

# The Owl PRactitioner

*Temple PRSSA's Annual Newsletter*



# Letter from President Mackenzi Hockensmith



This year, Temple PRSSA continued its 52nd year as a student professional organization at Temple University. Our chapter continued its programming in a virtual capacity throughout the academic year.

Although the past year has been a challenging time, our members learned about public relations through mentorship, leadership, and networking.

After observing the racial injustice and turmoil throughout the country, our chapter decided to focus on our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts for the academic year. In the fall, Temple PRSSA and PRowl Public Relations became the first student organizations in the country to join the Diversity Action Alliance. The Diversity Action Alliance is a coalition of communication leaders and professionals working to improve the recruitment, retention and representation of under-represented groups in public relations management.

Throughout the year, Temple PRSSA had the opportunity to host numerous guest speakers from all corners of the country. These speakers included the CCO of General Mills, Jano Cabrera, for Hispanic Heritage Month, Dr. Denise Hill, APR for Black History Month and a women-in-leadership panel for Women's History Month.

Although this year has come with adversity, challenges and unprecedented times, our chapter has continued to make strides towards more inclusion.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to lead the chapter through such a trying time. Temple PRSSA continues to strive for more accomplishments and continues growing in the public relations industry.

# Evening Guest Speaker Series

*By Christina Billie, Vice President*

In the Spring 2021 semester, Temple PRSSA introduced its Evening Guest Speaker Series. Throughout March and April, we hosted three events at 6:30 p.m. We felt hosting an evening guest speaker series would give active members a chance to get involved outside of our regularly scheduled meeting times and delve into different public relations sectors, whether it be media training, sports, nonprofit, or talent acquisition.

The first event was held on March 8, hosted by Dr. Joe Trahan, President, CEO and Media Trainer at Trahan Associates, along with his son Joe Trahan, the Media Relations and Corporate Communications Coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys. Dr. Trahan and Joe both talked about how they got to where they are today and what a day looks like in their careers. They also gave some advice to the aspiring-to-be public relations professionals of our chapter.

The second event occurred on March 25 and was hosted by Aba Blankson, Chief Communications Officer of the NAACP. Blankson spoke about how she got to where she is today in her organization, how she got started in communications, and her life before becoming a professional communicator. She got her master's degree from an Ivy League school, and moved back and forth between Africa and the United States.

The last event was held on April 13, and was hosted by Rebecca Wuhl, the talent acquisition manager at Brian Communications in Philadelphia. She gave resume and cover letter tips and tricks and detailed what an employer looks for in a potential job or internship candidate. Members came prepared with questions for Rebecca, as many of the attendees were rising or current seniors.

All of these events were engaging, as the question and answer sessions usually ran the longest, and our members wanted to learn what they need to do in order to succeed in the future. Being on Zoom this year, it was nice to hold these events so students could get advice from professionals from all over the country. Students from different universities and PRSSA chapters, such as Elon University, were able to attend these guest speaker sessions. With these intimate events, students who attended were able to get a lot out of them.

# Diversity and Inclusion Updates

*By Olivia Mianulli, Director of Diversity and Inclusion*

*(D&I)*

This is only the second academic year where Temple PRSSA's executive board included the Director of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) position. Through focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion, it is the director's mission to create a space where no member or student feels underrepresented, excluded or marginalized. I worked tirelessly along with our executive board to ensure these principles were ingrained into the chapter's everyday routine, especially during a year of sadness, tragedy, and injustice.

During the summer of 2020, our chapter's D&I initiatives began with the first open conversation. Members were invited to share their positive or negative experiences and concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion in Temple PRSSA. These discussions have proven to be instrumental in the way we go about planning and implementing initiatives. We held a total of four open conversations during the academic year to gain an understanding of what we can do better for our members.

It is important to celebrate and commemorate the lives and work of all people regardless of their age, race, gender identity, ethnicity, religious or spiritual beliefs, sexual orientation, culture, physical or mental disability, and appearance. We created social media graphics for each monthly observance in the PRSA D&I calendar of events and holidays. We celebrated Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, National Native American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Women's History Month, and Deaf History Month. Each graphic included historical facts, resources for students and allies, accomplishments, ways to spread awareness, businesses to support, and how to educate ourselves on topics related to the observance of that month.



# Diversity and Inclusion Updates

## (Cont.)

In Fall 2020, our diversity and inclusion initiatives started off strong as Temple PRSSA became the first student organization in the country to be part of the Diversity Action Alliance. This group brings together the world's top public relations organizations to achieve continuous improvement for underrepresented groups. As the year went on, we were required to report our organization's demographics for the purpose of benchmarking and tracking diversity numbers to improve our recruitment and retention. Next, we created a survey to gain valuable insight into the thoughts and feelings of general body members regarding diversity, equity and inclusion. This survey was sent out every week during the first semester, and responses were later used as a basis for the diversity and inclusion strategic plan for the next academic year.

Also, our chapter held multiple events for students to learn about topics related to diversity and inclusion. We held a workshop for students to find their place in the PR industry, with a focus on disabilities in the workplace and resources for students to take advantage of. Additionally, we held an event outside of our weekly chapter meetings where students were able to learn about their unconscious biases through an online test, along with ways to combat them.



Spring 2021 began with commemorating the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and focused a lot on Black History Month. With the recent racial injustices and protests that have occurred, it is crucial now more than ever we commemorate Black history in America. We created multiple social media graphics detailing facts and historical events, "firsts" in history, and ways people can educate themselves through books, podcasts, movies, as well as businesses to support. We also held a watch party for the movie *Hidden Figures* and highlighted Black public relations pioneers at our chapter meetings. Another prominent observance we commemorated was Women's History Month. We celebrated by holding a women-in-leadership panel with Chelsea Leader Fuller, CEO of Campowerment, LiRon Anderson-Bell, Assistant Professor of Instruction at Temple, Shelley Spector, Founder of the Museum of Public Relations, and Kate Shields, CEO of Vault Communications.

Throughout March we also highlighted the "firsts" in women's history, local women-owned businesses in and around Philadelphia, female public relations pioneers, as well as empowerment shoutouts where members could spotlight another member, mentor or someone who may have needed a smile.

# Diversity and Inclusion Updates (Cont.)

In addition to our monthly initiatives, the D&I committee was created. Temple PRSSA has multiple committees for members to get involved with, however, the D&I committee was not assembled until Spring 2021. Members were brought up to speed on the D&I initiatives from Fall and Spring semesters, were asked for feedback, criticisms and ideas for upcoming events and graphics, and wrote blogs about D&I related topics for the PRSSA website.

Other things PRSSA has done throughout the year in relation to diversity, equity and inclusion include a “What Does D&I Mean To You?” social media campaign, where we encouraged students to share their thoughts and opinions about what diversity and inclusion means to them. We also released a conference toolkit for the PRogress Through Tech Mid-Atlantic District Conference, where we provided our members with tips to prepare them for the event by illustrating what to expect, wear, reminders and how to make the most of it. Lastly, the Director of Social Media was much more cognizant of making our Instagram page more accessible to users with disabilities by adding alt text and ensuring hashtags are capitalized.



The final two initiatives were more prolonged. The strategic plan was designed based on our diversity and inclusion survey sent out during the fall semester. A 1-2 year plan, it highlights all of the organization’s goals, objectives, strategies and initiatives. We will begin sending out an annual D&I report at the end of each academic year in an effort to be transparent with our members, as well as holding ourselves accountable for and celebrating the accomplishments of that year.

There is always more work to do; however, we are so proud of the work that has been done this year towards making our organization more inclusive and equitable. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion has only grown, and we are excited to see where the next D&I leaders take our efforts.

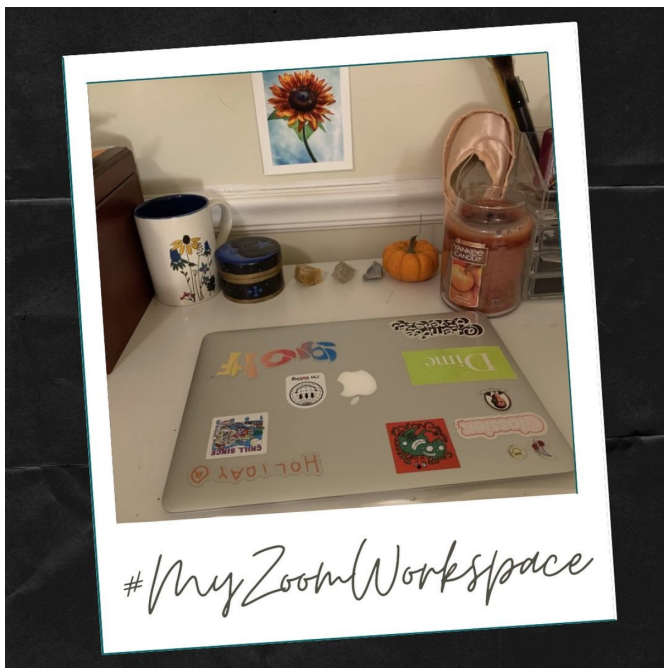
# Social Media Update

*By Kiersten Sholly, Director of Social Media*

This year, Temple PRSSA utilized a number of new social media campaigns and continued with previous ones, while garnering followers and engagement. The new campaigns included PR Pioneers for Women's History Month and Black History Month, Zoom Workspaces, and Committee Deep Dives. We also continued with our continuous PRoud Interns and Member Monday campaigns.

Our Zoom Workspace campaign showcased our members' work-from-home spaces where they attended our virtual meetings. This series allowed our members to become involved with our social media and helped our members get to know each other better. This campaign ran throughout both semesters and received 10 submissions.

With the help of our Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Olivia Mianulli, and our new D&I committee, we were able to highlight different PR Pioneers in the months of February and March. In February, Black History Month, we highlighted multiple Black PR pioneers at each of our general body meetings and posted a graphic with his or her photo and some facts about them. The next month in March we celebrated Women's History Month by highlighting Women PR pioneers on our social media. These graphics also included a photo and some facts about each woman.



# Social Media Update (Cont.)

In order to give our general body members a better understanding of each committee and what they do, we posted a graphic for each. We highlighted what each committee does and what our members will learn and the experiences they will get if they join that committee. We also featured all of the committee heads on each post. This was especially helpful so our members could reach out to the right person if they had any questions, and they could get an idea of what it's like to participate in each committee.

Other campaigns we continued were our PRoud Interns campaigns and Member Monday. We had many of our members do Instagram story takeovers of their days at their internships, and they were all engaging and interesting. This helped show members what kinds of internships are out there and which companies they might be interested in interning for. Our Member Monday campaign featured new and engaged general body members our executive board wanted to honor with a photo on our social media and a profile of them.

Overall, the most successful campaigns were our Zoom Workspaces and PRoud Interns. Zoom Workspaces allowed for our members to get involved in an easy way and was appealing because of how simple it was to do. Our PRoud Interns campaign was also engaging because a lot of our members who have internships participated and viewers really enjoyed watching the takeovers.



MEMBER MONDAY



MACKENZIE DORWARD



# Mid-Atlantic District Conference

*By Amelia Wilt, Conference Coordinator, and  
Paige Nicholas and Stephanie Zajac, Assistant  
Conference Coordinators*



Like the previous year, PRSSA National chose chapters to host District Conferences across eight regions. In August, the Conference Coordinators put together an Intent-to-bid Form to host the Mid-Atlantic District Conference. Since many of the District Conferences in 2020 had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, PRSSA National gave priority to the chapters scheduled to hold these events. Temple PRSSA was excited to hear we were awarded with another chance to host PRogress Through Tech.

We worked closely with Rachel Meltzer, National Vice President of Events & Fundraising, to figure out how to transition our existing conference plans to a virtual format. Since we had a strong platform emphasizing the work from home transition, we chose to continue the theme of how technology is affecting the public relations industry. We wanted attendees to leave PRogress Through Tech with an understanding of emerging technologies and a knowledge of how to implement them in future public relations initiatives.

On March 13, we successfully hosted PRogress Through Tech over Zoom. Throughout the day, attendees were given the opportunity to listen to informative presentations, network, and participate in giveaways. The 73 attendees were from multiple universities including Rider University, Liberty University, Marywood University, Susquehanna University, and Hampton University. We held 10 breakout sessions on trending topics like virtual event planning, artificial intelligence, search engine optimization, user experience, and more. Our conference keynote featured "‘Good’ Is Not A Four-Letter Word: Why Building a PR and Social Media Strategy on an Anti-Racism Framework is Good For Business," delivered by the current and two past presidents of the National Black Public Relations Society, Neil Foote, MBA; Richelle Payne, CCP; and Deborah Hyman. Attendees were also given the chance to participate in an artificial intelligence crisis communication simulation led by Louis Cointepas, the Vice President of Consumer Success and Market Development at Signal-AI.

PRogress Through Tech's conference partnership was with North Broad Renaissance, an organization with the goal of revitalizing and improving the economic power of Philadelphia's North Broad Street community. Temple PRSSA collected donations for North Broad Renaissance before and during the conference.

Since we could not provide attendees with a traditional networking session, we created opportunities for them to connect with one another through different group chats on GroupMe. We also held multiple giveaways and competitions through social media leading up to and during the event. By engaging with our content, students had a chance to win gift cards, swag items, or a free ticket.

We were honored to plan PRogress Through Tech and are so excited to see what the 2021-2022 Conference Team does next!

# Community Service Update

*By Chloe Maher, Director of Community Service*

Our main goal for the year was to make a difference in our community in any way we could. All of our events were directed towards helping those in the Philadelphia and Temple communities. The Community Service Committee has worked to fight food insecurity and suicide as well as educating students on becoming activists. We were able to work with four organizations: Philabundance, Klein Futures, Temple's Office of Sustainability, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Philabundance is Philadelphia's largest food bank, feeding 90,000 people a week. They work to end hunger in Philadelphia for good through education programs, housing, health services, and financial literacy courses. The Community Service Committee hosted a fundraiser and canned food drive for Philabundance in the fall semester. Through fundraising, we were able to raise \$390, equivalent to 814 meals donated. At the event, we collected 34 items.

Klein Futures is a program run through the Klein College of Media and Communication fostering connections with local high schools through virtual workshops and presentations. The Community Service Committee crafted a workshop giving students the ability to have their voices heard before they are allowed to vote. We talked about easy ways to make an impact on the community such as thinking about where you spend your money, signing petitions, contacting elected officials, and reflecting on privileges. We also spoke about how to communicate your stance on a possibly controversial topic in the most ethical and persuasive manner. In total, 25 high school students attended the workshop.



# Community Service Update (Cont.)

Temple's Office of Sustainability works to promote climate justice and improve the environment through a variety of actions. This year, they participated in Philly Spring Clean-Up, the largest single-day, citywide clean-up in the U.S. by hosting a clean-up on Temple's Campus. We spent an hour picking up trash around our community.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention works to prevent suicide through funding scientific research, educating the public about mental health, advocating for public policies regarding mental health, and supporting those affected by suicide. We sold T-shirts as a fundraiser and participated in a walk through campus to show our support for those struggling with mental health. We were able to raise \$105 and all of the proceeds went directly to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

It has been a very rewarding year for the Community Service Committee because we have been able to come together, even if virtually, and make a difference in our community. The Community Service Committee is excited to continue giving back in the fall!



# Fundraising Update

*By Anne Cleary, Director of Fundraising*

This year, the Fundraising Committee ran two successful, large-scale chapter fundraisers. In response to the continuation of the pandemic, we were cognizant of the needs of our members and wanted to provide fundraising opportunities to benefit both our members and the chapter as a whole. Our first fundraiser in October focused on distributing tie-dye masks. In an attempt to promote safety and social distancing, the Fundraising Committee dyed 75 masks to be shipped to chapter members. Almost 50% of the masks were sold during the course of four weeks.



In February, we hosted our second fundraising event. Using remaining materials from the fall semester, the Fundraising Committee built care packages for chapter members. Considering the difficulty of our second fully online semester since the pandemic began, we wanted to spread joy and encouragement to our members. The care packages included a cloth face mask, a Temple University notepad and pen, a handwritten notecard, and pieces of candy. A special addition to the fundraiser was a free Klein College travel mug for the first 10 orders! The packages started at \$7 each and sold out during the course of about four weeks. The packages were available for pick-up for students living near campus and were shipped to students living at home due to the pandemic.

Trying to fundraise during the pandemic was extremely difficult, but the Fundraising Committee stayed determined and creative to provide realistic, affordable options for our members.



# Mentorship Update

*By Brianna McDevitt, Director of Mentorship*

This year, the mentorship program looked a lot different. Of course, this is largely due to the need to conduct the mentorship program fully virtually. Despite this, the mentorship program was still full of enthusiastic mentors and mentees who made the best of it. The core values of the program still held true: creating a welcoming, comfortable space to talk about our goals, new opportunities, and life within and outside of being a student involved in public relations.

Haley Williams, who served as Director of Mentorship in the fall, kicked the program off with a personal branding workshop series. Through multiple events, mentors and mentees were able to challenge themselves and one another to create a personal brand while gaining tips on creating portfolios, cover letters, and more. The spring semester's virtual events included a LinkedIn workshop and a coffee hour event. The LinkedIn workshop highlighted the best ways to use the platform and create a successful profile, as the coffee hour event focused on the social aspect of the program, allowing mentors and mentees to chat in a casual manner over a cup of virtual coffee.

Despite the adversity of being completely virtual, the program still made strides to support our chapter and its core values of mentorship and connection.



# PRowl Public Relations Update

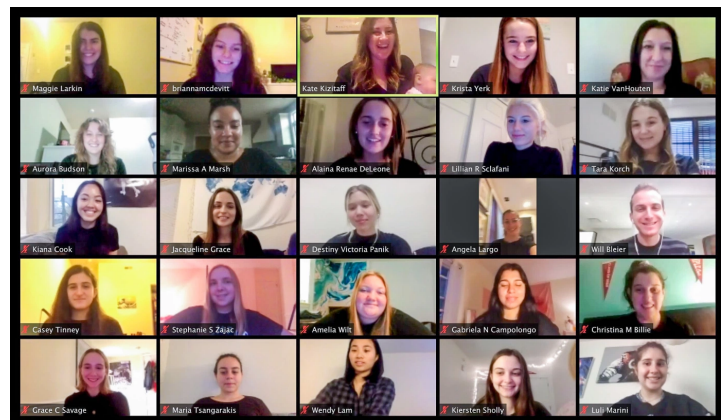
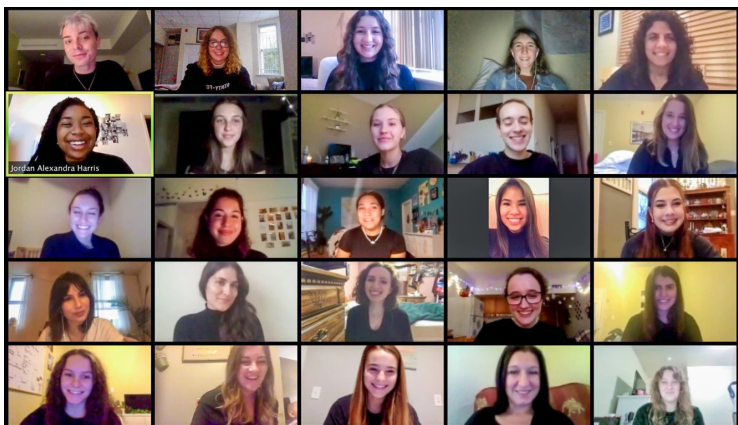
*By Jordan Harris, PRowl Firm Director*

PRowl Public Relations is Temple University's first and only student-run PR firm. PRowl works with many Philadelphia-based clients to help improve the organization's PR strategies and solutions. Services offered include research, business and strategy development, content creation, and media relations. The main goal for the students who participate in PRowl PR is to create a better opportunity to gain experience and expand their knowledge outside of the classroom. For the past 13 years, PRowl PR has given students professional-level public relations experience and materials to bring to their future opportunities.

During the 2020-2021 school year, PRowl Public Relations was completely virtual. Despite the lack of face-to-face interaction, PRowl had a successful year with six clients. During the fall semester, PRowl was reinstated as a National Affiliated Firm, one of only 34, which is a distinguished honor in the PR community. The firm also became a part of the Diversity Action Alliance which promotes diversity in PR.

Throughout the school year, there were numerous accomplishments on the client side as well. Temple University Television hosted a contest called TU BFF, Ride Hard, Breathe Easy secured a placement in the Northeast Times and Klein College News, and the Department of Advertising and PR account constructed social media strategy and promotion for the Senior Showcase. We gained a new client, MK Tours who specializes in Ben Franklin impersonator tours around Philadelphia.

One of PRowl's proudest accomplishments this year was sponsoring a session at the Temple PRSSA Progress Through Tech district conference. After a challenging virtual year, the meticulous team at PRowl Public Relations learned to adapt and serve our clients in unfamiliar circumstances. We are excited for another wonderful year of PR work!



# About Temple PRSSA

Temple University's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Chapter is a pre-professional organization for students who are interested in public relations and communication. As one of the largest and longest standing chapters in the region, our mission is to help students launch their careers in communication by providing guest speakers, professional development workshops, and events to help aspiring practitioners expand their knowledge and grow their network in the field.

