

# THE PROFESSIONAL

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

November 14  
Speed Networking

December 9  
Closing Social

How to start up your  
own PR company

## A Degree in PR can lead to a career in politics

By RACHEL CALL



There is no doubt that politics is a hot topic right now. With all the debates, ads and other media coverage of the presidential campaigns,

many public relations students are becoming increasingly interested in or even pursuing a career in politics.

To be involved in the political field, it is not always necessary to get a political degree. Costas Panagopoulos of New York University's department of politics explained that degrees in other fields, such as communications can profit a student interested in entering the political field.

"In the past, students prepared for careers in politics by studying political sci-

ence, or history or law. Today, they can also focus on marketing, communications, media, business and a variety of other areas that are now relevant to politics."

Being involved in politics is an obvious avenue for creating change. This change can be on an individual basis, in personal lives, or on a community or even national level.

In fact, communication is an extremely powerful tool in persuading people. John Guiniven, in Public Relations

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## PR portfolios: Putting your best work forward

By SUSAN BALCOM WALTON

You're partway through your job interview process. You've researched the hiring company. You've painstakingly prepared your résumé. Maybe you've even had a phone interview. And just when everything seems to be going smoothly, the question arises: "May we see your portfolio?"

The prospect of developing a portfolio can fill both new and seasoned PR practi-

tioners with dread. Of all the steps in the job application process — research, résumé preparation, interview — the portfolio is often the least understood. We wonder, what does my potential employer want to learn about me through my portfolio? What do I put in the portfolio? How do I present the contents of the portfolio?

PR practitioners, especially

those new to the field, should carefully consider these questions, because the impact of portfolios should never be underestimated. You will have other opportunities during your interview to share your personality, job history and understanding of your prospective employer's business. But the true breadth and depth of your PR production skills — especially your writ-



ing — will only come out in your portfolio. This is the

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place where the writing hits the road.

To help get you started on that journey, here are some answers to those all-important questions:

### What does my potential employer want to learn about me through my portfolio?

Erin Enke, an account supervisor at Fleishman-Hillard New York who supervises internship hiring and evaluates entry-level candidates, says, "Think in terms of what the employer needs to know about you and what you've done. They don't need to know that you've written a 40-page paper unless that paper discusses new media or some other emerging trend that the organization is interested in."

How do you know what the employer does need to see? Begin by reviewing the basic required skills and tactics of public relations and include any high-quality materials you've produced that show you've mastered them. It's also a good idea to learn about the employer and the business. Do some research; contact the company to see if they would like you to be prepared to discuss any specific topics. Then, if you've done related work in these areas, include that work in your portfolio.

### What do I put in the portfolio?

Stress the basic PR tools, but think about any and all work you've done that demonstrates important skills and can be displayed visually. Enke notes, "Things that you might think are just project work may be extremely significant to your employer. Articles and press releases are top priorities, but examples of article analysis, communications measurement and media monitoring can be important as well."

The PRSSA Web site at [www.prssa.org](http://www.prssa.org) provides information about compiling portfolios with a list of helpful items to include, such as résumés, evidence of professional affiliations, licenses

or certificates, and work samples. The Web site also suggests making a habit of saving your work. Keep copies of everything you've written or contributed to, and save it in its original form. You won't use it all in your portfolio, but you will have a bigger pool of possibilities to choose from when the time comes.

### How do I present the contents of the portfolio? TIPS:

- Present samples in their original form as often as possible. For example, if you are showing a newspaper story, a clipping of the printed publication is best, not just an electronic version. Original pieces help the reviewer better understand how the document was actually used.

- Select your best pieces to include, not everything you've done. Avoid the temptation to use your lesser work as filler if the portfolio seems too lean.

- Opt for samples of work published or used professionally, not just in the classroom.

- Include newsletters, brochures or Web site samples that demonstrate graphic design or desktop publishing skills along with the writing.

- Make access to the portfolio content as simple as possible for your reviewers. Consider using tabs or a table of contents.

- Proofread, proofread, proofread — then ask your roommate, mom, academic adviser or lab instructor to proofread it again. And did I mention the importance of proofreading? Enke recalls a candidate who, having successfully passed through two rounds of interviews, was not selected for the job, partly because of typographical errors in the application materials. "When it comes to proofreading, the little deal can really be the biggest deal," she says.

- In addition to rigorous proofreading, check your tone as well. Ruthlessly review your own materials to ensure that you've achieved the right tone — and

ask friends or teachers to help. Does the portfolio speak about your skills and not just about you? Is it confident but not arrogant? Is it an honest and reflective portrayal of what you've done?

- PR folks, unlike journalists, often do not have their name in the byline of materials they've written. If your name is not prominently featured on a piece as the writer, create a brief, neat caption for the portfolio that explains your role in, or contribution to, that piece.

- As you create your hard copy portfolio, keep a few samples handy in neat, organized electronic form as well.

- Plain black-and-white (or color, if it was done in color) pieces mounted on a plain black background are best. Avoid bubbles by using two-sided tape, adhesive spray or very light glue for mounting.

- A ring-bound notebook with a clear protective sheet covering each page is one good choice for displaying your work. It allows reviewers to easily remove pieces to pass along, and allows you to change the portfolio easily. That said, don't agonize too much over the precise format. The important thing is that the portfolio is neat, professional, and easy to read and understand.

- And above all, remember that this is portfolio creation — not scrapbooking. Avoid funky fonts, clever clip art and other frills. Enke says, "The differentiation will not be 'Who has the cutest clip art?' It comes down to 'Who has the most to contribute to my company?'" The hiring process for PR internships and jobs is highly competitive. Rest assured that your prospective employer will review stacks of portfolios. But, as Enke points out, "The winners will be those whose materials speak directly to their PR experience. I know I won't have to train that person about what public relations is or how to write." By following these basic tips, you and your portfolio will be ready to hit the interview road. Much success on your journey.

## Member Spotlight: Patrick Hernandez

### Major:

Pre-Communications Emphasis in Public Relations

### Minor:

Spanish

### Year in school:

Junior

### Hometown:

Murrieta, CA

### Hobbies:

Reading, Listening to Music, Racquetball, Tennis, Dance

### Favorite non comms class taken at BYU:

Dance 185, 285, Honors 200

### Why you are involved in PR:

I want to be an ambassador or an international business executive and the public relations program teaches you skills that you can apply to any field, plus the teachers are awesome, my fellow classmates are great, and I get to work at the Bradley Lab!

### Favorite movies:

Dark Night, Lord of the Rings Trilogy, Emperor's New Groove

### Best trip you've ever taken:

A trip to Honduras, I actually lived there for a little bit when I was ten because that's where my mom is from but I think it was just as awesome as a vacation. Major: Pre-Communications Emphasis in Public Relations



## What Is Sports PR?

By HEIDI CARMACK

Public relations in sports serve two main functions: international communication made possible through sporting events and the promotional visibility of athletes.

Sports is a major international business and key structure to our rapidly globalizing society. Cultural and intercultural

communications are fed through sports. The Olympic games model this communication. International diplomacy that would not be plausible under another circumstance is found in these worldwide sporting events. Countries have the opportunity to promote national ideals, culture and tourism.

This summer the Iranian national basketball squad played exhibition games against several NBA summer league teams, including the Utah Jazz. These games were an attempt to reduce tensions between the United States and Iran. Where public diplomacy is strained, sporting events can provide opportunities for relationships.

Sports PR people are also vital in promoting their athletes to generate public interest and visibility. People will take

action—buying tickets to games, subscribing to sports publications and actively seeking out information—if their interest in athletes and teams are piqued and they know information is available.

Sports PR experts coordinate the flow of information from teams to publics through the media. There is great demand for sports news, team data and information about players.

On a smaller scale, some of the functions of sports PR personnel include writing press releases, creating press guides and organizing briefings. They must respond to requests for information. They must position sensitive news delicately or respond to crisis situations—often in cases that, handled inappropriately, will afford injury to reputation.



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Tactics, went so far as to suggest that Al Gore won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 for what Guiniven said “was a very effective PR awareness campaign on global warming.”

“Many of our students now see politics and public affairs as honorable professions where they can make an important contribution, earn a good living, and be respected by their families and friends,” John C. Green, professor of political science and director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, said.

Green suggested students go to three sources for information and mentoring as they prepare to enter the political field. These sources also hold true for public relations students interested in the political field.

The first source Green suggested to students is their undergraduate professors and career counselors. Our department of communications is filled with exemplary professors who are always willing to discuss topics with students and help them further their education. The department of communications consists of not only qualified public relations professors but wonderful advertising, journalism, broadcast and communications studies practitioners and professors.

Our program also boasts an exceptional counseling center and internship office.

Both of these are invaluable resources students can take advantage of to help them as they prepare to enter the field of communications.

questions and “the importance in PR of building relationships with the people you encounter every day.” For students, these people could be fellow students, professors

communications often hosts visitors, many of which have experience in the political arena. PRSSA strives to bring a variety of professional in contact with public relations



Secondly, Green suggests students contact political programs across the nation as they prepare for a career in politics. There are institutions and colleges that specialize in the field of politics and communications that can provide resources to those interested in a public relations career in politics.

Former deputy press secretary to First Lady Laura Bush, Ashleigh Adams, said that while she worked in the White House she learned how important it is to ask a lot of

and local professionals.

Lastly, Green suggests students get in touch with political professionals in their areas. There are various political professionals in the area that would most likely be delighted to speak to students about their careers and how students can prepare to be successful in similar careers.

Often, these professionals come to BYU through forums, the Kennedy Center or specific college programs. The department of commu-

students through events like weekly meetings and speed networking and also through the Interlock program. These programs often lead to valuable networking opportunities which can bring internships and jobs to students.

“The single best thing an undergraduate can do is to take an internship with a campaign, political organization or public official. There is simply no substitute for ‘hands on’ experience,” Green said.

# PRSSA National Committee: Two BYU students lead the way

By WHITNEY CLARK

This school year our chapter of PRSSA is proud to have two members represent us on the National Committee.

Both seniors from West Jordan from Sandy were with other PRSSA around the coun- national commit-

As the editor of of *The Forum*, publication, Bad- tri-annual publi- the leadership publication entitled, *Connecting with PRSSA*. Both publications deal with issues regarding public relations information and current events in the field.

Badger was nervous about her qualifications when applying for such a prestigious position, but with help from the PRSSA board, she put her talents forward and applied.

“Because of some wonderful people’s help and a little prayer,” Badger said, “things worked out the way they were supposed to.”

Page works with the National Committee as the Supervisor of Professional Development, working with the 14 student firms associated with PRSSA as well as publishing the national blog, which discusses trends in the industry and how they influence the practice of public relations.



majoring in Pub- Cindy Badger and Tyler Page selected to work members from try on this year’s tee.

this year’s edition PRSSA’s national ger produces the cation as well as

“I didn’t even know about PR before my mission,” Page said. He got involved through his parents and after taking all the classes loved

Both members ing from BYU in on to careers in tions field. Bad- career in a non- while also look- reward of starting hopes to work lic relations firm his MBA.



it. plan on graduat- April and moving the public rela- ger is planning a profit agency, ing toward the her family. Page with a major pub- and then pursue

Both Badger and Page expressed their love for PRSSA, each emphasizing the effects the people within the club have had on their lives.

“A lot of the people I’ve gotten to know through PRSSA have become like a second family,” Badger said. “And the faculty and professional advisors are no exception, and many of them have become my greatest mentors.”

PR has been a large part of both of their lives. Page began his work in PR after his mission, and has enjoyed it since he started.

“Step ahead of all your peers,” Page said when asked what advice to give to students. “Meet experts and practice.”

“Just do it! Don’t let fear hold you back,” Badger said. “You have to give it your all if you expect to reap the full benefits of [PRSSA].”



Detroit Skyline

# Reorganization of the Bradley Firm: Getting Students Involved

By LAUREN LYTLE

Over the past two years, Bradley Public Relations Firm has changed from being a student-run club to a professionally advised firm with big-time clientele. BPR was created in 1986 and is the PR agency for Brigham Young University's chapter of PRSSA.

"The reorganization of Bradley Public Relations as a student lab with a full-time adviser is exciting," said Dr. Laurie Wilson, Professor and Director of Internships at BYU. "It means that BPR will be the place where students can practically apply what they are learning in their classes, and the classes can use BPR clients for their coursework."

BPR bridges the gap between the academic and the professional world by giving students an opportunity, while still in school, to get professional experience and apply the skills they've been taught in the classroom.

"It will provide the opportunity for

students to connect with more prestigious clients, both agencies and companies, who will observe their work through BPR and naturally reach out to hire them when they graduate," Dr. Wilson said. "While we always had real-world clients in our upper division classes, the "new" BPR brings the practice of public relations into our classrooms in a more realistic way."

Bradley aims at helping students build their portfolios and develop professional skills that will help them land that first job.

"Everybody will have a diploma, but not everyone will have the Bradley experience that will have given them the experience and skills they need for the real world," said Jeff DuBois, Manager of the Bradley Public Relations lab.

Jeff DuBois is a BYU graduate and earned his B.A. in Communications with a public relations emphasis in 1997. He worked in New York City for a number of years with a wireless mobile company and gained a great deal of professional experience that he now

uses to advise the students of BPR. DuBois is in charge of overseeing all the work that the BPR students do as well as finding clients. DuBois says that he is trying to move away from just local clients by getting involved with national campaigns such as Unicef's Tap Project's launch in Salt Lake City.

Unicef's Tap Project is a nation-wide fundraising campaign aimed at raising money to ensure clean drinking water for underprivileged children in Africa. Restaurants who agree to comply will help by inviting their customers to donate a dollar for the tap water they would normally get free. BPR is helping to implement this campaign in the greater Salt Lake City area.

BPR is the Agency of Record of BYU's Communications department. Their three prong mission is to improve alumni and student relations and to increase awareness to incoming freshman. The goal of this campaign is to tell the story of the Communications department and all the things it has to offer the student body.

"Not everyone will have the Bradley experience."

-Jeff DuBois



# UTAH TAP