

AUBURN, Ala- On a brisk September morning, the Melton Student Center filled with vibrant students, eagerly anticipating the beginning of Auburn University's bi-annual "J Day."

The event spanned from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 26, and included lectures and seminars from Auburn alumni and industry professionals. The dynamic event allowed students to learn, connect and network with experienced journalist professionals.

Particularly busy for a normal Tuesday, the student center held many students visiting to hear from the J Day speakers. With coffees in hand, students entered the prospective classroom on the second floor, anticipating their opportunity to hear from the keynote speaker, C.J. Holmes the morning of J Day.

As a CMJN, School of Communication and Journalism, alumni, and former Auburn basketball player, Holmes vested interest in a wide range of students. He currently reports on the Golden State Warriors for The San Francisco Chronicle and was one of the many experienced guests throughout the day, drawing in interested students with an incentive to visit the student center, aside from grabbing lunch at Chick-fil-A.

The J Day event included distinct panels, allowing students to find something they found interest in amongst the number of speakers throughout the day. These panels included: "Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Women in Journalism," "Making a Good Impression: What Are News Managers Looking For?," "Why Local, Local, Local, More Than Ever," "Old Dogs, New Tricks: Web Metrics, Social Media, and Building New Audiences in Newsrooms," "Fiber and Football: Ins and outs of producing Jordan-Hare Stadium videoboard shows" and "Home Team Coverage: Developing the Sports Information/Beat Reporter Relationship." The day ended at 2 p.m. and the guests were invited to meet with student media organizations.

One panel that garnered special interest amongst media studies students was the Fiber and Football panel which featured Jake Maze and Kevin Roberts. Maze is the director of videoboard production for War Eagle Productions and Roberts is the assistant director of creative video for War Eagle Productions, or in his words, "works behind the scenes."

The two answered several questions about their profession and took students through the process of a typical gameday, highlighting everything that goes into its production. They play an important role in creating an enthusiastic community amongst students and fans at the stadium. Therefore, it requires they utilize their creativity when constructing new ideas such as the "facemask singer." When asked how they came up with this idea, Leach stated, "The best ideas come from random moments."

Their passion for production was evident in each thoughtful response they produced. Maze stated, "It's production, it's a show, we are trying to build an environment."

Leach added, "Broadcasting and video boarding is really important for staff, it's give and take, you want to make Auburn look the best while staying neutral with the broadcast." The two

recounted stories and offered insightful advice that highlighted the purpose of J Day. They inspired students and provided them with a valuable learning experience.

When asked about her J Day experience, Public Relations student, Sumerlyn Yudell, said “I attended the Fiber and Football panel. Every time I go to an Auburn Football game, I will remember all the work that goes into the videoboard production!”

Communications student, Rachel Coval, who attended the 11 a.m. “Why Local, Local, Local More Than Ever” panel stated, “I got to hear from aspiring journalists and people who already work in the field. There was a lot of diversity in the panelists and inspiring people to learn from.”