

Touch of Class

News about the Rowan University Graduate Public Relations Program

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Send Us Your E-Mail Addresses!

A "Touch of Class" is moving to an electronic newsletter format. Please e-mail your name and current e-mail address to coylep23@students.rowan.edu if you wish to continue to receive a "Touch of Class."

Also, please let us know about any news or accomplishments you would like to share with your fellow alumni.

Inside this issue:

Recent Graduate Disciplines Disruptive Media at Ketchum	1-2
New Student Focus: Alanna Kennedy	2
Alumni Advise Students	2
We Remember Dr. Craig Monroe	3
Research in the Works	3
Time to Sign Up for Summer Courses	4

Recent Rowan Graduate Disciplines Disruptive Media at Ketchum

Chris Legentil (M '08) won a fellowship at Ketchum Public Relations in New York. The fellowship paid off big, leading right to a full-time job for Legentil at the agency giant.

Legentil earned one of only 14 Ketchum fellowships. He accepted the fellowship initially because of Ketchum's stellar reputation and because he wanted to work in New York.

The experience, however, played an enormous role in his career choice. He got to see what it was like to work at Ketchum, and gave Ketchum's management a chance to see how he worked as well. At the end of his summer tenure, he was one of eight people offered a full-time position.

"An agency is very fast-paced," Chris explained. "It allows you to work on a lot of different things and figure out what you like to do best. Also, the atmosphere is usually pretty engaging and you can move up very quickly."

Legentil was recently promoted to Assistant Account Executive at Ketchum, the first new hire to be promoted. His main client is the Dr Pepper/Snapple group. He works on a variety of different public relations projects for the account.

We asked Chris to share some of his thoughts regarding his agency experience.

Q: How did you win the Ketchum fellowship?

A: I believe I was chosen because I performed well at our final presentations. I work quickly, and I don't complain.

Q: What made you decide to work at the agency after your fellowship ended?

A: There are many great things about Ketchum. The office goes to great lengths to keep employees happy: bowling leagues in the winter, kick-ball leagues in the summer, casual Fridays, summer get-away days, funny decorations, things to read on the walls of the bathrooms, etc. This culture is also reflected in the people that Ketchum hires. "Hardworking, but laid back" could be used to describe most people at the agency.

Q: What work do you do in the Disruptive Media Program, and why is that different from most PR jobs?

A: That's a great question. The idea behind Disruptive Media is this: Why try to make a story out of thin air when so many other stories already exist? For instance, let's say you work for Guitar Hero and your goal is to make Guitar Hero seem more favorable to parents. You could encourage Guitar Hero to partner with a tutoring center and pitch that story to the media, or you could attach the brand to a story that already exists.



Chris Legentil

For example, many articles were recently written about a boy who dropped out of high school (with parental permission) in hopes that he'd become a professional Guitar Hero player. The articles even mentioned that he wanted to make \$80,000 per year.

Then, you show the clients all the press that this story is getting and suggest that they respond by informing the boy that if he goes back to school and graduates, Guitar Hero will give him a one-year job for the desired \$80,000 in which he acts as a game demonstrator at conferences.

Now, which story do you think would get more press - the partnership or the \$80,000 job that encourages kids to go back to school?

Continued on Page 2

New Student Focus: Alanna M. Kennedy

by Amanda G. Weko

It's often rumored that English majors have the most difficulty with PR writing. That hasn't been the case for new student Alanna Kennedy. She earned a B.A. in English from Rowan in 2004 and has spent the past 4 years as an editorial assistant at *CR* – a magazine about people and progress in cancer published by the American Association for Cancer Research.

Alanna has combined her formal knowledge of the language with practical journalism experience. As she transitions to public relations through the program, Alanna is guided by a strong understanding of how editors and the public respond to writing, and how to craft messages that will appeal to both groups.

"I think my biggest strength as a PR practitioner will come from my years spent working on the other side of the fence," Alanna explained. She hopes her scientific understanding of cancer, coupled with her communication skills, might lead to a career in public relations for a cancer center such as Fox Chase or the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

We asked Alanna for her perspective on the program:

Q: What made you choose Rowan for graduate school?

A: I enjoyed my undergraduate experience here. I was on the staff of the college magazine where I edited the women's section and the literary section. That helped me form an interest in journalism, but I don't want to limit my opportunities for the future. PR seems to have more stability. Rowan offered convenience, familiarity, and the program had a good reputation.

"I think my biggest strength as a PR practitioner will come from my years spent working on the other side of the fence"

Q: How do you think the program will enhance your career? How will it help strengthen your professional skills?

A: I hope to get a more specific understanding of the goals and practice of PR. I have the writing background, but I want to expand that knowledge. I sometimes am too reserved and a little shy, or I get nervous when I have to do interviews for my articles. Clearly these are not attributes that will work in my favor as a PR practitioner, but I am working to move past them.

Q: Are there any areas of PR that you think the program should cover? Why?

A: I'd like to learn about specific uses for internet communication options. Having a column about blogs has shown me the strength and impact of reaching an audience online. I'd also like to learn more about website planning, getting people into a site and keeping them there.

In her position at *CR* magazine, Alanna writes a regular column, "Cancerblog," profiling the blog of someone affected by cancer, whether it's a patient, survivor or family member. She assigns and edits the "Advocacy Action" section of how-to articles about raising awareness of the disease and becoming involved in patient advocacy. Alanna also writes feature articles, including a recent cover story on cancer prevention.

Alumni Advise Students

Three alumni returned to Rowan University recently to answer questions, provide study tips and give advice to students preparing for their comprehensive exams.

This year's panel included **Bill Pavlou**, associate account executive for Garfield Group Public Relations, **Marissa Traveline**, general manager of government and community relations for South Jersey Industries, and **Ron Sansone**, SEO copywriter for the global solutions team at Razorfish.

Graduates of the program cite the comprehensive exam and thesis as the two most valuable experiences of their degree. "It's not as hard as everyone tells you, but it will be if you don't study," said Pavlou. "It's all about time management."

Recent Graduate Disciplines Disruptive Media at Ketchum

(Continued from Page 1)

Q: Looking back, how did the PR program at Rowan help you get your career underway?

It forced me to write more. It forced me to get an internship. It forced me to open my eyes to communication as a whole.

Q: What aspects of your job do you enjoy the most?

A: Pitching is the best. Whether it is the client or the media, pitching allows you to show your value to your company.

We Remember Dr. Craig Monroe

Dr. Craig Monroe was dean of the College of Communication at Rowan University for five years. He spent 40 years in higher education, passionately committed to his work.

Dr. Monroe held a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Nebraska, an M.S. in Speech from Emporia Kansas State University and a B.A. in Speech and Political Science from the University of Central Oklahoma. Prior to serving as dean at Rowan, Dr. Monroe held professorships in communication studies at California State University, San Bernardino and at Marshall University, West Virginia. At California State, he served as both chair of the department of communication studies and associate dean. He also served as chair of the department of speech at Marshall.

Throughout his career, Dr. Monroe authored several textbooks and articles in communication journals, delivered more than 40 conference papers and served as a trainer/consultant to many businesses and corporations.

Regarded by members of the Rowan community as an outstanding dean and a highly respected colleague, Dr. Monroe was noted for supporting student and faculty achievements and mentoring his faculty and staff. A strong leader, Dr. Monroe guided the college to new levels of accomplishment. During his years at Rowan, he was an influential member of numerous task forces and committees, always providing a voice of reason, wisdom and accommodation. He excelled at bringing people together and overseeing projects to a successful conclusion.

As dean, Dr. Monroe championed the work of award-winning communication students, believing that student achievement was the “signature” of his college. During his tenure as dean, communication students won more than 130 regional and national awards, and Dean Monroe attributed this high level of productivity and recognition to the quality of the college’s educational programs.

“I know Craig would have been pleased to see the size of the crowd,



and how much he was respected and how much he was loved,” said University President Donald Farish at the beloved dean’s memorial service. “I remember him as one of the most decent people I have ever met. I will miss my friend.”

Dr. Monroe’s leadership, good humor and caring nature will be forever missed by all who knew him at Rowan University.

Research in the Works

- ◇ Department Chair Dr. Suzanne FitzGerald, Dr. Chandrasekhar Vallath, and Patrick T. Coyle, graduate assistant, are working on their research, “Corporate Marketing in a Time of Economic Uncertainty: An Examination of Internet Advertising in Popular News Web Sites.” The paper title was accepted by the Conference on Corporate Communication for its 2009 conference in London, England.
- ◇ Dr. FitzGerald and Dr. Joseph Basso are researching “Fairness Doctrine Effects” for a paper presentation at the PRSA International Conference in San Diego, CA, in November 2009.
- ◇ Professor Edward Moore has published a new book with the National School Public Relations Association, entitled *The School PR Research Primer*. Professor Moore’s next book, *School PR for Student Success*, will be published by Corwin Press later this year.
- ◇ Professor Tony Fulginiti is conducting a random probability telephone survey of Woodstown-Pilesgrove residents to learn efficacious messages for an upcoming school bond referendum in March.
- ◇ Professor Diane Holtzman, Dr. Karen Stewart (Stockton) and Dr. Jennifer Barr (Stockton) are publishing a research paper entitled “Service Learning: Theory and Application to Marketing and Management” in the *Journal of the Northeastern Association of Business, Economics and Technology*.
- ◇ Patrick T. Coyle, graduate assistant, and Kaleef Lloyd, senior, are working with Professor Holtzman’s IMC students this semester on focus group and survey market research for Samaritan Hospice.

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Time to Sign Up for Summer Courses!

The list of graduate courses in public relations for the summer session of 2009 is now available. These summer courses help students to delve into specific topic areas in public relations and public affairs.

First Summer Session (May 18-June 4)

Online PR (Taught as a hybrid course for 3 credits):
May 18-June 4, 6:30-9:55 PM

Second Session (June 8-July 30)

Client Relationships (1 credit): June 8-11, 6:00-9:00 PM

Internal Communications (1 credit): June 15-18, 6:00-9:00 PM

Public Affairs Advertising (1 credit): June 22-25, 6:00-9:00 PM

Fund Raising and Development (Taught as a hybrid course for 2 credits):
July 6-9, 13-16, MW 6:30-9:30 PM; TR, Web Assisted

Using Electronic Media in PR (2 credits): July 20-23, 27-30, 6:30-9:30 PM

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