

The Relay

a publication for PR students

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General information

Communication studies adds new face to faculty

By Krista Henery

Eastern's communication studies department has added a new member to its staff this fall semester, and several faculty members have no doubt the addition has made the department stronger.

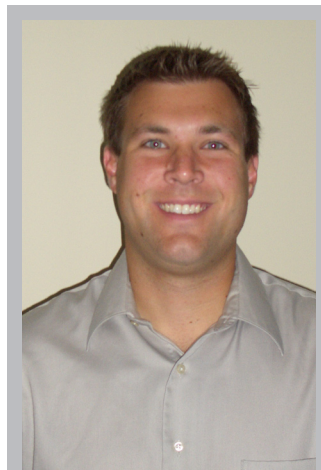
Matthew Gill, a graduate from Purdue University, was selected to join the faculty after the search committee was impressed with his teaching skills.

William Coombs, communication studies professor, chaired the committee that hired Gill and said the department is excited to have him as a new addition to the staff.

"Dr. Gill demonstrated his excellent teaching skills during his visit when he taught a class here," Coombs said. "We were very excited that Dr. Gill agreed to join our faculty,"

As an undergraduate at Purdue, Gill pursued a degree in advertising. "I'm not really sure what led me to that, but it was something I enjoyed," Gill said.

After graduating, his first job consisted of work in the advertising field. He then took a second job where he focused on public relations and marketing work. However, as a result of Gill's second job, he decided to go back to school at



Matthew Gill, new communication studies faculty member, brings a background in research and PR to Eastern.

Purdue and finish his degree in communication studies.

Gill's research bridges the gap between public relations and organizational communications.

"A lot of my research is done in between those fields. Some of the more public relations oriented research that I've been a part of and I'm still currently working with mainly focuses on corporate sponsorship," Gill said.

Coombs said Gill's training

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The Agency's Current Campaigns

Beginning this year, the editorial team of The Relay will monitor the progress and activities of the three public relations campaigns The Agency is involved with.

Each issue will bring another update of the Respect for Youth—University MADD, Donate Life Illinois and Colleges Against Cancer/Relay for Life campaigns.



For those who are not familiar with RFY, the organization was started last semester by wide receiver Micah Rucker in honor of his late girlfriend Rebecca F. Jacob, who was killed by an underage drunk driver on Jan. 28.

RFY currently aligns itself directly to the values of University MADD national, with these goals: prevention of underage alcohol consumption, prevention of drinking irresponsibly, and prevention

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Homecoming 2007—Lights, Camera, Action!

Homecoming committee shifts its focus to PR to generate more participation in the week's activities.

By Danielle Scott

Normally, seeing a limousine parked in the North Quad would seem out of the ordinary.

However, for the Eastern community, the limousine promoted one of the contest giveaways—a night on the town in the limo—and the sight of it helped jump start Homecoming Week 2007, “Lights, Camera, Action!”—a tribute to Hollywood movies.

The multifaceted Homecoming committee worked for nine months creating a new plan for the week to get both the Eastern and Charleston communities involved and to show their Panther pride. The limousine was just one of them.

“The focus of this year’s EIU homecoming was creating ‘the spirit of Homecoming’ throughout campus and the community,” said Ceci

Brinker, director of Student Life and adviser to the 2007 Homecoming committee.

With that in mind, the committee set to work supplementing old marketing plans with fresh strategies. Planned events were geared toward individuals of all ages, campus organizations were challenged to participate, and the “True Blue” apparel made its debut. Rally towels, mini-footballs and keychain movie clappers were passed out at the different events as promotional giveaways to encourage audience participation.

Advertising was made easy with the Internet, Eastern student media, and local newspapers. The committee had a

Web site where individuals could find a calendar of the week’s events, as well as event descriptions.

Facebook was also used to send out notices. News releases ran in local newspapers, *The Daily Eastern News*, and on WEIU-TV and radio. A Homecoming Guide was also distributed that detailed all the week’s upcoming attractions, the Homecoming Court and nominees, and advertisements from local businesses that wished the Panthers ‘good luck’ for the week.

“The committee wanted to show the Charleston community that Homecoming Week

was not just a week for Eastern students to party,” said Angie Taylor, co-chair of the Homecoming community relations sub-committee. “Most of the events were geared toward getting individuals to participate and bring their families along.”

Resident student organizations, resident halls and greek organizations were challenged to design sandwich boards and banners to demonstrate the depth of each organizations’ school spirit and the theme of a famous Hollywood movie. The boards and banners were displayed around Eastern’s campus and prizes were given out to the best boards.

Greek organizations were challenged further to make house decks that illustrated their school spirit. The decks were displayed in the front lawns of each organization’s house in Greek Court and could win prizes.



Pro-active approach helps alumna land PR job

By Derrick Johnson

The job search for a recent college graduate is not always a quick process. Individuals looking will find that it takes more than a degree to impress prospective employers.

Eastern alumna Lacey Everett was fortunate to be able to find a job after her graduation in 2006. In August 2007, Everett started work as the communications assistant for the Indiana Family and Social Services Association, which according to the FSSA Web site, works with Indiana’s families, children, senior citizens, people with disabilities and people with mental illnesses.

The organization was



Alumna Lacey Everett is a former member of The Agency. The experience helped her earn her an internship.

started in 1991 and has four main divisions including the Division of Family Resources, Division of Mental Health and Addiction, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, and the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning.

Most companies looking to hire are looking beyond the degree and for someone who has actual field experience. According to Assistant Journalism Professor Terri Johnson, Everett had the experience she earned by

completing an internship.

“She did an internship in Indianapolis with United Way, a non-profit organization, for a while,” Johnson said. “It was a paid internship and then she moved into a paying job.”

However, the internship alone did not solidify the job at FSSA for Everett. Her membership to organizations such as Public Relations Society of America and the International Association of Business Communicators helped as well. Building relationships and making contacts was also vital to Everett finding a job.

“She got involved with the Indianapolis Chapter of the International Association of

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(clockwise) University Campus Police Chief Adam Due listens to Micah Rucker and Matt Kelly explain why working with Campus Police is important to Respect for Youth's cause.

Agency member Barbara Harrington studies a Donate Life Illinois donor registration card while she sits at the Donate Life Illinois tables in the Union. Harrington and other students worked the registration tables for four days to help Eastern attempt to win the 'I Am. Are You?' Campus Campaign Challenge.



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of impaired driving—with an emphasis on prevention of impaired driving.

Want more information on Respect for Youth—University MADD? E-mail umadd.eiu@gmail.com, log Online to www.eiu.edu/~rfy or visit RFY's Facebook group Respect for Youth—UMADD.

Making a connection with campus police

Recently, RFY spoke to University Campus Police at its evening roll call meeting in hopes of inspiring the police to crack down not only on impaired driving, but underage drinking and irresponsible drinking, as well.

RFY's motives for speaking at the 10 p.m. roll call meeting were to reach police right before they went out to deal with kids who have been drinking and to show that RFY members were serious about the cause.

The message was posi-

tively received by the officers present at the meeting, who said they would do as much as they could to help RFY reach its goals.

RFY would like to thank University Police Chief Adam Due for allowing its members to speak at the meeting.



On Jan. 1, 2006, a new organ/tissue donor registry took effect. Individuals who wish to be organ donors no longer need additional consent for their wishes to be legally binding.

All Illinois residents who wish to be an organ/tissue donor must re-register in the new donor registry, or their wishes

will not be binding.

The Donate Life Illinois Campus Campaign is an effort focused on engaging college campuses throughout Illinois in the quest to raise awareness of the new law, as well as donor registration numbers.

A friendly competition— I am. Are you? Eastern students participate in life-saving challenge

The Donate Life Illinois Campus Campaign Challenge is a friendly organ donor registration drive to see which college or university involved in the Campus Campaign can register the most students, faculty and alumni in the new organ/tissue donor registry during the month of October.

Twenty schools are competing in The Challenge.

In an effort to win The Challenge, students involved in the campaign recently ran a registration table at the Martin Luther King Jr. University

Union.

The booth was successful in registering 56 people. Passersby who did not have their licenses on them or did not have the time were told how to register Online and how to join the EIU—Students for Organ Donation Facebook group.

Want more information? E-mail Katrina Zaret, kmzaret@eiu.edu or log On-



The American Cancer Society's Colleges Against Cancer allows college campus communities to get involved in the fight against cancer.

Students involved in this campaign are currently making fliers for campaign kickoff on Nov. 7.



'Going to go far'

Student gets summer internship at Sarah Bush

By Joshua VanDyke

Last summer senior journalism major Matt Kelly learned that the “real world” is different from the realm of academia. While working as an intern at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center’s PR department, he took on a number of tasks that did not go by the book.

That doesn’t mean school-work is useless—Kelly believes it helped prepare him for the future by providing him with the basics—but professionals need to know when to ignore the rules taught in class. For example, not once did he hear about the RACE formula, a teaching device used to instruct students about proper PR work.

“I did a little bit of everything PR related,” Kelly said. He worked on both fliers and larger events, with many press releases in between.

One campaign was a health fair in Arcola. The event, which provided not just information but also blood pressure testing, a massage therapist, and full health analysis, required about a month of preparation. Kelly got the word out about the event and made calls to the people who would have booths set up. He did not physically put the equipment together or handle money. He says that in the end only about 15 people showed up, but it was still a valuable learning experience.

Kelly says that no two days were alike, with each one bringing new challenges. He did admit that he sometimes felt awkward when answering the phone. All the other staff members concentrated on their work, so that meant breaking the near-total silence of the office. Otherwise he only has good things to say about working at Sarah Bush,

and his boss has good things to say about him too.

“I think Matt is going to go far,” says Sarah Bush’s PR Director Patty Peterson. She describes him as funny and light-hearted but capable of being serious as well, and

“I did a little bit of everything PR related.”
—Matt Kelly

capable of juggling multiple projects. Peterson is the one who brought Kelly on board in the first place: After watching her give a presentation in one of his classes he simply went up and talked to her about the possibility.

Kelly was also fortunate in that he got paid for his work, with half of his paychecks coming from the hospital itself and the other half from a state grant for students with internships. According to journalism Prof. Terri Johnson, who

oversaw Kelly’s internship and has helped other students find them, it is unusual for a public relations organization to pay internships anything at all, especially nonprofits. However they bring rewards in other ways than money.

“They help you find jobs, they help you build your portfolio, and they help you start networking,” Johnson said, adding that internships are worth taking even if it means the student also has to wait tables.

Kelly currently uses the leadership skills he learned during his internship as the coordinator for Respect for Youth, an registered student organization that promotes prevention of alcohol-impaired driving.

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Business Communicators and met someone in that Chapter who was a director of public relations in the Lieutenant Governor’s Office,” Johnson

said. “So when she applied for that state government job she had that lady as a reference. Through networking with IABC that lady knew her and

was able to recommend her for the job.”

Johnson isn’t alone in acknowledging contacts and networking as a key to Everett’s success. For college students to find a great job they must be motivated, pro-active and willing to get connected with others in the field they want to enter, according to Everett.

“My biggest piece of advice is to network with other communications professionals,” Everett said.

“I networked with a variety of people,” Everett said. “It was also helpful to talk with other professionals and get advice on how to tailor my résumé and stand out among other job applicants.”

“My biggest piece of advice is to network with other communications professionals.”

—Lacey Everett

'That's a wrap!'—PR students give film a try

By Dana Puziss

After hearing of a friend's success in working with students to produce a music video, Christian music artist Amanda Fessant decided she would do the same. Fessant chose Eastern students because her husband is an alumnus.

"A lot of retooling and intensive editing went into the final version...We moved stuff around and changed shots, and tried to put more shots of Emilee in there."

—Zach Nugent

"I felt like [the video] was an opportunity for them, for those who were interested in those kinds of things," said Fessant.

After looking at what Eastern had to offer in ways of student media production, Fessant was pointed in the direction of The Agency, the student-run public relations firm on campus. Though members of The Agency lacked experience in videography and production, they accepted the project as a learning experience, and did the job pro bono.

In a preliminary meeting with Fessant and Marion Pate—Fessant's manager and

mother—Agency staffmember Zach Nugent and Agency Directors Katrina Zaret and Matt Kelly let Fessant know that they lacked experience. Since Fessant seemed OK with that fact, the project went ahead as scheduled.

Fessant chose the song "Just Like Emilee" off her al-

bum Release for the video, a song she wrote for and about her cousin with cerebral palsy. It was important to her that The Agency members filmed Emilee for the video.

"They captured her and to me that was the greatest gift they could have given her," Fessant said. "I don't think they realized that they changed a life; they changed Emilee's life."

The crew visited several locations in Paris, Ill., while filming the video. At one location, Kelly had the idea to give Emilee the camera to film a run through of the song from her perspective.

"Giving her the camera seemed like a cool idea," Kelly said. "It was something she had never done before."

"I got the impression from Amanda that Emilee was never really given the opportunity to prove herself, that she was able to do all of these things," said Zaret.

Filming had gone relatively smoothly. However, the editing of the nearly six hours of footage did not. Even with Eastern alumna Tasha Brown's help with the editing, the process took a great deal of time.

"We weren't really sure what [Amanda] was looking for," Nugent said. "It was overwhelming for us."

After long hours spent editing the first version of the video, members

of The Agency were proud of the product. But the final product did not meet Fessant's expectations. She was dissatisfied with the fact that the film footage did not seem to match the music.

"It was apparent that there had been some miscommunication between Fessant and The Agency on our level of expertise," Zaret said. "We

thought we had made it clear that we were not well versed in videography."

Nugent and Zaret went back to the drawing board. After a week of intense editing, the second draft was finished.

"A lot of retooling and intensive editing went into the final version before giving it to Amanda," Nugent said. "We moved stuff around and changed shots, and tried to put more shots of Emilee in there."

The end result of this version received more positive feedback. Though, we had been proud of the first one too.

"I was really happy with the second video," said Fessant.

"It was a unique experi-

"I felt like [the video] was an opportunity for them."

—Amanda Fessant

ence," Nugent said. "I'm proud of it."

Nugent called a wrap to the project in late September after the final tapes had been delivered to Fessant. Adviser Terri Johnson said the video was outstanding and the students did a great job.

PRSSA gets practical

Group focuses on development, leadership

By Hannah Plevka

This year, PRSSA plans to try new ideas and add a few new activities.

One of the biggest differences this year will be having more professional speakers and offering workshop sessions.

"Students want more skill development and also want to hear more from pros in the field, not just their professors in the classrooms," said Dr. Brian Sowa, Eastern's PRSSA

co-adviser.

"By bringing in credible speakers, such as our professional PR adviser, Karen Korsgard, and other professionals such as Richard Fox, I hope to excite students about the multiple opportunities the field has to offer and to, of course, network," Kiley O'Brien, Eastern's PRSSA chapter president said.

Even though she is graduating in December, O'Brien

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Come to

PRSSA
Public Relations
Student Society
of America

Time: 6 p.m.

When: select Mondays

Where: Union—Effingham Room

Want to know more?

Contact:

Kiley O'Brien, kiobri@yahoo.com

Or Matt Kelly, mwkelly@eiu.edu

and research in public relations are strong.

Gill teaches three different courses—Public Relations in Society, Advocacy and Message Design and Public Relations Techniques.

Gill's wife Elizabeth is also a part of Eastern's communication studies department. Although the two work in the same department, they teach

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different subjects.

"It's wonderful to have someone who completely understands your work," she said. "We frequently bounce ideas off one another for both teaching and research."

Gill said one of the main reasons he chose to teach at Eastern was because of the balance between teaching and research at the university.

Gill enjoys his role as a teacher, and as of now, he has no plans to stop teaching.

"I can't ever see myself deciding to be a consultant full-time or a PR person full-time," he said. "That's not to say that it would never happen in the future. I would say though as of today, this is what I'm going to do."

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plans to institute different workshops that will continue throughout the year that include professional networking, PR résumés, and more.

PRSSA will continue its work with the Children's Advocacy Center in the spring. However, members decided that they wanted to try more than just fundraising.

Members want to try more with the promotion of education about CAC—possibly work on a public relations campaign that includes one large fundraiser, said Matt Kelly, Eastern's PRSSA vice president.

Katrina Zaret, publicity chair, makes most of the fliers for PRSSA. She said that the design is a bit different this year.

"As an exec. board, we decided that clipart didn't give us the look we were aiming for—professional," said Zaret. "I also make it a point to add that new members are welcome."

PRSSA membership is open to all individuals interested in a career in public relations.

Flier distribution will be expanded, as well. Look for fliers in academic buildings other than Coleman Hall and Buzzard Building, residence halls, and even in the Union.

PRSSA meets on select Mondays at 6 p.m. in the Ebbingham Room of the Marin Luther King Jr. University Union.



PRSSA members (L-R) Rachel McConnell, Katrina Zaret, Adviser Dr. Brian Sowa, Matt Kelly and Adviser Terri Johnson pose with Alice Irvin (center). Irvin gave a presentation on conducting Online survey research to the Central Illinois chapter of PRSA following the suggestion of Kelly, vice president of EIU PRSSA.



Eastern alumna Emily Rousch, former EIU PRSSA vice president, joins Kelly, Zaret and McConnell at the Central Illinois PRSA chapter meeting in Decatur.

General Information

This is the official publication for public relations students at Eastern Illinois University.

Printed in the Journalism Office of the Buzzard Building.

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