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Giving Students an Inside Look

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Giving students an inside look



Scott Nelson '94 and Jesse Bopp '06 discuss different layouts and story selection on several sections and issues of *The Oregonian*.

Mackay knows just how tough that can be. As a student, she set up her own informational interviews, secured her own internships and established her own network. Now, she helps students do that through Career Mentor Day and January Term's Career Exploration class. Both pair students with alumni in a variety of fields, giving them an inside look at a career before they enter the workforce.

"This really helps students realize the importance of connecting with alumni and using them to help make decisions on their careers," Mackay said. "I know how tough it is to do it on your own. Linfield now has a fantastic program available to them."

Bennett is a believer, having participated in the Career Exploration course and in Career Mentor Day since its inception in 1993. He often takes two or three students at a time.

"I like to be involved and responsible and I like to make a difference," he said. "If you look at how to change the world, you do it one person at a time. Everything works better when we help each other. I can't think

If Kristi (Vertrees) Mackay '91 had met David Bennett '63 when she was still a student at Linfield, she might be a lawyer.

Maybe not, but she could have gained a mentor to show her how to work hard, while having fun on the job.

Mackay, program coordinator for Linfield's Career Services office, organizes Linfield's annual Career Mentor Day along with Lisa Garvey '86, director of alumni relations.

Mackay bubbles with excitement – and a little envy – when she talks about the opportunities students now have to connect with alumni and establish networks before they graduate.

of one job that I've had that someone didn't help me get."

Bennett's quick wit and wicked sense of humor make him a popular mentor. His goal is to expose students to the real world and real work.

"I don't care if they don't want to go to law school," he said. "I try to show them that work is really about relationships. Relationships are their greatest assets in both their personal and professional lives. I try to give them an opportunity to see how (relationships) can work for them."

Bennett, who is a partner in the Portland firm Landye Bennett Blumstein LLP, strongly believes in the motto, "Take your work seriously, but never, ever take yourself seriously." Students are often disarmed by his humor on a personal level, coupled with his intensity when focused on his job.

"He was very fun, but when he was working, he was completely into his work," said Michelle Hosie '06, a political science major from Coos Bay.

Neither she nor Bo Lockhart '06, a psychology major from Bend, had witnessed a lawyer in a day-to-day setting and were fascinated by the work. They observed Bennett interacting with clients and learned some of the legal aspects of real estate.

"He (Bennett) encouraged me to take some time off between graduating from Linfield and pursuing graduate school," Lockhart said. "I wanted to explore some career options and this was really a positive experience."

Jesse Bopp '06 knows that she has made the right career choice in journalism after spending just one day with Scott Nelson '94 at *The Oregonian*. Nelson, the paper's assistant business editor, arranged for Bopp to shadow a reporter and meet with a copy editor, an editorial writer, a researcher and a photographer to get a broader sense of what goes into producing *The Oregonian* and what her career options might be.

"I really could not have asked for a better mentor. Now I know I want to be a reporter," said Bopp, a mass communication and political science major from Issaquah, Wash.



Holly (Duckworth) Horning '98, left, and Shannon Malcolm '06 discuss different marketing pieces Horning uses at the Portland Oregon Visitors Association.

Nelson returned to his native Oregon in 2003 after stints at *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine, the *Tampa Tribune* and the *Boston Globe*. While at the *Globe*, he spent seven weeks in Kuwait and Iraq as an embedded journalist during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Nelson said Career Mentor Day can complement students' courses and give them a sense of what goes into a specific job. And the more information students have, the better career decisions they can make.

"The education at Linfield is great, but there's nothing like experience in the real world to give you a good idea of the choices you have," Nelson said. "In this field, as in many others, real-world experience matters a lot. The more information students have, the better decisions they can make. Being able to spend a day in a place like this and learn what it takes to get here is pure gold."

Alyssa Norman '06 got a glimpse into the corporate culture at Nike and was surprised to learn that the corporate environment can be fun, casual and challenging. Norman spent the day with Susie Kuhn '97, senior merchandise manager at Nike. She sat in on a team meeting where current projects and deadlines were discussed and looked at sample garments in the final design stage.

"I had no idea how much goes into making clothes, from choosing the fabric to selecting the style of buttons," said Norman, a business and physical education major from Denver, Colo. "It was really great to be with someone who had attended Linfield and to see how successful she has become. The experience helped me understand how everything in class translates into the real world."

Kuhn, who spent three years working as a buyer for Target Corp. in Minneapolis, Minn., returned to Oregon about a year ago. As a student, she found Career Mentor Day valuable and she wanted to share her experience and insight.

"I tried to show her how many little details you have to manage at one time," Kuhn said. "It was fun to explain things about my job. It gives you a second to step back and reflect on where you are in your own career."



David Bennett '63, left, reviews legal documents with Bo Lockhart and Michelle Hosie, both '06.

As convention services account manager at the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, Holly (Duckworth) Horning '98 knows the value of establishing strong networks. She works with regional and national meeting planners, helping find products and services they need for events in Portland.

Shannon Malcolm '06, a business major with a marketing and management concentration from Pendleton, is interested in the workings of nonprofit organizations and event planning and had a firsthand view of the marketing tools and techniques Horning uses.

"It was good to be in a work environment and this has given me an idea of one area in which I might eventually want to work," she said.

Horning attributes her success to those who mentored her and shared some of their own experiences, both successes and mistakes.

"I tried to show Shannon the importance of networking and how to build her own network," Horning said. "Career Mentor Day is really easy and the students learn a lot. With Oregon's job market being what it is, it's nice for them to get in touch with someone who is working in a career and find out how they got there."

—Mardi Mileham

Susie Kuhn '97, left, and Alyssa Norman '06 in front of one of Nike's displays featuring some of the company's historic designs.