This semester four California State University at Monterey Bay student journalists formed a Special Investigative Reporting Team to produce the stories in this issue of The Otter Romp.

Over the course of four months, the journalists have learned about accessing public records, conducting investigative interviews, and fact-checking sources and information. In addition to writing articles, each reporter graded her sources on the ease of accessing public information.

The students used the motto “Be the Donald” to re-shape the way in which they approached interviews and public records. The phrase came from one of the books they read about utilizing public records. The author encouraged journalists to request records and interviews with certainty, not doubt. He said to act like Donald Trump, a man who never doubts his right to information (and many other things).

As the final edits were being made to the original investigative reports, the journalists: Janine Adams (JA), Erin Hawkins (EH), Samantha Gillespie (SG) and Elizabeth Hensley (LH), under the guidance of Dr. Sam Robinson, got together to talk about the value and challenges of investigative reporting.

What does it mean to be a “Donald”?

**JA:** You can be a quack or an ace. I felt several times like I was being a quack.

(The group laughs.)

**EH:** It takes a lot of time to be an investigative reporter. The planning, research, writing and re-writing; it is very different than regular reporting.

**LH:** There are so many layers of information to go through.

(The group agrees.)

**EH:** There were so many dead ends. I wish I had more time to keep researching.

**SG:** You get obsessive. When you do a piece you have invested so much of yourself in, it consumes you. You have to do so many interviews and they are all so different. I had to hone in and check on the approach I was using to get the information. I had to act differently for each person.

**EH:** Yes, you had to find the line between being transparent and not... not to be deceptive, but to not be as straightforward so you don’t scare people.

**LH:** Yeah, I got brushed off at first. It is all about the way you approach it. I had to approach it in a way that meant I would get the information. I had to do research ahead of time. It was a push and pull.

**EH:** You see the stigma linked to investigative reporting. Some people didn’t even want to talk with me.

**SG:** The attitude people have about investigative reporting is interesting. People wanted to see the quotes before the article was printed.

**JA:** What I got from this was you can’t add your personal feelings. It took its toll on me. I realized you can’t do that. You have to be more objective. There are legal standards to adhere to, and rules of journalism.

**SG:** Ultimately it isn’t about you; it is about the truth of the story.

**LH:** I thought it was going to be more scandalous. My information is still good for the consumer to know, it is still a good story, but, isn’t the story I had thought it was going to be.

**EH:** That’s another assumption, that we as investigative reporters are always going to find something juicy.

**SG:** Multi-tasking was key to being efficient. There are so many directions you can go and so many things to investigate. You have to manage your time, tools and information. I felt stretched thin because there was so much I wanted to do.

**LH:** There is a lot of networking. There is so much to know and it takes time. You talk to one person who refers you to someone else. You have to follow the interviews.

**JA:** It made me think about the Pulitzer Prize winners. They have to do so much work. You see the effort they had to put in to their projects. I don’t want to let it go. I want to keep after it. Now I realize that I have a real passion for this. I am doing it because I want to help my community. I am doing it for justice, and for those reasons I want to continue.

**SG:** When I was feeling the stress I thought about why I was doing this and it helped to motivate me. I am very proud of this. I put my soul in to this. All the coffee and not sleeping really paid off in the end.

(Big laugh.)

**EH:** In my article I say “this is what I found” and I am bringing it to the public so there can be a broader conversation. This was four months, imagine if we had a year, or if we were full time reporters.

**LH:** You can see how the reporters get consumed in the work. Often times we see the outcome, the final story, but you don’t see behind the scenes to know what they had to do and to give up to get to that story.

**JA:** I recorded everything. I wanted to rely on my memory to know the context and meaning of a quote. So, I recorded it all to keep track of it. It takes away from your article if you are unsure of a quote. You can’t be too careful.

**EH:** Fact check. Fact check. And then fact check again.
Upgrading Discharge Status: The Real Mission Impossible

Vietnam Veteran Promised Status Upgrade That Never Came

Timote Peterson sharing his story.

Samantha Gillespie, Investigative Reporter
SGILLESPIE@CSUMB.EDU

Timote [Ti-ma-tay] Peterson is a 61-year-old Vietnam veteran living in Watsonville, California. He was homeless for nearly 20 years between stints in rehabilitation programs and prison.

In 1972, Peterson was discharged with a Bad Conduct status from the United States Army. This means Peterson receives no benefits or assistance from the Department of Veteran’s Affairs or Department of Defense.

It was confirmed by a health clinic in Santa Cruz County that he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). “If I had V.A. benefits,” Peterson said, “I probably would have had a greater chance. I would have had access to programs. I would have had access to counselors. I would have had access to PTSD counselors. I would have had money coming in. I wouldn’t have had to worry about surviving.”

Dean Kaufman who is a veteran’s advocate in Santa Cruz County, reported the largest demographic he works with is homeless veterans. About 20 percent of the homeless vets are from the Vietnam-era, said Kaufman.

“I would say, without a doubt, the Vietnam veterans have suffered the most out of any group of veterans, in our recent history,” said Kaufman.

When a soldier is issued an honorable or general (under honorable conditions) discharges they are eligible to receive V.A. assistance and benefits. They can receive assistance and benefits for housing, employment, retirement pension and health care. An honorable discharge also allows for education benefits.

“Vietnam vets are a bit different, these guys didn’t have a choice,” said Kaufman. “They were just told, you got to go. So to be forced to go and then come home and to be treated the way they were, and denied for so long...”

Despite the dramatic shift in veteran’s care that has occurred during the past five years due to the Obama Administration’s initiative to end homelessness among veterans, some obstacles remain in place.

Geoff Millard, a policy associate at the non-profit organization, Swords for Plowshares, which provides aid and services to more than 2,000 veterans in the Bay Area, is trying to tackle two of the major issues that many veterans face. These issues are upgrading an OTH discharge status to a general discharge, and to stop the process of soldiers receiving an OTH discharge through administrative elimination without being court-martialed.

A veteran can submit an application for review of military discharge. The application is reviewed by the Discharge Review Board, and they decide whether to grant the upgrade.

In 1999 Peterson attempted this type of process but was denied.

Millard has seen only a three percent success rate in these claims.

“One third of our [legal] clients are approaching us with discharge upgrade requests,” said Millard.

Kaufman said he has yet to see a status upgrade happen in Santa Cruz County.

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Both Kaufman and Millard expressed concern about the complicated nature of filing an upgrade claim. Because of the lengthiness of the process and the rejection rates, it becomes discouraging, they said.

“I don’t know why it is so difficult. It’s very frustrating for everyone,” Kaufman said. “There is a certain amount of broken trust. If you tell someone no repeatedly, eventually there going to go, ‘look I’m not going to ask anymore.’ They feel let down. ... The V.A. can’t be a very difficult barrier, it’s a wall, it’s a bureaucracy.”

Millard is launching a campaign later this month to take “bad paper” discharge claims to a macro level. A long term policy goal for the campaign is “taking away command discretion for OTH,” he said.

A scenario that occurs when commanding officer’s [C.O.] issue an OTH discharge. The C.O. implies there will be an automatic upgrade after six months, said Miller. With this process, court-martialing the soldier is avoided. When the soldier is not court-martialed, he/she is denied the chance to present his/her case to a review board.

Peterson’s discharge resulted from a process similar to this.

Two lawyers told him to sign a Chapter Four document, he said. A Chapter Four document is a type of Administrative Elimination. Peterson was told after six months he would receive his benefits, he said.

“The automatic six months upgrade is a flat out lie,” Millard said. “That is just not true. It is a common misconception, even among the C.O.’s. Most of the C.O.’s are low-level officers, over-worked, and this is the easiest way to get the thing moved along, instead of going to a court-martial.”

OTH status can be compared to having a criminal record. Any future employers are able to see the charge. “Bad papers” prohibit the likelihood of finding reliable jobs and stable housing. This is exacerbated when a veteran self-medicates with drugs and/or suffers from mental health or trauma.

Timote Peterson spent more than ten years addicted to crack-cocaine. His addiction may be link to trauma from his time in Vietnam.

Peterson’s Story: Surviving Hell Only to Get Burned

Editors note: Story includes graphic content and strong language.

Peterson was addicted to heroin by the time he left Vietnam. He had 15 charges against him, including treason and assaulting a commanding officer. Peterson said: “They told me after it was all said and done, if I were in World War II, I would have been in the firing squad.”

Peterson broke his contract with the Army. Yet, one may question the events that led up to the charges against him and how those events impacted his behavior.

Peterson received a draft notice in June 1970, like many others around him. He thinks he got tricked into enlisting, he said.

“They said if you sign up for another year, we’ll make sure you won’t go to Vietnam. I said, ‘Really?’ And the recruiter said, ‘Sure I’ll do that.’ So I go, and signed up for three years.”

Peterson did Advanced Individual Training to become a clerk in Fort Lee, Virginia. The veteran was 19-years-old at the time and made it the rank of Specialist.

Then he was deployed to Vietnam.

“I’ll never forget, we are all at the PX [Post Exchange] drinking (3.2) beers. They call our plane. And right as we were getting to leave a song

“I was scared, I was angry. I hated myself, I hated the world. There was only one thing I loved, heroin.”

heavily addicted to heroin and feeling more of the tension between the white and black soldiers, he said.

“We used to get pure heroin in caps, 50 cents. Pure opium, a quarter. ... I used to watch guys pack their stereo with dope and then just ship them home. They were bringing back pallets full of heroin, they were stuffing body bags full of heroin and putting them in planes,” according to Peterson.

Peterson was now seeing more combat.

“My last combat mission,” the veteran said, “we were in Laos, they had caught a hit in a vil [village,] and so we went to the vil. We landed, and we were picking up people, and it’s all chaos, no one knows what they’re doing, other than trying to stay alive.”

“And these guys [from his company] were raping this girl. She couldn’t have been more than 18 or 19. And I go, ‘Hell no, get off her,’ and

In November 2013, John Shepherd Jr., a Vietnam veteran, filed a class-action lawsuit against the American Armed Forces. The lawsuit asks that he and other veterans be awarded an up-grade status.

The suit was filed in Federal District Court. Yale Law School students are representing Shepherd.

They believe that not only will his PTSD diagnosis be retroactive to his time in service, but the policies connected to service-related PTSD will be retroactive to Shepherd’s service if he were to win the suit.

“The students estimate that more than a quarter million Vietnam-era veterans were discharged under other than honorable conditions, and that thousands of those probably had PTSD,” according to a New York Times article.

Additionally, in March “five Vietnam combat veterans and three veterans’ organizations filed a class action lawsuit in federal court seeking relief for tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans who developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during their military service and subsequently received an other than honorable discharge (OTH),” according to Yale Law School.

The plaintiffs are filing the suit against Ray Mabus, Secretary of the Navy, John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, and Deborah Lee James, Secretary of the Air Force in the Monk v. Mabus case.
“Pulled a guy off. And they call me gook lover and nigger, so I go on my way,” he said.

“So I come back and the girl, she’s laying there, and they cut her up, her vagina, and she was dead. And I had guilt for a long time because, maybe if I had left her alone they probably wouldn’t have done that, but I had kept that guilt and anger for a long time.”

When Peterson got back from that mission he requested to be withdrawn from combat. He had been put in the Property Room, a guard at the Long Bein Jail, and finally as a guard for his barracks.

Peterson recounted many acts of racism and discrimination from his C.O., being given unfair tasks, duties and restrictions that many of the white soldiers did not receive, he said. Peterson thinks the final straw was one night on guard duty, which was in a tower on stilts, he said.

Rounds were being fired at him. Peterson was sure he was going to die from either the mortars hitting the stilts and falling 60 to 80 feet or from being shot. When Peterson asked if he could leave his post, he was told not to by his C.O. Peterson thinks he was purposely being put in a dangerous situation, so he would be killed, he said.

Peterson was brought to his C.O. to be reprimanded for leaving his post despite his direct orders. As he was being yelled at, he punched the officer in the face.

“Every frustration I had, it was like I snapped and I had enough,” he said.

Peterson went AWOL [absent without leave] after, and he began experiencing the apathy that was taking over many of the soldier’s mindsets during the end of the war, he said.

“A lot of guys were AWOL. We start jumping back over the fence, because you could get over, and we started stealing things from the Army.”

“Nobody cared,” Peterson said. “We started stealing guns, we would steal anything. We stole anything that wasn’t locked down. We sold it to the Vietnamese. You could sell anything in the black market. There was no accounting for anything, it was a free for all, you could do whatever you want,” he said.

In 1973 Peterson turned himself in to Army authorities. He had read a pamphlet that was being handed around in the villages, that all AWOL soldiers would receive amnesty if they returned.

He was put back in the Long Bein Jail. This is when Peterson signed the Chapter Four document.

“They lied to me,” he said. “Your discharge doesn’t turn good after six months. I was scared, I was angry, I hated myself, I hated the world. There was only one thing I loved, heroin.”

Peterson was 20-years-old when he returned stateside. The first day back from Vietnam, he went to jail for starting a bar fight in San Francisco.

After that he spent four months living in an abandoned house using heroin. This is when his actions escalated to more drug use, theft and prison time.

Now, Peterson has more than four years of sobriety. He is active with a local church and community programs. He is enrolled in the 180\180 project, a Santa Cruz effort to help the homeless, and has maintained stable housing.

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**GRADE CARD:**

| OVERALL: | This project pushed me to be better and tougher than any project I have ever ensued. I accessed different parts of myself depending on what the article needed. I learned the importance of standing back and looking at the entire picture that was being formed.

The times that I had to be soft and receptive were when I was interviewing the veterans. It was a challenge to not get carried away by the compassion and empathy I felt. No matter how moved I was by their story, I had to remind myself of my job. This meant that I had to ask the tough questions, ask for specific details, and not hold back from questioning their actions.

The times I had to be bold and tough came when I worked with the veteran’s organizations. I had to constantly pursue them for any communication, and not get discouraged by rejection. I had to push to get concrete answers and opinions, not just abstract and general responses. Discouragement was not an option if I wanted answers. |

| TIMOTAE PETERSON: | His eagerness to talk and be open with me was commendable. He not only bared all, but he set the bar for me as a journalist. I knew the delicacy that was needed because he is in recovery. I knew that he could easily get triggered by sharing his story. I had to find the balance of getting all the facts and details, while respecting his threshold.

It was also very hard to hear the horrifying details, and know that his story is real. It was not just a movie, but these were real events that happened to real people. I was overwhelmed at times, and when he had to take a break, I found myself going into the bathroom and rinsing my face. The thing about writing to the best of one’s abilities is that one must experience the story, so I found myself experiencing it with him. It was intense and hard, but great and empowering. |

| DEAN KAUFMAN: | He was great. He was very honest and candid in his responses and how he felt about the VA department. His communication was prompt despite his hectic schedule. His information was in depth. He sent me to helpful websites and other ways to access information. It was transparent that he believes in his job and justice for veterans. |

| SWORDS FOR PLOWSHARES/GEOFF MILLARD: | I had e-mailed the organization through a portal that they set-up for all veteran’s to reply through if they are trying to file bad paper claims. I wrote that I was a student, and told them about my article. Geoff replied in four days. He took me seriously, and gave me a solid and honest interview. |

| V.A. DEPARTMENT: | I was unable to talk to the director of the V.A. Center in Santa Cruz County without having to e-mail him a list of my questions. Then he would reply and send the list of questions and responses to his boss. They would review them, tell him what to edit, and then he could e-mail them back. He was not allowed to conduct face-to-face interviews with me. He never responded to my e-mails. |
Your phone rings. The number is blocked. The person on the other end begins to speak and your mind zooms back to that trip to Target before a beach day last March.

The store was in disarray but someone helped you. Now, the survey you filled out is paying off in the form of a $1,500 gift card. You thought no one ever won those contests. Could this really be happening?

Surveys, sometimes called “invitations” touting handsome rewards in the form of cash or gift cards seem to be popping up on store receipts everywhere. People trade personal information like their address, phone number and even income with hopes of winning big. But what happens to this information and what are the odds your feedback will ever pay off?

For this special edition of The Otter Realm, I investigated four popular retail stores: Grocery Outlet Bargain Market, Home Depot, Target, and Walgreens to see how these surveys are presented and discover the odds of becoming their next big winner.

I graded each store to see how the surveys stack up when it comes to eligibility to enter the contest, rules/regulations, transparency and store involvement.

In the early 1920s, innovative American psychologist, Daniel Starch, stopped pedestrians along bustling thoroughfares to ask about what they saw in advertisements. Their responses played an important role in forming what we know today as market research.

Market Research is the act of collecting data in the form of people’s needs and preferences regarding a certain ad, brand, or anything marketed to an audience to spur sales.

This is how companies and corporations learn and grow according to people’s opinions. They incorporate new ideas and discontinue others depending on the sway of public opinion.

In the years since Daniel Starch, this type of research has taken a few twists and turns. As technology advanced, random telephone calls became the norm and now feedback is mostly obtained online. Everywhere we eat, sleep, watch or shop, there seems to be a survey waiting for us at the other end of the purchase.

On average, it takes about 15 minutes for someone to fill out one survey. “A hundred thousand people each week complete the survey across the United States,” said Dan Guarino of the Home Depot in a recent interview with CBS.

Since Home Depot chooses only one winner every three months, odds of winning are about one in 1.3 million. Someone filling out the survey is more likely to be struck by lightning than to claim the grand prize.

Though there has not been much evidence published about these surveys prior to this investigation, I found each of them to be legitimate. Rules and procedures vary from survey to survey but each is legally bound to follow through on their offers.

Target, for example, uses third party Ipsos Loyalty, Inc. while Grocery outlet Bargain Market relies on Leger Metrics to administer their surveys. This type of market research is an inexpensive way for large corporations to tap into the opinions of consumers using incentives.

Upon giving out personal information, each survey claims the details are protected and will not be used for sales purposes, but it is important to note that the information is only as protected as the store itself. Last year, thousands of credit card numbers were compromised when Target was hacked.

Here are some unique stats about each of the four stores, and my own experiences with local branches should you decide to try your luck. Grading of each category is established on an A-F scale to correspond with the overall accessibility for consumers.
## GRADE CARD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Store</th>
<th>Time Limit to Enter</th>
<th>Prize Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Prize: Any visit that ends with a purchase comes complete with a crisp receipt and a fresh chance to win $3,000 in cold, hard cash. A winner is drawn once every month and the prize is paid with a check. The raffle is pooled with Duane Reade, USA Drug, Drug Warehouse, May’s Drug, Med-X Drug and Super D Drug customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Prize: A $1,500 Target gift card with bonus entry to win one of six $25 gift cards per state. Each is drawn monthly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Eligibility: All U.S. residents over the age of 18 excluding Puerto Rico. Eligibility excludes Walgreens staff, immediate family members and those who live in the same household.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Eligibility: Legal residents of the 50 U.S. States who are 18 and older. Excludes Target staff and immediate family of staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Rules: Winners are contacted 14 days after being selected by telephone and asked to verify their address. The winner will then be notified by mail within seven days and is required to send back a signed affidavit within seven days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Rules: Drawings and “Instant Winners” are chosen at random monthly. Winner must sign an affidavit and return it to Ipsos within 10 business days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Transparency: Rules and surveys are available in English and Spanish online and a winners list can be obtained by a self-addressed stamped envelope to their headquarters in Minnesota which is somewhat inconvenient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Transparency: Rules and winners are listed at <a href="http://www.informtarget.com">www.informtarget.com</a>. However, the “Contact Us” icon only offers an email address.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Walgreens</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Store Involvement: Upon entering the Seaside Walgreens at 1055 Fremont Boulevard, I was pleasantly surprised with their attentive service. I was guided by about four associates who helped with my inquiry, though I didn’t make a purchase. I was directed to the store manager who immediately shared his knowledge about the surveys and said the managers received monthly updates on winners. He took the time to print out the official rules and a list of winners going back to Jan. 2012. I was very impressed with his knowledge and help considering I just walked in off the street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>72 hours after purchase</td>
<td>Store Involvement: I met with General Manager at 2040 California Avenue in San Diego who was very new about my questions than knowledgeable about her answers. Though she did not know anything about the store or winners, she requested to remain anonymous and refused to give me her name (despite sporting a Target nametag).</td>
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### Home Depot

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Time Limit to Enter</th>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
<th>Rules</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Store Involvement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>One month after purchase</td>
<td>Receipts from this do-it-yourself giant double as an invitation to receive $5,000 in the form of a gift card. It is a lot of store credit, perfect for starting a larger project but the downside is that it is not as versatile as a cash prize. The drawing is completed every three months.</td>
<td>This store definitely has its specifications to who may or may or may not participate. The sweepstakes is open to permanent and legal U.S. residents in mainland United States, District of Columbia, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam but excludes residents of Puerto Rico.</td>
<td>Potential winners must sign an affidavit and provide information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) verifying their social security numbers.</td>
<td>Unless you love listening to machines, Home Depot’s fortress of audio recordings keeps most inquiries that cannot be categorized or nested into a frequently asked question out.</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>I spoke with Customer Service Representative at the 1590 Canyon Del Rey Boulevard store in Seaside. She was friendly but not knowledgeable regarding the surveys. She directed me to the Head Cashier and General Manager, neither of whom could assist me. I was left with a 1-800 number to call.</td>
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### Grocery Outlet Bargain Market

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<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Rules</th>
<th>Transparency</th>
<th>Store Involvement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>One month after purchase</td>
<td>Three $250 GOMB gift cards offered monthly.</td>
<td>Open to all customers of Grocery Outlet Inc., except employees of, a member of the immediate family of an employee of Grocery Outlet Inc., or retiree of, or domiciled with an employee of, or any of its subsidiary companies, event venue staff, retailers, franchisees, agents, associates, dealers, representatives, advertising and promotional agencies, or the Contest Administrators.</td>
<td>GOBM relies on a third-party, Leger Metrics, to ensure they are complying with all laws.</td>
<td>Referred to Marketing Director who was very helpful and provided more information about the surveys by emailing me directly several times.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The store owner and manager at 1523 Fremont Boulevard in Seaside was very helpful and knowledgeable about the surveys but not about winners. However, she did give me information about the “Win what you saved” promotion where customers tear off the part of the receipt which highlights their savings to put into a drawing with winners chosen every month from each store, and referred me to the company’s Marketing Director for more information.</td>
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CSU Newspapers Feel Pressure to Self-Censor

Survey Explores the Prevalence of Censorship in College Newspapers

Erin Hawkins, Investigative Reporter
EHAWKINS@CSUMB.EDU

“We absolutely feel that we must self-censor items so as not to anger our administra- tors or those who fund us,” said Chantyl Vasquez, previous Editor-in-Chief of California State University (CSU) Channel Islands student newspaper, the CI View. This is an example of self-cen- sorship that many student newspapers across the 23 CSUs experience as a college publication.

Vasquez said that while the CI View did not experience direct censorship, when administra- tors prohibit content from going to print, that the writers and editors received criticism from the university for certain items published in the past.

The writers and editors of the CI View experienced flak from the university when they published a creative writing piece including the words “f**k” and “nigger.”

In another instance, the newspaper received push- back from administration and advisors when they started publishing a sex column.

“We published a comic with a curse word and were verbally reprimanded by the administration for using curse words in any form,” said Yzzy Gonzalez, Editor-in-Chief of Mustang News.

Other factors found to contribute to a student newspaper’s level of censorship are dependency for funding, the knowledge of rights as a student journalist, and written policies specific to newspaper publication.

CSU LA’s student newspaper, University Times, believes they must self-censor content in order to avoid negative feedback or punishment by the university.

“We published a comic with a curse word and were verbally reprimanded by the administration for using curse words in any form,” said Yzzy Gonzalez, Editor-in-Chief of University Times.

Other factors found to contribute to a student newspaper’s level of censorship are dependency for funding, the knowledge of rights as a student journalist, and written policies specific to newspaper publication.

“We published a comic with a curse word and were verbally reprimanded by the administration for using curse words in any form.”

Another factor that contributes to a student newspaper’s level of censorship is the type of article topics that are re- ported on.

Chico State reports on school events, community news, investigative reports, national and international news, and controversial topics regarding politics, economy, education and government. CSU Fullerton reported on all of these items except national and international news.

In contrast, the CI View, University Times, and The Pioneer all reported the university funds their student newspapers, have some knowledge of their rights as student journalists, and do not have written policies.

These schools showed the highest prevalence of cen- sorship, all sharing the same factors, including only re- porting on school events or community news.

According to the Student Press Law Center, school officials or student govern- ment that fund a publication, radio or television station are also prohibited include, “confiscating copies of publica- tions, requiring prior review, removing objectionable mate- rial, limiting circulation [and] suspending editors and with- drawing or reducing financial support.”

The California Supreme Court also recognizes a report- er’s qualified privilege under the First Amendment and the California State Constitution.

In 2000, a Sacramento County Superior Court judge denied a subpoena issued to the editor of the CSU Sacra- mento student newspaper for a front-page photo of an arrest at a football game.

Attorneys asked the paper to turn over the photo so it could be used in the defense of the person arrested at the football game. The judge said the attorneys did not exhaust other sources and upheld the newspaper’s privilege.

This case and the limitations of the statute demonstrate, “students are entitled to the same protections as other journalists.”

While the prevalence of di- rect censorship is limited in student newspapers in the CSU system, there is a strong indication that writers and editors of student newspapers self-censor written material in order to avoid negative feed- back from the university.

For the future of CSU student newspapers to fulfill their Madisonian Premise un- der the First Amendment, it is important for student jour- nalists to know their rights and limitations as journalists and develop written poli- cies for both online and print publication.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Newspaper</th>
<th>Independent or Funded?</th>
<th>Direct censorship?</th>
<th>Self-censor?</th>
<th>Know rights in CA?</th>
<th>Written Policy?</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Advisor/role?</th>
<th>Workshop or club?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cal Poly Pomona “The Poly Post”</td>
<td>mostly ads, activities committee, and university</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>consider topics being investigated and sensitivity to administration</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>school events and news affecting students</td>
<td>yes, feedback on stories and layout</td>
<td>Activity class (2 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chico State “The Orion”</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>all</td>
<td>yes, critiques print and web content after published</td>
<td>class and club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humboldt State “The Lumberjack”</td>
<td>associated students</td>
<td>yes, attempt of withholding issue by parents and admin but ran issue anyway</td>
<td>no, but pay attention to obscenity, sensitive material, and human interest stories</td>
<td>yes, understand enough outdated and obsolete</td>
<td>community news</td>
<td>yes, critiques paper once a week and has informal advising</td>
<td>workshop class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal Poly San Luis Obispo “Mustang News”</td>
<td>independent</td>
<td>no, but issue with student gov. using names of candidates in articles</td>
<td>no, but know will get negative feedback reporting on greek life, some reporters feel uncomfortable</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>school events</td>
<td>yes, almost no role in publication, but available to consult</td>
<td>independent, reporters paid by money from ads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU Fullerton “Daily Titan”</td>
<td>part ad sales, part university support</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>all but national/international news</td>
<td>yes, helps with story ideas and gives advice</td>
<td>independent in hiring staff but also capstone class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU LA “University Times”</td>
<td>funded</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes, comic with curse words reprimanded</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>school events</td>
<td>yes, meets twice weekly to go over previous issue and discuss next issue</td>
<td>mix, class but others allowed to be involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU Channel Islands “CI View”</td>
<td>funded</td>
<td>no direct, but pressured to censor</td>
<td>yes, reviewed pushback using “fuck” and “nigger” also tried to tell what to write and how to write sex column</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
<td>not sure</td>
<td>school events</td>
<td>yes, do paperwork and guide them, but felt most censorship from them</td>
<td>umbrella entity under ASI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU East Bay “The Pioneer”</td>
<td>funded by com. dept. and ads</td>
<td>felt pressured to write a puff piece about occupy event, cover it in a way that was not accurate</td>
<td>no, but changed content of comics because it seemed somewhat racist</td>
<td>not in depth but enough</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>school events</td>
<td>does nothing?</td>
<td>linked to 3 journalism classes, but most content comes from outside those classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU Monterey Bay “The Otter Realm”</td>
<td>funded</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no, but aware of certain topics that could be offensive, inflammatory, or harmful to the campus community</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>not an official role</td>
<td>mostly school events, community news, some national and international topics, recently published investigative reports</td>
<td>teaches workshop class and offers advice for the print and online edition</td>
<td>workshop class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADE CARD:**

**F.I.R.E.:** The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) receives an A for their responsiveness and willingness to inform students of their right as journalists and free speech advocates. I talked with one of the FIRE representatives who got back to me quickly and provided me with information on college journalists rights.

**CSUMB Office of the President:** I contacted a representative of the Office of the President asking if CSUMB had a written policy for The Otter Realm. The representative responded quickly and informed me that CSUMB does not have a written policy for The Otter Realm.
When you visit the website of Give 5 to Cancer, you are greeted with a pink ribbon and banner. The company’s logo includes a pink hand and the sub-title “Great products. Great Cause.”

There are several places on the site that state the company gives a portion of its sales to charity. All of this implies that Give 5 to Cancer is a charitable organization donating to cancer research.

A three-month investigation has found this is not the case. Give 5 to Cancer is a for-profit business that gives very little, if any of its earnings to charity.

For-profit businesses using the façade of non-profit, charitable organizations are an increasing problem in today’s world of online shopping. Consumers must do their research on a company, just as they research products they intend to buy. The Latin phrase “caveat emporior” - buyer beware – holds true when dealing with many companies that have “charitable-sounding” names.

Give 5 to Cancer is a North Dakota based online merchandise distributor. The company incorporated in February 2012, according to the Articles of Incorporation obtained through a public records request from the North Dakota Secretary of State’s office. John Schock is listed as the President, and Loren Balkowitsch is recorded as a member of the board of directors.

Give 5 to Cancer is not listed with the Internal Revenue Service as a charitable organization. Corporate tax returns for the business have been requested through a Freedom of Information Act request, but have not yet been received.

On its website, Give 5 to Cancer links to two cancer research organizations: Breast Cancer Research Foundation and the Bismarck Cancer Center Foundation. The website states that Give 5 to Cancer is a member of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation’s Survivor’s Circle Partner program.

Upon researching further, a business only needs to make a one-time donation of $250 in order to state this on its website and link to the New York Based Breast Cancer Research Foundation. This foundation, unlike Give 5 to Cancer, offers detailed lists of organizations and researchers receiving funding from it, and a list of major cash and in-kind donors.

Give 5 to Cancer is not on any of the donors lists published on the Breast Cancer Research Center’s website. A spokesperson for the Breast Cancer Research Center said a new list will be published in July, but would not state if Give 5 to Cancer will be on it at any level.

It should be noted that Give 5 to Cancer founder and board member Balkowitsch is Vice President of funding with the Bismarck Cancer Center Foundation, the other organization listed as a partner. No records could be found to determine what, if any money is donated from Give 5 to Cancer purchases to this foundation.

On the same Give 5 to Cancer website page that lists these partner organizations, consumers learn that only “$5 for every 5 products sold” is supposedly donated. However the company “invite[s] you to browse through our store and shop with confidence.”

While overall sales of the company will not be known until tax returns are received, it is imaginable that $1 per product is a low percentage of overall sales. Some products sold on Give 5 to Cancer’s website, products that include everything from chicken coops to lawnmowers to watercraft, can cost more than $1,000.

The company has a Better...
Business Bureau rating of an A-. While doing background research a consumer complaint was found about a Give 5 To Cancer product purchased through Sears.com. This complaint was similar to one the special investigative reporting team received, which led to this investigation.

The complaint stated: “We purchased an item from Sears.com who uses Give 5 To Cancer as a marketplace partner. When receive [sic] the item, we discovered it was not as advertised on the Sears website. We attempted to contact Sears to return it. Through the course of three attempts to get the issue resolved and over the course of three weeks, we were finally able to contact Give 5 To Cancer and arrange return.

Once the item was received by Give 5 To Cancer, they notified us that since it had not be [sic] returned within 10 days they would charge a 30% re-stocking fee and only refund 70% of the item cost. We attempted to return the item within 3 days of receiving the item. Through no fault of ours, we were unable to get this issue resolved.”

In a follow up comment the customer expressed concern that they did not know they were ordering from Give 5 To Cancer, but rather thought they were purchasing directly from Sears, since they had accessed the transaction through Sears’ website.

Give 5 Cancer responded and placed the burden squarely on the consumer: “It is not our fault the customer is confused on how the Sears marketplace works, it’s the customer’s responsibility to do so.”

Give 5 To Cancer goes on to answer, in all capital letters, that the customer did not know what they were ordering.

Sears could not be reached for comment regarding how businesses are vetted and selected for partnership, or specifically about issues connected to Give 5 to Cancer. Similarly, Give 5 to Cancer did not contribute information for this investigation or article.

While it appears that everything Give 5 to Cancer is doing is legal, it leaves this reporter asking: Is it ethical?
Blueprints are rolled out, decisions are made and a building goes up. However, this process is nowhere near as simple as it seems. Despite its projected completion in summer 2015, the Business Information Technology (BIT) building already has accumulated 10 years of history without a single student walking through its doors.

The BIT building, adjacent to the Tanimura & Antle Family Memorial Library, will house two programs: the College of Business and the School of Information Technology and Communication Design.

Construction of the 58,000 square-foot structure requires more than $43 million in state funds, as well as two generous gifts: $30,000 from Union Bank and $25,000 from First Capital Bank.

The building’s general contractor is Rudolf and Sletten. The contractors have built numerous buildings for educational institutions including the Green Music Center at Cal State University Sonoma, the Clinical & Translational Research Institute at University of California San Diego and The Warren and Katharine Schlinger Laboratory for Chemistry and Chemical Engineering at Caltech.

In addition to the BIT building’s innovative design, it will also strive to be sustainable, a theme that runs deep in the history of Cal State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). By utilizing natural light and extrapolating water runoff from storms, the BIT building will carry on the tradition of this green and sustainable campus.

This semester, as part of a special investigative reporting team, reporters learned about accessing public information and how to use that information effectively in newsgathering. Knowing what rights are available to citizens is crucial and exercising those rights from time to time can mean the difference between telling part of a story and offering the full spectrum.

My project to develop a comprehensive history behind CSUMB’s newest addition, the BIT building, for The Otter Realm is an extensive project. This semester, I learned the importance of newsgathering from the viewpoint of an investigator. Working on this story sharpened my skills as a reporter and introduced me to the tools and resources available in this field.

Most information I was looking for was not on the surface so I had to take extra steps to secure the data I needed. By working with Presidential Aide April L. Lee, CSUMB’s Director for Campus Planning and Development, Kathleen Ventimiglia and Contracts Coordinator, Reyola H. Carlisle, I learned how crucial it is to conduct research in a timely manner and to complete as much background research as possible to make the most of everyone’s time.

There are many factors and players that contributed to the creation of the BIT building, both on campus and throughout the state that must be covered with greater depth, I will continue coverage of the BIT building construction through the coming fall semester. Because uncovering the complete evolution of this building serves to tell the story of CSUMB’s past and also gives way to the university’s direction into the future.