

Voices from the Real World



Tashima Gallant ('10), Samantha Lewis ('09), Gladys Molina, Anne O'Toole-Bolthrunis ('09)

Facing the leanest economy in two generations, a few professional writing students in a directed study are preparing for their careers by networking with professionals while preparing their own unique materials. **Anne O'Toole-Bolthrunis** is producing a detailed outline, query letter, and several chapters of her novel, *Nazi Zombies Take Salem*; the opening scene has already been published at Salem State's own *Red Skies*. **Samantha Lewis**, a 3-semester editor-in-chief of *Red Skies*, is laying out a 32-page journal representing the best work written and edited by her during her tenure. Both are planning to attend the annual conference of the American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA) in New York City in April.

NETWORKING

Equally important, O'Toole-Bolthrunis and Lewis are reaching out. Recently, they enjoyed a breakfast with **Abbie Lundberg**, former editor in chief of CXO Media's *CIO Magazine*, a teleconference with **Deborah Reiter**, a Communications Manager for the Finance Division of Wells Fargo Corporation, a visit to the offices of **Art Jahnke**, Assistant Vice President & Executive Editor of Boston University Press, and dinner with **Gladys Molina**, a director of public relations for several product lines at Merck Corporation. The message from every executive they meet is the same: *network, network, network!*



Abbie Lundberg

EDUCATION?

The informational interviews reveal another

common thread. These executives, who supervise as many as 20 content providers to web and print channels, all began their careers as English Majors. Whether the field is finance, pharmaceuticals, education, or technology, the core skills are mastery of writing and facility with professional collaborative techniques.

In the pace of modern organizations, that means more than coffee, conversation, and consensus. Working writers rarely use paper and only occasionally meet in physical space. Editorial workflows call for digital collaborative environments. And new employees need to know how this is done *before* they get the job.

"There just is little or no time to train on the job," says Reiter, who supervises 15 people producing internal education online and materials for the global finance giant, Wells Fargo. Lundberg agrees. "Traditional print content has to be prepared to be web-ready," says the former editor, now a consultant and guest speaker.

Since different organizations use different collaborative tools, the education a student needs is not about learning software. **What will you need?** You'll need the habits of a professional.

Spring 2009

The English Department at Salem State College

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Professor Regina Flynn

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Professor Perry Glasser



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