

imPRessions

A monthly MSU PRSSA newsletter

October 2008

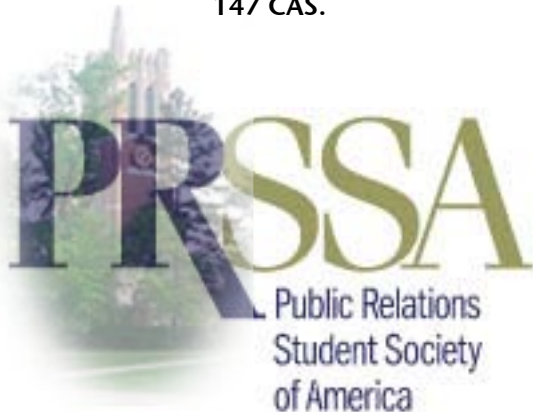
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Coming up this month

- Oct. 1: National Conference Registration extended deadline.
- Oct. 3: Homecoming Parade
- Oct. 7: General Meeting
- Oct. 8: PRSSA Fundraiser at Melting Moments 5-8pm
- Oct. 10: Hubbell Connections Launch Party
- Oct. 14: Bone Marrow Registration Drive
- Oct. 16: FRIB Frenzy Day
- Oct. 21: General Meeting
- Oct. 24-28: PRSSA National Conference in Detroit

All general meetings are held at 7 p.m. in 147 CAS.



President's Letter

Nick Lucido

Greetings PRSSA members!

I know that Homecoming, Halloween and everything in between is keeping you busy this month, but October is also a busy month for PRSSA!

We have two general meetings planned in addition to the 2008 National Conference in Detroit. Our Chapter has the most registrants attending a National Conference in the history of PRSSA at MSU- congratulations! The Conference will be such a great experience for those who attend. If you aren't able to go, we will be Tweeting live from the Conference and come back to share everything we learned with you.

October is also the month that we are launching Hubbell Connections, our student-run firm. If you are interested in working in any facet of public relations when you graduate, Hubbell Connections is an important component to your career. I encourage you to apply for one of the open positions. Contact Courtney Curran for more information on that.

I would also like to congratulate Ragina Smith for being selected as September Member of the Month. Ragina has attended all general meetings so far and has volunteered for multiple events that we are participating in. Congratulations!

If you ever have any questions or suggestions, come talk to me or any other e-board member. We really do love to hear from you. Thanks for making us such a great Chapter.

Sincerely,

Nick Lucido
Chapter President

Stay Connected

Visit our website: www.msuprssa.org

E-Mail us: prssa@msu.edu

Follow us on Twitter: MSUPRSSA

Join our Facebook group: PRSSA... it's a mouthful!

A PR Cultural Experience

By Whitney Geller

In the past year or two the traveling bug, the need to seek out new destinations and adventures, bit me. I loved visiting my friend in Europe and studying abroad in Asia. Yet, each of these trips was for a short period of time, a week, two weeks, a month at the most. I wanted a real cultural experience. I wanted to leave behind my home and comforts and submerge myself in a culture. I decided I would get an internship and live in China.

Why China? Why not? China seems to be taking over the world, with their ever-growing economy, expanding cities, the host for the 2008 Olympic Games, and the fact that I had been studying the Chinese language for the past 4 years. For the next month I searched online, sending my resume out to hundreds of public relations firms. Of all the places I contacted, two responded. One of which I took, working for a European fashion company called DressCode in Beijing.

On May 14th I left the United States feeling terrified and excited. I barely knew anything about what lie ahead for me. I had no idea where I was living, what it would be like, what exactly I would be doing at my job and if I would even be able to communicate while there. After 16 hours on a plane I arrived in the smog-filled city of Beijing, ready to start my new life.

Even though everything I planned for was done through the Internet with little to no guarantee, I found everything to work out great. My job, which I started one week after arriving due to my prolonged jetlag, was wonderful. The company, DressCode, owned a store, which introduced new clothing lines from Europe into the Asian market. If the line showed potential

in the store it would then be sold to multiple other retailers throughout Beijing and Shanghai.

Like many internships I worked on a variety of projects and tasks. The store and office were located right down the street from each other, and so I would often work a few hours in the office and then a few in the store. Working in the store was not just another boring retail job. I was there to watch and learn the Asian market. What the Chinese women were buying, who was buying what, and why. In the office I worked on promoting the store through media connections, event planning, and website updating. While there I found an American designer looking to sell her clothing line in China. I organized, planned, and put on a trunk show showcasing her designs. The event had a full runway show with models, photographers, and guests, as well as personal fittings for customers and cocktails for all.

While working there I not only learned about the Asian retail market, but I also learned how to handle the media. It is much easier there to get an ad in *Elle* or *Glamour* magazine. Most of the promotions

I worked on were through various Beijing entertainment websites. Yet, there was really no way to promote through radio, TV, or even newspapers unless you were a large name brand. I learned about the fickle and meticulous Chinese customers. They helped me learn why some things sell and work in China and why others don't. I learned about the work force in China, the economy, and their government.

It was not always easy, and in the beginning often hard. I made plenty of mistakes, got lost, couldn't speak with 90% of the population, and occasionally felt lonely. But the majority of the time I had a blast. I met tons of new friends from around the world. I visited and saw new places every week. I ate exotic and delicious foods everyday. I learned about twenty new things every day be it at work, talking to my multicultural friends, or simply riding my bike around the vast city. It was an amazing experience and one that has changed who I am and what I want for the better. I would recommend that any one interested in something different, something challenging, to just go for it.



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R o f f i l e

Mary Henige, APR 2008 PRSA International Conference Co-Chair

Mary Henige, is the Director of Strategic and Executive Communications for General Motors Corporation, which she has been with for 22 years. Throughout her career at GM, Henige has held a number of communications positions. Her current title has her responsible for GM's speechwriting team, grassroots communications activities and the annual report. Last year Henige was asked to co-chair the 2008 PRSA International Conference, the conference for professionals that takes place during the same weekend and at the same location as the PRSSA conference.

Henige's involvement with this conference started long before her being asked to co-chair it. Beginning her affiliation with PRSA in 1984 as a student, this organization has been a part of her life for many years now. She helped the Detroit chapter of PRSA obtain the bid to host the 2008 International Conference in Detroit by promoting GM's willingness to be the premier sponsor. In addition to her affiliation with PRSA including being the Detroit chapter president in 2003, Henige has strong ties with PRSSA and students in general.

Henige has trained and recruited students for many years, and began overseeing GM's internship program in 2005. She has taught introductory public relations courses at Wayne State University, and has been a guest lecturer at many U.S. universities. Beginning in 2004, she began speaking at national conferences including the 2004 PRSA International Conference, the 2004 National PRSSA Conference, and at a New Professionals teleseminar.

Recently, Henige was interviewed along with the other co-chair, Gerry E. Corbett, APR, about the PRSA International conference in the September 2008 issue of PRSA Tactics. Read on to see what you can expect at the conference.

What can attendees expect during the opening-night gala on Sunday, Oct. 25?

The Detroit Chapter worked hard to throw a party that would enable everyone to connect — with Detroit's rich music heritage and cultural diversity, as well as each other. GM's Wintergarden is beautiful and, at night, the Canadian skyline is spectacular. The Host Committee has arranged for incredible food and engaging music. It will be a fun, welcoming environment.

What advice do you have for first-time attendees of a PRSA International Conference?

Absorb, enjoy and learn. The world of communications grows at a rapid pace. Besides conventional techniques, countless fresh opportunities through new media, social media and word-of-mouth provide new contexts for one-to-one communications and two-way engagement. Career requirements evolve. The Conference is a fabulous opportunity to join thousands of professionals for four jam-packed days of learning and networking. Learn to combine proven techniques with innovative strategies. Get step-by-step insight into how to effectively reach your audiences and sustain relationships. Connect with industry experts and peers to expand your networks. Return focused and rejuvenated with ideas that can be put into immediate action.

The FRIB Files by Monica Fineis

As Geoff Koch, communication manager from the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory (NSCL) explained at our first general meeting this year, MSU is bidding to land the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB).

So you already know what it stands for. The Facility for Rare Isotope Beams sounds pretty intense, and it is. But it boils down to two things we all can understand: money and jobs for Michigan. Not to mention, huge bragging rights for MSU!

We've been gearing up for FRIB Frenzy Day at MSU for the past couple of weeks. The different promotional events have ranged from spots on Spartan Podcast to a huge "Bring FRIB to our Crib!" poster at the Barack Obama rally. What this is all leading up to is FRIB Frenzy Day on October 16. This is when we will be handing out free FRIB T-shirts to students on campus to spread the word about this opportunity and show the student support of the facility.

Not only do we believe NSCL at MSU would most successfully operate FRIB, without this upgrade, it could be the end of the lab; the U.S.'s last national university lab of its kind. So tell your friends about FRIB, join the Facebook page: Michigan's Rare Opportunity: FRIB, and wear your shirt on October 16!

Tips and Tricks

Edited by Julia Wendzinski

Here's a list of some of the most popular writing mistakes to keep an eye out for, especially when writing in the public relations field.

The Dreaded Passive Voice. This is a form of writing to be avoided at all costs. We must get actors to act and avoid the business of having things done to them. This is my favorite pet peeve. Please eliminate the passive voice from your writing to help preserve what little sanity I have left.

The Three Rules of Writing. There are only three rules for good writing: omit needless words, omit needless words, omit needless words. I recommend that you go over anything you write and apply these three rules, one at a time.

Negative Construction. We try to avoid it as much as possible because the reader has to work too hard to figure out what the writer means—positively. Rewrite the sentence using a verb that means what you say without the negative word. (Rather than saying, “he did not succeed,” say “he failed.”)

Mark Twain Rule. Remember the Mark Twain Rule of writing: “The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between the lightning and the lightning bug!” Make sure your words mean what you intend.

Chesterton Rule. Ending a sentence with a preposition is only a venial sin these days. However, remember Chesterton: “Ending a sentence with a preposition is one thing up with I will not put!”

Avoid Contractions Rule. We do this in formal writing.

Avoid clichés Rule. These are tired expressions that we must avoid like the plague.

see Tips, page 5

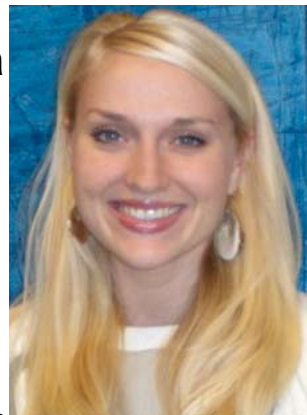
When I Grow Up...

As told to Courtney Sipperley

Danielle Weller

MSU PRSSA Alumna

Danielle Weller works in the Corporate Communications department at Jackson National Life Insurance Company, a financial services company that helps people plan for retirement.



Q: Describe your experiences after graduation.

A: In the spring of my senior year, I was working for a public relations firm downtown. I approached them a couple of times throughout the semester to ask about the possibility of staying on full time after graduation. While they did finally offer me a position, I had already interviewed with Jackson and decided this was a better fit for me. One piece of advice I can give about looking for a full time job is that no one knows what you are capable of better than you do. Be your own advocate. Keep track of the projects you've worked and responsibilities you've had and don't be afraid to share them in an interview.

Q: Describe your current position at Jackson National.

A: In corporate social responsibility (CSR), I manage our charitable grant application process, associate gift matching, volunteer projects, internal CSR newsletter, and recycling/sustainability efforts. In internal communications (IC), I work on a company newsletter, plan an annual all-employee meeting with our CEO and coordinate communication between executives and front line staff. In my day-to-day work, I am 80 percent CSR and 20 percent IC.

Q: What do you like most about Corporate Communications?

A: I love my job. What is most rewarding to me is that I have a direct hand in ensuring that Jackson is making the most of its charitable dollars, associate volunteer hours and sustainability efforts. My position allows me to have face time with associates, executives and the community every day.

Q: What is the biggest challenge you have faced thus far in your career?

A: The transition into the corporate working world was a big surprise to me. There were office politics and personalities that were disheartening to me as a new graduate. After two and a half years out of school, I feel like I better understand the corporate world and am grateful to work for such a successful and respectable company.

Q: How did PRSSA help you prepare for the future?

A: The networking I did with local professionals through PRSSA had a direct correlation to Jackson deciding to hire me. I would encourage all of you to take every opportunity you have through PRSSA to interact with professionals, gain industry knowledge and experience professional opportunities.

Tips continued from page 4

Mixed Referents. Never mix a singular noun with a plural referent. We must avoid sexist language, but we must find a way to do it without grammatical error. Changing the noun to a plural form usually works nicely.

Semicolons. We use semicolons to separate two complete and similar sentences. Watch your colons, regular, semi and intestinal.

Quotation Marks. Use them carefully. The rule is to use them to set off a word or phrase when you mean it in a different way than how folks normally define it. Otherwise avoid them.

Commas. These nasty squiggle things confuse me too. But we need to learn when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em. Try reading the sentence aloud with and without them.

Capitals. Most of us want to capitalize too much. Avoid capitalization, thanks. Unless you have a specific reason—supported by a specific rule—we do not capitalize. Emphasize by your word choice and strong style.

Etc. We avoid etc., i.e., and all such nonsense in formal writing. Write plainly. Etc. means “and more of the same things.” Is that what we want to say? Probably not, that would be boring and violates the rule about omitting needless words.

Person. Generally, we use only one person, never mixing persons and, almost always, avoiding the second person in formal writing.

Slashes. We avoid the slash in formal writing. Say what you mean—in words.

Quotes. The punctuation goes inside the quotation marks in this country. The British do it the other way around. I can barely keep one system straight.

Interviewed: Russ White

As told to Courtney Sipperley



Courtney Sipperley talks with MSU PRSSA's newest addition, Academic Advisor Russ White.

Q: What is your position at Michigan State University?

A: I am communications manager in University Relations. UR is the central public relations office at MSU. We have two areas – marketing and creative services and media relations. I work in the media relations area and work proactively to gain positive attention for MSU in the local, state, national, and international media. I work to cultivate strong relationships with journalists in order to obtain

effective placement of positive stories in targeted media. I also create podcast content for Spartan Podcast; these podcasts generate thousands of hits.

Q: What other professional experience do you have in the Public Relations field?

A: I have worked in media relations at MSU for over 11 years and was an award-winning radio producer before that.

Q: What made you want to become the Academic Advisor for PRSSA?

A: I believe that anyone who works at a university should do what they can to help the students gain the best possible experience they can from MSU. I enjoy working with the smart, enthusiastic students in PRSSA. Most of us wouldn't be where we are today without a couple people in our lives who went beyond the call of duty to provide a rich and rewarding internship or strong and practical guidance in some way. I had a couple people like that in my life who are big reasons I'm where I am today. I hope I can provide a similar experience for some students.

Q: What are your goals and expectations for our chapter?

A: I want to do whatever I can to make the MSU PRSSA experience as rich and rewarding and valuable as possible for the members.

Q: What is your favorite part of PR? Of teaching?

A: I like public relations because I like working with media. I love the whole media industry and how it works. I also love MSU; so it's rewarding to work to gain positive attention for and enhance the image of this university I love. The part of teaching I like is part of what I wrote above. If I can help a student or two gain a rewarding experience at MSU that leads the realization of some of their goals, I'm happy. Knowledge and experience is something one can give away but still keep!

Member of the Month September

Congrats to our September Member of the Month:

Ragina Smith!

Ragina has attended every general meeting so far and has volunteered for several of our events. She's a great example of someone that is making the most of her PRSSA membership and all that our organization has to offer. Congratulations Ragina and keep up the great work!



What to Pack: A General Guide of What to Bring to National Conference

Women:

- Dress pants
- Blouses
- Blazer
- 2 Dressier Outfits
- Pumps/dress shoes
- Band Aids (for blisters!)
- Professional purse

Men:

- Dress pants
- Button-up shirts
- Suit
- Dress Shoes

Both:

- Resumes (30)
- Business cards (50)
- Padfolio
- Tide Pen
- Breath Mints
- Lint Roller

Fall 2008 Executive Board Members

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Public Relations Director: Jenni Lewis
Secretary: Aubrey Zimmerman
Finance/Fundraising Chair: Tony Willis
Publication Director: Julia Wendzinski
Alumni Relations Director: Courtney Sipperley
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Webmaster: Angela Minicuci
Sophomore Chair: Kristine Kendall
Associate E-board Member: Whitney Geller

Academic Advisor: Russ White
Professional Advisor: Jen Holton
Bateman Advisor: Amber Shinn

For E-board member contact information, check out the "Contact Us" tab at msuprssa.org.

Had a great internship this summer? Learning something interesting in class?
Tell us about it!

Writing an article for *imPRessions* is a great way to get published and have some material for your portfolio. Articles can be up to 400 words and the deadline for the November issue is Thursday, October 23. If you're interested or have any questions, feel free to contact Publication Director Julia Wendzinski at wendzins@msu.edu or talk to her after a meeting.