

LIBERAL STUDIES GRAD BEATS CANCER TWICE



Photo courtesy of: Camille Chabot

Two weeks before her sophomore year began, liberal studies student Camille Chabot ('17) was diagnosed with Stage IV Hodgkin's lymphoma. She was 19.

Surgery, a dozen chemotherapy sessions, a relapse and a bone marrow transplant followed. Through it all, she remained determined to graduate on time in June 2017.

"It was always my goal to finish with the people that I started with," Chabot said.

Family, friends, neighbors and a growing group of supporters created T-shirts that evolved into #CamilleStrong, a viral crusade to share Chabot's story, advocate for those with childhood cancer and raise money to help female teens facing infertility due to cancer to harvest their eggs.

"President Obama wore my shirt," she said. "We just had this cool, awesome support group all over Facebook. It was a great community, and they were my motivators."

Chabot continued with online classes — even working on a laptop during chemo sessions. She missed three quarters in the classroom but remained on track academically with the help of professors and advisors.

"My advisor, Dr. Lola Berber-Jiménez, and professors were very helpful and communicative. I would not have graduated on time if it were not for them," she said.

Chabot completed her French minor in Paris over the summer and is pursuing her multiple-subject credential at Cal Poly. //



Photo credit: Rick Morgan

BIO MAJOR EARNS TWO ALL-AMERICA HONORS

Biological Sciences major Peyton Bilo was one of only 21 women across Division I to be an All-American in both cross country and track for 2016-17.

Her cross country season included the Big West title and a 23rd place finish at the NCAA Cross Country Championships. In the spring, Bilo took 10th place in the 5,000 meters at the NCAA Track Championships to earn her second All-America honor.

Memorably, she qualified for the national track finals by running a dozen laps with only one shoe after being de-heeled along her right foot early in the semifinals race.

Bilo earned All-Academic honors from the Big West and is a four-time Scholar-Athlete honoree from the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. //

STUDENTS PLACE FIRST AND SECOND AT CSU STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION



Biology senior John Stepanek took home first place in the undergraduate Biological and Agricultural Sciences category at the 31st annual California State University Student Research Competition. David Bilger, a chemistry student, and Laura Fleischman, a physics student, placed second in their categories.

Stepanek worked with faculty advisor Emily Taylor on a first-of-its-kind study of the effects of elevated corticosterone, a stress hormone, on color in Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes, which are common on the Central Coast.

"Our results indicated that natural environmental stressors such as drought, climate change or predation might trigger increased contrast to help rattlesnakes camouflage and avoid detection," Stepanek said.

Bilger worked with Professor Shanju Zhang and focused on printable solar cells, and Fleischman investigated black holes with Professor Scott Fraser. //

Photo Credit: Jay Thompson