

# The Relay

a publication for PR students

## What's Inside

page **2**

3 students attend  
PRSSA National  
Conference

page **3**

Sowa new Central  
Illinois PRSA  
Chapter President

page **4**

Former Agency Di-  
rector now Public  
Affairs Specialist at  
State Farm

page **6**

Piurek's internship  
at Consolidated  
Communications

## Former PR executive from Ford addresses international PR

*By Kyle Piurek*

The increase in technology advancements allows employees to communicate with people from around the world with just the click of a mouse, making international public relations a growing part of the industry.

PR professional Jim Bright said with global communication, the world is truly getting smaller.

Bright addressed the Central Illinois chapter of PRSA about his experience with international PR at Tuscany Steak and Pasta House in Decatur, Oct. 7.

Bright worked in public relations at Ford Motor Co. for 24 years, spending three years with Mazda Motor Corp. in Japan.

In 2000, Mazda, a Japanese subsidiary of Ford, was having a hard time competing with the rest of the vehicles in Japan and Bright was asked to help improve its reputation and sales.

Bright became the first outsider to work PR in Japan for Mazda. He didn't speak any Japanese and had to have a full-time interpreter.

Bright headed up a team of 10 Japanese PR professionals



*Former Executive Director of Ford Motor Co., Jim Bright, speaks to senior communication studies major Ben Percy, left, and senior journalism major Kyle Piurek, right, after addressing the Central Illinois Chapter of PRSA about his international PR experience.*

*Photo by Terri Johnson*

who developed an ad campaign using the slogan many know today, "Zoom Zoom."

He said the phrase picked up quickly in the United States and Canada, but took longer in Japan since it did not translate well.

As part of the campaign to increase Mazda's recognition in Japan and around the world, Mazda spent \$5.5 million on the Mazda Global Road show.

Mazda flew its products to

three cities across the globe including New York City, Frankfurt, Germany, and Tokyo, Japan.

Bright said the media was invited to come see the new products but were told they could only write about them in order to help build up the suspense.

This strategy played a big role in the success of the campaign.

**See Ford pg. 2**

**"The public is the only critic whose opinion is worth anything at all."**

**Mark Twain**

# Three EIU seniors attend the 2010 PRSSA National Conference in D.C.

By Nick Persin

Three members of Eastern's chapter of PRSSA attended the 2010 PRSSA National Conference in Washington, D.C., Oct. 15-19.

The conference gathered more than 1,000 students from all over the country for a week-end of networking, professional development, career preparation and leadership training.

Students attended sessions where they learned about the most exciting communications strategies, tactics and tools currently shaping the field from professionals working in fashion, politics, crisis communication, entertainment and several other fields.

Ben Percy, senior communication studies major, attended his first national conference and said it was an amazing experience.

"Networking with other students and professionals from different universities and firms around was very influential," said Percy.

Percy said he usually attended three sessions a day, some of which were put on by different PRSSA chapters across the nation. Some of the



*EIU Senior PRSSA members attend the 2010 PRSSA National Conference in Washington, D.C. From left, Tara Rosenbaum, president PRSSA, Prof. Terri Johnson, APR, adviser PRSSA and former president of CI PRSA, Ben Percy, member PRSSA, and Kelly Wittenmeier, secretary PRSSA.*  
Photo by Lauren Gray

sessions he attended focused on social media and ethics in the profession.

"My favorite session was put on by Alan Playmakers Systems," said Percy. "The idea behind this session was to standardize the language we use in PR," he added.

Another member PRSSA Chapter President Tara Rosenbaum, also attended the conference and brought back with her a wealth of experience she hopes to share with Eastern's own chapter.

One of the sessions that she attended was about chapter

development and how to get members more involved.

Rosenbaum said she visited with about 10 speakers each day and also got the opportunity to attend the PRSA National Conference across the street.

"It was important to network

See PRSSA pg. 4

## From Ford, pg. 1

Bright also addressed the differences between the PR industry in Japan and in the U.S.

In Japan, PR is a fairly new concept and sometimes Japanese PR professionals tend to lie. Bright had to explain to them how that is unethical.

Bright offered some advice about working in international PR.

He stressed the importance

of respecting other cultures by trying everything about the culture and being polite even if there is something you don't like.

"Don't assume the American or Western way is the best way to do something," said Bright. "Try not to embarrass people, but let them know when they've done a good job."

Bright spoke about the im-

portance of building relationships with different cultures and going out of your way to be nice to people.

He said to make sure not to step out of line, take the time to learn phrases in the native language and to use two-sided business cards, because not everyone speaks or reads English.

Bright said when the opportunity to go abroad knocks,

grab it and take advantage of it.

"A place like Japan on your resume is a huge help and opens up lots of opportunities," he added.

Students looking to work abroad can either try right out of college or through a company. Bright advises students who wish to work abroad to just take the chance and go for it.

# Sowa new Central Illinois PRSA chapter president

By Kelly Wittenmeier

Dr. Brian Sowa was appointed new president of Central Illinois PRSA Chapter in May when former president, Elizabeth Kerns, took a new job in Ellensburg, Wash., as an assistant professor at Central Washington University.

Sowa is a communication studies professor at Eastern and one of the faculty advisers for Eastern's chapter of Public Relations Student Society of America.

Soon after joining PRSA, Sowa was asked to serve on the board.

He served as secretary in 2004, and remained a board member from 2005-2008.

In the fall of 2008, Sowa was nominated and elected president-elect, serving in 2009-2010.

As chapter president, Sowa is responsible for communicating to the members and organizing the four meetings and board planning retreats they have each year.

Because Central Illinois spans the distance from Peoria to Charleston and from Indiana to Missouri, Sowa also hopes to get local members together for networking between membership meetings.

Sowa said he is thrilled about being the new chapter president and will serve more than two years, stepping down in December 2012, when he will serve as immediate past president, an adviser to the new president.

"I appreciate and thank past presidents including Rock Jenkins, Karen Korsgard, Terri Johnson, APR, and Elizabeth Kerns, APR, who have all contributed to my new position," said Sowa.

One of Sowa's main goals for this year is to increase membership. He plans to add a professional workshop and an award ceremony.

"PRSSA adds tremendous value to a student's resume and it gives students experience, especially campaign experience," said Sowa.



*Brian Sowa was appointed new president of Central Illinois PRSA Chapter. He is a communications studies professor at Eastern and one of the faculty advisers for Eastern's chapter of PRSSA.*  
Photos by Terri



"Whether you are a member or on the board, you can take your experiences to job interviews in the future," he added.

Sowa said the benefits of PRSSA and PRSA give others the ability to connect with their peers, both students and practitioners.

With Kerns move to Washington, Prof. Terri Johnson, journalism, will stay on two more years as immediate past-president.

*Brian Sowa and Anne Bright attended the Central Illinois PRSA Chapter dinner at Tuscany Steak House in Decatur. Anne Bright's husband, Jim, spoke about his international experience in PR.*



# Former Agency Director lands position as public affairs specialist at State Farm

By Kyle Piurek

Recently earning his master's degree in public relations from Ball State University, Matt Kelly is thriving as a PR and social media professional.

Kelly, who graduated from Eastern in 2008 with a journalism degree, finished his thesis and received his degree in July.

Kelly works with corporate public affairs for State Farm Insurance on a social media team made up of three others.

State Farm offered Kelly an internship in internal communications while he was finishing his graduate studies at Ball State.

At the end of the internship in summer 2009, Kelly said State Farm hired him full-time.

The social media team Kelly is a part of is in charge of monitoring the various social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, for mentions of State Farm, Kelly said.

If the company is mentioned, Kelly's team must decide whether it's something they should respond to, leave alone or report to customer service.

Along with monitoring social media, Kelly said he and his team also produce multimedia pieces. They put videos on YouTube and upload photos to State Farm's Flickr page.

Kelly said his internship was not the only experience that helped him get to where he is today.

Kelly was the former president of PRSSA and associate director of The Agency while at Eastern.

"PRSSA and The Agency helped me get a job after I graduated," said Kelly. "The writing



Senior journalism major, Kyle Piurek, left, and former Agency Director & PRSSA president, Matt Kelly, right, at a Central Illinois PRSA meeting last year.

Photo by Terri Johnson

experiences put me ahead of a lot of other people."

Kelly said employers don't just want people who have internship experience.

He said it is pretty much required for students to have some sort of familiarity working with student media and being involved in other organizations on campus, he added.

"Make sure to put yourself in the best position possible for after graduation and get as many life experiences as possible so you stand out," said Kelly.

Keeping a good portfolio of the work you have done is another way to help recent graduates stand out at an interview.

Kelly said students should be strategic while preparing a portfolio.

Some people like to put everything they've ever done

in their portfolio, but Kelly said quantity is not necessarily better.

He advises that students keep their portfolio tailored for the type of job in the PR field the student is applying for.

Kelly said that being flexible with what you want to do helps

out a lot.

"Most students don't really know what area of PR they want to work in, so not ruling anything out will help them get experience in a variety of different areas in the field so they can figure out what they like best," said Kelly.

## From PRSSA, pg. 2

and make friendships with different students at the conference so that I have connections later on in my career," said Rosenbaum.

Also attending was Kelly Wittenmeier, senior communication studies major, and Faculty Adviser Terri Johnson, APR, journalism professor.

At the PRSSA awards dinner, Johnson received a certificate for her 13 years as a PRSSA adviser. Johnson serves as chair of the Educator Academy for the Public Relations Society of America and was in charge of several sessions at that conference in her role as chair. She also presented a paper on the changing roles of journalists and public relations professionals.

# PR students bring LA & Mr. Music to Charleston

By Cara Fumagalli

Taking advantage of a unique opportunity to build portfolios and gain professional experience, a group of Eastern's public relations students brought the sounds from Chicago to Charleston.

LA and Mr. Music, a pair of upcoming artists who unite the sounds of R&B, Hip-Hop and dance into high-energy beats, rocked Eastern students on Oct. 14, at the Penalty Box.

The duo known as LA and Mr. Music began combining their musical talents in 2008 and released their first album "What Do You Do?" in 2009.

This summer LA and Mr. Music joined the B96 Pepsi Summer Bash and opened for T-Pain, B.O.B, Ludacris, and Jason Derulo, on a hot streak to the top,

LA and Mr. Music's most recent venture includes "The Billboard Hot 100 Series."

By remixing top billboard songs with their own style, lyrics and rhythm, LA and Mr. Music create an unstoppable sound, Ellie Sternaman, senior communications studies student said.

Invited to Eastern to perform at The Penalty Box by senior communication major Alison Trinkleback, LA and Mr. Music were pleased to perform in their home state.

"We were glad to come to EIU, and we love to perform for college students because they are the most loyal fans," said Mr. Music.

Trinkleback met LA through mutual friends as well as growing up in the same suburb.

"When I heard LA and Mr. Music were performing at colleges around the Midwest I thought it would be a great idea to host an event and bring their talent to Eastern," Trinkleback said.

Keeping graduation in mind, Trinkleback wanted to practice public relations skills by constructing a concert that would work as a portfolio builder as well as promote LA and Mr. Music.

The event attracted almost 300 students to the Penalty Box for a 21 year old and up show featuring Renegade, Eastern's well-known rapper, songwriter as the opening act.



LA and Mr. Music, a pair of upcoming artists that unite the sounds of R&B, Hip-Hop and dance into high-energy beats, rocked Eastern students on Oct. 14, at the Penalty Box.

Photo by Cara Fumagalli

Renegade won Eastern's battle of the bands last spring, Renegade is admired for his intelligent lyrics and stage presence.

"I had an unbelievable time performing, I fed off the crowd's momentum and I enjoyed every moment of it," Renegade said.

After performing for two hours LA and Mr. Music closed the night with their hit single "The Stars" to end their performance.

With their musical versatility and ability to rap, sing, write, play and produce music, LA believes, "The next step for LA and Mr. Music is to take it nationally."

Students who worked on the LA and Mr.

Music campaign handled every aspect from hosting the performers, creating publicity, arranging a venue, designing flyers and tickets, and pitching the event to the local media outlets.

Jessie Dwiggins, senior communication major, was glad to assist with the event. "I am so happy our hard work paid off, The concert was a success, and the event was the perfect way for me to add to my portfolio."

The group raised \$1,300 from the event and was able to make a donation of \$905 to the Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA at EIU.

# Kyle Piurek takes on corporate communications

By Tara Rosenbaum

Kyle Piurek, senior journalism major, is gaining real world experience at Consolidated Communications as the corporate communications intern this semester.

Piurek found this specific internship through Professor Terri L. Johnson's PR case studies course.

The class took several trips to different businesses that do some sort of PR work in the Charleston and Mattoon area, Piurek said.

One of these trips was to Consolidated Communications. Piurek met Sarah Greider, who does corporate communications for Consolidated.

"I asked Greider if they were offering any internships and she gave me her information," Piurek said. "Then I applied and got an interview," he added.

Sarah Greider, EIU graduate and former member of The Agency, said interns need to have experience in writing and public relations.

"I always encourage writing for the campus newspaper to get additional real world experience," said Greider.

Piurek said he decided to apply for the internship because it would give him more experience and a chance to build his portfolio.

Piurek's duties as intern involve compiling compliments and service anniversaries for the electronic newsletter, writing news releases, safety articles, blogs and taking pictures.

"I enjoy having the responsibilities that come with this internship," Piurek said. Piurek said this internship will help him prepare for his future by getting experience in the professional set-



*Kyle Piurek worked at Consolidated's Special Olympics Family Festival at Lakeland College.*

*Photo by Sarah Greider*

ting with writing, tracking media coverage, making media lists, becoming proficient in Excel and communicating with employees.

Piurek will be graduating in December and plans to continue his search for a job. Piurek's job search is not limited to the Chicago area or to Illinois. He said he would like to work for an agency where he can gain knowledge in many areas of PR, to help him become well rounded for future jobs.

Consolidated Communications has one intern per semester with the possibility of an extension into another semester. Student internships at Consolidated are flexible around student classes and students earn a stipend.

## General Information

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

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**Join The Agency**  
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