

Today's weather



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Gehrke-Jones a smash hit for Poly softball team

IN SPORTS, 16

Swing with the SLO Lindy Hop Exchange this weekend

IN SPOTLIGHT, 8



Panel of professors, counselor analyze school shootings

Kristen Marschall
MUSTANG DAILY

2001: Two lives lost and 13 wounded in Santee, Calif.
2005: 10 lives lost in Red Lake, Minn.
2007: 33 lives lost in Blacksburg, Va.

It was April 16 when those 33 lives were lost in the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University shooting and three Cal Poly students found themselves discussing the turn of events. Lizzy LaMotte-Mitchell, Ruth Osorio and Jen Ledbetter wanted to explore the issues beyond what the media showed. Thus, Wednesday's school shooting panel discussion was created.

Three faculty members and a Counseling Center psychologist comprised the panel that answered students' questions on the emotional responses, media attention and causes of school violence that have accompanied recent school shootings. More than 25 students gathered in the San Luis Lounge to hear what they had to say.

"We thought it was important to start a dialog on campus," said LaMotte-Mitchell, who decided to do her senior project on school shootings.

The event hit home for two panel members. Religious studies professor Stephanie Stillman, special-

see Panel, page 3



A psychologist from the Counseling Center and three professors discussed the causes and effects of school shootings.

SHEILA SOBCHIK
MUSTANG DAILY

When paying attention pays off

Knowing multiple languages may help students understand the world from different perspectives and could get them better jobs after college.

Brooke Robertson
MUSTANG DAILY

The unfortunate destiny of people who only speak their native language is one of isolation, described Brian Kennelly, modern languages and literatures department chair and French professor. "You're doomed to be washed up on some mono-language patch of sand in a much



BRENNAN ANGEL MUSTANG DAILY

Professor John Thompson co-teaches a French cooking class every spring. Taught entirely in French, students get to cook everything from crepes to soups every week for lab.

more interesting ocean," he said. Kennelly described language as being connected to every aspect of life, from everyday communication and traditions to art, literature, film, business and politics.

Many students study language because they are interested in traveling and experiencing other

cultures. "I'm kind of like the translator for the family," child development junior Lauren Ambrose said of traveling through Latin America. Ambrose is currently pursuing a Spanish minor which she hopes to use both while she's traveling and in her future career. Ambrose plans to work

with Spanish-speaking families when she graduates.

"I really like to work with that culture," she said.

Students are often required to enroll in second language courses if they desire to take advantage of study abroad opportunities in non-English speaking

see Languages, page 2

Iranian speaker addresses Cal Poly

Daniel Seguin
MUSTANG DAILY

Nobel Peace Prize winner, celebrated author and political activist Shirin Ebadi spoke Tuesday night to 1,000 attendees at the Performing Arts Center.

Reza Akhavan, an electrical engineering senior and president of Persian Students of Cal Poly, introduced the evening's honored guest speaker by delivering a quote that he said summed up the essence of the woman in question.

"Dr. Ebadi has worked to give a voice to those with no voice," Akhavan said.

During the 90 minutes that followed, Ebadi delivered a speech punctuated throughout by studious silence, agreeable laughter and thundering applause.

Early in the speech, the audience roared with applause after Ebadi extolled the positive

see Ebadi, page 3



Shirin Ebadi

Matt Taylor wants to strengthen the ASI/student link

Isaiah Narciso
MUSTANG DAILY

Business senior Matt Taylor thinks that he has the [it] factor that the next Associated Students Inc. president needs to succeed.

Taylor feels that he can meet the demands of ASI and lead a normal student life at the same time.

"I'm a pretty normal person," Taylor said. "I am really involved in ASI, and I want to better the college experience. I want to bring better communication (between students and ASI)."

If elected as ASI president, Taylor wants to continue the work left by Todd Maki. He wanted to ensure that the link remains strong between Cal Poly students and the

MUSTANGDAILY 3-PART SERIES

This is the third installment of a three-part profile on the ASI candidates.

local population.

"We need to have that link so we can keep working on projects," Taylor said.

Taylor noted that the strong relationship between the students and the community is needed so both sides can get what they want. He cited the extended bus schedule as a result of this connection.

As another of his campaign points, Taylor thought that ASI should cater more to the students than it does now. He noted that he wants to use the latest technology like pod-

casts to get ASI's word out to the student population.

"I want to make sure that ASI is pointed in the right direction," Taylor said. "I want to make it so that we're more involved with the students. We have to make sure the link between the students and their leaders is there."

Based on his interaction with other students, Taylor said that the major issues for Cal Poly students included overcrowding at the recreation center and campus dining. But he reminded students that neither he nor ASI itself can guarantee results overnight.

"Those are problems that can't be solved

see Taylor, page 2



Matt Taylor wants to improve student-ASI communication if elected president.

PATRICK TRAUTFIELD
MUSTANG DAILY



BRENNAN ANGEL MUSTANG DAILY

French cooking is one of many classes available to students interested in studying a foreign language. The class incorporates learning how to cook and how food plays a role in French culture.

Languages

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countries, including Cal Poly's Spain Study Program.

Agribusiness sophomore Hayley Maynard plans to use her Spanish minor when she studies in Chile next spring semester.

"I hope not many people speak English," she said, wanting to improve her Spanish skills while she's there.

Others take courses to fulfill a major requirement or to increase their chances of getting accepted into a graduate program. Many graduate schools have second language requirements due to the fact that important research is frequently published in non-English books and journals.

Many take courses for languages they already speak in order to enhance speaking and writing abilities. The courses also provide a greater understanding of cultural history and an opportunity to explore native arts and literatures.

Still other students learn second languages in order to make themselves more marketable to employers.

Maynard recently attended a job fair for agribusiness students in which none of the companies asked about her grade point average. Instead, "they all wanted to know if we spoke another language," said said.

Kennelly painted a picture of a Cal Poly business student who only speaks American (English, he said, is what people speak in England): "Companies (that) students want to work for aren't based in the United States or won't be," Kennelly said. "You're going to need to communicate in the language of that culture in order to succeed."

Kennelly agreed that a businessperson may be able to travel abroad, speak American and make a sale, but he or she will not understand some aspects of culture which can create more personal relationships. During a business dinner in France, for example, "Would you know it's inappropriate to talk about business until the dessert course?" Kennelly asked.

Making the effort to learn another language and understand a country's culture will give travelers more respect and credibility in the eyes of natives, Kennelly said.

He emphasized that people work with whom they are comfortable with, and therefore, employers hire workers who they are compatible with.

"Languages facilitate communication, and there's no way you're going to make a connection with someone without communication," Kennelly said.

He said it's important for students to give themselves an edge when applying for jobs. This can be achieved through immersion into different areas of study, whether it be through language classes, internships, or minors in other fields.

Not only are languages important in the world of business, they also affect day-to-day life.

"Languages are alive, evolving and impacting decisions and foreign policies," Kennelly said. It's necessary to be able to communicate and relate with other cultures in order to truly understand what's going on in the world, he added.

As Americans, "we've tended to believe the rest of the world needs to come to us and do things on our terms," Kennelly said. But in this global world, he emphasized, "It's becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain that arrogant posture."

In order for the United States to maintain its position as a superpower, Kennelly said the country needs to be in dialogue with the rest of the world.

"To be unable to deal with another person's culture and their own terms is detrimental," Spanish professor William Martinez said.

Studying another language is "the best way of learning about other peoples' cultures and at the same time learning about your own," Martinez said. Students of language study and view culture from an outside perspective, which in turn can lead to a deeper understanding of their own cultures as they are able to step into other peoples' shoes and examine their own customs, traditions and values from another viewpoint.

Spanish is the language to learn for

California residents, Martinez said. Students of all majors would benefit from learning the language.

California is home to more than 12.4 million Spanish-speakers, according to the 2000 Census. There are currently more Spanish-speakers in the United States than speakers of French, Hawaiian, and the various Native-American dialects combined, as stated in the Census.

"Pretty much anyone in California should know Spanish," said agribusiness senior Andrew LaGraff, who is currently enrolled in his first Spanish course. "I hear Spanish every day, just around town."

If students think they enroll in "foreign" language courses, they are mistaken. Kennelly hates the term, not only because it perpetuates an "us versus them opposition," but because language is everywhere, he said.

The modern languages and literatures department offers classes in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Mandarin Chinese. Majors must take classes in Spanish, with a choice of either French or German as a required second language. Minors are offered in Spanish, French, and German.

Kennelly said Cal Poly doesn't offer nearly enough language courses.

"That's not a criticism; that's an opportunity," he said.

Maynard, who wants to learn Greek, agreed.

"I really want to go (to Greece)," she said. "I Google pictures of it all the time."

Kennelly grew up in South Africa, which has 11 official languages. In his lifetime he has learned Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Latin and French.

"In this country you'd be considered a wiz kid or unique," he said of his knowledge of languages. Kennelly hopes that attitude will change.

Some of Kennelly's goals as department chair are to expand Cal Poly's Asian language course offerings and establish French as a main language choice for majors in addition to Spanish.

"Languages are the way human beings communicate," Kennelly said. "You can restrict your communication channel to English and miss out on a lot of fun."

Taylor

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in one term," Taylor said.

As a current member on the ASI Board of Directors, Taylor proudly mentioned the organization's response to high textbook prices. This is also an issue that he will mention in his campaign to be ASI president.

"ASI has passed a resolution that asks teachers to get their book orders in earlier, so that the bookstore has more time to order these books, so that the prices are cheaper," he said.

Taylor also wants to assure students that they have the right to graduate in four years. He said that he has tried to work with the provost office and Academic Advising Council to relieve some of the harder graduation requirements.

"I have no problem with you staying if you want to enjoy the college experience," Taylor said. "But if you can't graduate, and

you want to graduate in four years, that should be a right to you."

Although he had no previous leadership experience back in his Jesuit high school in San Jose, Cal Poly changed his perspective on student government.

"Once I got into Cal Poly, I started looking at it and thought this was something I wanted to do," Taylor said. "When I was a junior, I decided to get involved, and I've been loving it ever since."

To get his message out, Taylor plans to harness the power of podcasting for his campaign, as well as selling T-shirts and holding a tri-tip dodgeball tournament. He promised to start working on the job immediately if elected as ASI president.

"Once you're voted in, that shouldn't be all that matters," he said. "When you're voted in, that's when your job starts. Your job doesn't end when they pass out the ballots."

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Ebadi

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wisdom of keeping government and academia issues separate.

"I certainly hope that the misjudged policies of the Iranian government, as well as the misguided policies of your government here, will not affect academic and cultural exchanges and issues," Ebadi said.

Toward the end of her speech, Ebadi was asked her opinion concerning the strain between Iran and the United States.

Ebadi's response was simple and the audience response was immediate.

"The biggest problem between Iranian and U.S. relations is the two current presidents," Ebadi said.

Faryal Saaidnia, a civil engineering senior and the social chair of Persian Students of Cal Poly, said that bringing Ebadi to Cal Poly involved quite a bit of time and energy.

"We actually started the process during spring quarter of last year," Saaidnia said. "One of our member's parents actually hand-delivered the invitation to her in Iran. In December, we got the go-ahead that she would love to speak at Cal Poly."

Negisa Taymourian, a business junior and secretary of Persian Students of Cal Poly, said that Ebadi's speech left her enlightened toward women's issues.

"I definitely felt that I had a lot to learn from Dr. Ebadi's speech," Taymourian said. "The laws that she stated as examples of the status that women have in Iran were something that I wasn't even aware of."

Ebadi's accomplishments are numerous.

Ebadi was awarded the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize for her work in the area of human rights and equality.

Among several other published novels, she is the co-author of the 2006 autobiographical memoir, "Iran Awakening."

Her political activism defending the rights of women and children alike has garnered worldwide attention.

After earning a doctorate in law from the University of Tehran, Ebadi became one of the first female judges in Iran.

Between 1975 and 1979, Ebadi became president of the city court of Tehran.

Ebadi said she is passionate about her beliefs, her ideals and the causes in which she chooses to become involved.

Ebadi readily admits that she is a controversial figure, especially within her own country. The two burly bodyguards that accompany her are testament to her safety precautions.

In the speech, Ebadi talked about some of the retaliation she has personally experienced for her views.

"I have been to prison once before. I have evaded a number of assassination attempts," she said.

"Thank the Lord I am here with you tonight, God only knows what will happen when I leave tomorrow."

Panel

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izes in what shapes Americans' memories of school shootings – particularly the Columbine incident. Stillman herself is from Littleton, Colo., the site of the 1999 shootings, and is writing a book about its aftermath.

"In the case of Columbine, it becomes very intellectual. It's more of the mind than of the heart," Stillman said of her studies on the subject.

"With Virginia Tech, I had much more of an emotional reaction because of my students. I wondered, if someone came in, how could I move the desks in the room? Would there be an open window?"

Additionally, Jodi Jacques, a graduate professor in the College of Education's counseling program, received her master's degree from Virginia Tech.

"It's been interesting to watch the news and know where the shootings happened on campus," she said.

Of her former university and Cal Poly, she said there are few differences between the two polytechnic universities in small towns.

"Having been in Blacksburg and having been in San Luis ... it's very ironic because Blacksburg has very much the same meaning to me," she said.

The other two panel members, psychology professor Linden Nelson and Counseling Center psychologist Barbara Gilbert, said school shootings are incredibly difficult to pre-

vent.

"Everyone says, 'there were signs all along,' but those signs could be there and nothing happens," Gilbert said. "While we all have this aggression in us, we have empathy too. We're all aggression-prone to some extent."

"If the key is to identify that college student that's going to be violent, I'd say forget about it," Nelson said, adding that what needs to be done to prevent such a scenario should take place an earlier age, such as elementary school or junior high.

Jacques said students become accustomed to taking tests as early as third grade and their level of stress becomes increasingly high.

"Kids are not allowed a lot of time to be kids," she said.

Gilbert said it's not unusual for resident advisers or professors to walk students over to the Counseling Center.

"We see ourselves as our brother's keepers," she said. "If someone's distressed, it matters."

The discussion concluded with the panel asking questions of the students in the audience about how they felt.

"It was like watching an action movie," computer engineering sophomore Jacob Lopez said of the Virginia Tech coverage. "I had a lot of questions that had not been addressed by any other outlet. Now I have to digest it."

"That was one of our goals," LaMotte-Mitchell said. "You sit and hold a candle, but there's no discussion."

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