

Getting a Master's Degree in Public Relations

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Letter From the Editor

All throughout our college careers, we are preparing for the lives we will lead once we graduate. That being said, this is one of the most fast-paced times of our lives. We are finding that we have to make important decisions every day. We will continue to face challenges head-on throughout our college experience.

There is one question that haunts us all when it comes to big decisions. What are we going to do after college? Graduate school is something that crosses the minds of most undergraduates, regardless of their majors. Un-

like majors such as psychology or pre-med, public relations is a major that doesn't require graduate school. But a public relations master's degree is an option, and it may be a good option for some of us.

In this newsletter, you will find all sorts of information that will help you in your decision to either take your bachelor's and go into the workforce with it, or go after an even high-

er education. I wish you good luck in your decision making process. For students, it is always a good idea to explore all possibilities.

Kelly Kling, Editor



Source: Cohn Public Relations

Thinking About Grad School?



Source: DPK Public Relations

On the next pages, you will learn who can benefit from graduate school, what opportunities

will become available to you with a master's, how employers view a public relations mas-

ter's degree, and what a former graduate student suggests about graduate school.

What's Your Situation?

Graduate school can be beneficial for many types of students. Before making the decision to go to graduate school, you have to decide what your personal situation is.

Just Getting Started

In the article, "Class Masters: What PR Pros Must Decide Before Pursuing a Master's Degree" by Jeanette Drake, two professors give their input on who should consider graduate school. According to Dr. Judy VanSlyke Turk, a professor in the School of Mass Communications at

Virginia Commonwealth University, "good candidates for a master's degree are those who have never been formally trained in public relations or they were trained long enough ago that they would like to retool." The former probably applies to a lot of us in undergraduate school. We have all taken the classes and done the projects on school grounds, but many of us have no public relations experience in the actual field. Graduate school may provide more of an opportunity for that type of experience.

Not a Newbie

Robert Pritchard, assistant professor at Ball State University, said graduate school can be valuable for people who have been in the public relations business for five years or more. As undergraduates, we are most likely not at that point yet. But, someday we will be. Graduate school can be beneficial for students straight out of undergraduate school, or for people who have already gotten experience in the field of public relations.

Determining if graduate school is right for you is the first step. What's your situation?



Source: Rainbowskill.com



Source: Blog Gallery

Cha-Ching!

Regardless of majors, college students find common ground on one thing: **wanting to make money after college.** According to the article, "Five Reasons to Pursue an Executive Master's" by Maria Russel, the 2005 Annual Survey of

Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates conducted by the University of Georgia's Cox Center found that graduates with public relations master's degrees earn an average of \$8,000 more than graduates with bachelor's degrees.

The Business Aspect

According to the same article, graduate school can provide a better look into the business side of the public relations field. Graduate students can take classes on public opinion research, strategic management and planning,

and management sciences of accounting and finance. We may not acquire this type of skill set in our undergraduate programs.

Do these possible benefits of a graduate degree sound appealing to you? If so, you may want to continue researching graduate school!

What's In It For You?

What Do Employers Think?

The article “ ‘It Depends on the Degree:’ Exploring Employers’ Perceptions of Public Relations Master’s Degrees” by Elizabeth L. Toth depicts research determining the value a master’s degree has to employers.



Source: Thecareercouch.com

Content of the Degree Matters

According to the article, employers agreed that the content of the master’s degree is very important when considering potential candidates for positions. These days, most public relations master’s degrees are different from one another. Students should choose a school with a program that offers courses that are specific to the type of public relations career they want. Employers will pay attention to your specific skill set that you acquired in graduate school, so you must make sure that the content of your degree is geared toward your future career.

Master’s Degrees Show Initiative

Employers surveyed for the article agreed that pursuing a master’s degree in public relations shows investment in your future career. One employer said a potential candidate’s master’s degree would demonstrate that they were serious about wanting to be in the field of public relations, which is important considering the field has an “anyone can do it” reputation.

According to these findings, a master’s degree has the potential to set you apart from other candidates for the job you want.

What does a former grad student have to say?

In her article, “Confessions of a former grad student: Returning to the classroom? Here’s what you need to know,” former graduate student DeAnn Baxter addresses some of the things she wished she would have known before beginning her master’s program.

campus she attended for her master’s. Students must be aware of the possible differences between their undergraduate school and the school they choose for their master’s program.

When making decisions regarding graduate school, we must be mindful of its differences from undergraduate school.

Consider the Differences

Baxter suggests being aware of the differences between a small campus and a big campus as well as the differences between a main campus and a satellite campus. She attended a large school for her bachelor’s, and was expecting easy access to libraries and professors. However, this was not the case at the satellite

Know Your Style

Baxter suggests knowing what kind of schedule works for you before scheduling your master’s classes. Master’s programs often offer later night classes, so you may choose those in order to work in the daytime. In order to make a good decision regarding your schedule, you must figure out when you are most productive and what kind of hours you’re capable of handling.



Source: Csmonitor.com

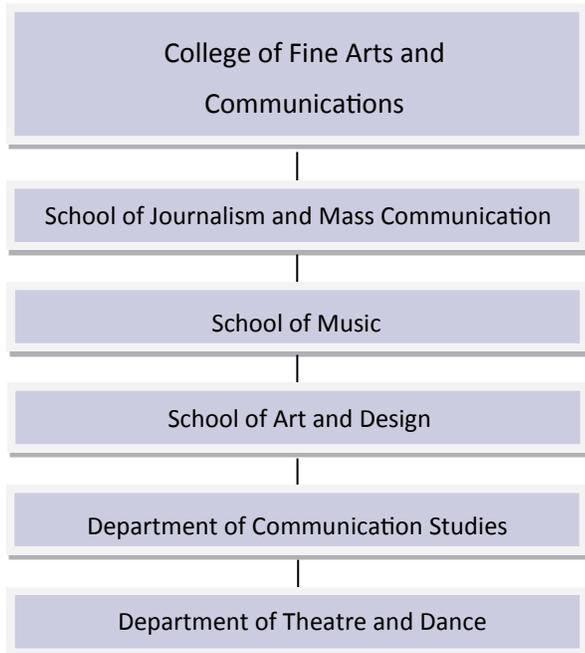


Figure 1

The Mass Communication Department

The College of Fine Arts and Communications is divided into five parts as displayed in Figure 1. The major of public relations falls under the mass communication department in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The mass communication department offers five majors: journalism, advertising, electronic media, public relations, and general mass communication. In order to major in any of these disciplines, you must have an overall GPA of at least 2.5 and have a grade of C or better in ENG 1310, ENG 1320, COMM 1310, and MC 1301. You must also choose a minor and achieve a passing score (70 or higher) on the PUG (Punctuation, Usage, and Grammar) test.

For more information on the Mass Communications Department and majors, contact Director Judy Oskam at 512-245-2656 or oskam@txstate.edu. You can also visit www.masscomm.txstate.edu for more information on the programs.

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