

PCOM Sponsors 2nd Annual NJ Social Media Summit



Professional Communication students and faculty take a selfie at the NJ Social Media Summit.

By Linda Zani Thomas, '17

At the second annual New Jersey Social Media Summit (NJSMS), held April 8, 2016, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Warren Sandmann stood at the podium—orange tie ablaze against his crisp, white shirt—and proclaimed that the major challenge universities face in teaching about social media is finding the balance between the practical and the theoretical.

Keynote speaker Dr. Karen Freberg of the University of Louisville, Kentucky echoed that statement in her electrifying, high-energy and admittedly coffee-fueled speech, stating that the goal of

educators is to “bridge the science and art” of social media.

Freberg urged NJSMS attendees to use social media to engage students and not to fear making mistakes along the way. She stressed that nobody knows everything about social media and that professors and students can and will learn from each other in real-time in the classroom.

Her personal philosophy is that the role of educators in higher learning institutions is to “pay it forward.” Social media will change but the key to effective communication is “who knows you and what they are able to learn from you.”

The need for time management skills to keep pace with social media’s demands was the lead topic in the lively Q&A exchange that followed, with Freberg inspiring the audience with her tale of using what she learned from her training as an Olympic shot put hopeful to craft her robust and exacting social media regimen.

Prior to the deli luncheon spread, attendees stepped next door to the lively conference room where social media researchers from across the state, including five PCOM students, presented their research in poster format to NJSMS panelists and Summit attendees. (Continued on page 4)

Letter From Co-Director Lorra Brown



Thank you for taking the time to read our latest newsletter.

As part of their Professional Writing course, led by Professor Anne Barretta, students collaboratively shared their experiences and perspectives about graduate life and its professional applications. This is what you'll find in this newsletter, as well as the success stories of our growing pool of MA alumni.

Jaclyn Antonacci's ('16) research, "The Influence of Social Media on Sense of Belonging in University Students" was presented at the Marketing Management Association (MMA) conference. Based on her outstanding achievements and performance as a graduate assistant, she also earned an appointment as WP's Social Media Marketing Coordinator.

Rebecca Costantini's ('16) research, "Geotagging Crisis Public Relations: The Implications of Localized Messages and Planned Parenthood," was presented at the International Public Relations Research Conference (IPRR) in March.

Amaryllis Muniz ('16) joined Bloomfield College as Assistant Director of Marketing and cites her experiences and knowledge garnered in our program as the key to her position.

Izabella De Souza ('13) was promoted to Senior Marketing Manager at Applegate in Chicago. Her Master Project research article "Social Media Marketing in Luxury Retail" appeared in the International Journal of Online Marketing and solidified her reputation as a thought-leader in the area of social media.

In addition to our student achievements, our faculty continue to lead the conversation in the area of social media. Our second annual New Jersey Social Media Summit "Praxis & Publication: Exploring Social Media in Higher Education" took place April 8, 2016 and brought together a distinguished panel of social media scholars and professionals to share their perspectives on the role and impacts of social media in today's society.

Congratulations to our faculty and students on their many academic and professional achievements, including this newsletter, which was proudly created and designed by our graduate students. Enjoy!

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PCOM Program Overview

By Christina Lolis, '18

Looking to enhance your professional credibility and make yourself more marketable in a competitive job market? The Master's in Professional Communication at William Paterson University tailors learning for real-world problem solving to help students enhance their communication competency. Small class sizes foster greater peer interaction and discussion surrounding contemporary communication issues and trends. With guidance from professors, who have a high level of expertise within their fields, students can creatively apply this knowledge to many disciplines.

Students can personalize their curricula

by selecting one of the two concentrations the program offers. The first option is the Corporate and Strategic Communication track, which focuses on public relations skills, corporate issues management, programming of integrated marketing campaigns and organizational leadership techniques. The second option is the Digital Media and Professional Writing track, which emphasizes comprehension of digital applications and multi-platform writing for business as well as many media channels.

Dedicated professors share their real-world experiences with their students, offering valuable connections that can help them succeed after graduation.

Within the PCOM program, peers and

professors constantly inspire each other, share information, and encourage one another as they work together to enhance the learning experience. Flexible class times are offered, including classes at night and online, in order to meet the challenges of a vigorous work schedule and the demands of home life.

In order to graduate with a Master's in Professional Communication, a student must complete 30 credits. Each class within the PCOM program is worth 3 credits, meaning a total of 10 courses must be completed. Apply online at www.wpunj.edu/graduate. For more information, you may contact graduate director Dr. Angie Yoo at (973) 720-2743 or YooK2@wpunj.edu.

Financial Aid Q & A

By Amaryllis Muniz, '16

Q: What are the initial steps in applying for Financial Aid?

A: The first step is to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). William Paterson University will use this data to determine your eligibility for school and state aid. Once your loan is awarded, you will determine the amount to accept or decline for that particular academic year.

Q: What types of loans are offered to me as a graduate student?

A: Direct Unsubsidized loans are available to undergraduate, graduate and professional students. With this specific loan, there is no need to demonstrate financial need to be eligible. Direct PLUS Loans are made to help graduate and professional students pay for educational expenses not covered by financial aid.

Q: When does repayment begin?

A: Upon graduation/ completion of your graduate degree, you are allotted a specific grace period, depending on the loan you have. This allows you to become financially settled and select your repayment plan. With Direct Unsubsidized loans, there is a 6-month grace period. With PLUS loans, there are no grace periods and payment begins immediately upon graduation.

Q: What should I consider when taking out federal student loans?

A: Ensure you are a responsible borrower and keep track of how much you are borrowing. It is also essential to consider and understand the terms of your loan, make payments monthly and stay in constant communication with your loan servicer.

Q: Are there any graduate assistantships within the PCOM program?

A: Yes. WP offers a graduate assistantship, which is awarded to you based on specific qualifications. If requirements are met, you may apply and await the selection process. Visit bit.ly/WPUNJGA for more info!

NJ Social Media Summit (continued)

(Continued from page 1) The afternoon panel discussion began with a humorous look at professor/student interactions from Dr. Ai Zhang of Stockton University, who urged fellow educators to use social media to be approachable and “meet students where they are, not where you think they should be.” A devotee of Snapchat, Zhang described a recent, furiously-fun live chat she had using the platform with her students.

Mindy Gikas, Executive Vice President at Porter Novelli, broke down the key skills public relations companies are looking for in potential employees. She also advised that young professionals should be careful what they post on any social media site, as it will be seen by future

employers. Gikas confirmed that many PR hiring managers do not look at your resume until after they’ve investigated your past behavior on your social media apps.

Final panel speaker, PCOM student and WP’s Online Marketing Coordinator Jaclyn Antonacci, shared a multimedia presentation featuring her stellar efforts on Twitter (#Twillyp), Tumblr and other media and told a compelling story of how her social media activities inspired her graduate thesis project on social media engagement and community-building.

WP professors Dr. Oh and Dr. Owlett ended the day with interactive group

discussions based on trending social media topics, which sparked energetic discussion between professors and students.

Following this, PCOM student Rebecca Costantini was named the winner of the 2016 NJSMS poster session, with her study titled, “Geotagging crisis public relations: The implications of localized messages and Planned Parenthood.”

The New Jersey Social Media Summit is the only one of its kind in the state. Its successful second year was mentioned by Provost Sandmann, who declared that the Summit would now become an annual event. See you next year at #NJSMS17!



Dr. Karen Freberg presents her keynote address.



Students pose for #NJSMS16 pictures.



Rebecca Costantini and Jaclyn Antonacci, poster session winners.



Attendees listen to panel speakers.

Master Project Highlights

Jaclyn Antonacci

The Influence of Social Media on Sense of Belonging in College Students

Studies have shown that social media can be used to effectively build connections, strengthen communities and enhance sense of belonging in groups. Antonacci has been assisting with William Paterson's social media efforts in various ways for several years, and in her personal experience she has found that social media is a powerful tool for helping students connect with their university. Antonacci hopes the results of her research will produce strong, supportive quantitative data that correlates with her own experience.

Rebecca Costantini

Framing Reproductive Justice: Understanding Perceptions of Planned Parenthood and Abortion through the Influence and Credibility of User Generated Content

Costantini's crafted five conditions in a social media environment that contain biased, unbiased and neutral content about Planned Parenthood and abortion. Accompanying each of the conditions are user-generated comments that contain positive and negative content regarding Planned Parenthood. The goal of this study is to identify whether the conditions and user-generated comments influence people's attitude toward abortion and Planned Parenthood.

Ashley Farrell

The Influence of Multimedia on the Recommender System Users' Perception of System Credibility

Farrell's project will focus on how people interact with recommender systems on a daily basis. Services such as Netflix, Hulu and Amazon Prime use these systems to suggest movies and television shows its subscribers may prefer using strategic interface designs. Farrell's study examines the role multimedia plays in a user's perception of the credibility of a recommender system. Her work will answer these questions: Is plain-text a less efficient way of presenting recommended content to a user? Can adding video to a plain-text display enhance a user's perceived credibility of the content and lead the user to accept the recommendation?

Gabriela Mera

Real-Time Social Media Communication and Event Attendees' Experience

Mera's project will investigate the relationship between live audiences attending events in-person and their use of social media to document and react to these events. Her hypothesis proposes that if audience members are more involved with social media during a live event, their experience of that event will be significantly enhanced.

Amaryllis Muniz

Intercultural Differences Affecting Relationships and Marriages

The research in Muniz's project will center around how intercultural relationships affect marriages. She will use qualitative research from conducting interviews with 3-6 couples who possess differences in culture, religion and/or ethnicity. Each couple's interview will be conducted separately in a public setting and from these interviews, she will create and draw an analysis to determine strategies used by each couple to ultimately ensure the longevity and success of their marriages.

Juliana Quintero

The Influence of Feedback Environment on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors in the Workplace

Why do some employees display organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) more than others in the workplace? Quintero's hypothesis states that employees display these behaviors as a result of working in a positive feedback environment influenced by coworkers. The findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge in both organizational theory and internal communication about how employees can influence each other's extra-role behaviors by developing a culture of open and continuous feedback among employees.

How To Be A STAR Job Candidate

By Desyra Highsmith, '17

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What are your most significant strengths and weaknesses? These predictable interview questions don't truly provide employers with any real insight into how a candidate will behave in the work environment once he or she is hired. Savvy employers seeking an unfeigned portrayal of their prospective candidate are unlikely to use this antiquated line of questioning. Behavioral interviewing has become the preferred method for vetting candidates in search of top performers. It is critical for job seekers to be prepared to offer thoughtful interview responses which directly relay authentic experiences and application of abilities.

The STAR technique will help you develop and deliver powerful and impressive responses during an interview. Following the steps below, you will comprehensively provide the interviewer with the problem, action and outcome of your accomplishments.

At the core of each story should be the revelation of the fundamental competency, talent or quality you possess, illustrated by the behavior validated within your experiential story. Even if you have limited work experience, you can draw on contributions to extracurricular and

Situation or Task
Describe the situation you were in, the challenge you faced or the task you needed to accomplish. You must describe a specific event or situation, not a generalized description of what you have done in the past. Be sure to give enough detail for the interviewer to understand and appreciate the situation. This situation can be from any source in your life.

Action
Describe the action you took, keeping the focus on you. Even if you are discussing a group project or effort, describe what you did -- not the team efforts. Tell what you did, not what you might do.

Results
What happened? How did the event end? What did you accomplish or learn?

academic involvements which depict your finest attributes.

For example, you might explain how you were elected captain of an athletic team that was victorious as a result of specific unifying team-building techniques you applied. Then, transition the discussion to reflect how you have demonstrated success in leading people around a shared purpose, and how you are gifted in motivating teams to unite to achieve a solitary goal.

Whether you are a leader, a team player, a focused analyst, an artist, a big picture visionary or an innovator, you can depict these marketable assets through a behavioral illustration of these qualities applied.

Prepare for your interview by gathering several personal accounts which reveal your greatest talents and hit each point of the STAR technique. Even if you are not specifically asked a question in the behavioral interviewing format, be prepared to provide illustrative, action-based responses. After supplying a direct answer you can follow by saying, "I can share an experience which demonstrates this."

Your arsenal of stories will serve as the supporting evidence of your accomplishments and ensure that the interviewer clearly understands the valuable capabilities and talents you are prepared to contribute to the organization and the advancement of their objectives.

Sample Behavioral Interview Questions

- Tell me about a time when you had to solve a difficult problem.
- Give an example of a goal you successfully met and how you achieved it.
- Tell about a time when you had to go above and beyond your job requirements in order to get a job done.
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with conflict.
- Give an example of a time when you assumed the lead and took initiative.
- Describe a situation in which you found a creative way to overcome an obstacle.
- What accomplishment are you most proud of in your professional experience?
- Tell me about a mistake that you made and what you did about it.



The Importance of Graduate School

By Steve Schreiber, '17

For many young people, walking down the aisle to receive an undergraduate diploma is a life-affirming moment. With that piece of paper and a firm handshake, a recent graduate might think that job opportunities are suddenly open wide like a car window on a hot summer day. After years of hard work, you'll land a well-paying job thanks to this degree.

Or will you?

This line of thinking seems to be rapidly drifting into the rear view mirror. The value of that degree, while still a crucial step toward a successful career, is not a harbinger of gainful employment. Gone are the days where an undergraduate degree will make you one of the most qualified applicants. With the general

ease of obtaining student loans and the push to send everyone and anyone to college, hundreds or even thousands of applicants with similar qualifications will be vigorously competing for the same job. How do you stand out in the job market?

This probably sounds bleak but pursuing a graduate degree can help to spotlight your resume in the eyes of employers. According to a 2014 Washington Post article, jobs that require a graduate degree are expected to grow 21.7% through 2020, which is faster than the growth of any other education level. That works out to roughly 2.6 million jobs created in less than a decade; some economists think that may be a conservative estimate.

Additionally, a person with a graduate degree is likely to see the benefits of his

or her decision immediately. According to a 2015 study by Georgetown University, students with a graduate degree in Communications/Mass Media average an extra \$13,000 per year in salary.

So while you may think the cost of pursuing a graduate degree is high, you're making a modest investment toward significantly improving your future. That investment can help qualify you for opportunities that you never could have found with only a bachelor's degree.



What Is Grad School Like?

By Jason Krobatsch, '17

When I was first considering graduate school, I asked many friends what being a grad student was like. Everyone said it was different than undergrad, but could not explain exactly why. Below are the reasons I have found graduate school to be different, and more enjoyable, than undergrad.

1. The work is more intense but more focused. You may have several assignments per week or three 10-page papers in a semester, but all of the work focuses around a central theme and can be tailored around your interests and career.
2. You have to read for class. There is no way to pretend you read the content for a graduate class. Get the book and read it.
3. Students usually take a maximum of three classes per semester. As opposed to undergrad, where students might take as many as six classes in a semester, graduate school is completed at a more casual, individualized pace.
4. The classes are very interactive. Students at the graduate level want to participate and everyone has valuable information to share. Professors typically structure their classes to include discussion and critical thinking. They want to see that you can apply the information you learn, not just memorize it.
5. Students want to be there. If you're in graduate school, you are there because you are passionate about the subject you're studying and want to be involved. You don't come across the "C's get degrees" attitude that is seen at the undergraduate level (because C's don't get degrees in graduate school).

Alumni Profile: Amaryllis Muniz

By Amaryllis Muniz, '16

Throughout the PCOM graduate program, I have gained knowledge in various concentrations including public relations, management, social media, professional writing, media production and strategic communication.

The hands-on activities such as the creation of video and social media campaigns, blogs, communication audits, integrated marketing campaigns and ultimately my Master's Project have guided me into my career as the Assistant Director of Marketing at Bloomfield College.

The various projects and assignments completed throughout the PCOM program have allowed me to be an innovative leader within my current position. From social media strategies and campaigns to writing web content, newsletters and overall marketing materials, the program enhanced my knowledge and improved the skills I use within my daily roles.

To finalize my graduate degree, I have compiled my Master's Project exploring the question: "How do intercultural differences affect romantic relationships and marriages?" The goals of this project are to analyze and interpret key

messages and overall communication strategies from interviews reflecting four couples in romantic relationships or marriages. For this project, I explored strategies and tactics used by intercultural couples, which helped identify how they overcame their struggles regarding differences of ethnicity and religion as they related to their relationship.

William Paterson's PCOM program prepares graduate students to excel in the workforce and enhances their knowledge within many career sectors found in communication, digital media, social media, marketing and public relations settings.



Now accepting applications!

Apply online at www.wpunj.edu/graduate

Prospective students must have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and an undergraduate grade point average of 3.0 (out of 4.0) in their major. Applications should include two academic letters of reference and a writing sample. GRE scores are not required but are strongly preferred. Further information is available through the Office of Graduate Admissions at (973) 720-3641 or wpunj.edu/graduate.

Questions?

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Considering graduate school, but aren't sure? You may take up to three classes (nine credits) as a non-degree student before formally applying to our program!