

4-1-2011

## Bennett establishes Furman-to-L.A. pipeline

Katie Levans

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine>

### Recommended Citation

Levans, Katie (2011) "Bennett establishes Furman-to-L.A. pipeline," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 54 : Iss. 1 , Article 30.  
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol54/iss1/30>

This Article is made available online by Journals, part of the Furman University Scholar Exchange (FUSE). It has been accepted for inclusion in Furman Magazine by an authorized FUSE administrator. For terms of use, please refer to the [FUSE Institutional Repository Guidelines](#). For more information, please contact [scholarexchange@furman.edu](mailto:scholarexchange@furman.edu).



Chad Bennett (second from left) with members of the Furman-L.A. network, from left: Elise Lineberger '10, Briana DaMota '10, Katy Wynn '09, Andrea Holt '09 and Reid Gormly '04.

## BENNETT ESTABLISHES FURMAN-TO-L.A. PIPELINE

### AFTER GRADUATING FROM FURMAN

In 2003, Chad Bennett took his degree in communication studies, packed his car, left his hometown of Charleston, S.C., and drove across the country to Los Angeles to enter one of the fiercest job markets in the world. He knew one person in the City of Angels: his sister.

"I set out on that journey not knowing where it would lead me," says Bennett. "But when you leave Furman you have no doubt that you will get a great job and be successful. I left with the confidence that I was armed to do anything."

As a student Bennett worked for two years in Furman's career services office, where he says he learned firsthand the value of networking in landing a job. So he applied the skills he'd acquired to his L.A. job search and soon was hired for a position with Reveille, a production and development company responsible for such television shows as "The Office," "The Biggest Loser" and "Ugly Betty."

He has since risen steadily in the company hierarchy. Today he is Reveille's vice president of brand development, overseeing the merchandising, licensing and development for its reality shows. Among other areas, he manages "The Biggest Loser's" eight-figure, multi-platform health and lifestyle brand.

And he has used his influence to create a Furman-Reveille pipeline.

"I wasn't aware of a big Furman network out in L.A., so I wanted to open up that industry for our community," he says. "I knew Furman students would be hard-working, smart and professional, and when

I got my job it made sense for me to see how we could establish an internship program at Reveille."

Working primarily with Susan Zeiger, internship director at Furman, Bennett has helped place 10 Furman students in internships with Reveille, including three this summer. Three of the interns have gone on to take full-time positions with the company. "Out of the many interns that we have all year long," Bennett says, "the ones who have gotten hired are those from Furman."

Which speaks well for Furman students, since the entertainment business is highly competitive. John Barker, director of career services, says, "There are so many people that want to get into that field that employers know they can be selective and will use their internship program to identify candidates for their full-time, permanent positions."

Furman has publicly recognized Bennett's efforts. During Homecoming last fall, the university presented him the Wayne and Rubye Reid Award for his contributions to the career development of students.

But as Bennett says, the students aren't the only ones who benefit from the internships. "Internship programs offset a company's workload and also groom people to become employees as the company grows. The students get the experience, but it also benefits the company. It's a win-win."

Take Briana DaMota '10, who was offered a full-time job after interning at Reveille for just seven weeks. She is currently executive assistant to the managing director of domestic television and digital.

She says she'd wanted to work in the entertainment industry since high school, but she didn't expect her plan to become a reality so quickly. "I came to L.A. to go to graduate school at the University of Southern California, but working at Reveille gave me the opportunity to live out my dreams immediately," she says.

Then there's Katy Wynn '09, who interned and then worked full time at Reveille before landing her current "dream job" as production coordinator for Conan O'Brien's talk show on TBS. "I'm so thankful for my time at Reveille," she says. "It gave me a foundational knowledge of the entertainment world and helped me build the skill set I needed to succeed in late night TV."

For DaMota, Wynn and others from Furman, these opportunities came about because Chad Bennett understood the value of on-the-job training for students and opened the door for them to demonstrate their abilities. As he wrote in *Furman* magazine in 2004, "You can trust the Furman network to help you pursue the career and life that you have always dreamed of."

— KATIE LEVANS

*Adapted from an article in Volume 7, No. 1, of Engage magazine, a publication of the Office of Admission. The author, a 2007 graduate, is studying for a master's degree in human nutrition at Winthrop University. Read her blog, [www.sweettaterblog.com](http://www.sweettaterblog.com).*