The ‘PR Fraternity’: A fraternal approach to student engagement and employability in the delivery of public relations education.

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Charlotte Kingsland:
President, PR Fraternity; 2nd year BA (Hons) Public Relations & Communications student
Def: Fraternal

• “belonging to brothers, or between brothers”
• “between friends or people who share the same interests or opinions”; or,
• “fraternal organisations are formed by people with the same interests” (Macmillan, 2014)
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Fraternal (Synonyms)

- Friendly; Neighbourly; Benevolent; Amicable; Altruistic; Philanthropic; Comradely; Charitable; Brotherly –
- We say Sisterly too.
Introduction to **PR Fraternity**

- Networking – inter-cohort & alumni;
- Shop window to employers;
- Top-level guest speakers – inspire;
- Promote and create internship/job opportunities;
- Social opportunities;
- Autonomy; a less formal ‘space’ to reflect;
- Ultimate dream – a ‘student-run’ agency;
- For now, an SU society.
Lighting the fire

Fanning the flames of inspiration

Integrating the personal with the professional
Review: Literature

• Co-creation, and involving students and stakeholders in learning design (Williams and McKie, 2011);

• Real opportunities to reflect on, and take charge of professional identities, and digital footprints (Camacho et al, 2012);

• Taking my role in the industry seriously – why am I doing this job? I originally wanted to equip students to go back into industry to CHANGE the way things are done. Can I help them make links between all experiences – very much a transformational approach. (Hodges, 2013)

• A student-focused approach – an attempt to give context and reality to experiential learning; make it real. Something is actually at stake. (Prosser and Treadwell, 1999)
ISMO Conference (Greenwich) work on Innovation in Curriculum Design: - Armstrong and Simpson (2014)

- Autonomy;
- Social Capital;
- Digital;
- Industry Engagement;
- Experiential.
Participants

• Charlotte Kingsland (Current President);
• Maisie Goldney (President, 2013-14);
• Michelle Amos (President, 2012-13);

Qualitative Case Study
Series of In-Depth
Semi-Structured Interviews
Participants

• Jo Ayre (Graduated 2014);
• Jeanett Tesfaldet (Graduated 2014);
• Leila Mountford (Graduated 2013);
• Thom Will (Graduated 2011);
“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice, and most of all, love of what you are doing, or learning to do.”

Charlotte Kingsland
BA Public Relations and Communications (2013-16)
President, PR Fraternity, 2014-15
"Good PR is about being good neighbours. A good PR degree includes the chance to do interesting internships, like my time with the PR team at Channel 5."

Maisie Goldney, PR Undergraduate student (with Stefan Dennis a.k.a. Paul Robinson of Neighbours)

“You have to be dedicated; PR is a life long stretch! You have to work hard to get to your destination and make a difference whilst getting there.”

Michelle Amos, PR Graduate (2012-13)
Account Executive, Freuds
"PR is about being honest and transparent and it is not about gimmicks or spin."

Joanna Ayre
Final Year PR undergraduate (2012-13)
Experience incl. WDP Press & Communications Volunteer; CIPR Student Rep.
“Good PR should evoke change and response amongst consumers, start conversations and adopt evolving platforms. Good PR should be proactive in idea generation and responsive in a crisis. It’s not just about creating a great PR story, it’s about what happens after that story that has the greatest impact.”

“After 8 years freelancing within fashion, beauty and music PR, and working with some of the world’s leading artists and designers, I’ve launched a new adventure in magical Marrakech, with a consultancy combining PR, Events and Lifestyle Management - facilitating HNWI with bespoke lifestyle experiences, all while soaking up the sun... life couldn’t get any better!”
“PR is about finding that killer insight that can transform a ‘creative idea’ into an ass-kicking, behaviour changing movement. Without insight you could be shooting off in entirely the wrong direction.”

Leila Mountford
BA (Hons) Public Relations Graduate, (2012-13)
Creative, Weber Shandwick
Apprentice to Colin Byrne, CEO EMEA, Weber Shandwick (2013-14)
Winner, Young UK PR Lions, 2014; Silver, Cannes Young PR Lions 2014
“Good PR is recognising a good idea (and often a bad one), thinking creatively and not shying away from encroaching on the domain of other disciplines. It’s about knowing the rules and not being afraid to break them – as long as it’s done with integrity.”
Thom Will, graduated 1st class honours, 2011

Publicist, Ian Johnson Publicity
Projects include BAFTA winning ‘The Hollow Crown’ (BBC Two) & unit publicity for BBC One’s ‘Wallander’
Results

• **Experiences of the PR Fraternity;**
  “A sense of belongingness”; “Prepared you for the working role when graduating.”
  “Introducing me to different open-minded, ambitious people”;
  “There was always something we could learn from each other”
  “Learnt a lot from people who shared contacts and work related experiences.”

• **Impact of the Fraternity on careers;**
  “Gave me a sense of spark and direction”; “It gave me confidence and direction”;
  “I made new friends, contacts I still have and use – we recommend people;”
  “It helped me get the job I’m in.” “Without it, I would not have secured my current job”
  “Gave me something to talk about at interviews, and discuss what we did.”
  “I still feel part of it, and keep up-to-date on what the Fraternity is doing now.”

• **How contribution of Fraternity differs from formal structure of degree programme?**
  “Practical skills”; “Felt genuine”; “Closer and more personal”
  “No hierarchy”; “Asking questions of each other”; “Made me feel I could contribute”.
  “Less formal and more time for one-to-ones with guests.”
  “Opportunity to get to know other people or ask questions without the pressure.”
Doing things differently

• **Success** – Creative at global PR agency, Winner UK PR Lions (2014); Silver, Cannes PR Lions (2014);
• **Success** – internship managing social media of Government of St Kitts & Nevis in Caribbean;
• **Success** – winner of graduate-run competition secures internship, then full-time position based in Marrakech;
• **Success** – graduate is second to walk into position at agency where manages projects featuring Benedict Cumberbatch, Ben Whishaw and Judi Dech;
• **Success** – relationships with speakers from organisations such as Channel 5, Sky 1 HD and Kiss FM secure regular internships;
• **Experiential** – taking responsibility for extensive social media activity, and photo/video led projects.
Speakers
Speakers

Top name speakers from the worlds of public relations and communications.

Colleen Harris
Leadership & Brand Coach
Formerly Press Secretary, HRH Prince Charles, William & Harry; Senior Press Officer, Number 10.
Top name speakers from the worlds of public relations and communications.

Colin Byrne
CEO, EMEA & UK, Weber Shandwick
One of the largest global PR agencies
How do we know it is working?

• Impact on securing employment (good DELHE scores for PR degree) and securing internships;
• Contribution to NSS/Student Satisfaction scores;
• Sense of involvement/belonging – contribution to student involvement on courses/programme;
Spreading the word

- Academic Conferences/Teaching & Learning;
- National student blog (‘Behind The Spin’ funded by PRCA);
- Twitter account managed by Fraternity;
- Facebook group managed by group (and PS);
- Instagram and Pinterest accounts.
- Liaise with press office – media relations.
Shop Window on Pinterest:

Digital; Experiential; Autonomy; Industry Engagement; Social Capital
Conclusions/Challenges

• Securing support from institutions?
• How far do we integrate with the formal curriculum?
• Is there scope to network across institutions, particularly in urban areas?
• Industry/academic tensions;
• Is there a role for more industry liaison within disciplines? How do we secure it?
• Should this be subject led? Or a central function?
Questions

• Does any of this match your experiences?
• Do you have any questions about the work of the PR Fraternity?
• Do you think the Fraternity might be able to work with you or your students?