LA FELLOWS LEARN TO KEEP THE CONNECTION IN TODAY’S JOB MARKET

More than 100 individuals applied for the LA Fellows program, but only 34 were chosen.

“Not just everyone can be an LA Fellow,” said Allison Deutch, project coordinator of the program. “I knew success of the program would depend on the individuals involved. This group didn’t just show up. They went above and beyond, remained professional and supported one another.”

At the May 13, 2011 culmination, Fellows and advisory board members emphasized the importance of maintaining connections with one another and networking to navigate through today’s ‘it’s who you know’ job market.

Rosa María Santana, who currently works for a media research company, said the connections she made with her peers were one of the most fulfilling aspects of being a fellow. “The people I met here were intelligent, kind and generous. I’m that much more enriched for having them in my life.”

“The hidden job markets have been hard to navigate,” said Mark A. Smith, who is preparing for the California Bar in July. Through the program, Smith said he had to learn how to ‘get out of his own way’.

“I had to let the information come to me in the order it was supposed to come. I had to have the patience to listen to myself.”

The program, which launched in October 2010 at Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC), uses an academy-style approach to prepare individuals for working with non-profits. Fellows go through seven weeks of training during which they learn a variety of skills such as how to write grants, better navigate job searches and revamp their resumes. Fellows also have to fulfill 100 hours of volunteer work.
“It’s all about serving others,” said Douglass Marriott, Director of Cooperative Education at LAVC.

This was the third group of Fellows to graduate since the program was launched. At the culmination, three members of the cohort got to speak on behalf of the class.

“If you want proof that this works, seven weeks ago I would not have been speaking in front of you,” said Barbara Maultsby. “This experience will stay with me forever.”

“Instructors kept us honed to what’s important,” said Donald A. Lovett. “Life is all about making those connections.”

For Randall Phillips, the program allowed him to re-examine his career path and gave him a reality check. “We thought we were perfect. We had a lot to learn.” He said being an LA Fellow introduced him to the non-profit world and he learned just how important it is to society.

“Community, connections and collaboration are the three words the college lives by,” said Dr. Susan Carleo, President of LAVC. “Our job is to stay connected to changing environments and make a difference in our community.”

Lennie Ciuflo, Director of job training at LAVC, expressed gratitude towards the advisory board and Dr. Carleo’s support. “I’m honored that she looks at our program in a special light.”

Instructors also enjoyed working with the Fellows in the program.

Larry Braman focused on life experiences that would give Fellows the leg up in their job search. “In the end, a hiring manager is going to make a decision based on the human connection they feel with you. You’ll be getting these jobs because of your stories.”

“It’s a treat to do something that I love doing,” said Roberto Gutierrez, who lead a drum circle with the cohort as part of a team building exercise. “The drum is an analogy for what’s going on; trying to find a groove in an organization or a job, making sure not to step on anyone’s toes.”

The bar will continue to be raised for future cohorts. This round of Fellows received praise and advice that they could implement in their professional and personal lives.
“I’m not going to wish you luck,” said instructor Doug Card. “If you’re good, you won’t need the luck.”

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