

Spring 2015

The Semesterly

News from PRSSA-UD's Spring 2015 semester

A letter from the president.

It is crazy to think that 2 years ago I was a freshman attending an interest meeting for PRSSA-UD and now I am preparing to be President of this incredible chapter. In these past two years, our chapter at the University of Delaware has grown tremendously. From attendance at general meetings to the strength of our executive board, we have become a chapter that others look to for ideas.

I will never forget attending National Conference last year in Washington D.C. and sitting around with executive board members of other PRSSA chapters. We were all sharing what our own chapter does in terms of gaining attendance, events, fundraising etc. and so many people were so intrigued by what PRSSA-UD did. It was then that I realized how strong our chapter really was, and how much we had to offer others.

Following Past President Natalie Hines, I know I have big shoes to fill. However, I have high hopes that our chapter will continue to grow. One of my goals for this upcoming year is I want to recruit students from other majors to join our organization. The skills you learn in PRSSA-UD are ones that any person in any profession can use. I want to make sure it is known on our campus that this organization is not only open to Communication majors, but to anyone who wants to improve their professional skills.

Another goal that I have is to not only increase our membership, but to strengthen our membership. What I would like is for more of our members to become extremely active members that come to every meeting and are active participants. I feel that it is more beneficial to have a small bunch of active members than a large bunch of inactive members. I want our members to know that becoming more active will only benefit yourself and your professional career.

Lastly, I want to make the PRSSA-UD atmosphere an open and enjoyable one. While this organization is professional, I want all that attend our meetings field trips skill slams etc. to enjoy themselves and feel comfortable enough to ask questions. I want our members to look forward to coming to our events!

I couldn't be more excited for the upcoming school year and I am even more excited to work with my incredible executive board to make our chapter even stronger than it was before!

All the best,

Katherine Bartell

Chapter President

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE PRSSA
Public Relations Student Society of America

Hunter PR: From Classroom to Cubicle

PRSSA has hosted many amazing guest speakers and events over the past year that have each provided a unique and insightful perspective on diverse aspects of the public relations industry. As one of our last big events of the year, the Hunter Public Relations workshop that took place on Thursday, April 23 provided many useful professional development tips to help send our members off to their summer internships and jobs and suggested steps to further enhance their personal brand.

Hunter Public Relations, a successful consumer PR agency that received The Holmes Report's 2014 Consumer PR Agency of the Year award, has maintained a close relationship with UD over recent years. Grace Leong, a proud former Blue Hen and the current Managing Partner at Hunter PR, has kept close ties with her alma mater by offering UD students exclusive internships, including the Barbara Hunter Fellowship Program, an exclusive annual internship with a cash stipend for a PRSSA-UD student, which will begin this upcoming summer.

In another effort to offer as many opportunities and resources for UD students as possible, three current Hunter employees visited the university to run an exclusive workshop. Hunter PR's Senior Vice President **Melissa Kuhn**, Assistant Account

Executive **Kristin Archambeau** and Vice President of Social and Digital Media **Michael Lamp** gave an amazing presentation on Hunter PR's award-winning strategies, but also shared important information on the dreaded but inevitable transition from "Classroom to Cubicle." Here are some of the great pieces of advice they presented to help PR students become PR professionals.

Show that you can maintain your personal brand. Using your resume and social media accounts to creatively package yourself can help your application stand out. Instead of emphasizing where you worked or interned in the past, add a short description of what you accomplished during your time there and how your efforts benefited the company. This accentuates your unique skills and shows employers the valuable you can potentially bring to their company.

Attitude is everything. Whether you're in an interview or working for a company, maintaining a positive attitude is crucial to your overall success. Interviews provide potential employers the chance to frame their first impression of you, so dressing appropriately, maintaining eye contact and remaining engaged during the conversation increases your chances of being remembered and seriously considered. In the office, being the

employee that keeps an upbeat, can-do attitude and presents solutions instead of problems can brighten up the mood of the office and increase overall productivity. Also, giving every task your all and not being afraid to take on additional or more challenging projects proves your dedication to the company and can create great relationships that are crucial when looking for recommendations in the future.

Never stop researching. Public relations is a dynamic industry, and it is imperative that you stay on top of trends and new social media strategies to not only maintain your personal brand but bring new ideas to your company. Staying on the cutting-edge shows your audience that whoever you represent, whether that be your personal brand or the company you work for, is adaptable and therefore worth paying attention to.

No idea is a bad idea. Never shy away from voicing an innovative idea because you consider it too ridiculous. These "get fired" ideas, as the Hunter PR employees continuously referred to them, could potentially be reworked into a creative solution to a problem or an innovative campaign with the help of your colleagues. Even if the idea doesn't amount to anything substantial, working through it with your peers can help creativity flow and potentially spark the next reward-winning innovative idea.

By: Victoria Dellacava

hunter public relations

A Q&A About Internships

With the business market hitting it's most competitive since the recession, it has become very hard for college graduates to find full time work in their desired field. This means that our college careers cannot simply be spent only doing homework and participating in activities. We need to be actively pursuing the types of jobs we want, while we are still in school. For some majors this might mean participating in research, for others a fellowship or shadowing program, but the most common is obtaining an internship. Internships are hard to come by and sometimes discouraging when you only receive 1 yes out of 100 no's, but if you dedicate your time to finding one you won't be sorry. To help aid your quest I interviewed Nina Price, a sophomore at The University of Delaware, who over winter session completed her first internship with prestigious ELLE Magazine in New York City.

How did you find this internship?

Nina: "One of my brother's friends from high school is the Assistant to the Publisher at ELLE and so I reached out to her about their student internship program. She told me they had openings for their winter in tern position so I sent over my resume and did a phone interview".

What was your interview process like?

Nina: "Having a personal contact made the process much easier for me. I had my first phone interview with her and when I made it past that first round I had another phone interview with one of the Intern Supervisors. That interview went well and after I was offered the position."

Did you think working for a big company took away from the hands on experience you would receive at a smaller company?

Nina: "I learned SO much at my time at ELLE. I felt like I was learning more valuable information for my future there, than I was at school! But what was really great about my time at ELLE was that I was the only winter intern. I was able to work with many different people across all branches of the publishing side of ELLE. I don't think working at a smaller company would have given me more hands on experience".

What are the pros and cons of working at a well-known company vs. a lesser known one?

Nina: "The pros are that Hearst is a very well established company with set plans for their internship program. I enjoyed the large and professional setting with an exact layout of what my duties would consist of. Working in the Hearst building gave me a true sense of what it meant to be a successful professional adult. The only con I can think of is that I was not able to meet everybody. I knew about 80% of the ELLE publishing team, but I wish I had the opportunity to know everyone on a first name basis. I felt as though I could have missed out on some connections that could have been really great for my future. But I honestly have no complaints".

What would you tell someone who dreams of working for a company like Hearst? How would they go about applying?

Nina: "Start talking and researching! I would be lying if I said my connection didn't help me land this internship. It really is all about whom you know, so the sooner you start talking, the sooner you will find a connection. In the meantime- I would suggest that you bulk up your resume and make a LinkedIn profile (if you haven't done so already). You need to prove that you are a strong enough candidate. The next step is to start sending emails. You can look online for open positions, and contact the people who are in charge of the position you are interested in".

What is your #1 pre interview go to?

Nina: "Do research! Find out as much information about the company and the position as you can. Look at the company's website, blogs, articles and press releases. Also- make sure your resume is always updated in order to avoid unprofessional errors".

Nina pointed out some great ways to get a head start on your internship search. Most companies take a couple interns for fall and spring semesters and in the summer they usually hire double that. If you don't wind up with your first choice don't give up. Sometimes the perfect internship is right around the corner. I received 19 rejection emails until I received the one that offered me a phone interview (I also applied to much more than 20, some companies wont even tell you no). It is a hard working life out there for young adults, but if you apply yourself, good things will come!

A Reckless Riot

Baltimore, Maryland: a beautiful city that is a home to the Baltimore Ravens, and Orioles, Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Inner Harbor, and many proud people to claim it as their home. On April 12, 2015, this city experienced an event that beckoned members of various communities to disregard the city they love and resort to outrage and violence. An African-American man by the name of Freddie Gray was arrested and suffered a severe spinal injury while in police custody. Gray died a few days later due to this injury. There were many questions swarming around this issue in accusation of ruthless police brutality.



<http://southseattleemerald.com/2015/05/04/marchers-take-rainier-avenue-for-black-lives-matter-demonstration/>

This topic is no stranger to media, as there have been many recent cases focused on the allegations of misconduct by the police. However, the situation in Baltimore was not limited to the issue of police

brutality. Instead, it escalated to a situation focused on racial discrimination. The police that handled Gray were white, and as was mentioned, Gray was black. This is what stirred up the recipe of destruction. Initially, some people were moved to organize a peaceful protest against the police brutality and discrimination, holding up signs that read, “Black Lives Matter,” and “All Lives Matter.”

But this positive, nonviolent way of combating the issues was soon forgotten with an opposing form of protest. Following Gray’s funeral, an angered black community in Baltimore began wreaking havoc in the streets; lighting over ten buildings on fire, as well as close to 150 cars. Multiple media channels were used to release information regarding this dangerous situation and the communication of the information escalated the issue. Watching the news of this demolition could’ve been mistaken for a movie, a twisted situation that couldn’t possibly be real life. News channels, news blogs, and many other media were reporting on the situation, showing videos of citizens throwing flaming trashcans at lines of shielded police. Facebook posts displayed people’s prayers that the violence would stop for the sake of the safety of the police forces and surrounding communities. The mayor of Baltimore, who desperately wanted to end the ferocity and destruction, was forced to declare a State of Emergency. She called in the National Guard and instituted a mandatory curfew of

10 p.m. to 5 a.m. in an aim to keep the city safer, especially at night.

Although these riots were an extreme devastation to many people of Baltimore, the light through the dark tunnel came in the form of unity for reconciliation and harmony. It was really moving to see people convincing other members of their communities to stray from violence and return to peaceful and effective protests. The violence only served to cast Baltimore in a bad light, it had no positive effects, but many opinion leaders known in Baltimore



<http://bringmethenews.com/2015/04/28/black-lives-matter-plans-minneapolis-rally-to-show-support-for-baltimore/>

got involved to help direct people away from violence. One of those leaders was Ray Lewis, a former decorated Baltimore Ravens football player. He released a video that was viewed on Facebook by over twenty-eight million people saying, “No way this can happen in our city... violence is not the answer, violence has never been the answer.” After several days of rioting and countless dollars in damages to the community, the police officers allegedly responsible for Freddie Gray’s injuries and subsequent death have been indicted on felony charges and the state of emergency was lifted on May 6, 2015. Things will begin to return to a new normal.

It is apparent that the issues of police brutality and racial discrimination are not going away and the means by which to dissolve them remain to be blurred lines. Although history has not proven success before, peaceful protests continue to be covered up by violence as a way to communicate anger and demand change. It is up to society to apply the power of protest for good or bad. For right now though, the prayers from Baltimore have been answered and the violence has ceased. Freddie Gray’s name will not be forgotten and the issues that seeded the trouble have been sung by a loud voice. May we eventually solve these issues and live in peaceful harmony, using communication as a positive tool.

By: Sydney Dawson

Interview Skill Slam

There are many elements that go into landing that dream job or internship. No matter how qualified or well dressed a candidate may seem, communications professionals usually need to prove their personality and ability to succeed through an interview. Since everyone only gets one chance to make a first impression, being considered a well-composed interviewee is crucial in order to get hired. Often times, you could think that an interview went flawlessly and you are left baffled when you get passed up for the position with no real explanation. PRSSA-UD realized how vital this skill is to possess, so on March 23, the skill slam “Breaking Through the Interview” was organized for a select few paying members to participate in. The Skill Slam was organized by PRSSA-UD’s Vice President of Professional Development, [Laura Hepp](#).

The goal of the skill slam was to give constructive feedback to the participants on their resume, their attire and how they are generally perceived. One by one, the selected students faced a panel of four hypothetical employers embodied by actual professionals in the communications field and answered their questions concerning a theoretical position. While the shifts were short, each participant was able to hear back from the professionals on their specific interview skills.

One of the most important questions asked was “would you be comfortable with us looking into your social media accounts?” As aspiring professionals in the public relations industry, the best way to practice good public relations is with yourself and your personal brand. While it is important to be well versed in the power of various forms of social media, representing yourself and your potential employers should always be in a positive light. For certain candidates this was a wake up call that it is time to clean up any online content that could portray them in a negative light.

I was fortunate enough to be chosen to partake in this skill slam. While I found it slightly intimidating being in front of a whole panel of “potential employers”, I tried my best not to let it show. Some of the questions caught me a bit off guard such as “tell us about a time you failed”. I was accustomed to playing off my strengths in an interview so it was good practice having to spin one of my failures on the spot that would still make me seem hireable. I thought that the professionals did a great job of simulating what it is like to go through an interview. The feedback I received was priceless and I am very glad that I took part in this skill slam.

Generally, the interview process can be intimidating, especially in front of a panel of potential employers. While there is always room for improvement, our PRSSA-UD members were well prepared to impress the pretend employers with their skills and poise.

By: Amanda Schuman



PRSSA-UD member Brittany O’Connell in action being interviewed- photo taken by Professor Bartoo

PRSSA-UD Challenge:

Strategic Plan for Project Sunshine

On Thursday, May 7, PRSSA-UD members up for a ‘challenge’ gathered to compete in drafting original campaign plans for the RSO, Project Sunshine. The evening was full of focused chatter and excitement as ten members brainstormed to create one-of-a-kind pitches for Project Sunshine, an organization that lives up to its name with highlighter yellow t-shirts.

The PRSSA Challenge, an annual event offered by PRSSA-UD, fosters creativity and practical writing experience for its members. This year PRSSA-UD was fortunate to have two judges with thorough experience in the communications field: **Marie Coleman**, the Social Media Manager at Navient, and **Abby Ecker**, the Connecting Director at The Journey.

The event began with an informative presentation by four members of Project Sunshine’s UD chapter. It quickly became clear the members of Project Sunshine were passionate about their organization which aims to provide free educational, recreational, and social programming to children with medical challenges. Their dedication to the children inspired PRSSA-UD members to produce their best campaign pitches.

At the conclusion of their presentation, the members of Project Sunshine offered their main campaign goal – to raise awareness about Project Sunshine programming among children and their families at current site locations. Additionally, one member of Project Sunshine expressed a desire to expand their current visit sites to encompass additional locations throughout the greater Newark area.

Each PRSSA team swiftly brought out their computers and notebooks and began crafting away at a comprehensive campaign plan that would best suit the needs of Project Sunshine. For about 45 minutes the clock ticked by but the hustle and bustle of typing and hushed speaking carried on strong.

Once every team had wrapped up their draft the pitches began. The first team eloquently presented their ideas as the judges scribbled down notes and nodded in agreement. As everyone clapped, the second team stepped up to the front to pitch an equally impressive campaign plan, followed by the final team who offered yet another original campaign pitch for the organization.

The members presented a wide range of ideas for Project Sunshine, from fostering a stronger social media presence to handing out beaded bracelets or flyers to medical patients in site locations. Creativity was evident in each of the three comprehensive plans.



The judges thanked everyone for their hard work and excused themselves for a few moments to gather their thoughts and determine a winner. The atmosphere in the room was excited and friendly as everyone congratulated one another on their successful and professional pitches

As the judges returned to announce the winner, each member portrayed a proud confidence in the work they had presented. Ultimately, team three was the winner with a comprehensive plan including various forms of social media use, bright yellow branded merchandise, point-based membership encouragement, and suggestions for new location pitches. The members of team three were **Brittany O'Connell**, **Katherine Bartell** and **Rachel Thompson**.

The judges also had valuable feedback about each of the groups' presentations. Overall, they were pleased with each member's innovative use of available resources and their logical outlines for implementing the plans.

The outgoing judges did not leave without offering a few pieces of valuable wisdom. One strategy for campaign planning that each of the judges emphasized was traditional media. Though many plans were focused on social media strategies, the judges encouraged each attendee to remember that print, radio, and television media are still valuable tactics in planning. Furthermore, they reminded the members that it is important to think through each step of the campaign evaluation in order to determine the effectiveness of each tactic.

The evening wrapped up as the members thanked the judges and offered words of encouragement to one another about the plans. The night was certainly a bright and sunny success as Project Sunshine received multiple suggestions for furthering their goals, and the PRSSA-UD members left happily with new writing samples and conversation pieces from the event.

By: Rachel Thompson

PRSSA-UD Challenge judges with the winning team from L to R:



The Semesterly Writers:

Sydney Dawson

Victoria Dellacava

Amanda Schuman

Jill Swartzentruber

Rachel Thompson

Keri Betters, Editor and PRSSA-UD Public Relations Director

Katherine Bartell, PRSSA-UD President Elect

Natalie Hines, PRSSA-UD President

Thanks for a great semester, PRSSA-UD!

Keep in touch!

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