the idyllic memories of her childhood.

"It was another experience in my appreciation for coming back to Linfield and realizing, had my parents stayed there, what different lives we would have had," she said. "I can't believe my life turned out this way. Some days I walk through the campus and think, 'I can't believe that I'm here.' I thank God that I got this far and I'm grateful to Linfield. I hope one day I can give back."

— Laura Davis