USU Public Relations Professor at FanX | Journalism

02/20/2015

Debra Jenson impressed the attendees of ComicCon FanX where she presented on five panels. Jenson is an assistant professor at Utah State University in the JCOM department and loves all things Harry Potter. This week we spoke with her about FanX to get a better understanding of ComicCon and how it ties in so much more than dressing up as your favorite fictional character.

Q: Can you give me a brief description of your involvement at Comic Con?

A: "I participated in Salt Lake City ComicCon FanX from January 29-31. I was on five panels, three fan-based and two related to my academic interests."

Q: What panels did you participate in?

A: "The names of the panels were:

1. "Am I a Good Man?" Answering the 12th Doctor’s Question. This was a fan-based panel about the latest season of Doctor Who.

2. Secondary Character: Why Harry Needed Ron and Hermione. Every Time. This was a fan-based panel about the supporting characters in the Harry Potter universe.

3. Heroes, Anti-Heroes and Villains in Harry Potter: Do We Even Know Who's Who? Another fan-based panel about who is bad and who is good and if there is even a difference.

4. The Bechdel Test. This panel was an academic experience that discussed the representation of women in popular culture, specifically in geek media. It was very exciting to have Felicia Day participate in this panel - she is an actress and gamer who has appeared in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Supernatural, and Dr. Horrible’s Sing Along. We discussed comic books and games briefly, but focused largely on movies and film and the importance of women's roles in front of and behind the camera. We also addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the Bechdel Test.

5. Disabilities in Popular Culture. This panel was also tied to my academic research and professional experience with Special Olympics Utah. We discussed the ways various media are including people with disabilities. There were seven panelists, including Richard Paul Evans and R.J. Mitte (Walter Jr. from Breaking Bad)."

Q: What was your favorite part of Comic Con?

A: "My favorite part was twofold: One, I loved talking about my academic work at USU and how it applies in the real world.... well, in the geek world. It was great to have audiences in the panels cheer when I mentioned USU in my bio. And it was great even more fun to see people connect the dots from my research to their real life. And two, I met some amazing people. Yes, I met celebrities, but I also met the coolest girl named Emily. She is 12 and she shared a theory about Harry Potter that blew my mind - and I have read those books five times. I cannot stop gushing about how cool she was!"

Follow us on instagram and twitter at @usujcom

Visit our Facebook page USU Journalism and Communication Alumni & Friends

Figure 1.1: Deb got to serve on the Disabilities in Popular Culture panel with R.J. Mitte from Breaking Bad!
Figure 1: Deb taking a selfie while on the Harry Potter panel

Figure 2: Deb with Felicia Day - actress and gamer - who participated on The Bechdel Test panel