

Alum wears ‘many hats’ on job

By Josh Van Dyke

As the director of publicity for the College of Arts and Humanities at Eastern Illinois University, Dan Crews describes himself as a man who must wear many hats. His job requires him to do a variety of activities that may cause stress to most people, but Crews goes at it with a smile.

“I’ve never seen him flustered or angry or upset,” said Philosophy Department Chair Jonelle DePetro.

Crews is in charge of coordinating publicity materials for departments on campus. The art, communication studies, English, foreign language, journalism, music, philosophy and theater departments all benefit from his assistance. If one has read a press release or pamphlet from a department on campus, chances are good it was the work of Crews.

Crews is also in charge of the Illinois Board of Higher Education Co-Operative Work Study program, which helps students obtain internships and then helps pay half their salaries. In fact, half of the money from the Illinois Board of Higher Education was spent

on students’ salaries.

On Crews’ cabinet is a plaque given to him “for outstanding achievement” in research and grants. His efforts have brought \$1.5 million to Eastern Illinois University.

The job is certainly a far cry from teaching high school history, which Crews originally wanted to pursue as a career. The fact that there were so many history teachers—making jobs difficult to find—helped persuade Crews to switch to writing TV news.

During his last semester at Eastern in 1984, Crews worked as an intern at WTWO News Channel 2, which is based in Terre Haute, Ind.

After working at WTWO for three years he started a new job at a Fortune 500 company and then a radio station for a year each. A conversation with an old friend from Eastern brought him back to the university.

A project that Crews is more directly involved in is the Spring Arts Festival Celebration, an annual event on Eastern’s campus. The festival will provide artists from campus and all over the Midwest a chance to show their work to the public from April 27-29.

“When you’ve got a project that [Crews] takes on, you don’t have to worry about it,” says Dr. Mark Borzi, chair of the communications studies department. “He has a love for the university.”

‘I’ve never seen him flustered or angry or upset’

*—Philosophy
Department Chair
Jonelle DePetro*



Dan Crews graduated from Eastern with a BA in journalism and speech communication in 1984. He received his master’s in 1984 in history. He is married and has three children: Nathan, Landen and Emily. His hobbies include woodworking, landscaping, traveling and learning about history.

Shadowing for a day changes future

By Katrina Zaret

When Danielle Neal found a sports externship at Eastern's Career Services, she jumped at the chance to shadow a public relations professional from her favorite baseball team, the St. Louis Cardinals.

Neal did not shadow a professional from the St. Louis Cardinals organization, but rather the St. Louis Rams professional football team. Even though she was slightly disappointed that she was not able to shadow her first-choice team, Neal used her day shadowing Artis Tyman, a PR professional for the St. Louis Rams, to her advantage.

"I think it worked out for the best because the Rams were in season and I really enjoyed my experience and got a taste of what it would

The publications were mainly for the media, but there was also the program that people could buy at games.

Throughout the day, Neal was able to speak with other people in the public relations department to see how their jobs were different from each other's. She also toured the building, which was the practice stadium, and watched the Rams practice to make sure the

"(I) consumed so much information in one day."

—Danielle Neal

media only viewed what they were allowed to.

"After practice, I helped Samantha (an intern) tape the quotes the coaches gave to the media.... Then we typed the quotes for Artis and the media that were not present, and that was it," Neal said about the latter half of her day.

Neal learned about the workings of a PR department within professional sports.

"The PR department works seven days a week during the season, and at least two PR professionals travel with the team to away games... They have to leave a day or two early to make sure everything is ready for the team, such as the hotel and security. It is a very time-consuming job during the season," Neal said.

At the end of the day Neal was "very tired" and said that she had "consumed so much information in one day."

However, she was also slightly confused. "I really thought this was the type of PR I wanted to do, but now I think that it would be fun for a couple of years.... When it comes time to have a family, this is not the type of job that really allows that," she said.

Neal recommends her experience to others because it "helps you decide if that is really what you want to do."

"I think if other students know what field they want to work in, but are not sure what aspect of it they want to work, this (experience) could definitely help," Neal said.



Danielle Neal sits with the public relations professionals from the St. Louis Rams organization.

be like to work for a professional sports team in-season, which is when you are the busiest," Neal said.

Artis Tyman gave Neal a rundown of the daily experiences in his job and showed her the publications his department is responsible for.

Sports interns to double this fall

By Matt Kelly

Eastern students interested in the other side of sports have something to get excited about. Next year, the sports information office covering all Eastern's 22 Division 1 sports will offer a new kind of internship for students — in the coveted, dynamic field of sports public relations.

Journalism Professor Terri Johnson and new sports information Director Rich Moser created the internship to provide experience opportunities to students.

Moser said it will give students an opportunity to build both a résumé and a well-rounded base in public relations.

"I know a lot of people in sports won't hire somebody without experience. This way, they did some work in Division 1 and they have some skills and experience," Moser said.

Moser, who has worked with popular media outlets like ESPN, USA Today and The New York Times, is letting students work in the sports information office this semester as a trial run for next year.

"The long-term goal is to have three interns for an entire year and get a year's worth of credit," Moser said. "They would be members of my staff. That would be a goal for next year."

The three intern additions in the fall will double the current sports information staff.

He said the technological effects on the business have also allowed him to spend more time at home, but the profession is still a big time commitment.

"We try to rotate Sundays around. You're definitely doing more than 40 hours a week, but you're not necessarily doing 60-80 hours a week anymore. It really depends on the season," Moser said.

Ben Turner, one of two assistant sports information directors and assistant Web master, believes technological proficiency will give new public relations graduates an edge.

"Being able to design Web sites is huge," he said. "It's a new world—you have to be able to do that."

The assistant director said that once the interns establish their skills in the office, he will give them tasks to perform.

These interns may never run out of things to do.

"You name it, I do it," Turner said. "Stat writing, media guide design ... My primary duties would be designing media guides, writing post-game stories and game notes, keeping stats at games. Specifically, I do soccer, baseball and softball, solo."

"Also I'm the P.A. announcer for baseball, soccer, volleyball... a little bit of everything. I throw a little bit of Web site updating in there as well... It keeps me busy."

These are only a third of the tasks performed by Eastern's sports information department.

Turner said no day repeats itself in sports information and prospective professionals need to be able to perform several tasks.

"I think the more versatile you are, the more valuable you are in this profession," he said.

Travel and work variety attracted Danielle Neal, senior journalism and sociology major, to sports public relations.

One of six current interns, she has already had two professional internships—both at WCIA television

"The long-term goal is to have three interns for an entire year and get a year's worth of credit,"

— Rich Moser, sports information director



Senior Taylor Frawley is one of three interns for the sports information office at Eastern this year.

See Sports Page 4

Student's first-hand account:

Networking with PR professionals

By Angie Taylor

In February, Eastern Illinois University's PRSSA chapter informed members of an opportunity to attend the annual PRO-AM Day in St. Louis. The PR Club and department of communication at St. Louis University played host to students and public relations professionals in informative sessions that prepared students to succeed in the PR field.

I jumped at the chance to attend. This was the first time I'd gone to a seminar that was directed toward my specific career interests. Don't get me wrong – Communication Day was no doubt a success this year – but here I was mingling with students in the same concentration as me.

On Friday, Feb. 23, PRO-AM Day began with a general session where specialists addressed tips for success for students. The panel included professionals from Weber Shandwick and Fleishman-Hillard—two of the largest PR agencies in the country—Harris-Stowe University, and BJC Healthcare. They suggested ways to make yourself marketable to potential employers, such as résumé tips, internships and classes relevant to PR work.

Next, attendees filed into two rounds of "Break-Out" sessions where students could choose from six different branches of public relations. The first

round included event planning, new media or PR & media relations. The second round included topics of crisis communication, nonprofit PR, and sports PR to choose from. After listening to professionals speak about their organizations and day-to-day tasks, I was ecstatic.

The best part of the day was actually meeting and shaking hands with potential employers. This opportunity was given during lunch, when students and practitioners ate and shared tables together. Students were encouraged to network, and network I did. I was a little nervous about the ordeal at 8 a.m., but after building up excitement during the sessions, I was ready for almost anything! I met some very interesting men and women with plenty of advice to give and stories to tell. I was all smiles and barely touched my plate (which was great eating, by the way).

Students also had the opportunity to have our résumés reviewed by members of PRSA or participate in mock interviews. We then were able to tour either Fleishman-Hillard/St. Louis or Weber Shandwick.

I was a little surprised only four Eastern students attended the event; however, most students were from schools in the St. Louis Area. I am so happy I had the opportunity to meet some of the best in the Midwest at PRO-AM Day this year. After the nerves faded away, I was able to shake hands with experts. I'm just hoping they remember me when I schedule interviews in December!



The Relay, the monthly newsletter for EIU PR students created by **The Agency**, a student-run public relations agency.

Editors: Ashley Mefford & Angela Pham

Agency Director: Katrina Zaret

Assistant Director: Danielle Neal

Adviser: Terri Johnson, ABC, APR

To contact Ashley or Angela with story ideas or to contribute to *The Agency*, e-mail
almefford@eiu.edu or
ampham@eiu.edu.



Sports continued Page 3

station in Champaign, Ill. She participated in an externship with the St. Louis Rams NFL football team last Christmas break.

After working there, she decided the time commitment in the sports field was not for her.

"Most of those guys work seven days a week during the season," Neal said.

Former Eastern sports information Director Dave Kidwell used to allow students to work in the office in a less formal internship. Moser said this internship will be structured in a more professional way.

He has advice for any students interested in the field.

"If you're interested into getting into some sort of athletics, there are tons of internship opportunities like we have here. You don't have to work for a pro team," Kidwell said. "The main thing is to get your foot in the door by getting experience somewhere. There are lots of avenues for PR and journalism out there not sports-related."