

Touch of Class

News about the Rowan University Graduate Public Relations Program

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Graduate Focus: John Sadak Combines Passion for PR and Sports

Hard work rarely goes unrewarded. John Sadak (M'03) graduated and immediately began working on his dream of becoming a sports broadcaster. Sadak began his career with a seasonal baseball position that combined broadcasting work and media relations duties. He continued his career in baseball announcing with the Wilmington Blue Rocks, including working as the lead play-by-play announcer for the past three years.

Sadak's work has been recognized multiple times over the years, including top sports-casting honors from the Delaware Press Association in 2007 and 2009. He was recently named the 2009 Delaware Sportscaster of the Year by the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association.

"Working 80 to 100 hours per week, including being on the air, behind-the-scenes work and travel can be quite a drain," John explained. "Honors like this help reinforce that what I'm doing has a purpose."

We asked John about his experience as a broadcaster.

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

A: My first on-air job in baseball was a seasonal position

from January through September with full-time hours that combined broadcast work and media relations duties. While I had the chance to announce the middle innings of the team's home games, the job also involved drafting press releases, game recaps and writing/editing our daily game notes. The writing techniques I learned and honed at Rowan helped me land that job.

Q: How is your job different from most PR or journalism jobs?

A: It's quite different from both traditional agency work and from your standard newspaper writing position. I work for a team. So while I always attempt to remain objective, I also must always keep the best PR interests of the organization in mind. At the same time, instead of catering style to different clients, I create and reinforce a brand identity for the many publics that are our fans, marketing partners and our parent club, the Kansas City Royals.

Q: Of all the honors and awards that you have received, what makes being named "Delaware's Sportscaster of the Year" special?

A: This one rings quite loud for me personally because it is voted on by my peers from the



John Sadak

nation's oldest and most prestigious collection of sportscasters. It's almost more of a nod to the culmination of my work in Delaware since moving here permanently in 2006 than specific to 2009.

Q: How did the program help you evolve into the person that you are now?

A: The graduate program handed me the tools to accomplish just about anything. Combine the skill set it established with the personal connections and friendships that I still maintain to this day, and it's an experience that I will always cherish.

Q: What job-seeking or career advice would you have for those currently in the program?

A: Work hard, be nice to people and show up on time. Truth be told, if you do just those three things, your plans will often have a way of working themselves out over the course of time.

Student Focus: Top Professionals and Accomplished Students Contribute to Rowan Classes

Nancy Long Brings 25 Years of Experience to Class

Nancy Bacher Long entered the master's in Public Relations program in the spring of 2009 having spent the past 25 years working in PR agencies. Like many students in the program, Nancy brings a wide array of experience to the table from her years as a professional.

For 15 years, Nancy served as president of Dorland Global Public Relations, now known as Tonic, in Philadelphia. The agency focuses on healthcare and pharmaceutical public relations. She also helped found the PRSA PR Institute, an education and training program for mid-career PR professionals. In 2009, the Philadelphia Chapter of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) gave Long its Lifetime Achievement Award.

After leaving Dorland in 2008 to take a break from working full-time, Nancy decided to pursue her graduate education and follow her interest of university level instruction.

"Throughout my career, mentoring and education has been the most fulfilling part of my job," Nancy explained to me. "I decided to attend Rowan so that I could pursue a Master's in PR degree and ultimately teach at the college level."

We asked Nancy about her decision to come to Rowan.

Q: What do you hope to gain from the program?

A: While I have a deep well of "on-the-job" experience, I never learned the formal history, theory and background

that underpin the profession. I hope to learn that here. In addition, I never pursued my APR. Rumor has it that if I pass the comprehensive exam, I will be well positioned to ace my APR exam. And, of course, by observing various teaching styles, I hope to learn the skills and tools to be an effective educator.

Q: What do you hope to do with your degree when you complete the program?

A: I hope to move from a classroom desk to standing in front of the classroom – ideally at Rowan University – teaching students PR from both an academic and practical perspective.

"I have learned, throughout my career, that partnering, mentoring, and giving back are the essential attributes of success."

Q: How did it feel to win the Philadelphia PRSA Lifetime Achievement Award?

A: At first, I was flabbergasted. Totally surprised. Then, I was deeply touched that my colleagues and friends chose to honor me. What makes it special is that it really is peer recognition. I have learned, throughout



**Nancy
Bacher
Long**

my career, that partnering, mentoring, and giving back are the essential attributes of success.

Q: Looking forward, what areas do you think programs such as the one at Rowan need to focus on to make sure their students succeed in a professional environment?

A: I am a big proponent of hands-on practical training – both in the classroom and out. Group projects, tight deadlines, rigorous standards are all things that will prepare students for the real world. I also advocate more external speakers and relationship-building opportunities. All the studying in the world is no substitute for making personal connections.

Q: What career advice would you give to a student in the program?

A: Develop relationships. Reach out to the PR community. Be active in PRSA and PRSSA. Intern. Volunteer. Remember, we all have to start out somewhere. My first job involved an IBM electric typewriter, carbon paper and a salary that was less than \$10,000 per year. By starting at the bottom, and soaking in everything you can, anything is possible.

Greg Richter Goes Straight from B.A. to M.A.

One approach to graduate education is to continue right after earning an undergraduate degree. This was the case for Greg Richter, who earned his BA in Public Relations from Rowan University in the spring of 2009.

Greg now pursues his master's degree in public relations while working as a graduate assistant for the media and public relations office at Rowan. Although his work there mostly involves the College of Engineering, Greg uses a variety of public relations tactics on the job.

In addition to traditional public relations writing, such as media alerts and press releases, the position also provides invaluable creative writing experience. Currently, Greg is working on a project researching traditional and participatory media use among engineering colleges.

As for the future, Greg is still keeping his options open. "After a few public affairs internships, I gained an interest in governmental relations," Greg said. "PR is a broad and continuously developing field. Therefore, I am not ruling out any particular area of practice."

We asked Greg about his experience as a student and as a graduate assistant.

Q: What do you hope to gain from the program?

A: I hope to strengthen my writing skills, broaden my overall understanding of the public relations field and be more marketable to potential employers.

Q: What has impressed you about the program so far?

A: Although I earned an undergraduate degree in public relations at

Rowan, the master's degree complemented my undergraduate degree much better than I expected. In addition to core courses, electives such as "Using Electronic Media in Public Relations" are very interesting and helpful in developing my career.

Q: How has being a graduate assistant helped you in your studies and vice versa?

A: Everyone in the office is a pleasure to work with. They may be co-workers, but are great teachers as well. In a communication techniques course, one of our assignments involved writing a feature story on a classmate. Writing features on graduates of Rowan's Engineering College provided me with helpful experience for the assignment.

"PR is a broad and continuously developing field. Therefore, I am not ruling out any particular area of practice."

Q: Looking forward, what areas do you think programs such as the one at Rowan need to focus on — to make sure their students succeed professionally?

A: Countless professionals emphasize the importance of developing effective writing skills. After talking to peers in other public relations programs, I firmly believe Rowan answers that call better than any other program in the region. As the public relations field adapts to trends in this country as



Greg Richter

a whole, I would like to see course modules on health care and/or "green" communication.

Q: Based on what you've experienced, is there anything else graduates of the program should know?

A: The Certificates of Graduate Study (COGS) in School Public Relations and Integrated Marketing Communication and New Media are both noteworthy ways of diversifying your skills before completing the program. If planned appropriately, the COGS can fit conveniently into a student's course load.

Q: What advice would you give to a student considering the program?

A: Prospective students should select courses best complementing their background, even if that means taking a less traditional route to a degree. Rowan's program is highly customizable; an emphasis on writing and other core skills is invaluable to everyone in the program, but carefully choosing electives and modules is the best way to gain additional skills.

Learn more about
the M.A. in P.R.

rowan.edu/mapr

Program Updates

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Register for Summer Courses!

The following Summer, 2010 classes have been scheduled. Please see the online PR schedule for more details.

Three Week Session:

MAPR 01524; Fundraising and Development; MTWR; 6:30-9:30 p.m., 5/17-5/27, 2 credits

MAPR 01554; Planning Special Events; TWR; 6:00-10:0 p.m., 6/1-6/3, 1 credit

Eight Week Session:

MAPR 01539; Client Relationships; MTWR; 6:00 – 9:00 p.m., 6/7 – 6/10, 1 credit

MAPR 01537; Contemporary PR Challenges; MTWR; 6:00-9:00 p.m., 6/14-6/17, 1 credit

MAPR 01538; Legislative Liaison; MTWR; 6:00-9:00 p.m., 6/21-6/24, 1 credit

MAPR 01610; Internship; 3 credits

MAPR 06515; Online PR (web-assisted) M; 6:00-9:00; 6/7-7/29, 3 credits

Alumni Return to Advise Graduate Students

Four alumni returned to Rowan University this semester to answer questions, provide study tips and give general advice to students preparing for their comprehensive exams.

This year's panel included Rosie Braude, program assistant for University Events at Rowan University; Greg Howe, communications associate at Bayada Nurses; Joe Staudenmayer, REBEL youth coordinator at the Camden County Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse; and Laura Bruhn, district webmaster & community outreach coordinator at Flemington-Raritan Regional School District.

Graduates of the program cited the comprehensive exam and thesis as the two most valuable experiences of their degree. "Studying for the exam went well because of the breadth of expertise that we had in our study group." said Braude. "Make sure you have a group that studies hard, but has fun too."