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2012 EDUCATION AND GAMING SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
Video Game Industry Insiders Share Variety of Education and Experiences

On May 4, 2012, speakers from the game industry will bring their varied educational and industry backgrounds to CSU Bakersfield, to talk about the future of games and education.

James Portnow received his masters from Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center, went on to work for Activision as a designer on the Call of Duty series before raising funds to start his own company, Divide by Zero Games. Recently he's opened Rainmaker Games, a design and narrative consulting firm that has worked with partners from Warner Bros. to Zynga.

James Portnow has written for every major trade publication including Gamasutra, The Escapist, Edge &c. He is currently the writer on the hit consumer facing series about game design: Extra Credits. He is known for his theories on socially positive design and has been asked to speak at universities and companies around the world. He is the co-author of a book on Invented Languages being published by Oxford University Press to be released this fall.

James Portnow also holds a professorship at Digipen Institute of Technology where he teaches masters level game production and undergraduate level game design.

Leslie Redd is the Director of Educational Programs at Valve Corporation, an entertainment software and technology company based in Bellevue, Washington. In addition to producing bestselling entertainment titles such as Half Life, Team Fortress 2, and Portal 2, Valve is a developer of leading-edge technologies, such as Steam, a broadband platform that delivers and manages digital content for 40 million accounts.

Leslie is spearheading Valve's foray into education. Previously, Leslie was a senior administrator at an independent school in Seattle. She also directed efforts in public policy and management at the University of Washington and in institutional advancement at the Smithsonian Institution. Leslie received a BA in government from Cornell University and an MPA from New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service where she also was an adjunct faculty member.

Geoffrey “GZ” Zatkan is President and COO of EEDAR, the premier research and business-intelligence company of the video game industry. Co-founding the company in 2006, Mr. Zatkan directs development of EEDAR’s product and service infrastructure.

In addition to his work with EEDAR, Mr. Zatkan has over a decade's worth of video game industry experience, having performed in senior design roles for international corporate conglomerates and independent development studios. Geoffrey was an integral part of the original EverQuest design team and helped pioneer the rise of MMO games.

Geoffrey has a background in psychology, video games and pop culture, and lives in San Diego with his wife and two cats.

Christine “CCB” Cruz-Boone has been a faculty member in the Department of Communications at California State University, Bakersfield for the last six years. She primarily teaches the general education Public Speaking courses, and finds ways to incorporate media topics such as Diablo III and Buffy the Vampire Slayer into her lectures.

In the Winter of 2011, she taught an elective course at CSUB entitled “Introduction to Video Game Studies.” The class took a broad approach to Ludology and the cultural implications of games. In the last six years, “CCB” has embraced her inner geek as a way to enrich her courses. Her general education students can attest that she is known for quirky class content. For example, she sends her students on quests, and one of the options for her term paper is to investigate interpersonal theory in MMORPG’s.

“CCB” is the faculty advisor and a major supporter for the Campus Gamers student organization at CSUB. She has just recently been accepted into the Doctoral Program for Educational Leadership at California State University, Fresno. She currently resides in Bakersfield with her husband and lifelong gaming companion John, and their two children, Inara and Nathan.

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For more information about this event or the Campus Gamers student organization, or to schedule an interview, please call club founder Ed Webb at 661/301-1857 or email Ed at mredwebb@gmail.com