

imPRessions

January 2011

A monthly MSU PRSSA newsletter

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Coming Up...

- Jan. 21: Professional Development
- Jan. 25: CMPRSA Luncheon
- Jan. 26: PRSSA Twitter Chat
- Jan. 28: Detroit Firm Tours

President's Letter

Greetings members,

Happy New Year! I hope your semester is off to a great start and to those of you joining us for the first time, welcome. We have a lot of fantastic programming coming up in the next four months.

Every month we have a Professional Development session put together by our VP of Professional Development, Clare Perreault. The dates for these events, as well as information for the majority of this semester's activities, can be found in this newsletter. Clare is taking into account your suggestions from last semester's survey and getting in touch with some inspiring and knowledgeable professionals. I strongly suggest you to make time to attend these monthly events to further your skills and knowledge of the industry.

Coming up on February 17 we have our fourth-annual PR Links, MSU's only public relations focused career fair. This year it is at the MSU Union and we will have companies and agencies from all over Michigan attending looking to hire interns and full-time employees. Start working on your elevator pitch and resume!

At the end of this semester, seven of our executive board members will be graduating, which means there will be at least that many openings to fill for 2011-2012. We will hold a roundtable discussion about positions after the March 1 meeting. However, if you are interested at all in applying for a position I encourage you to start talking with the current executive board now to familiarize yourself with the positions and responsibilities.

As always, the executive board and I are always happy to chat with you about any of your questions, whether they are about PRSSA, school, internships or anything else. Don't hesitate to reach out to us!

Cheers,

Julia Wendzinski
Chapter President



PRSSA
Public Relations
Student Society
of America

Stay Connected

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 Michigan State University PRSSA

When I Grow Up...

As told to Emily Tschirhart

Laura Cumbow recently started work with the Michigan Manufacturers Association as a communications specialist, but when she completed this for me she was still with the Michigan Senate Democrats. Laura graduated from Michigan State in 2008 with a degree in communications and public relations specialization. Previous to her work with the Michigan Senate Democratic Caucus Laura held internships at the Rossman Group and Rizzi Designs.

Q: Describe your position now:

A: I am currently a Communications Advisor for the Michigan Senate Democrats and am responsible for the communications needs of the 16 Democratic State Senators. This includes anything from press releases, opinion editorials and speeches to newsletters, talking points and columns. I am also responsible for the Senate Democrats' Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts. I work closely with the Senators and a variety of media outlets to ensure their message is delivered.

Q: What is the most rewarding part of your job?

A: The most rewarding part of my job is being published in newspaper and/or getting a Senator a TV or radio interview on a certain

bill that is extremely important to them. I also enjoy writing flood statements for Senators and hearing them deliver the speeches on the Senate floor.

Q: How have you found the area that you work in to be different from other areas of PR?

A: I find working within government PR quite similar to working in an agency. I interned at The Rossman Group while attending Michigan State University and was advised by my boss at the Senate to treat each Senator differently as though I'd treat clients. Considering how different Senate Districts are (writing on issues for the U.P. is very different than writing on issues for Detroit) I could apply my experience of using different writing styles and tones that I did with clients at Rossman in the Senate.

What do you know now that you wish you would have known in college?

A: I wish I would have taken advantage of more activities within PRSSA as well as volunteer activities. These give you a great opportunities to not only learn and make great friends but also to network. Who you know is extremely important and the more people you meet the better. I also wish I had started internships at a younger age. I had two internships, both at agencies and I think it would have been helpful for me to intern with a company or non-profit organization as well to get a good feel of PR in different capacities.

Save the Date...

January

- 18 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., 147 CAS
- 21 – Professional Development, 3p.m.
- 25 – CMPRSA Luncheon, noon, Kellogg Center
- 26 – PRSSA Twitter Chat, 9 p.m.
- 28 – Detroit Firm Tours

February

- 1 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., 147 CAS
- 10 – Professional Development, 6 p.m.
- 10-11 – DePaul PRSSA Regional Activity
- 15 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., TBA
- 17 – PR Links, 2-5 p.m., MSU Union

March

- 1 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., 147 CAS
- 15 – Professional Development, 6 p.m.
- 18 – E-Board Applications Due
- 21-26 – E-Board Interviews
- 22 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., 147 CAS
- 24-25 – Chicago Firm Tours

April

- 5 – General Meeting, 7 p.m., 147 CAS
- 13 – CMPRSA Pace Awards, 11:30 a.m., Radisson Hotel
- 14 – Professional Development, 6 p.m.
- 15-16 – Relay for Life, Ralph Young Track & Field
- 16 – Ohio State Regional Activity
- 19 – Last General Meeting “Pizza and PR,” 7 p.m., 147 CAS

Grammar 101

Are you guilty of making prevalent spelling, word usage or punctuation problems?
Check out these common mistakes that can be easily avoided.

Could of, would of, should of

Instead it's could have, would have, should have

e.g. vs. i.e.

The abbreviation **e.g.** means “for example”
The abbreviation **i.e.**, means “that is to say”

So, you might write, “We like vegetables—e.g., broccoli, green beans and cauliflower”
Or you might write, “We like all vegetables—i.e., we’re healthy eaters”

Then vs. Than

Then is a description of time—
“I wrote the sales letter and then I wrote the advertisement”—

Than is used when making a comparison—
“I am more sick of this picky client than you are!”

Writing that something has “peaked your interest.”

We’re not talking mountain climbing here.
The correct word is piqued

Using “that” instead of “who” (and vice versa)

If you’re writing about people, always use who. If you’re writing about objects, use that

Using “irregardless”

While irregardless does appear in some dictionaries, it’s always listed as “non-standard.” That’s because it’s meaningless. The “ir” cancels out the “regardless.” Stick with plain old regardless

Using “toward” and “towards” interchangeably

Both words are correct, but towards is British and toward is American. Which you choose depends on your audience. And whatever you do, be consistent.

Using “centered around.”

How could anything be centered around something else?
The correct phrase is “centered on.”

Welcoming in the New Year!

by Katie Heck



Hubbell Connections, PRSSA's student-run public relations agency, had an exciting fall semester introducing five new clients with a team of 21 students divided among each client. Our teams worked on several projects for clients including events, media relations, website development, social media updates and more. Last semester launched the beginning of a building year for us.

With the New Year, Hubbell Connections is ready to continue building the professional skills it takes to work with real clients. We also look forward to challenging ourselves with the addition of two national campaigns presented through National PRSSA and adding new students to our team.

Here is a brief update for some of our clients: One of our clients, Wanderer's Teahouse, has plans to bring in student organizations on campus for tea-tasting as well as promotion for a Valentine's Day couple's special. Another client, remind101, is expanding nationally and writing numerous blog posts. The YMCA of downtown Lansing has a few spring events coming up where our team will be tasked with generating media buzz and asking local businesses for sponsorships. Finally, Next Step Test Prep, will roll-out their promotional campaign on campus.

Hubbell Connections provides students with real world experience that helps build up your resume and get really involved in PRSSA. If you have any questions about our clients or are interested in working with Hubbell Connections as an Account Associate, please contact the firm director, Katie Heck, at heckkath@msu.edu.

Rich Rodriguez: Post Ann Arbor

By Yue Lv

On Jan 4th 2011, after too many losses and NCAA violations, Rich Rodriguez, was fired as head coach of University of Michigan's football team.

As Spartans, I guess, we would never get tired of singing "Victory for MSU", especially when it comes to the Wolverines. However, from the perspective of a PR professional, how to help Rodriguez "go right through" this transition wouldn't be as easy as the song. Actually, before he let the Wolverines down in Ann Arbor, Rodriguez led West Virginia to four Big East Championships in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007. He was also named Big East Coach of The Year twice in 2003 and 2005. So based on what he has accomplished, it was not difficult to imagine the large expectations UofM had when they first signed Rodriguez.

Even though it's not very fair to solely blame Rodriguez for all those losses and violations, the disappointing performances he displayed for three years can't stop people from questioning his ability as a head coach. What's more, at age 48, it's not the time to talk about retirement for Rodriguez yet. Therefore, redeeming himself as soon as possible is crucial to continue his career.

Here's the question, if he hired you to take care of his PR and trusted you with his reputation, what would you do?

If it were me, I would suggest Rodriguez handle this crisis as low-key as possible. We don't want the media to pay too much attention on the incident; especially when it might negatively affect his future career as a head football coach.

So just what he did at first, after Dave Brandon, the Athletic Director of UofM announced the decision to relieve Rodriguez from his position, he needed issue a statement in a timely manner. The statement gave his reaction to the decision and expressed his regret, understanding and respect. After that, it would be a bad idea for him to have too much exposure, because he needs that time to adjust himself and try to move on to the next position. During this period of time, if Rodriguez kept appearing in front of the media and talking about the incident over and over again, it would not let the story go away, but accentuate the failure of his leadership. In fact, from my point of view, the best way for Rich Rodriguez to regain his falling reputation is leading a team to win again.

Hubbell what?:Overcoming Intimidation as a *New Member*

by Becky Cunningham

As if deciding in four years what you want to do with your life isn't intimidating enough, finding your niche in a professional club can be just as daunting. Reflecting on my first PRSSA meeting, I remember how intimidating joining a new club and getting involved can be.

As a first-year PR student, I was told joining PRSSA was the best thing for me. I attended my first meeting half-way through fall semester of my sophomore year and thought for sure it would be my last. Everyone seemed to know each other, I saw no familiar faces, and I felt completely out of my element. I can remember thinking "What on earth is a Hubbell point?" "Was I supposed to dress up?" "I don't measure up. These students have so much more experience than I do." That was, in fact, my last PRSSA meeting – until junior year.

After a couple of internships, I returned to 147 CAS as a junior with much more confidence and made it a point to overlook anything that might intimidate me from reaching my professional goals. What a difference that made for me. It's important to remember that everyone was a newbie at some point. Everyone has had a blank resume. The only way to overcome intimidation is to accept opportunity. Maybe you feel inferior because you don't have an internship on your resume, or you have difficulty networking. That's OK. Volunteer! Volunteering is one of the easiest ways to get experience on your resume and professionals in your network. Reach out by volunteering for the next PRSSA event or within the community – on or off campus. You may also benefit from job shadowing. Spending a few hours with someone in your field of interest is an invaluable experience and instant connection. It's also constructive to simply talk with someone in the club. The E-board members are leaders, as well as resources who are more than willing to answer questions, share their class and work experiences and point you to professionals in their networks.

Finding your niche is easier than it seems. All you need is motivation and a willingness to participate. Utilize other PRSSA members and PR professionals to find opportunities to get involved. I encourage new PRSSA members to ask someone in the club about a previous internship, volunteer within the club or reach out to a company representative at a general meeting. Even such simple steps are monumental in molding a successful student and professional.

New Year, New Professional Opportunities

By Clare Perreault

As we all come together for another semester I hope that everyone has had a chance to think about areas in which they wish to improve professionally. It's been said a dozen times but a perk of being a paid member is to take advantage of the monthly professional development sessions. If you're juggling a job, an internship, and classes like me these are perfect opportunities to sharpen skills and learn something new. Professional development sessions only last an hour (I promise!) and you get Hubbell points. Most importantly you're becoming an active member in a student-run organization that works tirelessly to put the most valuable aspects of PR at your finger tips.

Although it's hard to implement change and habits in our busy lives, professional development sessions can provide instant results. Case in point: A member who attended resume building seminar in September brought his resume an hour before an interview for an internship position. He was able to make changes, ask questions, and correct mistakes. And yeah, he landed the internship! This semester will be packed with great topics that each person can benefit from. Additionally, if you have any suggestions or ways you would like to see professional development improve, don't be shy! I enjoy reading your emails and your voice does not go unnoticed. If you have any suggestions or questions email me at perrea13@msu.edu.

