

Fall 1992

UA68/13/5 PR Perspectives

Kelly Thompson Chapter, Public Relations Student Society of America

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PERSPECTIVES

Kentucky Consultants Makes A Comeback

Student-run agency returns after four years

By Matt Williams, Program Director

How many graduating students can say they have experience as account executives for a public relations agency? Members of the Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA have the opportunity to receive that kind of experience in Kentucky Consultants, a student-run public relations firm.

The agency functions like any PR agency with its own account executives and account

teams. All positions are held by PRSSA members. According to chapter president Eric Davis, the firm has two main purposes: to provide inexpensive services to organizations and give experience to PRSSA members.

The firm was originally begun in the early '80s by PRSSA members who wanted to gain experience with public relations functions. Despite its success, the agency was dissolved soon after its start. This semester, Davis and chapter vice president Heather Hauer remembered and reorganized the agency.

Davis said the strength of

Kentucky Consultants lies in the students, who have a wide variety of experience in print journalism, desktop publishing and public relations. The agency offers services such as newsletter publishing, news release writing, brochure production, telemarketing, media relations and special events management to local and campus organizations.

Currently, Kentucky Consultants has several clients. The firm is handling general public relations on Western's campus for Marriott, Inc. It is also developing an alumni

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PR Sequence Gets a Face Lift

By Julie Hickman

Effective Fall 1993, the PR sequence will unveil a whole new look—from course numbers to the courses themselves—in an effort to better prepare students for a career in public relations as specified by professional standards.

Western's program currently meets the Public Relations Society of America's standards for accreditation by offering the minimum five courses in the major, but according to sequence coordinator John Barnum, the courses are "not sufficient" in covering all the

skills that professionals believe students should have.

The sequence committee requested the creation of new courses to update the major and "give students the quality they deserve." Two classes were desired to make up for the program's deficiencies, but because of a lack of resources, they were combined into one course entitled Public Relations Theory, Research and Evaluation (JOUR 353).

Students presently enrolled in the major will not be required to take the new course,

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Personal Perspectives

PR students have many options when it comes to deciding on a particular area of public relations. PRSSA member Dora Epley asked some PR students about their ideal jobs.

"Work for the military or an airline handling public affairs or crisis situations."

• Catherine Bartling

"The president of an agency."

• Nicole Walker

"Work in corporate PR."

• Denise Page

"The director of PR and marketing of a hospital."

• Julie Hickman

"The sports information director of a university."

• Sally Krauss

"Work in government or a non-profit organization."

• Heather Hauer

"A publication specialist."

• Rob Blackford

"Work in special events in radio."

• Mandy Heltsley

These are ideal jobs and it is important to remember that our first jobs may not be in our 'ideal' area. Later in our careers the experience gained in the not-so-great jobs may come in handy. Students should keep all options open because no one knows what the future may hold.

PRSSA Update

Pro-Am

Pro-Am Day, scheduled for Nov. 17, is an event which pairs PRSSA members with a PR professional for a day in

What's up and who's who in PRSSA this fall

Louisville. This is a great opportunity for students to observe public relations in the workplace and make important connections.

Leadership Workshop

Four PRSSA members recently attended the 1992 East Central District Leadership Workshop hosted by Purdue University. Representatives learned about opportunities in PRSSA on a national level and how to improve PRSSA on a chapter level. The workshop was attended by Eric Davis, Heather Hauer, Bobby Johnson and Nicole Walker.

National Conference

The 17th annual PRSSA National Conference was held in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 24 - 28. Representing the Kelly Thompson Chapter were Eric Davis and chapter adviser John Barnum. Sessions included: "What's Expected of an Intern?," "Networking: Before and After Graduation," and "Bringing the Media Up-to-Date." More than 50 speakers and 1000 students attended the conference.

1992-93 Officers

This year's officers are: Eric Davis, president; Heather Hauer, vice president; Matt Williams, program director; Sally Krauss, PR director; Karen Gibson, treasurer; Mandy Heltsley, secretary; and Bobby Johnson, national liaison/alumni relations.

PR Sequence

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although the option will still be available to them.

Next fall, current majors will notice that some course numbers have been altered as a result of the sequence update. To lessen confusion and distinguish PR from the rest of the journalism department, all PR classes will be recognizable by having a five as the second digit in the course number. For further clarification, the third digit will be sequenced in the order the student should take the class, e.g. 351, 352, 353,

454, etc.

In a final change, incoming majors will only have to chose one restrictive elective instead of the present two. The department has modified the list of choices by eliminating LME 445 (AV methods and Materials), and adding JOUR 426 (Advanced Reporting), SCOM 148 (Interpersonal Communication), and SCOM 461 (Organizational Communication).

Amidst all the changes, student will still be required to complete 33 hours of PR coursework in order to obtain their degrees.

Recent Western graduate talks about public relations in the real world

By Nicole Walker

Jeff Polson presented the topic "Life in a Public Relations Agency" at a recent meeting of the Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA. Polson, a 1991 PR graduate of WKU, is currently employed by Jack Guthrie and Associates, Inc. in Louisville as an assistant account manager. He serves several clients including: Toyota, Kentucky Distillers Association and Regional Airport Authority.

One major topic of Polson's discussion was the personality of a PR person. "There are certain characteristics of people who work in a PR agency," Polson said. "They are goal driven. They have to do one thing after another and they don't want to slow down."

Polson also noted that PR people have to work under deadlines. "In a medium-sized agency," he said, "you will be servicing three to six accounts and each will have a different deadline. You can't forego one deadline for another because each client sees you as working for them and no one else."

"You also have to be able to deal with pressure," said Polson. "My account manager told me that I should always remember 'when a client looks at you and says I want this done, even though the task is impossible,

you simply tell them 'no problem.'"

Polson also pointed out that PR people have the ability to switch gears. "You have to be able to drop one account and go to another when the phone rings," he said. "Those accounts

may have nothing to do with one another but you have to be able to change topics quickly in your mind and immediately be oriented to the new topic."

Corporations often hire an agency instead of employing their

own PR staff. By doing this, the company gets a staff of individuals who have separate specialties in media relations, writing, special events, crisis relations or any other area of PR. Because agencies have such a variety of skills, companies gain much more from an agency than a one- or two-person staff.

Kentucky Consultants

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newsletter for the Accounting Department. A yearbook is being produced for the Area Five Special Olympics and an awareness campaign is being implemented for the university's Canadian Studies Program.

A membership in PRSSA automatically allows students to work for Kentucky Consultants.

When a client looks at you and says 'I want this done,' even though the task is impossible, you simply tell them 'no problem.'

Alumni Close-up

Angela Peak-Baker, a former PRSSA president at WKU, is a PR Specialist for Deaconess Hospital in Evansville, Ind.

Nina Kissinger is the project coordinator for St. Mary's Medical Center in Evansville, Ind.

John Hart is the Media Manager of Pig Improvement Company in Franklin, Ky.

Brian J. Todd is an Account Executive for Dye, Van Mol & Lawrence in Nashville.

Keep our PR files updated, send your address and job changes to PR Perspectives.

Former faculty member dies

Terry J. VanderHeyden, 41, a former journalism assistant professor and Talisman adviser, died Aug. 18 at Indiana University Medical Center in Indianapolis.

VanderHeyden taught at Western from 1981 to 1990. In 1985, he was named the nation's outstanding collegiate yearbook adviser by College Media Advisers.

He was a director for the Indiana High School Press Association after leaving Western.

Internships are a plus in landing a job

Are you approaching graduation with a resume that is too short? If so, have you considered an internship? Students who hold internships have an advantage when it comes to exploring the competitive job market.

Internships allow students to be a working part of an organization. They will talk the language of the field and receive hands-on training and advice.

Denise Page, a WKU senior, said she gained experience in various areas of public relations during her internship with GENESCO, Inc. in Nashville. Some of her responsibilities were research projects, annual reports and press releases. "I noticed a big change in myself," she said. "It really built up my confidence level and I know I can handle anything now."

Junior Karen Gibson said her internship with Bibb and Lott Advertising/PR in

Clarksville, Tenn., helped her develop communication skills. She said, "I learned how agencies function and deal with clients."

To some students the hardest part about internships is finding one. Career Services Associate Director Carol White said students can receive assistance finding internships by using their office located in Cravens Library. "We can help students in writing resumes and in job placement after graduation," she said.

Senior Matt Williams, who held an internship with the Capital Arts Center in Bowling Green, said a student should look into any opportunity for an internship because "it may be a stepping stone to something bigger."

Internship information is available in the internship directories in the PR Lab and also from PR professor Robert Blann. 

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The Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA

PR CALENDAR

December 2
Chapter Meeting

February 10
PRSSA Luncheon with
President Thomas
Meredith

Spring 1993
Bateman Case Study

Spring 1993
East Central District
Conference

PERSPECTIVES

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