

# The Relay

a publication for PR students

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## Fleishman-Hillard Vice President advises Eastern students

By Cory Dimitrakopoulos

April's installment of the Fox-Thornburgh Visiting Professional program brought senior vice president of the international public relations firm Fleishman-Hillard and Eastern journalism alumna, Dana Hughens, to Eastern the week of April 13 – 18.

The program is designed to connect Eastern journalism alumni who have pursued successful careers in the field or other professionals with current journalism and communication studies students.

Hughens, a 1993 journalism graduate, spent her second visit to Eastern upon graduation speaking to journalism classes as well as PR Registered Student Organizations, including the Public Relations Student Society of America and The Agency, of which Hughens is a founding member.

"I feel as though I got a fantastic education here at Eastern," Hughens said. "I had a lot of access to my professors who were not only educators, but many of them professionals, too."

At both the PRSSA and The Agency meetings she visited,



*Dana Phelps Hughens, EIU alumna, currently serves as a senior vice president for Fleishman-Hillard. She recently served as the Fox-Thornburgh Visiting Professional.*

*Photo by Taylor Thompson*

Hughens spoke to members about topics ranging from how to have a successful interview to ways to use the current social media.

"The advice she gave about what to wear and how to act throughout the entire interview process really stood out to me. She offered some insight I had never heard before, which was great," Kelsey Karstrand, a sophomore journalism major, said.

Hughens also touched on a few "realities" of the current PR field. "Public relations can be a very rewarding profession when you do succeed. Today,

we have to be smarter with clients' money, use it more wisely. We want to see them through this [economic] time and make sure they stay with us.

"Public relations costs less than other areas of communication," she added. "A lot more can be done with \$1 million in public relations than in advertising. Because of this, we are seeing a blurring of the lines [among communication fields]."

Hughens' first-hand insight into the current state of the PR field offered students informa-

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"Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some hire PR officers."

— Daniel J. Boorstin

# Fox named Alumnus of the Year

By Amanda Smith

Richard Fox, an Eastern Illinois University graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Business degree, has been selected as the 2008 Journalism Alumnus of the Year.

To qualify for the Alumnus of the Year award, an individual must be a graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a journalism major or minor, or have considerable media experience at Eastern. In addition, he or she must have professional experience and a well-known reputation in journalism or a related field. The individual must continue to aid the journalism department or student media programs once they have graduated.

Fox began the first marketing and public relations department for southern New Jersey's largest county-sponsored healthcare facility. He also managed a \$1

million marketing budget and connected marketing, advertising, sales and public functions. He supervised a staff of seven people for a proprietary private psychiatric facility serving four states.

Fox could not choose his favorite job. He believes there is a similarity between what gives him the greatest professional and personal satisfaction. Fox has set up three healthcare facilities and enjoys seeing facility improvements.

"I think if I were to look at the evolution of my career, it has seen the growth from journalism to marketing and to marketing communications. It wasn't so much a matter of just communicating what an organization was doing but looking at target audiences and the needs of the various public," Fox said.

Besides his professional achievements, Fox has re-



*Richard Fox, the 2008 Alumnus of the Year, speaks to Amy Foster at an Agency meeting. Fox advises students about their future careers in PR.*

ceived more than 25 awards. The Public Relations Society of America - Philadelphia Chapter, American Society

for Healthcare Marketing and Public Relations, Hospital As-

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hosted by the college of arts and humanities  
for more information visit: [www.eiu.edu/~festival](http://www.eiu.edu/~festival)  
or e-mail: [decrews@eiu.edu](mailto:decrews@eiu.edu)  
or call: 217-581-2113

# celebration

a festival of the arts  
rain or shine, on the campus of Eastern Illinois University  
May 1, 2 and 3  
the fun begins Friday, at 11:30 a.m.  
amazing art and craft sale  
great music  
fantastic food

be there or, well, be dry

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tion they had not heard in the past.

"Her presentation to The Agency got me more excited about entering the public relations career field," Kelly Kawa, senior communication studies major, said. "She opened our eyes a bit to the numerous areas of public relations we as students can pursue. It was exciting to hear."

Throughout her visit to Eastern, Hughes used many of her personal experiences to ready students to enter the professional world of PR. "Think about your natural gifts and talents and how you can translate those into your professional setting," Hughes said. "And be able to define public relations."

# Publicity specialist wants to get WEIU word out

By Barbara Harrington

Ke'an Armstrong said she does not want WEIU to be the community's best-kept secret.

"That's really what my job is, to get the word out through all the means and contacts that I can," said Armstrong, WEIU's publicity promotions specialist. "That's what I enjoy."

Armstrong is in charge of external promotion for the PBS

station's programs, events and activities. To keep the community aware of what is going on at WEIU, she sends out promotions and press releases to media throughout the area.

She also supervises the station's Web site and works with educational services on programs for low-income, low-literacy families.

"I just like working with partner organizations and tell-

ing them about what services WEIU offers and promoting what our students do and where they excel and what they've done for the station," Armstrong said.

In order to ensure WEIU can keep offering and promoting programs to the community, Armstrong said she is also responsible for writing grants. The station received three grants for its My Source initiative, which recently won a national award.

"We went into the community and found local ambassadors who were passionate about WEIU and what we provided and gave testimonial spots," Armstrong said. The promotions can be seen on WEIU.

Those who work with Armstrong said she is not only a fun and energetic person to have at the station, but she also wants the best for WEIU.

"She is always more than willing to help us out anyway she can," said Zach Nugent, a senior journalism major and WEIU News Watch volunteer.

Although she has many responsibilities at WEIU, Armstrong also finds time to serve as board president of the Coles County Meth Awareness Co-

alition. The coalition focuses on educating the public about methamphetamine abuse, as well as other types of substance abuse.

Armstrong said one of the coalition's big projects is an annual leadership summit. This year's summit will focus on young people and is being held April 23.

Before going into publicity and promotions, Armstrong said she was an art teacher for almost five years. During her time teaching, she became interested in graphic design and decided to pursue a master's degree at the University of Illinois Springfield. Two weeks after graduation, she got the job at WEIU.

"It's nice because this (job) combines my previous degree with my master's and encompasses all of my interests," Armstrong said.

After working at WEIU for nearly eight years, Armstrong said she has some advice for students looking to pursue a career in public relations.

"You really need to know who you're working for and how to explain it to the community," she said. "And find a balance between life and work."



*Ke'an Armstrong works as WEIU's publicity promotions specialist. She is in charge of external programs for the PBS station's programs, events and activities.*

*Photo by Barbara Harrington*

## From Fox, pg. 2

sociation of Pennsylvania, and New Jersey Hospital Association have recognized him. One in particular was awarded for bringing healthcare on site for hospitals. Other awards include communication awards, usually for printed pieces such as brochures and newsletters.

Fox has contributed to Eastern in many ways. He founded and continues to fund the Fox-Thornburgh Visiting Professionals Fund. Fox contributes

to the fund financially and professionally. He has served as a guest speaker for journalism classes for the past two years. When he visits campus, he addresses journalism and PR classes and advises students individually to meet their needs.

"I find it beneficial to share some of the real world experiences with students," Fox said.

Cory Dimitrakopoulos of The Agency, said, "He has come to a few of the Agency meet-

ings. The last time he came he talked about the workplace. Fox talked a lot about public relations as an industry as a whole, current PR trends and what we as journalism students should expect. Everything he says is so credible because he's been out there in the workforce."

James Tidwell, journalism department chair said, "He really shows an appreciation of what Eastern Illinois University has given him. I cannot believe the drive and energy that he has. He would talk to

students individually, some for up to 30 minutes, giving advice on résumés and other work. We worked him almost to death, but he seemed to just really enjoy all of it."

Fox currently serves on the editorial boards for some of the largest newspapers in southern New Jersey. He is also a member of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

Fox is very active with church activities and enjoys taking half a dozen vacations throughout the year.





*This year, members of The Agency gained experience working with Eastern's Athletic Department, C.A.R.E. and the Children's Advocacy Center. The graduating seniors include, from left, Taylor Thompson, Christina Guadiana, Ellen Canale, Kelly Kawa, Cory Dimitrakopoulos, Hannah Plevka, Danielle Scott and Ashley Mefford.*

*Photo by Kelsey Karstrand*

# The Agency says farewell, good luck to eight graduating seniors

*By Katie Gregory*

The Agency, Eastern Illinois University's student-run public relations organization, has put much effort and hard work into the various campaigns it ran this year.

The Agency's executive board and other participating members worked with the Coles County Animal Rescue and Education Center, the Children's Advocacy Center and EIU's Athletic Department.

In a few short weeks, the 2008-2009 school year will be over and seniors, Cory Dimitrakopoulos, Christina Guadiana, Ashley Mefford, Danielle Scott, Hannah Plevka, Taylor Thompson, Kelly Kawa, and Ellen Canale will graduate.

## **Cory Dimitrakopoulos**

Cory Dimitrakopoulos, a journalism major, is student di-

rector of The Agency, and she has been a member for three years. As student director, she reaches out and connects potential clients around campus and in the Charleston area. Dimitrakopoulos also creates and heads the team to put student-run campaigns into effect.

She earned the Roy K. Wilson Public Relations Scholarship and Outstanding Public Relations Student 2008-2009.

She plans to stay around Chicago after graduation and begin work at a boutique firm.

## **Christina Guadiana**

Christina Guadiana is a journalism major and editor of *The Journalist*. She has been a member for two years.

Through The Agency, Guadiana has worked with the Coles County Animal Rescue and Education Center, raising awareness and making educa-

tional materials for them. On campus, she was a member of ROTC for two years and is a member of the Society of Collegiate Journalists.

Guadiana has been on the Dean's List, a member of Kappa Tau Alpha and has an internship at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in the public relations department.

After graduation, Guadiana hopes to find a PR job in Illinois working in a non-profit or healthcare setting.

## **Danielle Scott**

Danielle Scott is a communications studies major with a PR option. She is a co-editor of *The Relay*, and has been with The Agency for two years.

Scott is also the treasurer of Eastern's Public Relations Students Society of America Dan Thornburgh chapter. She has been on the Dean's List and is a

member of Lambda Pi Eta.

After graduation, Scott plans on finding a job in PR or event planning.

## **Hannah Plevka**

Hannah Plevka, co-editor of *The Relay*, is a journalism major with a concentration in PR and a minor in advertising. Plevka has been a part of The Agency for four years.

Plevka is also a member of NRHH, RHA, and New Student Programs. She was awarded the Richard G. Enochs Housing Scholarship in 2008.

Following graduation, Plevka plans to attend graduate school at Illinois State University for student affairs.

## **Ashley Mefford**

Ashley Mefford, journalism major, is editor of *The Wavelength*. She has been a part of

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# Five PRSSA members prepare for graduation

By Katie Gregory

The Public Relations Student Society of America is preparing to say good-bye to five of its executive board seniors who are preparing to graduate.

This year PRSSA worked hard to campaign and raise awareness for the American Red Cross, for which they held a benefit concert to raise funds for disaster relief.

Katrina Zaret, Laura Gebhardt, Danielle Scott, Whitney Elders and Lauren Meuth are preparing for graduation and their careers. They plan to use their PRSSA experiences to help them succeed after graduation.

## Katrina Zaret

As historian, Katrina Zaret recorded volunteer hours and took photos of guest speakers at events.

Besides PRSSA, Zaret is a part of the Society for Collegiate Journalists and a writer for Minority Today. She holds the Mary Kelly-Durkin Agency Scholarship.

Zaret is going to look for a real job after graduation.

## Laura Gebhardt

Laura Gebhardt, co-program chair, coordinates speakers to come to PRSSA meetings, and she helps make decisions with the executive board.

Along with PRSSA, Gebhardt has written articles for

Pounce Online. She also acquired an internship through Eastern's event planning department.

Gebhardt will be working with the Kane County Cougar's minor league baseball team following graduation.

## Danielle Scott

Danielle Scott is the treasurer.

Scott is also a member of The Agency, a student-run public relations organization, and editor of The Relay.

Scott is on the Dean's List and a member of Lambda Pi Eta.

Following graduation, Scott plans to find a job in PR or events planning.

## Whitney Elders

Whitney Elders, National Liaison, represents Eastern's chapter at the National Conference and reports current issues in PR.

Elders plans to find a job at the federal or state level working with PR.

## Lauren Meuth

Lauren Meuth is a first year member of PRSSA and secretary. As secretary, she organized and updated the membership through minutes and announcements for the chapter.

After graduation, Meuth plans on moving back to her hometown of St. Louis and is planning to pursue a career in PR.



The PRSSA Executive Board coordinated the "Heroes Rock" benefit concert for the American Red Cross. Executive Board member included, front, from left, Katrina Zaret, Kyle Collom, Elizabeth Morin, and back row, Megan Scharf, Danielle Scott, Laura Gebhardt, Leah Vaughn, Lauren Meuth, Danyelle Parker and advisers Terri Johnson and Dr. Brian Sowa.

## 2009-2010 Executive Board

### President:

Tara Rosenbaum

### Vice President:

Elizabeth Morin

### Secretary:

Megan Risenbigler

### Treasurer: open

### Programs:

Jillian Filippi

### Fundraising:

Danyelle Parker

### Webmaster: open

### National Liaison:

Tony Curcuru

# Dr. Brian Sowa researches PR management for book

By Danielle Scott

Public relations management, corporate branding and PR ethics are major topics Dr. Brian Sowa, professor at Eastern Illinois University, researches in the field of PR. Sowa currently researches PR management by tying relevant information back to stakeholder groups for a book.

For this project, Sowa is working with other PR professors including Eastern Professor Tim Coombs, University of Houston Professor Bob Heath, Illinois State University Professor Jeff Courtright and Syracuse University Professor Shannon Bowen.

When researching PR management, Sowa and the team research PR ethics, international PR and crisis communication. In each of these areas, organizations need to learn how to manage their relationships with their stakeholders, Sowa said.

"This book can be used as a reference or textbook for PR management classes. We are

hoping it will lead to PR management classes at both Eastern and other universities. It is recommended by the Commission on Public Relations Education as a possible elective option for a PR major program," Sowa said.

From the initial stages to publication, research projects can take professors and their teams, on average, two to three years to complete, Sowa said.

During the initial stages, professors choose a topic in which they are interested. Sowa chooses topics based on his passion and interest. Then, they contact publishers to set up a contract for their work, whether it is a book, chapter or paper.

To research a topic, professors critically analyze the topic by determining their perspective based on experiences.

For Sowa, the majority of his work has been published. Only one out of five of his projects are not published.

If his work is rejected, he can do some shopping around. Sometimes, other publishers

may be interested in the work. Often his research is presented at academic conferences.

Besides learning about the selected topic, Sowa has also learned how to be patient and manage his time. While working on research projects or with others, Sowa emphasized the importance of being patient with those you are working with, including publishers and other contributors.

To ensure he has time to work on research projects, Sowa allots approximately 16 to 20 hours per week to work on various projects. Not only does Sowa have research days on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but he also works on some research on the weekends. During this time, he limits his distractions by closing the Internet.

For students, Sowa suggests closing other social media, too, such as Facebook and Twitter.

"The most flattering compliment anyone can receive for his work is when people see your work and seek you," Sowa said.

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The Agency for two years.

Mefford also has worked with *The Daily Eastern New*, *The Warbler*, *AMP Magazine*, and *The Relay* over her past four years at Eastern.

After graduation, she plans on finding a job in the reporting or editing field.

### Taylor Thompson

Taylor Thompson, a journalism major with a concentration in photojournalism, works as a photographer for The Agency. This is Thompson's first semester with The Agency and he also

works for Pounce Online.

After graduation, Thompson hopes to work for a large company such as CAT or State Farm in the visual department.

### Kelly Kawa

Kelly Kawa, a communication studies major, is a publicity chair. This is her first year with The Agency.

Kawa is a PRSSA member and studied abroad in Australia doing PR work during fall 2008. After graduation, Kawa will attend graduate school at Eastern.

### Ellen Canale

Ellen Canale is a communication studies major. She is also a publicity chair for The Agency and helps inform others of the campaigns. She has been a member for the spring 2009 semester.

Canale is a member of Eastern women's basketball team and recently has been invited the Communication Studies Awards Banquet.

After graduation Canale hopes to find a political internship or PR job. She is also considering attending graduate school.

## General Information

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

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