

YouTube proves recruiting, advertising tool for ASU

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SPECIAL TO THE SUN

For more than a year now, the Department of Biological Sciences at Arkansas State University has been producing videos about the research conducted and teaching offered by that institution.

Initially the videos were placed on the Department's Web site and also broadcast in the local access channel 18 (ASUTV). Then the videos were placed on YouTube and ASU's name started to resonate in cyberspace.

Many potential students are now telling the admissions office at ASU that the main reason they applied to the university was because of the videos they watched on YouTube.

According to Tammy Fowler, director of Admissions at A-State, "The RSS feeds, YouTube videos and movie nights are reaching students through their preferred media. They are opening new doors in recruitment and students are responding to it."

In many ways this is not surprising. Lately YouTube has become a popular place for young people who want to know more about colleges and universities and seek visual images to get a better sense of those institutions of higher education.

"The office of admissions



A group of ASU students are shown filming dolphins during a marine mammal field course in the Florida Keys. Footage of this filming was used to produce one of the ASU's videos being broadcast on YouTube.

is always looking for new and innovative ways to contact students. ... the faculty of the Biology Department work tirelessly to help us. They are on the cutting edge of student technology," Fowler said.

The themes of the videos range widely, from Arkansas creatures, such as the ivory-billed woodpecker and the alligator snapping

turtle, to animals that live far away, such as the polar bear or remote places such as Antarctica. The videos also bring the latest in laboratory research conducted by ASU faculty in areas such as nerve regeneration, the effects of nicotine on health, and biotechnology.

All these videos portray not only ASU faculty but, more importantly, stu-

dents, both graduate and undergraduate. From the beginning, the executive production was given to ASU students themselves, such as Jane Anfinson, who graduated this year with a master's degree in the wildlife program, and now by Annabelle McKie, a doctoral student in the environ-

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mental sciences program.

The idea was to ensure that the videos were edited in the pace and format students would welcome, so they could feel that current students were talking to them as potential students. Even some of the music was composed and performed by Anfinson herself.

Some of the latest shows were fully written, produced, and directed by students under the supervision of Dr. Amy Pearce, Dr. Jack Zibluk, and me, all ASU faculty.

Another show that has been posted is an interview carried out by ASU-TV of three graduate students: Carolina Roa, David Hayes, and Jeremy Brown, in which they explained in their own words why ASU is a great place to study. The gender, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the students interviewed has attracted responses from many potential students not only nationwide but

also internationally. Since biology maintains a Web page in four different languages, some of those responses are written in their native languages.

One of the shows even talks about some courses offered at ASU that most people would not expect from a school in a land-locked state: marine mammalogy (lecture and lab) and a field marine mammal course in the Bahamas.

Several more shows are being produced in order to capitalize on the rich variety of subjects and faculty expertise at ASU. In addition to YouTube these shows can be viewed in the Biology Department's Web site at: http://biology.astate.edu/tv_shows.htm.

For more information e-mail the ASU Department of Biological Sciences at: <mailto:biology@astate.edu> or visit the Web site: biology.astate.edu.

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