

Aspiring journalists spend week at UI for 'boot camp'

Workshop aims to teach students the art of storytelling

By Holly Bowen Daily News Staff Writer

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Nine enterprising high school students from across the state are staying at the University of Idaho in Moscow this week for what's been dubbed "journalism boot camp."

They're attending the Multicultural High School Journalism Workshop hosted by the UI's School of Journalism and Mass Media. The workshop began in 2001 with funding from the Scripps Howard Foundation, which withdrew its support in 2009.

This year's workshop is possible with financial help from the Dow Jones News Fund, said Becky Tallent, assistant professor of journalism at the UI.

In addition to the nine students attending the workshop, three Idaho high school teachers are learning strategies for teaching journalism to students from multicultural backgrounds.

Tallent said the participants are learning about "a lot of different aspects of journalism," including multimedia, which is an increasingly common and important aspect of the storytelling process.

She said the students are working on a Facebook page and Twitter account, and they're shooting and editing video into the nighttime hours.

For example, workshop participants drove to the Coeur d'Alene Indian Reservation on Monday to interview some of the people involved in Rezkast, a YouTube-like video streaming website featuring clips by and for Native Americans.

They spoke with tribal members involved in a reservation radio station and shot footage of stick games and other cultural activities at a Native Nations gathering.

Monday also included a visit to the Coeur d'Alene Press, where the students learned a little about what it's like to produce a daily newspaper.

"I never realized there is so much in making a newspaper," said Nikkaila Bain, a senior at Moscow High School who also participated in the workshop last year.

"I can't believe they do that every day," added Whitney Urmann, a junior at Priest River High School who will become editor-in-chief of her school paper this fall. She said she's wanted to be a journalist since she was about 8 years old.

Ann-Maria Carmona and Katy Collins, both seniors at Centennial High School in Boise, said they were a bit skeptical of the UI before arriving at the workshop. They said they assumed they'd fit in better at Boise State University.

"I never knew the UI has this good of a journalism program, but I'll consider it now," Carmona said, adding that they are also looking at the journalism program at California State University in Chico.

The two friends said they film video announcements for their school but are now getting experience in print journalism.

Bain said last year's workshop provided her with "a lot of experience I don't think I would have gotten anywhere else." She said she hadn't thought about Associated Press style and its rules for spelling, punctuation, abbreviation and just about everything else.

"You never think, when you're reading the newspaper, that they use their own style," she said.

The young women said they're interested in journalism because they like discovering new things and sharing what they've learned with others.

"I like being in the middle of everything and being the first to know something," Urmann said. "I'm kind of gossipy."

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