

The Relay

A publication for PR students

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Student networks at PRSSA Conference

Students attend PRSA meeting

By Kelly Johnson

Four students took a road trip to Normal for a Central Illinois Public Relations Society of America meeting on March 1.

Henrik Rasmussen, the keynote speaker, discussed the importance of international public affairs. Rasmussen stressed that audiences in different countries perceived other country as its celebrities and by what those celebrities do and by their movies.

Rasmussen proved this by showing different pictures of celebrities and political leaders. The audience knew the celebrities more than the politicians.

Tim Trahey, a senior communication studies major and president of the EIU Daniel E. Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA, attended the meeting. "I thought that the speaker was very informative and did a great job keeping the audience engaged," Trahey said.

Trahey found it important to hear about public relations from a professional. "I attended the meeting because anytime I can learn more about public relations in any way from a professional I try and be there," Trahey said.

Stephanie Ciesla, a sophomore communication studies major and PRSSA secretary, also attended the meeting. "I thought the speaker was very interesting," Ciesla said, "but overall it was interesting to see how different countries run."

Trahey and Ciesla both saw many ways that attending the PRSA meeting was beneficial. "The meeting was beneficial because it allows you to network with both students and professionals while at the same time listening to a speaker talk about an interesting topic," Trahey said.

"The meeting benefitted me by allowing me to realize that different areas of the world run in different ways," Ciesla said. "It also



Stephanie Ciesla, Tim Trahey, Kelly Johnson and Jacqui Reinhart enjoy dinner at the Central Illinois PRSA meeting.

Photo by Terri Johnson

helped me expand my knowledge."

The students who attended the PRSA meeting gained a lot of knowledge from attending. "I loved the meeting, the speaker was great, the food was great, and meeting new people is always awesome," Trahey said.

For Trahey and Ciesla this meeting was informational. "Knowledge is power," Trahey said.

The next Central Illinois PRSA meeting will be Wednesday, April 11, in Champaign.

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

- Daniel Boorstin



The students have the opportunity to meet guest speaker, Henrik Rasmussen, after the Central Illinois PRSA meeting. From left: Kelly Johnson, Tim Trahey, Henrik Rasmussen, Stephanie Ciesla, and Jacqui Reinhart.

Photo by Terri Johnson

Interns work hard to leave a legacy

A personal reflection on my internship by Heather Derby

As my senior year comes to an end, I am keeping myself ever so busy by interning my way through graduation. All year I have been taking part in the communication studies department's social marketing internship (the "Don't be that Guy/Girl" internship).

I, along with the seven other interns, have been working hard all year to spread awareness for safe drinking and possibly leaving our legacy.

In October, before Homecoming 2011, we staged an event in the south quad, advising students to have fun during

homecoming, but remember to make it to class. The event received much attention from students.

Many students stopped to take pictures that were later posted over Facebook and Twitter. We had a presence at the Health Fair in November 2011, where we challenged students to mock drinking games, sharing smart drinking tips with them, while giving them free T-shirts and water bottles.

This semester, the main focus of the internship has been making an online presence. In the early part of the semester,

a Twitter feed was developed. That Guy (@EIUDontBThatGuy) was developed to raise awareness about safe drinking through social media.

The second part of making an online presence is the development of the "Don't be that Guy/Girl" website. This is the current internship project.

We are developing a website that will be part of the official EIU website. Currently everyone is working on developing materials and information to be featured on the site.

The final piece to the online aspect will be to add another

video to the internship's YouTube station, DontbthatEIUGuy. By the end of the semester, the website will be up and running, along with links to our Twitter and latest Youtube video.

Throughout the year, I and the rest of the interns have been working hard to get students to recognize our cause. We have carefully done the work with our goals foremost.

Everything is finally coming to full circle and with graduation approaching for many of us, the legacy we are leaving this internship is one to be proud of.

Janice Hunt visits PRSSA with advice

By Michael Wolbers

Janice Hunt spoke to PRSSA about her transition from newspapers to public relations Monday, Feb. 27, in Buzzard Hall.

Hunt, public information specialist at Eastern Illinois University, did not get her start in PR but rather in journalism and news.

Hunt, who is a '97 graduate of EIU, did not even take a PR class during her time here.

"I was in newspapers for the first part of my career," Hunt said. "During my college years I got an internship for the Charleston and Mattoon paper, and they offered me a job after graduation."

Hunt said that while working as a journalist, she did a little bit of everything. She was a reporter at first and was given an opportunity to be a features writer for the *Journal Gazette-Times Courier* in Charleston/Mattoon.

The *Journal Gazette-Times Courier* was bought out, and Hunt decided it was time to move to another position.

"There was not a lot of focus on the news and a lot more focus on the dollar," Hunt said. "So in December of '04 I left the paper so I could work at Eastern in January of '05."

Hunt stressed networking as a big reason of coming to EIU to work.

"I stayed in touch with Vicki Woodard, who is the public relations person," Hunt said. "We kind of stayed in touch. She knew I might be interested in something, so they created a job for me and did some restructuring."

Hunt emphasized that working at newspaper would go on to help her in PR.

Hunt stressed that her prior reporting knowledge and knowing AP style helped her write news releases.

"Being on the other side of it, I saw what news people want to see," Hunt said. "I know they don't care about certain things and they are going to look right past it. I know how to write something the way they would want it to be written."

Hunt also said that design and editing

also play a big role in PR and in her job, specifically, because a lot of flyers and newsletters end up on her desk to edit.

Vice president of PRSSA, John Krap, a senior communication studies major, said that he took away some new things from Hunt's presentation.

"I did not realize there was so much designing and writing (in public relations)," Krap said. "She does a lot of press releases and newsletters that I think communications majors sometimes forget that a majority of it is writing and producing pamphlets."

Terri Johnson, an adviser for PRSSA, said that Hunt's presentation affirmed many of things that she has been teaching in her classes.

"I think it is wonderful when we bring in a professional and she says the same things that I have been saying in class" Johnson said. "It adds to my credibility when students realize that I am giving them the right information. Janice Hunt gave them good advice about media relations."

Do's & don'ts for creating news releases

By Heather Derby

Feb. 20, PRSSA held a news release writing workshop with Dr. Claudia Janssen from the communication studies department.

The topic of writing news releases was something that PRSSA students requested to learn about this semester, and Janssen delivered the essential do's and don'ts of news release writing in her presentation.

Janssen's list of do's and don'ts for writing news releases included:

DO know your topic well. Research your topic as much as possible to familiarize yourself with the topic. In order to have an interesting news release,

you'll have to have knowledge of what you're writing about.

ALWAYS ask yourself, "Is this topic newsworthy?" Make sure the topic is relevant to the media's audience as well as having a close proximity to readers.

DON'T forget to include your most important information **FIRST!** It is easy to lose your reader's attention with too much wording.

ALWAYS write according to AP style!

DO make sure you answer the journalist's questions of who, what, where, when, why and how.

DON'T use too many adjectives or descriptive words.

Stay factual, neutral, yet interesting.

ALWAYS start with your lead. The lead always goes first and is short (no more than two sentences). It provides the core message of the news release.

Janssen provided PRSSA members with a examples of various news releases, to go along with her tips.

The packet she handed out to students included samples of regular news releases, online news releases and examples of boilerplates.

Kelly Johnson, a junior communication studies major and part of PRSSA's publicity committee, said she found Janssen's visit to be helpful.

"We learned the essentials to what we'll be practicing in our future careers," Johnson said. "Dr. Janssen provided us with some useful materials that we can use now and in the future."

Janssen's visit to PRSSA was well-received. Students were given a chance to learn and ask questions.

This workshop gave students a learning experience that they can apply to not only their college careers, but to their professional careers, as well, according to Terri Johnson, journalism professor and co-adviser to the PRSSA chapter. She offered good advice and good ideas.

PRSSA National Assembly

National Liaison Report by Genevieve Kia Wilson

Public Relations Student Society of America recently held its 2012 National Assembly Conference in Charlotte, N.C. The conference took place at the end of spring break, March 15-18.

I was granted the honor of representing the Daniel Thornburg Chapter of EIU at the conference.

The conference included several leadership workshops, a keynote speaker and, of course, the assembly meeting where delegates elected the 2012 national committee. The meeting took 13 hours to elect all the members of the committee, but it was a rewarding experience. I had a chance to meet some amazing professionals and was

able to network and exchange ideas with other students from around the nation.

I gathered plenty of information to bring back to our chapter: fundraising ideas, membership increasing tips and information about the upcoming PRSSA conference in San Francisco, Calif. I also received a list of the upcoming scholarships from PRSSA.

In addition, I ran for the vice president of member services position. Although I was not elected I gained practical experience through public speaking and participating in the one-hour campaign development called "The Day-Of Competition." Within the competition my group created a

phenomenal campaign to notify a company of street light outages.

I truly enjoyed the experience and networking with other PRSSA members at the national level. I met many new friends who have inspired me to come to the San Francisco National Conference this October.

Although the trip was exhausting, I will never forget the connections I made at the 2012 PRSSA National Assembly.

"We were pleased to have Genevieve represent us. We don't always have students who can attend. We really appreciated her taking this on," said Terri Johnson, journalism professor and PRSSA co-adviser.



Genevieve Kia Wilson attended the PRSSA 2012 National Assembly in Charlotte, North Carolina. She learned tips on how to increase membership for PRSSA and fundraising ideas.

Photo By Genevieve Kia Wilson

General Information

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