

Spring 1993

UA68/13/5 PR Perspectives

Kelly Thompson Chapter, Public Relations Student Society of America

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PR PERSPECTIVES

Agency Develops New Name and Image



CREATIVE EXCHANGE
PUBLIC RELATIONS

The establishment of a student-run public relations agency has continued this semester with the reorganizing and renaming of the agency after six years of the chapter operating without one.

Creative Exchange, formerly known as Kentucky Consultants, came to life again last September with a new image and a new dedication to providing quality, cost-efficient public relations activities to the

city of Bowling Green and south-central Kentucky.

The original Kentucky Consultants, created in the mid-1980's, handled large publishing accounts. The agency folded in 1987, and it wasn't until the chapter elected current PRSSA President Eric Davis last year that a vision of an operating agency became reality once again.

"I learned very early about the value of real-world experience gained in a college environment," said Davis. "I wanted to re-establish the agency so that we could provide our members with as much of

that experience as possible."

Creative Exchange is unique among student-run firms because of a bold, new approach to handling client projects. Rather than recruiting members to serve as Account Coordinators responsible for an entire client workload, the agency is divided into four distinct groups that specialize in different activities: Media Relations and Awareness, Special Events and Programming, Publishing, and Development and Support.

Every member of PRSSA chooses the type of experience

Continued on Page Three

Practitioners Share Insights on Entering Job Market

By Alex Rose

Several things exist that public relations students can do in college to make them more polished and marketable for the business world.

Members of the Kelly Thompson Chapter wanted to know from PR practitioners just what would give them the upper edge when preparing for a job. So we asked them.

Howard Mitchell, vice president of Keller Crescent Public Relations in Evansville,

Ind., said a public relations graduate should first of all "know how to write; be able to understand the subject and then pull out something enticing, interesting."

He added that he will often ask a potential public relations employee to write practice press releases during the interviewing process.

Mitchell also stressed the importance of having a basic knowledge of international

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Personal Perspectives

What kind of practical experience do you have? This is a question public relations majors will have to answer in a resume or during a job interview. Here are some internships PR majors acquired in 1993...

Heather Hauer will be interning at WKYU-FM, Western's public radio station, during the fall semester in the development office.

Carrie Hughes interned at Bowling Green's Camping World this spring semester in the marketing department.

Terri Winchell interned at General Motors Corvette Assembly Plant in Bowling Green in the Labor Relations Department.

Internships are a valuable learning experience that every public relations major should take advantage of to prepare for the real world. If you are interested in doing an internship or would like more information, please contact one of the public relations sequence advisers.

U · P · D · A · T · E

Bateman Case Study

The Kelly Thompson Chapter of PRSSA had six PRSSA members compete in the Bateman Case Study, a national PRSSA competition sponsored by PRSA. This year's Bateman team had to write a crisis management plan dealing with a fictitious Chicago riot. Team members were Sally Krauss, team captain, Chris Collins, Eric Davis, Bobby Johnson, and Lisa Robertson. The district's winning team will be announced in late April.

Revisions to By-laws

Revisions to the chapter's by-laws were made to bring the constitution up to current standards and practices. The major amendment to the laws was the recognition and establishment of Creative Exchange, the chapter's student run firm.

Changes were also made to the structure of the chapter's executive board. The offices of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, and PR director will still be directly elected by the chapter. The offices of agency director, program director and national liaison will be appointed by a combination of the present executive board and the officers-elect. The new by-laws went into effect April 7.

East Central District Conference

The East Central District Conference was held in Indianapolis on April 2-4. Eight chapter members attended a number of seminars hosted by PR professionals and got acquainted with PRSSA members from Michigan, Indiana and Kentucky. Ball State University hosted the conference, with a theme of "Racing Toward Success." Rob Blackford, Deven Carigan, Jama Coomes, Eric Davis, Dora Epley, Kevin Lloyd, Kim Mann and Matt Williams attended the conference.

National Assembly

The 1993 PRSSA National Assembly was held March 12-14 in San Francisco. Assembly delegates voted on national amendments to the by-laws and elected the national officers to serve on the National Committee for next year.

Officers in 1993

Officers during the 1993 Spring semester were: *Eric Davis*, President; *Heather Hauer*, Vice-President; *Matt Williams*, Program Director; *Sally Krauss*, Public Relations Director; *Karen Gibson-Moss*, Treasurer; *Mandy Heltsley*, Secretary; and *Rob Blackford*, Agency Director.

Creative Exchange

Continued from Page One

they would like to acquire and then joins the agency group that best suits their needs. The groups have several levels of leadership that help delegate the responsibilities of each account to a greater number of students.

"This activity-oriented structure creates an incredible working relationship between Creative Exchange and PRSSA," said Rob Blackford, Agency Director. "The two groups operate independently yet complement each other in a common goal of providing opportunities and experience to members."

Any income generated by the agency is used to subsidize the cost to members of attending workshops and seminars; this allows more members to attend these events and bring this experience back to the agency.

Creative Exchange landed six major accounts in the first four months of its new operation. Several clients both on the campus of Western Kentucky and in Bowling Green retain the agency's services year round. The agency also offers a resume service to students and produces newsletters for several organizations on campus.

"The difference between this agency and the old one is the type of public relations activities we are able to provide," said Davis. "Kentucky Consultants specialized in publishing; our members handle media relations, awareness campaigns, and video production as well as large publishing accounts."

"We are very excited about our early success," said Blackford. "And we are looking forward to becoming a well-known public relations alternative in Bowling Green. ■"

Practitioners Share Insight

Continued from Page One

affairs. "In other words, know where France is located, and who the Prime Minister of England is," said Mitchell.

He said that it is important to be able to "look at both sides of an issue, and then see the middle ground."

Allen Hall, director of business development at Ericson Public Relations in Nashville, also stressed the importance having good writing skills. Hall said that public relations practitioners "need to be precise, and have correct grammar.

"Listening skills are very

important; it is crucial to be able to understand what your client is telling you."

Hall said that he is impressed by a portfolio that shows "what a client's objectives are, how you executed your campaign, and what the results were."

Hall assured public relations graduates that with having basic public relations skills, "you can go anywhere you want to as long as you have some native intelligence." ■

Alumni Close-up

Marla Crow-Highbaugh, the sequence's first Macintosh lab instructor, is the public relations director of the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Medical Center in Louisville. She is currently writing an article on Radon for the Kentucky Hospital Association Magazine.

Anna White-Menges, a former PRSSA secretary, is the director of marketing & public relations at the Suburban Medical Center in Louisville.

Jody Carmak, a former East Central District Director, is the public relations specialist for the **Chicago Sun-Times**. He was the media coordinator for a recent televised presidential debate in Chicago and worked with Bill Clinton's public relations director. Carmak is now married to **Tina Howard**, also a former District Director.

Paul J. Thiry, a former PRSSA program director and staff member of the original Kentucky Consultants, is now the advertising manager at the **Spencer County Journal-Democrat** newspaper in Rockport, Ind.

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

Life After PRSSA:

The Public Relations Society of America

By James Campbell

Have you ever asked yourself what life is going to be like after college and PRSSA? Is there any organization like PRSSA that can assist you in professional development? There is, and it's called PRSA.

The Public Relations Society of America is a

professional organization that provides public relations practitioners opportunities for accreditation, ethical guidance, information, recognition, and personal services.

Two levels of membership exist: associate and regular. The associate member is an individual with less than two years of paid professional experience. The associate has full voting privileges and all other benefits of the PRSA member, but cannot hold certain offices or sponsor new members. PRSA and PRSSA created this membership division to allow graduates of PRSSA to join PRSA before they have substantial service as a practitioner. The associate must also abide by the Code of Professional Standards and the Society Bylaws and have a reputation of integrity. The associate's

\$50 per year dues are considerably less than regular member's dues.

The regular member is an individual who has substantial service as a practitioner of public relations or as an instructor of public relations courses.

The Bowling Green area is part of the Bluegrass Chapter

of PRSA, with headquarters in Louisville. The Bluegrass Chapter helps members receive their accreditation by providing classes to prepare for the APR exam. By receiving accreditation, a member

demonstrates their professionalism and broad range of experience and public relations knowledge.

Providing valuable community service and visibility for members is also on the agenda for 1993. The Bluegrass Chapter will also look for a chapter office, begin an active member retention effort, develop a mentor program for members in different progressive stages of their careers, and begin providing programs geared specifically for senior members.

Information on joining PRSA can be obtained by calling national headquarters at (212) 460-1474.

Is there any organization that can assist you in professional development?
It's called PRSA.

Chapter Co-Hosts District Meeting

Leadership Conference Provides Opportunity

By Susan Flanders

The PRSSA Chapters of Western and Murray State co-sponsored the East Central District

Leadership Conference in Louisville, Feb. 20-21.

Nineteen members from Western, Ball State, Eastern Kentucky, Purdue and Murray State met to discuss chapter development and improvement. Topics discussed included newsletters, membership, recruitment, student firms, fund raising and various issues facing public relations practitioners.

Dr. David Woolverton, APR, PRSSA faculty adviser for Eastern, spoke to the group regarding the benefits of belonging to PRSA, advisor/student relations, and ideas for improving these relations. He also explained the steps required to become accredited in public relations.

Each chapter discussed its activities and provided examples of printed materials.

Members received useful information for improving their chapters and gained experience networking within their field.

"This is one of the best things a chapter can do in terms of internal development," said Karen Gibson-Moss, co-coordinator of the workshop. "That's why we wanted Western to take an even more active role by actually putting the event together."

Former Chapter Adviser A Creator and Motivator

By Lisa Robertson

The public relations degree and PRSSA at Western Kentucky University did not just come into existence all by itself. The motivating force behind the creation of public relations at Western is Associate Professor Dr. Robert L. Blann.

In the fall of 1971, Western approached Dr.

Blann with the position of teaching and developing new academic majors in public relations and advertising. "I was looking to utilize my professional experience and academic

training in areas of public relations and advertising." As a result, Blann took the job, and the programs began to take shape.

Blann drew from his education, experience, literature and dialogue with professionals to build one of the strongest programs in the nation.

Blann introduced and taught the first course, PR Fundamentals, in the fall of 1972. Western accepted the academic major in public relations the following year.

Blann's guidance also helped form the school's chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America in 1975. For more than 10 years, Blann served as

faculty adviser over the chapter while it earned more than 75 district and national awards and recognitions. With Blann as advisor, the chapter received recognition as the "Nation's Best Chapter," established the first student-run agency, created and published a city magazine for Bowling Green, and hosted a national PRSSA conference.

Blann's history of accomplishment goes back much longer than his 22 years at the university. His interest in journalism began when he was a Navy Seal during the Korean War. He wrote and sold articles to *Skin Diver* magazine.

After leaving from the military, he attended Indiana University and received a degree in journalism and English. He also received his masters at IU in journalism with a minor in business administration. He attained a doctorate from Ohio University in communications with emphasis in public relations and advertising with a minor in marketing.

After college Blann went to work for one of the largest banks in the country. For six years he worked in the areas of public relations, advertising and marketing before coming to Western.

**I was looking to
utilize my professional
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Kansas City Convention Lives Up to Expectation

By Kim Mann

"Everything Is Up-to-Date in Kansas City." That was the theme to the 1992 PRSSA National Conference, and the convention most definitely lived up to its expectations as one of the largest and most grand national meetings to date.

Chapter President Eric Davis attended the convention, held last October in Kansas City, Mo., and Faculty Adviser John Barnum represented the sequence at the PRSA conference held across town in conjunction with PRSSA. Almost 600 PRSSA members from more than 100 universities attended.

The conference featured more than 50 sessions with such topics as professional development, networking, and resume writing, presented by various public relations practitioners.

Davis received the National President's Citation. The national office also recognized Dr. Robert Blann, a former faculty adviser to the chapter, for his past service as National Faculty Adviser by awarding him with Jon Riffel PRSSA Championship Award.

The 1993 National Conference is scheduled to be held in November in Orlando, Florida.

Guess Who Came to Dinner? President Meredith Guest at Spring Luncheon

By Alex Rose

Image is critical. Perception is just as important as fact." That's the message Dr. Thomas Meredith, Western Kentucky's University President, shared with students and faculty at the annual Spring Luncheon held Feb. 10.

Meredith spoke candidly of his experiences with public relations as president of WKU, noting that the role of a college president is changing and is much more complicated than it used to be. He said we are moving more to a political world, and that "everyone wants a say in everything."

Matt Williams, coordinator of the event, said "it was

interesting to sit down and talk to an official like our president and hear what he has to say about our profession."

Meredith said a public relations professional should have good writing skills, be able to work well under pressure yet also be creative and have excellent people skills.

I want everything that Western does to be first-class.

President Tom Meredith

He added that public relations must always build the image of the president, which represents Western.

Meredith stressed the importance of public relations being a positive force. "I want everything that Western does to be first class."

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PR CALENDAR

**April 14
Awards Banquet**

**April 21
Last PRSSA Meeting
PR Lab - 6:30 p.m.**

**May 8
Graduation**

PERSPECTIVES

Staff

Dora Epley
Editor

Rob Blackford
Graphic Designer

Rob Blackford
James Campbell
Susan Flanders
Kim Mann
Lisa Robertson
Alex Rose
Contributing Writers

Eric Davis
Sally Krauss
Scott Sloan
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PR Perspectives
Gordon Wilson Hall 307
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101

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