

The Relay

A publication for PR students

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PRSSA hosts résumé workshop

By Jennifer Brown

Bobbi Kingery, career adviser for EIU career services, was the key speaker for a PRSSA workshop, which prepared students for fine-tuning their résumés and business cards.

“Employers expect your résumé to be targeted towards them,” Kingery said. “If they see fluff, they may stop reading.”

Résumés should be written where they appear to serve a need to the organization, and only relevant job experience should be placed on the résumé, Kingery said.

Tara Rosenbaum, president of PRSSA, said the committee decided to have the workshop because many of the members were unsure of what makes a good résumé.

“Your résumé is an important factor in the job search and you need to know how to write one,” Rosenbaum said.

Rosenbaum said there had been other résumé workshops for PRSSA in the past, but the committee wanted to combine business cards because there are not as many rules.

“We wanted to get the creative juices flowing,” Rosenbaum said.

Tim Trahey, senior communications major, attended the workshop to make sure it’s the



Career Advisor Bobbi Kingery, left, and Senior Communication Studies Major Cara Fumagalli at PRSSA’s business card and résumé workshop on March 8.

Photo courtesy of Tara Rosenbaum

best it can be.

“Bobbi is an excellent source of information on résumés and it would have been a poor decision to miss such an opportunity,” Trahey said.

Kingery said corporations look for buzz words on résumés in order for the résumés to be considered for the job.

“Hit the organization’s website and look at the job description,” Kingery said. “Match

key words such as Twitter and Photoshop.”

Kingery also mentioned organizations scan résumés for leadership experience.

These are campus organizations such as Greek fraternities or sororities where the student is active in volunteer roles.

“Second languages are huge,” Kingery said.

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Students get glimpse of Chicago PR

By Merritt Whitley

Ten EIU PR students attended DePaul University's PRSSA regional activity, Transforming Traditional Into Digital: The New Ways of PR, Feb. 10-11, in Chicago.

The conference focused on the electronic media age and how to use social media tools to communicate.

It also helped to prepare students for future careers by teaching them what to expect at a job and different ways to be successful in the workplace.

The students who attended said they had the opportunity to gain insight on current trends, learn tips on how to get a job, network with professionals and get a glimpse of the Chicago PR industry.

Anton Jefferson, senior communication studies major, said that he learned a lot of new trade tips for future jobs.

"I learned tips on how to be a better writer, how to get a job and how to present yourself professionally," Jefferson said. "Specifically, I learned how to write for the Internet and how to keep readers attention."

On the first day of the conference, attendees visited different Chicago PR agencies.

Tara Rosenbaum, senior communication studies major and PRSSA president, said she really enjoyed her agency visit.

"It was very exciting to see agency life and job shadow," Rosenbaum said. "I have a better idea about what to expect working for an agency."

The conference also

provided students with the opportunity to attend different informational seminars led by PR professionals.

Jefferson said his favorite seminar was led by Chris Barr, senior editorial director at Yahoo!

"Barr gave a lot of tips on how to write for the Internet," Jefferson said.

Rosenbaum said she also learned a lot of useful information from Barr.

"One of the big things I took away was learning how to tailor your writing in order to get clients out onto the Internet better," Rosenbaum said.

On the last day of the conference, students were able to attend a career fair.

Representatives from several different Chicago

companies provided students with information on available internships and jobs.

Cara Fumagalli, senior communication studies major and PRSSA programs chair, said the job fair was a great opportunity.

"It was beneficial to talk with PR professionals from different agencies," Fumagalli said. "I learned about the different roles that public relations plays in an agency versus a company"

Fumagalli said if given the opportunity to go to the conference again, she would.

"Regional activities are great for networking with students and professionals," Fumagalli said. "I would recommend them to any student looking to get involved with public relations."

PRSSA hosts its second Tweetshop

By Jessie Dwiggins

In the new age of digital media, PR practitioners must know and understand how to use social media tools to communicate.

The Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA held its second Tweetshop to help students learn more about the growing social media tool on March 1.

PRSSA Chapter President, Tara Rosenbaum, led the Tweetshop. Rosenbaum gave students several Twitter tips and tricks.

She also spoke about how to expand your Twitter presence, using Twitter chats and the meaning and use behind hashtags.

Cara Fumagalli, senior communication studies major, said she learned how to properly function the various tools

of Twitter. "The Tweetshop helped me understand how to use TweetDeck and manage Twitter to the full extent," Fumagalli said. "All of the information was so helpful and I got to participate in my first Twitter Chat."

This is the second Tweetshop hosted by PRSSA. Rosenbaum said the first workshop received a lot of positive feedback. "I thought doing a second Tweetshop would be very beneficial in explaining additional details about the ins and outs of Twitter," Rosenbaum said.

Allison Trinkleback, senior communication studies major, was very involved in both of the Tweetshops.

"Attending the second Tweetshop only allowed me to learn more about Twitter and how to reach out to other people," Trinkleback said. "Partic-

ipating in a Twitter Chat gave me some great tips and insights into public relations."

Rosenbaum said PRSSA helps students with their social media presence and with their physical presence through different professional development workshops.

"Our mission is to serve our members by enhancing their knowledge of public relations," Rosenbaum said. "We provide access to professional development opportunities that help members gain practical skills to use in their future careers."



PRSSA held its second Tweetshop to help students learn more about how to use Twitter on March 1. Photo courtesy of Google

PR pro addresses agency vs. nonprofit

By Tara Rosenbaum

PRSSA members learned about the different areas of PR during a Skype session with PR professional Erica Stimac.

Stimac has held multiple PR jobs, all in different areas of the industry. In the past, Stimac worked as an account director at Chicago's The Experiential Agency, a publicist at Henson Consulting Inc., an in-house publicist for The Osbrink Agency and an executive assistant to the VP of marketing and corporate communications at SBE Entertainment Group, in LA.

Stimac currently works in Chicago as the developmental coordinator for Common Threads, a nonprofit organization that teaches low-income children how to cook nutritious and affordable food.

Stimac gave advice to PRSSA members on the difference between working as a publicist, in an agency and for a nonprofit organization.

"PR in LA and Chicago is vastly different," Stimac said. "Working in LA is more entertainment focused PR with local and national contacts. Chicago is more consumer and corporate PR based with mainly local contacts."

When trying to create a relationship with journalists, Sti-



PRSSA members listen attentively to Erica Stimac during a Skype session Feb. 21. Stimac shared her experiences and offered students advice about public relations in an agency and a nonprofit organization.

mac said to research them and make sure they cover what you want covered.

"After that, invite them to have a drink, lunch or to an event a client is hosting to create a personal relationship," Stimac said.

Stimac said her favorite part of working for a nonprofit organization is being able to make a difference and see the results right away.

"I get to see the impact of my work at Common Threads every day," Stimac said. "When working for an agency it sometimes takes longer to see the

impact you have." Stimac said one of the benefits of working for an agency was that it helped her hone her media relations and pitching skills.

Cara Fumagalli, senior communication studies major and PRSSA programs chair, said she worked with Stimac during her internship at The Experiential Agency last summer.

"Erica helped me have a better understanding of the different environments that occur in agencies versus nonprofit organizations," Fumagalli said.

Stimac's last piece of advice

was to make a great first impression on everyone.

"Be nice to everyone because you never know who they know," Stimac said.

Jessie Dwiggins, senior communication studies major and PRSSA fundraising chair, said it was interesting to hear from such an ambitious professional.

"Erica gave us practical advice about her experience working for an agency and a nonprofit," Dwiggins said. "Her advice gave me the confidence that anything can happen if you work hard enough for it."

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Rosenbaum said this is the season of internships, and this workshop helped to give PRSSA members the advice they needed to understand the hiring process.

Kingery said once an applicant arrives to the interview, the organization believes they are qualified for the job.

"You always want to follow up," Kingery said. "They don't want someone with the wrong attitude."

Rosenbaum suggested members of PRSSA use design and creativity when building their business cards.

"Don't use gloss on back," Rosenbaum said. "Your con-

tacts can write on back if it's a white back."

Kingery discussed cover letters briefly so the students would understand what would make their cover letter stand out.

"Sound confident by making a statement and backing it up by an experience," Kingery

said. "Pick two to three things to highlight that they're asking for."

Kingery said the more students write cover letters, the easier they will become in the long run.

"Look at the values and mission statement," Kingery said. "Share your values and vision."

Studying abroad sets students apart

By Beth Steele

In today's competitive job market, studying abroad helps students stand out from other applicants, according to Kelly Kawa, graduate assistant for the study abroad office.

Kawa spoke to PRSSA members about her experience and the benefits of studying abroad for PR students Feb. 28.

Kawa is a communication studies graduate and was an active member is PRSSA.

Kawa studied abroad fall semester of her senior year at Central Queensland University in Rockhampton, Australia.

During her time at CQU, Kawa took two PR classes and was able to get real life experience in one of them.

"I took Advanced Public Relations, which was a campaign planning course where we had to meet with a nonprofit client and plan and throw a fundraiser for their organization," Kawa said. "We planned and hosted a wine and cheese night with a budget of only \$500 and ended up raising more than \$4,000."

The second course Kawa took was PR & The Media. "This course focused on PR writing for media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and news stations," Kawa said.

While abroad, Kawa worked at CQU's division of marketing as a marketing researcher. "My responsibilities included proofreading various marketing materials and handbooks in order to increase the awareness of international education, assisting with the update of the course finder on the CQU web page and serving as a liaison to Australian news and radio stations on behalf of international students," Kawa said.

One of the main benefits



Kelly Kawa, grad assistant for the study abroad office, spoke to PRSSA members about the benefits of studying abroad at a Feb. 28 meeting.

Photo courtesy of Crystal Alston

Kawa highlighted was that studying abroad is great résumé building material. "Studying abroad looks great on your résumé," Kawa said. "It is an experience that could help you land a internship or job in PR."

Kawa also mentioned how studying abroad is a life-altering experience that helps students develop a broader mind about different cultures. "I formed relationships with people from around the world that I still keep in contact with," Kawa said.

Kawa said she gained a

greater interest and passion for PR from her time overseas. "I was more motivated to be involved with PR when I came back," Kawa said.

Tara Rosenbaum, senior communication studies major and PRSSA president, said studying abroad can help students interested in public relations.

"With more and more public relations companies doing work around the globe it is good to get travel experience and experience with other cultures while in college," Rosenbaum said.

Geoff Zuhone, sophomore journalism major and PRSSA treasurer, has already studied abroad once and will be studying abroad next fall in London.

"Studying abroad shows that I am adaptable, not routine, and that I don't always do the same thing," Zuhone said.

The Study Abroad office can help students choose a program that works best for them. It can also assist with internship or job opportunities abroad. For more information on study abroad visit <http://castle.eiu.edu/~edabroad/>.

PR pros share social media strategies

By Tara Rosenbaum

Central Illinois Chapter of PRSA held a social media panel for students and professionals on March 3, in Bloomington.

Several social media professionals gave advice on social media from their specific experiences and then opened up for questions from the attendees.

"The panel gave specific examples from real life situations and then provided great advice on how to best approach these types of situations," Ben Percy, senior communication studies major said.

Matt Edwards, social media team leader for State Farm Public Affairs, said that a company new to social media should pick a platform and make sure that it have content for that platform.

"The outlets a company chooses need to be updated regularly with content," Edwards said.

Aaron Miller, digital strategy director for Weber Shandwick, talked about how social media functions as a tool.

"Social media is a tool to meet the organizational goals," Miller said.

The panelists stressed that



Senior communication studies majors pose with the PRSSA professional adviser, Karen Korsgard, APR. From left, Sarah Harcharik, Korsgard, Tara Rosenbaum and Ben Percy attended a social media panel hosted by PRSA Central Illinois on March 3 in Bloomington.

Photo courtesy of Sarah Harcharik

there is a difference between social media for personal and business use.

"Your personal brand reflects the company's brand too," Edwards said.

Griffin Hammond, public affairs specialist for State Farm, said businesses using social media will find success by being personal.

Percy said he learned a lot from the panelists.

"The most important thing I took from the panel is letting those people you are conversing with know there is a real person on the other side of the computer screen and not a symbol or some company computer," Percy said.

Percy said he discovered

how to use social media tools in ways he had not used them before.

"I never thought of fan pages on Facebook as forums, but a few of the panelists suggested dealing with issues management on this platform," Percy said.

EIU journalism grad Matt Kelly organized the panel.

Inside look at sports public relations

By Nick Persin

Rich Moser, sports information director at EIU, deals with everything from social media to maintaining the athletic websites. Moser is also responsible for maintaining good relationships with the local and national media.

"Working in the sports information department requires you to be a jack-of-all-trades person," Moser said. "You have

to be able to tell stories about the teams, players and coaches, while also working the game operations for any given sport."

Moser said it is also important to be multi-media oriented. "Printed word is not as crucial as it used to be," Moser said. "In the past it was important to have a journalism background. Now, it is not nearly as important because of the emergence of on-line and multi-media."

Moser said his job requires a lot of time and effort like any other PR job. "A typical day for me, when an event is scheduled, begins around 8 a.m. and usually ends around 11 p.m.," Moser said.

Moser has worked in both professional sports and college level sports. He was an assistant director at Gonzaga University before landing the director position here at EIU.

"The biggest difference be-

tween professional sports and college level sports is that professionals play the same sport year round," Moser said. "In professional sports more energy is focused on selling corporate sponsorships then playing the actual sport."

Moser said an advantage of working for a university is the variety of sports.

"It's nice to have different sports during different seasons," Moser said.

EIU journalism grad works PR job with university media relations

By Anton Jefferson

EIU journalism graduate, Vicki Woodard, said her undergrad experience helped her land a full-time PR position with the university.

Woodard said it is important for students to get as much experience as they can.

Woodard worked several jobs while in school. During the winter of her senior year, she got an internship at the *Effingham Daily News*.

"They needed a part-time person and I was able to manage school and work during my senior year," Woodard said.

After her internship, Woodard was awarded a full-time position.

In the following years, Woodard worked as a journalist for the *Decatur Herald & Review* and as a secretary for the college of education at EIU.

"Doors opened when I started working for the university," Woodard said. "There was a need for work on a freelance basis in academic affairs office and I was awarded a full-time position."

Currently, Woodard is the coordinator of public information for university marketing and communications.

Woodard said public information is a big area that is difficult to summarize.

"My job entails a lot, but in a nutshell I work with the media," Woodard said. "I do ev-

erything from speech writing for the board of trustees to answering reporter's media questions."

Woodard said an important thing emerging PR and Journalism students should concentrate on is their interviewing skills.

"Don't rely so much on email interviews," Woodard said. "You lose the verbal interaction."

Woodard said she pays tribute to the late Dr. Dan Thornburgh, founder and first chair of the journalism department, for much of her inspiration and success.

"I hold D.T. in the highest regard for encouraging me and helping me get started with my career," Woodard said.

General Information

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Hoosier PRSA hosts luncheon

By Steven Martin

The Hoosier Chapter of PRSA hosted its March luncheon, Lights. Camera. Action! How to successfully integrate the use of video into your public relations campaigns, March 9, in Indianapolis.

PR professionals spoke on how video has emerged as an

integral part of how we communicate with our customers, stakeholders, employees, donors and peers.

Jon DiGregory, founding partner of Cantaloupe, discussed how to leverage video for PR. Cantaloupe, an Indianapolis based company, is a leader in video production and marketing.

Chris Herndon, director of marketing and communications with the Indianapolis Indians, spoke about how his team used video to increase ticket sales at Victory Field.

EIU PRSSA students are always invited. For more information on upcoming luncheons or regional activities visit www.hoosierprsa.org.

Upcoming Events

March 28 - Social media workshop

March 29-31 - Sunglasses for sale on campus

March 30 - Communication Day

