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The Furman network in action

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THE FURMAN NETWORK IN ACTION

LAST NOVEMBER, Furman's Young Alumni Council joined forces with the Alumni Association, career services and the internship office to sponsor a career networking event for students and alumni.

The first hour gave alumni a chance to get to know each other and exchange contact information. During the second hour, students were invited in to talk with the alumni about their work.



At one point two graduates, Tom LeGrand '94 and Mandrallius Robinson '06, struck up a conversation. Tom, a former Furman football player, current Furman parent and son of two alumni, is the youth minister at Inman (S.C.) First Baptist Church. Manie is a sports reporter for *The Greenville News* — and bears a striking resemblance to Michael Jordan.

They quickly discovered they shared a love for sports. And their chance meeting has led to an exciting collaboration: the "Lettermen's Lounge," a one-hour weekly radio talk show that features news about Furman and Greenville-area athletics.

The project began as a podcast in January and recently has been picked up to air Monday evenings (streamed on-line) from 7 to 8 p.m. on Greenville radio station ESPN 1440-AM (www.espn1440.com).

Many of you know about the UFFP (Unofficial Furman Football Page, www.uffp2.com), where fans (and foes) of Furman football and other Furman sports chat on-line and exchange rumors, in-depth analysis and good-natured (usually) commentary about Paladin

athletics and sports in general. Others of you have likely signed on to athletics-related Furman pages on Facebook.

Now, with Lettermen's Lounge, there's another source for news and views about Paladin athletics and the world of sports. And we have to agree with Tom LeGrand, who is justifiably proud that "two Furman graduates are doing groundbreaking work in this field, especially here in Clemson Country."

To learn more about the Lettermen's Lounge, visit www.lettermenslounge.com or send a note to tom@lettermenslounge.com.

Why do I tell you this story? To show how the Furman network can work. We hope you'll find ways, as Tom and Manie did, to take advantage of the connections you have as an alumnus/a of this university.

IN JUNE I HAD THE PLEASURE of traveling to China with the chair of Furman's Department of Asian Studies, Kate Palmer Kaup, and 11 alumni and friends. During our two-week journey we spent time in Suzhou, Shanghai, Tibet, Xi'an and Beijing.

Kate, who holds a dual appointment in Asian Studies and political science (and who was profiled in the Fall 2009 issue of this magazine), is wonderfully well-connected in China, so we got to know the country much more intimately than the average tourist. We also met with eight young Furman alumni who were living and working in China.

To learn more about our experience, visit <http://furmanchinatrip2010.blogspot.com>.

The Alumni Office is working to develop more travel programs for alumni and friends. Watch for an announcement about future opportunities.

AFTER WE RETURNED FROM CHINA, we saw another example of Asian Studies in action. In July Furman sponsored an intensive two-week Chinese language and culture camp for high school students who have taken at least one year of Chinese.

The Startalk Chinese Language Camp was designed to help the participants take their language skills to new levels. Students studied and lived with native Chinese teachers, interacted via webcam with high school partners in China, and worked with Chinese-speaking camp counselors.

Students did everything from making documentaries to preparing authentic Chinese food. And they were able to keep their webcams so they can stay in touch with their language partners in Suzhou. The camp was supported by a National Critical Language Initiative Startalk grant.

This special program is yet another selling point alumni can use to help the university recruit outstanding students. One of Furman's strategic goals is to increase its applicant pool, and alumni can help spread the good news. So make sure to encourage any prospective college students you know to consider Furman. They'll like what they see!

PRESIDENTIAL VISITS: New Furman president Rod Smolla, who took office July 1, will be traveling the country during the next few months, looking to meet as many alumni as possible. His schedule is still being determined, but be on the lookout for an announcement about an event in your area — and then plan to attend.

— TOM TRIPLITT '76
Director, Alumni Association