

# TRENDING TOPICS

The official Chapter newsletter of Waynesburg University PRSSA

November 2017



**PUBLIC RELATIONS  
STUDENT MAKES  
UNIVERSITY DAY OF  
GIVING A SUCCESS**

**CHAPTER PREPARES  
FOR RENAISSANCE  
AWARDS**

**+ REASONS TO JOIN A  
PRSSA COMMITTEE**

**WAYNESBURG UNIVERSITY**  
**PRSSA** Public Relations  
Student Society  
of America

**DR. F.H. TEAHAN  
2015  
OUTSTANDING  
NEWSLETTER  
AWARD**



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Maura Fenske**  
Chapter President

With the overwhelming amount of mistakes, misadventures and misconducts that have appeared in the news recently, most centered around major figures in society, we, as future public relations professionals, might be tempted to rethink our chosen profession. We might start to believe we could never take on the task of managing a crisis like the ones appearing in the news each day.

But we, at Waynesburg University, have an advantage. Our curriculum is based around the mission of faith, learning and service. We are being trained to handle public relations crises from a faith-based perspective. Our class, Chapter and firm experiences are centered around ethics and doing the right thing.

*Maura Fenske is a public relations major and has been the Waynesburg University PRSSA President since June 2016. If you are interested in the Chapter or have any questions, email Maura at fen7280@student.waynesburg.edu*

Witnessing all of the turmoil that has stemmed from these events should motivate us to become better, more seasoned future professionals, and should not cause us to shy away from doing the right thing—even if the right thing is the hardest thing to do.

### **Be proactive.**

**Teghan Simonton** Public Relations Director  
As the Chapter prepares to separate for winter break, members of Waynesburg University Public Relations Student Society of America are encouraged to use the free time wisely—to develop their business cards and portfolios, read industry news and plan Chapter activities for the spring semester.

Professional Development Coordinator Nicole Tobias will be preparing for another busy semester of events, workshops and activities. After her first semester on Waynesburg PRSSA Executive Board, she is excited about all that was accomplished, and hopeful for greater momentum in the future.

“I hope Chapter members learned a lot from the events we partook in as well as learned from the activities we did while having a good time,” said Tobias. “For me, personally, I enjoy making people laugh and happy. College can be stressful, and adding on other life problems on top of that can really make someone feel low. If I can help people learn more about a field they love while also making them laugh, crack a smile, and just take a step back from reality for a moment, then I feel like I am doing my job right.”

Never sit back on your heels and believe that your organization is protected from a crisis. Unless you have a comprehensive, updated crisis communication that is understood by everyone at your company, you are leaving yourself and your employees open to all sorts of potential issues. It’s better to take an umbrella out with you, even when it’s sunny, because you never know when the rain might fall.

### **Be transparent.**

In addition to being proactive instead of reactive, everyone within your organization must also be forthcoming with any issues that could turn into major crises. It is always better to know what you are dealing with and to get in front of the story than to be left picking up the pieces when your organization’s reputation and credibility fall apart.

### **Do the right thing.**

It all comes down to this; you know what is right and what is wrong. Do the right thing. Take the high road. Your career, your reputation and your character depend on it.

Best always,

*Maura Fenske*

Chapter President

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## STUDENTS REFLECT ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

During the Fall 2017 semester, Tobias organized an ethics article discussion, a workshop about professionalism at events, a look at Wendy’s social media and a business card workshop. She also prepared the Chapter to attend professional events, like PR Summit, PRSSA National Conference and various PRSSA National Twitter Chats.

“My goal for the semester was just to do the best that I can in my position,” said Tobias. “This is my first time ever fulfilling a role like this, and I had to learn a lot this semester, and will still be learning more about my role as my term progresses. Ultimately, I think I did a decent job. In the future, I hope I can provide the Chapter with more fun and informative activities as well as hopefully taking Chapter members to more events this upcoming semester.”

Tobias said next semester will include several more workshops and opportunities for professional development with the Chapter general body, which she is excited to facilitate.

“There is always room for me to improve, and I am hoping next semester will be even better,” she said.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS STUDENT MAKES DAY OF GIVING A SUCCESS

**Olivia Kelley**  
Chapter Member

Waynesburg University set a goal to reach 650 donors for its second annual Day of Giving Thursday, November 16,

2017.

The fundraising event accumulated 1,152 donations. Over the 24-hour period, donors earmarked monetary gifts of \$10 or more to academic departments, athletic teams or other University funds of their choosing. Those in the University's Office of Institutional Advancement played a key role in the Day of Giving's success.

This office is where Audrey Domasky, a senior public relations major with a minor in Biblical ministry studies, and a general body member of the Waynesburg University Public Relations Student Society of America, spent a lot of her time, since joining the Day of Giving team in September. As her senior practicum project, Domasky took on the position of Student Ambassador for the Day of Giving. She was heavily involved in activities that took place on the day of the fundraiser.

"On the day of the event, I found myself running around like a crazy lady," said Domasky. "I proudly dressed myself for the day in my bright yellow Day of Giving t-shirt to promote the event and spent a majority of the day in the Office of Institutional Advancement; in-putting data into the computer database, starring in Instagram posts and Facebook live videos, delivering

'I gave!' stickers to departments and keeping up-to-date with social media posts from donors."

Throughout the day, Waynesburg University's Twitter account posted updates on the fundraiser's achievements and thanked donors non-stop with shout-outs and trendy thank you GIFs. The University's Facebook page also posted a live video from the Office of Institutional Advancement of the moment it achieved 1,000 donors.

This year's Day of Giving garnered an unbelievable amount of support. Students and faculty banded together to encourage as many people as they could to donate to an institution that they know gives directly to its departments. Students like Domasky have already seen the benefits of the first annual Day of Giving in their own department.

"Last year, we worked together and were able to remodel the Mac Lab, an area we use every day as communication students," said Domasky.

The Department of Communication alone received 193 gifts and one pledge, with which it will be able to further invest in its programs and facilities. Through events like Day of Giving, the University is continuing to make strides to provide experiences of faith, learning and service for every one of its students.



### CHAPTER PARTICIPATES IN 90S-THEMED 'DUEL IN BUHL'

Waynesburg University Public Relations Student Society of America members helped represent Waynesburg's print media students in the annual Department of Communication Christmas party.

## FROM THE FIRM DIRECTOR'S DESK



**Amanda Troncone** VP/Firm Director  
My stepfather is a huge

history fan. I can remember years of “pop quizzes” driving the roads of upstate New York. I definitely did not appreciate this as a kid, and most the time, I rolled my eyes and put my headphones on. As I am maturing, I now realize the importance of history and why he spent hours upon hours drilling facts into my head. Without understanding where we came from and what has happened in the past, we cannot fully comprehend where we are going and what is yet to come.

In order to understand where Red Brick Communications is going, we need to understand where Red Brick has been. To help explain this, I am reaching into the depths of Red Brick’s files and using copy that Jordan Mitrik, a former

firm director, wrote for our National Affiliation application as a reference.

In 2011, Waynesburg PRSSA members discussed the possibility of creating our own student-run firm. After using the PRSSA student-run firm handbook as a reference, the members developed Waynesburg first ever communications firm. Naming this was another challenge in itself. As Mitrik wrote, “Gazing out at any window on Waynesburg’s campus, one is surrounded by academic buildings built with red bricks. It was only fitting to incorporate the university’s infrastructure into the firm name to continue Waynesburg’s unique tradition.” Thus, the name Red Brick Communications was established.

Throughout the years, the firm has had firm directors, all of which have expanded and strengthened Red Brick Communications into what we know today.

In the past, we have contracted our services to a variety of clients including Moore’s Hot Dog Food Truck, Blondie’s Hair Salon, and The Greene County Salvation Army. Today, most of our clients have a working history with Red Brick Communications, such as the Greene County Special Olympics and Greene County Tourism.

At the time that Jordan wrote the National Affiliation application, Red Brick Communications had 26 members and served 6 clients. Today, we are still serving 6 clients, now with 16 members.

But despite changes, development, and years passed, our objective remains consistent.

“Red Brick Communications’ mission is to provide result-oriented public relations campaigns that are developed to meet clients’ needs by providing professional services and excelling at client relations,” wrote Mitrik. “Through practice, Red Brick Communications aspires to follow the vision of Waynesburg University by allowing students to pursue a life of leadership by providing the community with public relations services that surpass expectations. Red Brick Communications offers hands-on experience to students with the intent to facilitate the transition into the professional field.”

As of now, we are looking forward to Red Brick Communications future and working on projects that will strengthen our ability to provide clients with professional and upstanding work.

Chapter VP/Firm Director

## Four Christmas Gifts for PR Majors



Coffee Mugs

Adobe Creative Suite



Notebooks



Office Supplies



## WINTER FUNDRAISER A HOT SPOT ON CAMPUS

**Teghan Simonton** The Waynesburg University Chapter of Public Relations Director of the Public Relations Student Society of America completed the Fall 2017 semester with one final fundraiser: a hot drinks sale in the Eberly Library on campus.

According to Tanner McKnight, fundraising coordinator, the idea came about as a result of the recent removal of the campus library's coffee bar. Once a popular stop for Waynesburg University students because it provided free coffee and cups, the Student Senate nixed the coffee bar last semester. Waynesburg PRSSA saw an opportunity to fill the void with their own fundraiser.

The Chapter sold hot chocolate and coffee, which was provided by the cafeteria and Chapter members, for \$1 per cup, plus one free refill. Because the cafeteria provided supplies free of charge, the Chapter was able to make a significant profit. McKnight said that the success of the fundraiser was the perfect way to cap off his first semester on Waynesburg PRSSA's Executive Board.

"I'm very proud with what we have done so far with the sticker sale and trying to do the cornhole tournament," said McKnight. "I'm excited for what else we can do as a group."

McKnight has high hopes for the spring semester, to increase the Chapter's involvement in new and creative ways to fundraise.

## Finals Week Coffee Sale

Monday - Wednesday  
8 a.m. to noon  
6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

**\$1 per cup + one refill**



"I hope we can do a few more fundraisers than we did the first semester," he said. "We have some very good ideas coming next semester that we have never done before."

McKnight said his experience as fundraising coordinator has been very positive thus far, and he is looking forward to working with the Executive Board to better himself and the Chapter.

"Having this be my first year on the E-Board has opened my eyes about all the behind the scenes stuff that we do," he said. "It was hard at the beginning, because for a lot of us, this is our first time on the E-Board. I hope to improve and adjust how many fundraisers we hold. I also hope to bring new ideas to the table for next semester and for the future."

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## CHAPTER PREPARES TO APPLY FOR RENAISSANCE AWARD

**Teghan Simonton** The Waynesburg University Chapter of Public Relations Director of the Public Relations Student Society of America kicked off 2017 by accepting the PRSSA Chapter of the Year Award from PRSA Pittsburgh, and now, the Chapter is wrapping up the year by applying for that same award.

Chapter President Maura Fenske and National Publications Editor-in-Chief Natalie Gloady spearheaded the application process for the Renaissance Award for the 2018 PRSSA Chapter of the Year, which is bestowed each year upon a regional chapter by PRSA Pittsburgh.

The PRSSA Chapter of the Year Award was brand new last year, making Waynesburg University PRSSA the first PRSSA Chapter to ever receive the award.

The application for the 2017 award was completed by former Waynesburg University PRSSA Vice President and Firm Director Jordan Mitrik, who is currently co-chair of the PRSA Pittsburgh Renaissance Awards alongside former Waynesburg University

PRSSA Chapter President Megan Bayles. The two accepted the 2017 award on the Chapter's behalf, with Fenske introducing the two, as the accomplishments in the application were in large thanks to the hard work and dedication of Mitrik and Bayles during their time as leaders of the Chapter.

This year, the application was completed by Fenske and Gloady and submitted to Mitrik and his fellow PRSA Pittsburgh board members. Though the deadline fell during finals week, the application submission was timely, and Fenske hopes for a favorable outcome.

"To be able to say that we won the first two awards of this kind ever given by our sponsor chapter PRSA Pittsburgh would be huge for us," Fenske said. "We really admire the professionals in that chapter and for them to recognize us for the things that we are doing on the student society level is very humbling and pretty awesome."

"I hope that we hear some good news soon and can report back shortly after we return from Christmas break," Fenske said.

# HIGH SCHOOL INITIATIVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE DURING SEMESTER

**Gabrielle Coy**  
Special Events Coordinator

The transition from high school to college can be difficult for some students, especially if they are unaware

of the opportunities that lie ahead of them. Many high schools offer limited communication courses, or public relations courses. To further educate high school students about the field of public relations, the Waynesburg University Public Relations Student Society of America Chapter developed a High School Initiative program, designed to show the endless possibilities a degree in public relations provides.

The High School Initiative program is part of Waynesburg PRSSA's recruiting strategy, and also allows the Chapter to qualify for Star Chapter Status each year.

The High School Initiative team, which consists of Chapter President Maura Fenske, Chapter Vice President and Firm Director Amanda Troncone, and Professional Development Coordinator Nicole Tobias, presented to the Introduction to Public Relations course at Thomas Jefferson High School in Jefferson Hills, Pennsylvania, November 2.

Because the class is a public relations course, the team was able to focus on different areas of public relations outside of the class's curriculum. The lesson allowed them to connect with students who were considering the public relations field.

The presentation included an overview of public relations and

highlights of the opportunities that come with being involved with an organization such as WUPRSSA.

"Understanding that I was simply talking to other people about something I love helped me this year to relate to the high school students," said Troncone, who has presented to high school students in the past. "At one time, I was in their place."

The High School Initiative program also serves as a professional development learning experience for current Chapter members.

"Being on a high school initiative team allowed me to understand and communicate what public relations is and how much I have learned over the course of my time at Waynesburg," said Troncone. "It helps to develop public speaking skills and it is an expression of your commitment to the field of public relations and Waynesburg PRSSA."

Presenters also had the unique opportunity to answer questions and inspire current high school students trying to decide on their post-graduation plans. For Tobias, this aspect of the program is especially impactful.

"At one point in our lives, someone older than us has probably persuaded us and or inspired us to make big decisions about life after high school," said Tobias. I believe it is important to step into that role and possibly help high school students in their decision on what they want to do with their lives after high school."

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## FOUR REASONS TO JOIN A PRSSA CHAPTER COMMITTEE

**Nicole Tobias**  
Professional Development  
Coordinator

As semester's end approaches, students have the perfect opportunity to reflect on their experiences and to set

goals for the future. When it comes to involvement in your PRSSA chapter, applying for a committee position presents the chance to develop professionally and personally. There are many benefits to becoming a chapter committee member next semester, including the following.

### **Improve your skills.**

As a public relations student, it is important to improve the skills you currently possess, and gain new ones. There are a wide variety of areas where skills can be improved or gained. Public relations is such a multi-faceted profession – meaning there are countless areas to learn and to master. Whether it is coordination social media, event planning or a number of other skills, committee positions will help you improve.

### **Discover interests and disinterests.**

There are a wide variety of diverse tasks that public relations students work with. When deciding to apply for a committee position, you can indicate a specific area to serve in. Along the way, you may find that you greatly enjoy the tasks your position

faces, or you may learn that the tasks given to your position are not entirely your forte. Either way, you have the experience, and you have gotten a little closer into developing yourself as a professional with defined skills and interests.

### **Boost your résumé.**

Having astounding grades is one thing, but participating in various organizations throughout college is another important portion of your résumé. Employers will seek someone who was able to do well academically while balancing co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Being able to list that you played a role in PRSSA can grab the attention of someone viewing your résumé.

### **Prepare for future roles.**

Every year, the Chapter is looking for individuals to take that extra step and display strong leadership skills. By serving in a committee position now, you are paving the path towards the skills, responsibility, and determination needed to potentially become an Executive Board member.

Evidently, serving in a committee position can lead to great success as a public relations student. It may seem intimidating at first, but serving in a committee position is ultimately a rewarding experience.

# Black Friday Facts

## It attracts more people than **Disney**

In 2014, Walmart alone attracted 22 million people on Thanksgiving day.



That's more than the 18.5 million people who visit Disney World, in Florida, every year.

## More People Die shopping than in **Shark Attacks**

7 people have died and 98 have been injured in the U.S. while Black Friday shopping since 2006

There is an average of only 16 shark attacks in the U.S. per year, with one fatal attack every two years.



## OPPORTUNITIES

### PRSSA National Individual Awards

Daniel J. Edelman/  
PRSSA Award due  
Feb. 27, 2017

Ruth Edelman/PRSSA  
Award due Feb. 27,  
2017

### Blog Writing

Enhance your writing skills and expand your portfolio by writing for the Chapter blog. Contact Public Relations Director, Teghan Simonton, for more information.

### Red Brick Communications

Become part of the Nationally Affiliated student-run firm and prepare yourself by providing local nonprofit organizations with pro bono public relations work. Contact Vice President and Firm Director, Amanda Troncone, for more information.

## INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: GABRIELLE COY

**Grace Hutchison** Historian  
Gabrielle Coy, junior public relations major with minors in

journalism and design, and Special Events Coordinator for the Waynesburg University Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America, spent May through August 2017 doing a “little bit of everything” for Lifesteps, a non-profit organization based out of Indiana, Pennsylvania.

“It was just my coworker and myself for the entire county, so there were only two of us doing public relations for the entire county,” Coy said. “One day I might be doing solicitations and the next day I am writing social media. It was different every day.” The freedom in tasks and unexpected demands of each shift, according to Coy, were what attracted her to the internship.

“I really am terrified of having to do the same monotonous task day after day,” Coy said. “That’s why I chose public relations, because there are so many different avenues I could take.”

Lifesteps operates in 11 counties within Pennsylvania where they “provide services for each county and fill in the gaps that government programs don’t cover,” said Coy. Some of the services that Lifesteps’ provides include autism screenings for children and a resource library that travels around their locations and local parks for children and families to utilize.

“Lifesteps also offers an adult day program for adults with special needs that don’t have anywhere to go during the day, because after they transition out of high school and special classes they don’t have anything to do,” Coy said.

Coy said that she chose Lifesteps for her internship experience precisely because of the services they provide to the community.

“I really am attracted to the non-profit field,”



Coy said. “When I knew I was looking for a non-profit internship, I then wanted to find one where I was really attracted to their cause, and I really resonated with Lifesteps.”

Coy said she was challenged by learning Lifesteps’ particular voice on social media and adapting her client work from the Chapter and applying it to her internship.

“I really learned a lot about non-profits,” Coy said. “I think that people in non-profits wear a lot of hats, and you hear that often but you don’t really get a glimpse into it until you work there.”

As a result of her time at Lifesteps, according to Coy, she gained experience in non-profits, where she sees herself in the future.

“I feel like I could walk into a non-profit or any agency and have a better idea of how they operate in the real world,” said Coy. “When you go out and you work in that environment it really prepares you for any situation.”

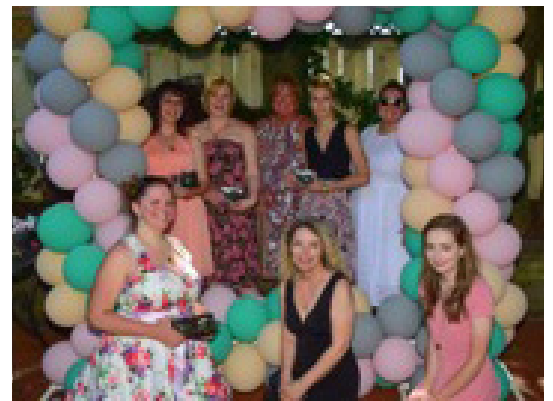


Photo courtesy of Gabrielle Coy

### Connect With Us!

Contact Teghan Simonton by emailing [sim6628@student.waynesburg.edu](mailto:sim6628@student.waynesburg.edu) if you would like to write for Trending Topics!

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# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT: OLIVIA KELLEY

**Chad Walker**  
Treasurer

Olivia Kelley is a junior public relations major student who interned right here at Waynesburg University. During fall 2017, she worked as an event planning intern in Waynesburg University's Office of Academic Affairs.

Kelley planned different activities and events for the students at Waynesburg, working under Sarah Bell, academic communications coordinator. Some of the university events included Merit Badge University, when more than 300 Boy Scouts are invited on campus, and the annual John Knox Writing Contest for high school students interested in journalism.

"Sarah has been really great about guiding me through what it means to be an event planner, but she has also given me a lot of freedom in trying to figure things out on my own," said Kelley. "I have learned a lot about the importance of staying on schedule, preparing for the worst-case scenario, and maintaining communication between all of the parties involved in planning an event."

Kelley said her experience with Red Brick Communications, Waynesburg University's student-run public relations firm, and several classes in the Department of Communication prepared her for success at her internship.

"These were classes that created the foundation of my Associated Press Style knowledge, so taking those courses was extremely helpful for this internship," said Kelley. "Also, Principles of Design taught me the basics of navigating Adobe software, which I use often."

Internships are usually completed during the summer when students don't have schoolwork, but Kelley didn't want to

pass up an opportunity to work at Waynesburg.

"My academic advisor approached me with the opportunity and thought it would be beneficial experience for me, since I hope to work in the nonprofit field post-graduation," said Kelley. "It was a challenge to add an internship into



my daily class routine, but it helped a lot that the internship was on campus. Ultimately, I had to remind myself that the internship was for a class credit so maintaining my grades and doing my homework was just as important as doing internship work outside of my typical hours."



*Photos courtesy of Olivia Kelley*

Kelley said time management was her biggest challenge this semester – one that she mastered, in the end.

"At one point, I was finishing up projects for one event, working on small tasks for another event, and also thinking of ideas for the next event, so it was challenging to balance all of that at once," said Kelley. "I tried to prioritize as best I could though and focus the majority of my efforts on whatever task needed to get done immediately."

Kelley said even at the toughest moment, she still had fun.

"I loved the dynamic that my boss, Sarah, and I shared," said Kelley. She is a fairly recent graduate from the University, so I felt like she and I have had similar academic experiences and could understand each other's expectations well. Working the events was also a blast. I loved witnessing the positive impact that the University's events have on so many people."



*Photo courtesy of Olivia Kelley*

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