

## UNLV Podcast: Season Finale Part 2

Frank Mueller: To quote the Grateful Dead, "What a long, strange trip it's been." Of course, it's been a pretty great one as well. I'm Frank Mueller, general manager of KUNV at UNLV and a professor of audio journalism. This is part two of a two part episode looking back at the experiences of a handful of very talented students who took you through the first season of UNLV: Different, Daring, Diverse. If you missed part one, make sure to go back and check it out. Now, here's Ben [Damolbot 00:00:35] and Melica Powell discussing how their experience creating this podcast series had an impact on them.

[00:00:30]

Melica Powell: Hi, this is Melica Powell. I'm here with Ben.

Ben: This is Ben [Damolbot].

Melica Powell: We're just going to do a little wrap up of the whole season and reflect on some things that we learned over the podcast season. Ben, why don't you tell me a little bit about how you found out about the podcast, because I know you're not taking Journalism 3 23, so how'd you find out about it?

[00:01:00]

Ben: No, I am not and I wish I had because I wanted to be more involved and I think that was one of the ways to do that. I found out about this podcast through an email actually. He's going to hate me for this. It was an email from one of the professors and so I think I sent him an email back but then he didn't respond because he was out of office. Lacey got the email and responded to me about the meeting that we had for the first day, and so that's how I found out.

[00:01:30]

Melica Powell: Cool, yeah, so happy that you came. I found out about it just from being in the class, but it's so crazy how I almost didn't even take the class. It was just something that I needed for an elective, it's like upper division elective, and then I was thinking about it over the summer and I was like, I don't really like audio. I don't know if I should even take the class. Maybe I should take something else. I'm so happy that I took it and now I'm ... I was just so involved with it and I'm listening a whole bunch of different podcasts now, and podcasts were never a part of my life until now. Now that's like all I listen to when I drive.

[00:02:00]

Ben: That's great to hear. I feel like I'm doing the same thing. I'm listening to more podcasts now than I did before. That's great to hear. You are a journalism student, are you not?

Melica Powell: Yes I am. Are you?

Ben: Well, it's my minor.

Melica Powell: Okay.

[00:02:30]

Ben: Right, and so it fits with both of us that we are part of this podcast.

Melica Powell: What's your major?

Ben: It's communication studies.

Melica Powell: Cool. You're graduating, right?

Ben: Yes.

Melica Powell: What do you want to do with your degree?

Ben: I'm not sure yet. I like a lot of things and this is one of them actually and so this experience helped me gain experience in podcasting, recording radio. That's very much where I want to be one day. How about you?

Melica Powell: [00:03:00] I'm kind of in the same boat. I don't really know what I want to do after I graduate. I'm really interested in fashion though, and I'm really interested in video production, mainly on the internet, like YouTube or Vimeo or video sources like that. I kind of want to mix fashion and that after I graduate at some point. Yeah, that's what I want to do.

Ben: That's great.

Melica Powell: What's the biggest thing that you've learned during this podcast season?

[00:03:30]

Ben: The biggest thing I've learned is just so much about what UNLV is doing. Being a student, you know, you're busy just focusing on your homework and just your classes and not so much about what's going on at UNLV, like as far as student affairs and what programs we have. With this last episode, as I was saying earlier, is one of my favorites because it talks about sustainability and creating a department of sustainability here on campus. I feel that it's an important topic that everyone should learn about and know about and just be responsible about what our actions are, it's doing to the environment. I feel that it's necessary and I feel like UNLV is going the right direction with that.

[00:04:00]

Melica Powell: That's really cool.

Ben: Do you have a favorite episode? You mentioned this one was your favorite as well.

[00:04:30]

Melica Powell: Yes, the sustainability episode was definitely my favorite because I got to interview two people from the sustainability council and it was like a total conversation. I feel like my first interviews were very by paper, I'm just looking at the paper and asking the question and I didn't really know how to make that conversation flow. With that, I felt a little more relaxed and so did the people I was interviewing, so it just flowed together really nicely. I learned a lot about what they're doing and how we as students can be more responsible for our impact on the environment. It was just all around really awesome and I'm so glad that they came in and talked to us.

[00:05:00]

Ben: Right, you know, I listen to you in the interviews that you do. You ask a lot of articulated questions and so I just want to know, when you do your interviews you select the topics from, is it a list that was assigned to you or just the things that you want to discuss in the podcast?

[00:05:30]

Melica Powell: It's a little bit of both. The episodes this season, they had basically a topic that we were going for, but then most of the topics were open. The episode would be about healthcare, for example, so me and my partner interviewed a doctor here on campus, Dr. Kinney, and he's doing a lot of research with Alzheimer's and other mental disorders like that. We got to do that on our own. We weren't told, "It has to be about mental health." We did that on our own. Yeah, you could just kind of take it and run with it. That was a really awesome episode that I liked too, because he talked about CTE, which is this disease that's coming out that a lot of football players and boxers get, so I'm happy that I got to hear from an actual professional that it's a real thing and it's happening and it's not just something that people are making documentaries about. It's a real thing that's being studied in the medical community.

[00:06:00]

Ben: That's great. Do you feel like you do learn along the way when you're doing [crosstalk 00:06:25].

Melica Powell: [00:06:30] Yeah definitely. It's nice to have a balance between students and professionals, which, we definitely had that balance. You want to have the professional people on to sort of dive deep into the topic and they could share what they know and that's amazing too, but students have a lot to offer too. With the sustainability council, one is a graduate but the other two are just students and they're majoring in totally different things that aren't even related to environmental studies, but it's cool to see what they're learning along the way and the impact that they have on the community. What was the biggest challenge for you during this season?

[00:07:00] Ben: I can't say. I do know that I enjoyed the whole process from beginning to end, working with you and the other hosts. It's just been a joy. I know that this is beneficial to me in the future and so this experience, it gave me the opportunity to be involved in the community and then that's what I like to do, is being part of something that matters. Just like what the sustainability council is doing. I feel like I'm a part of something that's important as well.

Melica Powell: Awesome.

Ben: Did you have any struggles with this podcast over the series?

Melica Powell: [00:08:00] Yeah, I had a few challenges, but I like being challenged because I feel like you can't grow as a person unless you're challenged. You don't learn anything when you don't step out of your comfort zone. I would say the biggest challenge episode for me was, me and my partner did a segment on the businesses surrounding campus and how they were affected by the debate. I remember during the day of the debate I was at my boyfriend's apartment and then I was driving home because I had to go to work, and the whole street was closed off. All of Maryland Parkway was closed off. There were cops at every single intersection, every street that can get onto Maryland Parkway, and I was just waiting in my car for a really long time until they said we could go. I was like, "Wow, this is like a serious thing happening." I just thought about the businesses around campus and I wondered if that affected them at all. [00:08:30] I got my recorder and I basically just went business to business.

[00:09:00] There were just a lot of them that were just like, "Oh, you're a journalist, don't talk to me," kind of thing, like, "Get out of here." A lot of them too were very receptive to it and they recognized, "Oh that's awesome, we can get our name out there, we can share part of our story and how we were affected that day by the debate." That was nice. It was a little challenging going business to business and I felt like a sales person, and you're getting the slammed on your face at some point, but at the same time, I like stepping outside of my comfort zone. Even if I'm talking to someone that doesn't want to talk to me, that's just going to prepare me for the real world when I'm trying to interview someone that just has no interest in talking to me, and how can I get them to have interest in what I'm talking about, and how can I get them to be comfortable around me.

Ben: Right, so this experience definitely does give you practice in what you want to do.

Melica Powell: Yeah, definitely.

[00:09:30]  
Ben: You mentioned how feeling what journalists feel when they do interviews and such. What have you overcome by doing that, as far as trying to talk to people and just pursuing what it is that you want to get out of them?

Melica Powell:  
[00:10:00] I guess it's all about the approach sometimes. Sometimes I feel like it's best when you're talking to someone to just go up to them and just have your spiel of like, "Hi, I'm a student journalist, I'm doing a story on so and so, and whatever." Sometimes they're not even listening in the first place, they want to shut you down right then and there, so maybe it's best to go in and just say, "Hi, how are you doing?" Then they're like, "Hi." The walls start to come down, they start to get a little more comfortable, and then you can say, "I'm a journalist. I'm doing this story." They're like, "Oh yeah, sure, I'd love to talk to you." I guess it's just like seeing how they are in the first place. Do they look busy? Do they look like they're just by themselves? It's all about the approach, I feel, and I wouldn't have learned that if I wasn't doing that over and over again with these businesses. Yeah, how was your time at UNLV? How were the classes that you took?

[00:10:30]

Ben: I'm a transfer student, so this is my third semester at UNLV, so  
[00:11:00] graduating in spring. It's been an awesome experience. This is, I think,  
my first physical university that I've attended the longest. Before this I  
was an online student and so with that online experience I didn't really  
experience what I have here at UNLV, which is very much different as  
[00:11:30] far as what you get out of, not just from the education but from your  
interactions with other people. You can't really substitute that by being  
online and it's a different way of communication, just your  
relationships also, the way you build relationships. I feel that I am part  
of this community now and it's refreshing because I haven't felt that  
way in a long time. Did you start here at UNLV?

[00:12:00]  
Melica Powell: Yeah, I've gone here all ... This is my fifth year, so all five years.

Ben: Oh wow.

Melica Powell: Yeah, I've gone here since the beginning. I joined a sorority when I first  
got on campus and that took up a lot of my time and it was a really  
awesome experience and I'm glad I did it. This is the first year that I'm  
not in the sorority, I'm an alumni member now, so I'm really happy I did  
the podcast because it's a good way to use my time and it's a good  
resume builder.

Ben: Did you say you're from Las Vegas?

Melica Powell: Yeah, I'm from Las Vegas.

[00:12:30]  
Ben: Were you considering other schools before Las Vegas, or this was your  
final ...?

Melica Powell: College was kind of a last minute thing for me. I didn't think I was going  
to go to college, but then I graduated high school and then I was like,  
"I'm really not going to go to college? Like, of course I'm going to go to  
college." I applied here and CSN, but I didn't really want to go to CSN, I  
wanted to go here. I got in kind of right before school started. Yeah,  
[00:13:00] that was my experience with it. As an online student, what was that  
like? You took all your classes online?

Ben: Yes, everything was online. We still maintain a schedule with meeting with the professor or the instructor and with other students as well. It was like a chat room, when there is lecture, and then we have a discussion post that we have to do. Much like what we do here at UNLV for online classes, but sort of different. That, to me, my last term there made me realize that I need something more than that, if I want to succeed and if I want to pursue the things that I want to pursue, I would have to venture out and eventually transfer to a local college.

[00:13:30]

Initially, when I decided to go online, was because I was moving from place to place. When I finally moved to Las Vegas is when I've decided to just, "You know what, why don't I try UNLV?" I'm glad I did because I'm enjoying my time here and I feel like I've accomplished a lot while being a student here even for the time that I've started up to now. Aside from this podcast, are you in an internship, or what experience are you doing before you graduate? When do you graduate, by the way?

[00:14:00]

[00:14:30]

Melica Powell: In the spring.

Ben: Oh, you are? Okay.

Melica Powell: Yeah, finally.

Ben: All right. Are you in an internship or what are you adding to your experience aside from this podcast?

Melica Powell: I'm actually doing an internship next semester, but for this semester to prepare me for the internship I took an advanced video editing course which is something that I'm interested in, and I learned a ton in that class. It was taught by Steven Bixby, he's a wonderful professor, he's so amazing. I learned a lot from him. It was really cool because I took the introductory course over the summer and it was nice, it was a summer class so I wasn't super excited about it, but I learned a lot too. I learned how to use the camera and the basics of video editing, but at the same time it was kind of like you did the work so you got an A.

[00:15:00]

In this class with the professor, he really graded you harshly, which is a good thing, because then you can see really what you're doing wrong and how you can hone your skills. I really appreciate that in a professor and I'm glad that he's like that. He said that he's going to try to do a class on Adobe after effects, which is another layer to video editing. I really hope that he can do that because he's so talented and amazing.

[00:15:30]

Ben: Great.

Melica Powell: I'm hoping that would be in the future of UNLV. Sad that I probably won't be able to take it, but other students will be and that will be amazing, that will just be another thing to add on to UNLV's progress.  
[00:16:00]

Ben: Right, what other classes do you find that are related, of course, with your major and what you want to pursue in the future, what other classes do you think, or which ones are your favorites as far as what you can take from that class and apply with your future career?

[00:16:30]

Melica Powell: Yeah, definitely the video editing class. I'm going to take this class next semester, it's called Studio G, and it's a five day a week, student run show essentially. I'm really excited, that's going to be really challenging, but I'm excited.

Ben: I think I've heard about this. Is this downtown? Or is it something different?

Melica Powell: I'm sure they were filming all over the place. You have to come up with content for a weekly show every single week, so I'm sure it branches all over the place. No, it's here in this college and it's taught by the department head, Gary Larson. Yeah, I'm really excited to take that and it's going to be challenging but ...  
[00:17:00]

Ben: I'm excited for you.

Melica Powell: Yeah, I'm really excited. I took this class this semester called Research Methods with Julian Kilker. Basically that class is just about when you're a journalist, how are you going to convey statistics, what do those statistics mean? You know, you see a lot of news stories where the graph will look like it matches the story and it's conveying what the story wants it to convey, but it's being completely truthful, so just, how you as a journalist can be truthful as much as possible, how do you know what your statistics mean. You know what I mean?  
[00:17:30]

Ben: Right.

Melica Powell: Things like that. That was a really informative class too. I'm really glad I took it.

Ben: It's great that you mentioned that, because I am taking that class in the spring.

Melica Powell: Oh awesome, so yeah, you know. Oh, cool.

[00:18:00]

Ben: I've taken another of Kilker's class, which is Photo Journalism. Did you take that one?

Melica Powell: No, I really wanted to take that class. I just never got the opportunity to. Yeah, he's an amazing professor. How was Photo Journalism?

Ben: That was really fun for me because I'm a photographer outside of school and outside of what I do at the bank. It definitely taught me a lot more about photography and just different styles. He's a great instructor. I can't wait to be in his class again.

[00:18:30]

Melica Powell: He's really amazing. What do you like to photograph?

Ben: It changes. Depends on where I am, I guess. I do enjoy taking photos of people and animals and nature. I like to do portraits. Just especially in nature where the natural sunlight is reflected. Yeah.

[00:19:00]

Melica Powell: Do you have a blog or something?

Ben: You know, I did create a blog, but it hasn't been updated yet in a while.

Melica Powell: Okay, well that's cool. Maybe over winter break you could ...

Ben: Exactly. Whenever I find time I think I will go ahead and do some things and even maybe create a podcast too. Have you thought about creating your own or maybe doing a blog and a podcast because of this experience?

Melica Powell: Yeah, definitely.

Ben: Yeah?

[00:19:30]

Melica Powell: Yeah, I'm really interested in either doing that or starting a YouTube channel, blogging about whatever. Yeah, something like that.

Ben: I've seen a lot of that lately, especially on YouTube, you incorporate different platforms which is really nice, it gets you out there and we're networking with other people as well. Definitely do that.

Melica Powell: [00:20:00] Yeah, I think that the internet needs more good content. If you're interested in photography and you take awesome picture you should definitely share them with people because the internet needs that, I feel like.

Ben: [00:20:30] Right, thank you. With your interests as well, like fashion, I feel as though it's somehow it's saturated in just, when you see it the same way people do it over and over again and I feel like we need people like you with fresh ideas and just a different way of delivering what's trending or what do you think is news in fashion as far as if you want to do your podcast or your blog. I feel that students in college have a fresh take on that. Do you feel the same way?

Melica Powell: [00:21:00] Yeah, absolutely, we definitely have a bright eye looking at things. If you wanted to have your own podcast, what kind of topics would you cover?

Ben: [00:21:30] [00:22:00] Great question. A bunch of things. I feel like it's important to talk about a variety of things, especially if it impacts you and others and in your community. We have to continue discussion outside of what we hear from the news because a lot of people believe what they hear face value, and really I don't know if they have time or they just don't have the patience to research on their own. I feel like the news media is contributing to that by not telling honest news. With podcasting I feel that it's a way to deliver honest news to people that are looking for the answers that they need or questions that they may have. How do you feel about that?

Melica Powell: [00:22:30] Yeah, I think that's great. I think it's hard to pick one topic that you would want to center on, because there's so many that would be so interesting to cover. Yeah, I mean, it's funny because when you're on the internet you kind of want to have one thing that you focus on so that you can draw in a fan base off of one thing and then branch off of that topic. Yeah, how do you pick one thing? There's so many things that you want to cover.

Ben: Yeah.

Melica Powell: I guess if I had my own show I'd be the same way. I'd want to cover a whole bunch of things. I'm very interested in feminism. I'd love to talk to some professors on campus about that and the research that they're doing. I'm very interested in sustainability.

Ben: [00:23:00] Interesting. I wonder have you heard of the ... Speaking of feminism, I came across a ... well, it was a lecture by one of the grad students here at UNLV. She researched intersections about feminism and just different movements. With that she introduced eco-sexualism to UNLV a couple of years ago. Did you hear about that at all?

Melica Powell: No, I didn't.

[00:23:30]

Ben: Okay. I think one of the professors here, I think she's still here, I think teaches that in one of her classes.

Melica Powell: That's awesome.

Ben: Which is great, because I feel that UNLV is definitely inclusive of everything that students and faculty are interested in. I feel like UNLV is a great environment for that.

Melica Powell: If UNLV were to have another season of the podcast, what would you like to see on it?

[00:24:00]

Ben: I would like to find out more about what the students' input are as far as what's going on on campus and just different perspectives. I feel like we need to incorporate students' opinion so that they have a voice, which we do, but I think we just need a little bit more maybe.

[00:24:30]

Melica Powell: Yeah, I would agree with that. Looking back on the segments that I did, I either would interview a student or I would interview a professional professor on campus or whatever, someone that has a voice in the field that they study, but I kind of wish I would have done both. That would have given nice perspective to each topic that I covered. Maybe start out with the professor or the professional in the industry and then get a student's voice on that. Maybe even just opening up my pool of students. I could just post on a UNLV page, "Hey, I'm doing this segment on whatever. If you're interested in being interviewed, let me know." You know, you can meet more people, you can give students an opportunity for their voice to be heard in that aspect. I think that would be something that the new students that work on the podcast could implement.

[00:25:00]

Ben:  
[00:25:30] I feel this, because we are starting or pioneering this podcast, I do hope that it grows to something that it will attract more listeners and just be involved with the campus and just what's going on in the community, even just get ideas from them, actually, from how we connect with them through social media or by holding maybe a show out in the field somewhere on campus, right? I think that's a good idea. It doesn't have to be in a controlled environment. I think that would be fun too.

Melica Powell:  
[00:26:30] Yeah, absolutely. I would have never had the opportunity to do this, but since it was happening I really wish I could have made it out to North Dakota when they were processing the pipeline, and brought my camera and some recording equipment or something. Of course, I was in school so I can't just leave everything in the middle of the semester to do that, but I really want to start doing more things like that. I want to go where the action's happening with whatever camera I can carry or whichever, and audio equipment, and just find out what's happening from the people, from both sides, from the authority side, the people side.

Ben: Do you think that more students are like you, prepared to do that, if this podcast were to continue on?

Melica Powell:  
[00:27:00] Yeah, I think that a lot of students are interested in that. We had a lot of rallies going on for the election when it was happening, a lot of election related gatherings in the community, and there were a lot of students that I saw in my classes that went to them and got to talk with those people and record it. It's really nice because especially people in areas like that, they want their voice to be heard, they're very interested in talking to you if you're a journalist and they have a lot to say.

Ben:  
[00:27:30] I feel the same way. The students here at UNLV are very opinionated and it would be great to capture that and be part of the podcast in future episodes.

Melica Powell:  
[00:28:00] Yeah, I see it online all the time too, people that just, they're doing whatever it is they're doing, they're travelling, they're starting a business, and they're documenting the whole thing. In a way, that is journalism in itself. They're telling their own story from their perspective. It's really awesome just to see there are so many people doing so many cool things and they have the opportunity to record it now. It is important. You don't have to go through a TV station anymore to get your story heard, you could just make it yourself and build your own audience around it. It's really cool what's happening in our culture now. I see that a lot in UNLV students. They want to be there when it's happening and they want everyone to have an equal voice.

Ben: [00:28:30] Right, and that's definitely what this generation is doing. I wish that we move forward and do that as a community. Okay, so since we're both graduating in the spring, what's next for you, Melica?

Melica Powell: [00:29:00] I really want to move out to LA because I want to pursue fashion, that's kind of where the industry is. I'd be interested in New York too, but I don't know, because it's really cold there and I hate the cold. No, I'd be really interested in moving out to LA. I think after I graduate I'm just going to stay here for a little while and save up my money and just hone my skills as much as I can, and then when I have the opportunity then I'd like to move and pursue other adventures out there. What about you?

Ben: [00:29:30] [00:30:00] I have a similar plan. I think it's smart to do a little saving money before you head out there and just to be prepared. Going out and just winging it, it's not the way it was before. We have to be responsible and with that you do have to gain more experience and that's what I intend to do. As far as what I would like to ... My ideal career would be to definitely work in radio or maybe a publication or some type of editorial, stuff like that. I did think about New York but definitely it's going to be a long time before I get there.

Melica Powell: Right, exactly.

Ben: You need to save a lot of money for that.

Melica Powell: [00:30:30] Yeah, of course. I just feel like that's where the industry is for a lot of things, in New York or LA, like if you wanted to pursue tech you should go to Silicone Valley. You could do anything from anywhere, but I think just being there, you're going to meet so many awesome people, you're going to make so many connections and you're going to learn a lot and you're going to be there while it's happening. I feel like in Vegas we were a ton of things with entertainment, but things when it comes to fashion or tech we just get that ripple effect from the coast of what's happening, so being there when it's actually happening and you get to be there for all the awesome events that are happening, it'll be really awesome.

[00:31:00] Ben: Right, well, I wish you luck and congratulations to us, we're almost done.

Melica Powell: Yeah, I know, it's so exciting. I guess, just one more question, what do you hope for the future of UNLV? What would you like to see being implemented on UNLV this time next year?

Ben: [00:31:30] At this time next year I would like UNLV to continue giving students opportunities to express themselves and just give them, just like this podcast, this was a great opportunity for us to practice what we aspire to be in the future and I hope that UNLV will think of other ways in different departments and continue to be involved with current events.  
[00:32:00] I was blown away when the debate was here and I hope that UNLV will continue to go on that path where it wants to be as far as, what is that tier that they're ...?

Melica Powell: Top Tier.

Ben: Top Tier. With the new schools that they're building, the School of Hotel, and is it the medicine ...?

Melica Powell: Yeah, we're going to get a School of Medicine, which is so exciting.

Ben: [00:32:30] School of Medicine, which is really exciting. There's a lot of changes and I don't know what to expect but UNLV's definitely on the right path. What do you hope for UNLV to do more of or expect to do?

Melica Powell: [00:33:00] I guess I have a similar answer to you, just more things for students, more resources, more professors. We have such an awesome journalism department, I've just been blown away, my whole experience at UNLV, it's really amazing, I've learned so much. I guess I'd just like to see even more classes being implemented, especially more modern classes to fit with what's happening in our culture. We have a social media class now, which is awesome. I'd like to see more branches off of that going on. I'd really like to see my professor, Steven Bixby, have his after effects course, that would be so awesome. Just because it's like, we teach a lot about how to make a news story and how to film it, which is awesome, but I think you should also have to know how to make an online video for the company you're working for or how to make a jingle or whatever on your own. I think that's really important, so having more courses along the lines of that would be really beneficial to journalism students and any student that wants to take a class like that. I guess, just more and more.  
[00:33:30]

Ben: I agree.

Frank Mueller:  
[00:34:00]

Thank you for listening to our first season of UNLV: Different, Daring, Diverse. We have a whole season of episodes, so make sure you go back and listen to them all. If you like what you're hearing, let us know by subscribing on iTunes, Google Play, or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. This is Frank Mueller. I've been your host for this final episode of season one of UNLV: Different, Daring, Diverse. I want to say thanks so much to the good folks at Swell Story Media for helping make this possible, as well as to the administration here at UNLV. Thanks to you for listening to our first season of UNLV: Different, Daring, Diverse.

[00:34:30]