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LSU Advanced Graphic Design Students Get Real-World Experience in Advertising Campaign Projects

For college students, especially upperclassmen, gaining valuable real-world experience in their respective field of study before heading out into the full-time working world is extremely important.

Students in Veni Harlan's Advanced Graphic Design class in the [LSU College of Art & Design](#) experienced a real-world work environment in the world of team-based graphical advertising during the recent spring semester, as they created and presented original image campaign materials to three local organizations as part of the class' integrated communications project.

On Friday, May 14, the students presented their work to their respective clients, both digitally and in hard-copy form in the College of Art & Design's auditorium and commons areas.

For the project, the students were grouped into teams, or "firms." Each team selected its coordinator, chose a name, created a logo and was paired with a not-for-profit client. The student "firms," p[H] Neutral, BigFly and Sunnyside Up, presented to their respective clients — The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, Cat Haven and the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force.

The "firms" then sent a basic questionnaire to their respective clients, discussed results and then had a single, face to face meeting to further familiarize themselves with the client's operation and goals. Extensive research, interviews, analysis, goal-setting and scheduling then went into a project brief. Creative solutions based on the brief were discussed in class as well as the art and process of putting an integrated communication project together.

Final work included a digital presentation, a trade booth display, examples of advertising mediums and a project booklet.

"The only real difference between this project and a real-world situation is that you don't have the constant back-and-forth relationship between client and firm," Harlan said. "It's a great deal for the client because they're basically getting free work. They're not obligated to use any of the materials, but they get fresh ideas."

Harlan said that each client's individual situation makes the student firm work that much more varied.

"Each client has their own ideas and their own goals," Harlan said. "Each industry has so many things going on that you could spend years on it. So they had to decide the most impactful way to get that client's message across to the public, whether it's advertising, marketing, fundraising or whatever. Then, the students had to decide how to best convey that message through various mediums."

In their projects, the students focused on improving company logos, information brochures, print advertisements, commercials and even website designs to better inform the public as to what their client offers.

For example, p[H] Neutral's project for The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank included a streamlined logo that would appear on everything from the organizations' website to its familiar donation bins. Also, to celebrate the food bank's 25th anniversary, the group created an advertising campaign that portrayed food as jewelry. The group also created an advertising campaign aimed at high school and college campuses to stress the need for donations and volunteers.

BigFly's project for Cat Haven included a new logo and website redesign. The students also created literature to increase the call for volunteers and education about the organization, including its fundraising efforts, adoption program and its TNR — trap, neuter and release — program.



Members of the student design "firm" p[H] Neutral discuss their project for The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. To celebrate the organization's 25th anniversary, the group created an advertising campaign that portrayed food as jewelry. Members also created an advertising campaign aimed at high school and college campuses to stress the need for donations and volunteers.



During the recent spring semester, students in Veni Harlan's Advanced Graphic Design class in the LSU College of Art & Design experienced a real world work

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"This is our first time creating something for an actual client and working in a group setting," said BigFly team member Chelsie Oelschlager. "It was good to experience the research side of it in our talks with Mr. (John) McChesney (president of Cat Haven). He gave us a direction to seek donations, adopting and volunteering. One representative of Cat Haven was really enthused about our presentation. She's going to take our ideas back to the president and see about possibly making some changes."

College of Art & Design experienced a real-world work environment, as they created and presented original image campaign materials to three local organizations as part of the class' integrated communications project. The student "firm" BigFly created these materials to promote Cat Haven, a Baton Rouge-based cat rescue organization.

For Sunnyside Up, the group's project for the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force took on a new emphasis with the recent BP oil well rupture and spill in the Gulf of Mexico, a situation which has a direct impact on the state's shrimp industry.

"It was difficult for us at first because we had so many different clients," said Sara Fradella, a member of Sunnyside Up, referring to the 500-plus shrimpers and distributors in Louisiana. "Working with so many clients was pretty hard, and working in a team setting was also hard. We've never had a class before that teaches that. It was really hard to learn how to communicate with each other. It was pretty daunting. Then, as we were trying to figure out how to do that, this oil spill happens."

Fradella said the group then decided to focus more on the importance of supporting local shrimpers, an industry to which she has personal ties, on a larger scale.

"This is in my blood," she said. "My father makes shrimp nets. My grandfather was in the shrimping industry. We wanted the message to have a unifying thread of trying to support Louisiana industry. The industry was starting to see a downturn already, and the oil spill just made things worse. It's exciting now because I think the rest of the country is going to be more sensitive to supporting Louisiana seafood because of the oil spill."

Rene LeBreton with the Louisiana Seafood Board said he was very impressed with Sunnyside Up's creations, which included an original logo and numerous advertising pieces to promote the purchase of "Louisiana Premium Wild Shrimp."

"It was excellent," LeBreton said. "I love the design they came up with. They did a very good job on their research and really captured our mission to have people to ask for local shrimp."

Some aspects of the student projects have been used by clients in their image campaigns, Harlan said. In the fall 2009 semester, one student group saw its graphic design campaign for the Old State Capitol taken into consideration for promotion of the historic building. The project also recently earned Student Gold Awards at both the 2010 Baton Rouge Addy Awards, held in February by the Baton Rouge chapter of the American Advertising Federation, and the District 7 Addy Awards, held in April in Mobile, Ala.

"The work was awesome, and the capitol looks to implement their designs, which is really nice as few students have the opportunity to do work in school that will be adopted and utilized," Harlan said.

Harlan's class is certified through LSU's [Communication across the Curriculum](#) program and is also registered with the LSU Center for [Community Engagement, Learning and Leadership](#), or CCELL.

For more information on the Integrated Communications Project, visit http://web.me.com/veniharlan/LSU_4555_Advanced_Graphic_Design/Home.html, or contact Harlan at veniharlan@mac.com.



Members of the student design group Sunnyside Up are pictured with their exhibit, featuring advertising materials for the Louisiana Shrimp Task Force. The group focused its efforts on promoting the purchase of Louisiana premium wild shrimp, with an increased need to do so based on the recent BP oil well rupture and leak in the Gulf of Mexico affecting Louisiana's seafood industry.

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LSU

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