

The Relay

a publication for PR students

What's Inside

page **1, 2, 3**

Eating an Oreo is more complicated than it looks

page **3**

PRSSA members get a glimpse into the PR world

page **4**

Will reform ever come to Illinois Government?

Eating an Oreo is more complicated than it looks

By Ceitie Glenn

Have you ever thought about all of the meticulous tasks that go into eating just one Oreo cookie? Some communication studies students were asked to write down the steps in a hands-on exercise on the tasks in eating just one Oreo cookie. To their surprise it was very involved.

Angela Hosek, candidate for basic course instructor in the communications studies department and University of Nebraska at Lincoln Ph.D. candidate, guest lectured for organizational communications classes on Dec. 2.

The purpose of "A Glimpse Into the Training and Development Process" lecture given by Hosek was to educate students on the preparations that go into putting together a training and development program for a major company.

The lecture was important to students because of its relevancy to their future careers.

"Most of the students in this field of study will most likely end up working in the human relations field where they will be interviewing and training employees," stated Hosek in her lecture.



Oreo cookies were used to facilitate discussions on the processes of completing a full length task analysis.

Image courtesy of Google images.

According to the guest lecturer, in order to have a successful training program one should follow a "Needs-Centered Model."

This model seeks to develop a program to set out the specific tasks and information an employee will need to do job and develop the skills to do a job more efficiently.

"The secret to training is to tell the trainees what the skill is, show them the task, ask them to help participate and finally encourage them to do the job and correct them along the way," said Hosek.

The "Needs-Centered Model" works to create a critical analysis of the exact processes that will work for the employee-training program and also include all situations that may occur while training that employee.

This as the point in the lecture where student audience members were given an Oreo cookie to eat and asked to write down every step they took to eat the cookie in an outline format.

See Oreo, pg 2

United Airlines PR director speaks

Jean Wright Medina, managing director of external communications at United Airlines, discussed her job and her handling of crises at a PRSSA meeting in November. A Fox-Thornburgh visiting professional in the journalism department, she oversees global media relations, public relations, crisis communications, and the company's in-flight magazine. She also lectured in various classes across campus and met with students. Students also heard how United Airlines uses social media.



Photo by Mike Leon

From Oreo, pg. 1

Students then paired up to compare their outlines.

The purpose of the exercise was to see how everyone's lists might be different and that is why it is important to do an extensive, researched task analysis before a training session.

"Importance of consistency is necessary so all members have the same methods for conflict management," advised Hosek.

Some other components to have a successful task analysis is to talk about tasks in behavioral terms and changing up stimulus every 90 minutes.

Yet the most important and the basis of analysis is to "immerse" yourself in research

about every possible situation that could come about.

You might be asking yourself how do you know when to stop analyzing? This process sounds like it goes on forever.

"Some of my critical analysis can be up to 15 to 20 pages long," admitted Hosek.

She said that the key to knowing when to stop is to consider the situation of the trainee.

"You need to look at development as learning skills that are larger than the individual," advised Hosek.

A faculty audience member then asked, "How do you do an analysis when you have many multi-cultural trainees that may

view active listening differently?"

"This is where you do even more extensive research on the different cultural differences in a session," replied Hosek.

As most students who have taken organizational communications classes may know, it is important to be clear in the communications and conflict management styles across the whole company so that every one is on the same page.

The second part of the lecture dealt with the importance of being an active listener when participating in a training and development session.

Some attributes that were volunteered by student audi-

ence members and faculty audience members were to keep eye contact, give non-verbal cues, give verbal cues by paraphrasing in content and in emotions.

These attributes are important for a training session facilitator to know also so that they know that their session is working successfully and effectively.

This "glimpse" into the processes of creating a training and development lecture enlightened many students and faculty members all with about 20 Oreo cookies, a pencil, and a sheet of paper.

PRSSA members shadow Indy pros

By Cara Fumagalli

How to give the perfect pitch to get media coverage is valuable knowledge that any public relations professional would like to know.

At Half Day with a Pro more than 100 college students traveled to Indianapolis to experience the world of PR first hand.

The event was hosted by Public Relations Society of America's Hoosier chapter which promoted an inside perspective of the life of a PR professional.

Each student was matched with a specific type of a public relations organization either an agency, corporation or non-profit. Within the three organizations PR professionals are utilized to execute a variety of tasks to communicate to the public.

Participating students went to their organization where PR sponsors gave tours, advice and explained job responsibilities.

Sara Boro, junior communication studies major, shadowed at the NCAA facility and witnessed how the organization functions in regards to public relations.

"I gained the perspective of how to utilize PR in a different atmosphere," Boro said.

Boro's unique opportunity allowed her to understand how the governing body of over 400,000 college athletes promotes sporting events, works with the press and the college teams.

Other students visited the Indiana Historical Society and witnessed the nonprofit side to public relations. PR and me-



Sara Boro and Cara Fumagalli enjoyed lunch while visiting with PR professionals and other members of PRSSA from different universities.
Photo by Terri Johnson

dia relations work at Indiana Historical Society provided an example of an organization with employees who have true passion for their job. Students enjoyed learning about the different outlets in which PR is used to reach with the public. PR agencies and corporations also hosted.

Later in the afternoon, students and professionals enjoyed lunch as they listened to a panel from *The Indianapolis Star*; the 26th largest news provider in the United States. The panel included senior editors Jenny Green and Steve Berta and columnist Cathy Kightlinger.

Topics covered provided advice for future PR professionals to take in consideration when working with the press.

According to the panel the perfect pitch is a detailed e-mail with all necessary, accurate information. The e-mail is then followed up with a phone call one day later. The panel described how e-mail is an ideal way to find out about news coverage because it is efficient and saves time.

Another important aspect of working with the media is allowing for enough lead-time, with exclusives so news staff can get access to graphics or photos.

Also, the panel mentioned how most of the time at *The Star*, staff is seeking news with value that will appeal to their readers' interests.

The panel provided insight into a world where time is mon-

ey. Since PR professionals and the media are in constant communication, creating the bridge to meet the gap between the different outlets is a key aspect to their success.

Overall, Half Day with a Pro was a great opportunity for college students to get a quick glimpse into the professional world, Prof. Terri Johnson, journalism, said..

The Indianapolis trip allowed students to network with professionals and gain valuable knowledge about their future careers.

Any chance to talk to professionals in your field of interest provides a worthwhile experience that can be helpful for landing a job after college, Johnson added.

Will reform ever come to Illinois government?

By Amanda Smith

Illinois residents know that the state's political structure is sensitive and fragile after so many setbacks.

A year has passed since Illinoisans have come to terms with former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's betrayal, just when they were getting over Gov. George Ryan's.

One more political scandal boiling over could push Illinois over the brink. James Merriner, at his lecture in Lumpkin Nov. 12, addressed the problems that Illinois politics are facing.

Merriner graduated magna cum laude from Harvard. He worked as a political editor, columnist and editor for the *Chicago Sun Times* as well as the *Atlanta Constitution*.

Merriner has been covering national politics since the 1976 presidential campaign between former Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. He also worked as an editor, where he saw and experienced many interesting things.

Merriner is the author of five books: *The Man Who Emptied Death Row*, *Grafters and Goo Goo's*, *Mr. Chairman: Power in Dan Rostenkowski's America*, *Against Long Odds: Citizens Who Challenge Congressional Incumbents* and *The City Club of Chicago: A Centennial History*.

Merriner addressed the problem of so many politicians being indicted. Every week it seems that another politician is being arrested and charged with some charge, he said.

Every politician that Merriner has been around while they have been arrested has told him that if they really want to, people can come to get him.

"Former Gov. Ryan didn't



James Merriner, who recently spoke at Eastern, is a former journalist who has done extensive research and has covered many of the recent cases of corruption involved in Illinois politics. Photo courtesy of jamesmerriner.com

say that to me, but the people in his orbit said that to me," said Merriner. Things that politicians were doing today would not have gotten them arrested, 10 or even 20 years ago.

This is because of the growing concern of criminalizing politics, says Merriner.

Politicians these days are so scared about getting indicted that they don't talk to each other anymore. Gov. Ryan actions changed the way that things were done in Springfield, when he got indicted.

Now, people are more scared because of what happened to former Gov. Blagojevich. According to Merriner, all politicians use the same defense: "The same defense is, that 'Everybody did what I did.'" The problem is over-regulating and over-prosecuting.

He also discussed a government bill circulating in Illinois for the first time. This bill would limit campaign contributions.

The question that Merriner posed to his audience is if these

limits will actually stop the contributions. Merriner compared campaign contributions to a Wild West kind of atmosphere.

Also being thrown into the mix of politics and corruption are reformists.

"Reformists will keep writing until its right," said Merriner.

The primary issue of the reformists is publicity and public relations. He also mentioned that government is not going to be shrinking, but instead it will be getting bigger.

"It's been an interesting evening all together. I'm glad so many students came out. It's a very important topic to be discussed. The problem of corruption is not a simple one," said history professor Bailey Young, after the lecture.

"I enjoyed hearing his thoughts on corruption," said Sonja Jones, a community member who attended the lecture.

Merriner's visit was part of the Edgar Lecture Series.

General Information

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

Printed in the Journalism Office of the Buzzard Building.

Editor:
Ceitlyn Glenn
cglenn@eiu.edu

Student Director:
Barbara Harrington
Associate Director:
Mike Leon
Faculty Adviser:
Terri Johnson

