

# PASS THROUGH the Gates

## THE MANY WAYS THAT PLNU SENDS

**“TEACH, SHAPE AND SEND” HAS BECOME THE SHORTHAND VERSION OF PLNU’S MISSION STATEMENT. SOME MIGHT INTERPRET SENDING AS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STUDENTS GRADUATE. BUT SENDING HAPPENS EVERYDAY AND IN MANY WAYS AS STUDENTS LIVE OUT THE MISSION OF POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY. WHAT FOLLOWS IS A SAMPLE OF HOW POINT LOMA STUDENTS ARE SENT.**

By Eric Yates

A significant way PLNU helps students be prepared to interact with their world is through internships, which not only bring them one step closer to earning degrees. Internships also engage students in ways of learning they cannot gain in a classroom.

“The real world experience, the practical application and the engagement in learning are the biggest benefits,” said Keith Bell, vice provost for Academic Administration. “It’s one thing to read about marketing. It’s another thing to watch it happening, or to watch professionals practicing it.”

PLNU students’ character and high work ethic contribute to their success at their internships, said Bell. Not only do the students benefit from the time they spend with people in the professional world, their employers benefit as well.

“All of the anecdotal reports that we get are stellar,” said Bell. “We hear things like, ‘this kid was the greatest thing that’s ever happened to this department’ or ‘we’re going to offer him a position when this is over.’ Those kinds of things are pretty typical and very gratifying.”

Julie McEliece, director of the Fermanian Business Center, agrees.

“You let loose a Point Loma student and they are exactly what a business wants,” said McEliece, who has been assisting students acquire internships for 10 years by serving as a conduit between employers seeking hard workers and students. “They’re smart, they look good and they have a good moral fiber.”

McEliece said the school has built a networking database of nearly 4,000 business and organizations, and works frequently with 300 companies in the San Diego area alone. The university is constantly trying to improve the accessibility to available internships, including listing them on the web site.

### UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES

Sometimes an opportunity pops up unexpectedly. That’s what happened to Mamer Ajak, who had a chance this summer to make a difference in people’s lives.

Ajak has returned to San Diego for his third year at PLNU after completing an internship in the office of Senator Sam Brownback (Kansas) in Washington, D.C. this summer. Ajak is one of the “Lost Boys of Sudan,” and came to America three years ago. He got the internship through a friend of the senator who lives in Washington, D.C. and asked if Brownback would be interested in hiring Ajak as an intern.

Ajak was able to assist the senator with many duties, chief among them helping get a piece of legislation passed which declared a state of genocide in Ajak’s native Sudan. In recent years, the Sudanese province of Darfur has been ravaged by killing and pillaging of an estimated 30,000 civilians in native African tribes by the Janjaweed, a sect of nomadic Arab tribes.

With Ajak’s help, Brownback was able to introduce legislation to Congress that called for others to take action.

“I’ve gone out and talked to some of the congressmen and senators to support the same bill and to help pass it, because it will attract international community attention,” said Ajak. “And that is exactly what happened. The Senate and House passed it unanimously.”

Ajak, who speaks four languages, was able to assist Brownback with his Arabic and several African phrases of



Mamer Ajak



# In Their Own Words

## STUDENTS' FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNT OF SUMMER INTERNSHIP IN WASHINGTON

*Grant Binasz and Simone Finney spent the summer of 2004 interning at the Summer Institute of Journalism in Washington, D.C.*

**A** lot can happen in a month.

In a month, we went from the bottom floor of Bond Academic Center at PLNU to Capitol Hill. In a month we went from interviewing professors to interviewing politicians. In a month we went from the front page of the *Point Weekly* to the front page of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.

In June, shortly after completing our third year as journalism majors at PLNU, we watched from the sidewalks of Washington, D.C. as former President Ronald Reagan's casket was transferred to a horse-drawn caisson for the funeral procession. We waited on the steps outside the Rotunda as the public first emerged from where he was lying in state. We sweated in the sun with well-wishers outside the Capitol and in the rain outside the National Cathedral. We interviewed people for three days, filling notebooks as they reflected on Reagan's influence on America and tried to express the personal connection they felt to the 40th president.

We were two of 15 students from across the nation accepted into the 2004 Summer Institute of Journalism, an annual four-week internship program in Washington, D.C., coordinated by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. We had the opportunity to intern at the D.C. bureau for Copley News Service, a network that includes newspapers in Ohio, Illinois and San Diego. While there, we worked on stories for the dedication of the World War II memorial, the National Geography Bee and the National Spelling Bee. Between writing stories and chasing sources we got to see the Orioles play the Yankees in Camden Yards, we watched thunderstorms from the deck of our apartment building, and we found the best Cajun chicken rice bowl in the area.

Working with several editors and often writing on daily deadlines made it a month of new challenges, but seeing our names in print with a D.C. byline, especially during Reagan's funeral, made it all the more rewarding.

Now we're back for our senior year at PLNU, taking on our writing and editing positions on *The Point Weekly* with fresh experience and higher expectations for ourselves and the paper. We're excited about the prospects: our time in Washington proved that we can rise to the occasion. And this time, we've got eight months.



(Left) Grant Binasz and Simone Finney  
(Above) Their byline on the cover of the June 10, 2004 edition of the *San Diego Union-Tribune*.



greeting for the senator's trip to Sudan in July. He also discussed with Brownback what the trip would be like and what he should expect.

Though Ajak has an interest in politics, he doesn't know whether or not he will pursue it for a career. He is majoring in business administration and international development.

"I am getting this experience because I want to go back to my country and be able to help out in so many ways, either at the grass roots level or at the government level," he said.

### OPENED DOORS

While Ajak isn't sure where what he learned during his internship will take him, another PLNU student parlayed his internship experience into a career.

Jeremy Kietzke is a 2003 graduate who participated in an internship with the San Diego bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATFE, formerly ATF). His faculty advisor, professor Patti Dikes, invited an ATF agent to speak in one of her classes. After hearing the agent, Kietzke decided to apply for an internship.

"I'd help out with the daily duties of the agency," said Kietzke. "I'd sit in on briefings with the FBI and other agencies, and do some field work. It wasn't all in the field, but if they could take me along, they would."

Kietzke, a sociology major with a criminal justice concentration, did a variety of tasks, including exploding a collection of confiscated illegal firearms out in the desert, and helping develop a Powerpoint presentation to be used as a training tool for police in Baghdad on dealing with weapons in Iraq.

"It was probably the best experience I had in my college career," said Kietzke. "Every day I was there I learned more and got to see things I couldn't normally see."

At the end of his internship Kietzke took a field test at the urging of his supervisor, which he passed to become an agent in Minneapolis. According to Dikes, when the ATFE budget allows for positions to open up, Kietzke will start his career with them.

That's one of the goals of internships, said Bell.

"There is an affirmation [with these internships] which can allow you to clarify your career goals," he said. "It's a kind of gut level feeling that this is what you should be doing, or to help you know, 'what did I get myself into?'"

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