

CPRE Educator-Industry Summit



May 15, 2019 Capital University, Columbus OH

- Sponsored in partnership with the Department of Communication at Capital University in Columbus
- The University provided space, refreshments and lunch, and state-of-the-art AV technology, as well as handling signage, registration, etc. This meant that CPRE had no costs but gained valuable insights for future reports, and visibility with key PR leaders on campus and in the industry.
- Thirty participants attended, including the president and the provost of the University and a CPRE officer, as well as:
 - Six corporate PR executives from companies including JP Morgan Chase, Abercrombie & Fitch, "L" Brands and others
 - Six PR agency staff including two CEOs (one who is a CPRE board member)
 - Three senior PR consultants including a trustee of the Public Relations Institute and Mary Lynn Cusick, past president of PRSA
 - Five public relations faculty from four Central Ohio Universities
 - Five PR leaders from major not-for-profit organizations including academic medical centers, health systems, universities and colleges of nursing, and the state hospital association
 - Two PRSSA representatives
- The program followed the same model as the Washington DC Summit:
 - Buffet luncheon served starting at noon to allow for late-arriving guests
 - 20 minute introductions, remarks from the University President, short presentation about CPRE, and at this event a representative of a locally-headquartered PR agency discussed their collaborative program with Capital University to provide experiential learning for students and service to the community
 - An hour of small group (5 to 6 each) on five topics:

- Ethics
 - Writing
 - Industry-Educator Dialogue
 - Diversity
 - Online education
- A 30-40 minute session where groups shared their key observations.
- The group adjourned about 2:45, based on feedback from a number of participants who said they wanted to attend but had 3 p.m. commitments.
- All group discussion notes will be put into a report combined with the Washington summit discussions and upcoming summits, with an emphasis on findings that are common across all groups, in terms of challenges and solutions. Some key observations from the Columbus group follow on Page 3. We noticed in Washington that we had some people who had to leave early.
- Key learnings for future Summits
 - A three-hour timeframe seems to be the maximum length that busy practitioners and faculty are willing to give. Comment about the compressed timeline. “If you had said half-day, I would have had to say no, and I would have been sorry.”
 - Comments before, during and after the Summit from participants expressed great satisfaction with the experience. One invitee wrote “To be asked to share our ideas – rather than sitting in a session listening to others talk AT us – was so unusual, and getting to exchange ideas with the faculty was really valuable. I think what we shared was helpful to the faculty, too.” Many liked the absence of a speaker – “just getting down to our discussion was good.”
 - Faculty also appreciated being able to respond to practitioner concerns. “I was able to explain why we have to do some things in specific ways at a university – we can’t just have students take only PR courses,” and all commented that hearing that what employers expect is based on what they are being asked to do by clients was “an eye-opener” as one put it. A high ranking and self-described “really demanding” exec said “Getting to go back and forth with a professor on better ways I can prep graduates and he can teach the kind of writing we need gave me insights I can put to work right now.”
 - They most valued talking to each other. “You should do one of these every year here, and certainly in every major city in the U.S.”
- Word travels fast. Another big Ohio PRSA chapter has already been in contact with us and want to do a same model event, inviting PR leaders from P and G, several banks, universities, etc., and they already have university sponsors ready to go!

Quotables:

- Teach them to write in real life language, not corporate speak.
- For ethics, if we could get REAL TIME case studies to use in the classroom, that would be an incredible service from CPRE. (Case studies and real-time even better, were mentioned by every group in their ethics discussion.)
- If you want diverse students to get interested, diverse practitioners need to be visible. PRSA – where are they?
- Online is here, whether we like it or not. Can we create hybrid programs?
- Don't focus on writing only press releases – we need content that can be used across multiple platforms and to multiple audiences.
- Ethically, we need to support journalists and news outlets – PR needs a free press?
- YES, grammar and spelling and punctuation matter, at least in MY office. I still give writing tests.
- Students need to know how to revise and edit their own work. The write it and submit it.
- Case studies let students learn how to experience and practice making ethical decisions in a safe space.
- Professor in residence programs are essential or a faculty internship – AS IS helping we adjuncts learn how to do as well in a classroom as we do at a conference podium.
- Dialogue like this is SO essential – can schools sponsor ourselves, or can this Commission provide how-to kits, get PRSA chapters involved?
- Undergraduates need the campus experience – working with others in teams is essential to their career. Online for grad students, maybe – or a few courses online.
- Our campus environment has to be welcoming for diverse students in ALL majors.
- I think if faculty were to review students' writing and give them feedback, BEFORE the finalize and submit, might help them become better writers