

# Scientists selected for journalism internships

Two University scholars were awarded Mass Media Science and Engineering fellowships by the AAAS

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NEWS REPORTER

No scientist from the University had ever won a Mass Media Science and Engineering fellowship from the American Association of Science until this year, when two scientists at the University were selected for the program.

Bradley Wible and Tran My Phung will replace their University laboratory jobs with writing positions at major U.S. newspapers this summer thanks to their fellowships.

A mentor of 18 previous fellowship winners, science writer for The Oregonian Richard Hill met Wible and Phung, describing them as "very bright and enthusiastic about learning how to translate scientific subjects for the general public."

"They have shown they not only have a broad understanding of science, but also have the communication skills necessary to improve public understanding," Hill said.

Tran My Phung, a doctoral candidate, has worked with professor David Johnson of the University Department of Chemistry. She will be reporting with the medicine and science editor of the Chicago Tribune.

"This will be a tremendous experience for Tran," Johnson said in an e-mail. "It will complement her technical training and skills and will provide her new career opportunities."

Phung, who finished her undergraduate degree in chemistry at Whittier, said that winning the fellowship was a fluke. "I found it on a random Google search and had 15

days to apply," she said.

For her thesis project, Phung has been building an atomic layer deprivation system and has developed a defraction technique to measure thermal expansion of thin film. She said, however, that winning the fellowship was unrelated to her work. The application process does not ask for current research projects or research history, Phung said, it only requires the ability to write on a scientific subject in layman's terms.

Phung will return to the University after her internship and plans to receive her doctorate next spring.

Bradley Wible, a post-doctoral researcher and cognitive neuroscientist of learning disabilities and development in the University Department of Psychology, has already begun his 10-week fellowship at the Los Angeles Times.

"I'm used to explaining my experiments to little kids," Wible said, "because you have to make them

comfortable with these shower cap-looking things on their heads." Explaining complex techniques in simple terms, he said, "is the same thing I'm doing at the L.A. Times."

Wible will not be returning to the University psychology department after his 10-week internship, however. The AAAS also awarded Wible with a yearlong Science and Technology Policy Fellowship in the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., starting in the fall.

"It puts scientists at the interfaith between science and government to aid public policy," Wible said.

Science and Technology Policy Fellowships, the AAAS Web site states, "help to establish and nurture critical links between federal decision-makers and scientific professionals to support public policy that benefits the well-being of the nation and the planet."

As the world's largest general science organization, the non-profit AAAS has promoted science "around the world" by advancing the careers of scientists in all areas of research for over 30 years, its Web site states. Publisher of the journal Science and other science-related publications, the AAAS also "undertakes numerous programs and activities that promote science to the public."

Founded in 1848, the main goal of the AAAS has been to increase public understanding of science and technology. Past fellowship winners have worked as reporters, editors, researchers and production assistants.

"I think the University of Oregon should be proud that two of its science students have been selected for this extremely competitive program," Hill of the Oregonian said.

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## IN BRIEF

### Lost caiman crocodile reunited with owner

The stray caiman crocodile found wandering North Eugene last weekend was returned to his owner.

The animal, named Tank, had escaped from his cage. When Lane County Animal Control officers responded to calls of a "small alligator," they found and captured the crocodile on Lindley Lane near Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard together with the Eugene Police Department.

"It's not the first time we've come across an unusual reptile, but it's certainly one of the biggest we've encountered in some time," said LCARA Program Manager Mike Wellington in a press release. "We're just glad, that with the help of the Eugene Police Department, we were able to round him up safely and get him back to his owner."

### Police hold public forum to hear community's input

Tonight the Eugene Police Department's Police Commission will hold the final public forum for community input on its recommendations on the civilian police oversight model.

The public forum is one of the final steps in a nine-month-long investigation by the commission into current policies for handling complaints against police.

Before the plan is submitted to the City Council on July 25, there will be chances for certain stakeholders to offer input. However, this is the last opportunity for input from the general public before the plan is submitted to the City Council.

The current draft of the plan includes a professional auditor and a review board made up of civilians in order to make sure complaints against police are given due attention.

The Commission would like feedback on "the roles and responsibilities of the oversight system, the selection process for establishing the system, and how the oversight bodies interact with and report to city decision-makers," according to an EPD press release.

The meeting will take place at the Hilyard Community Center tonight from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

For more information on the draft oversight model, visit [www.ci.eugene.or.us/policecomm/](http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/policecomm/).

— Gabe Bradley

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