

During the summer of 2016, I wrote featured articles about successful alumni from Wayne State University for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS). First, I interviewed the alumni, and then I crafted stories that highlighted their experiences at the university. These alumni profiles were published on the alumni's respective departmental websites. Through this experience, I learned about my own abilities as a writer and intern, and I gained essential communication and business skills. I look forward to using these developed skills throughout my personal and professional life

This internship, as a development strategy, targeted alumni to reconnect with the university and strengthen Wayne State's donor network. Alumni from across the country and in various career fields were included on the list of potential contacts. Within the first few weeks, it became clear how important relationship building was to this position. By reaching out to these alumni, I helped establish and maintain warm relationships between the university and the potential donors. Consistent and effective communication were crucial in my position, and I managed communications between dedicated members of the editorial and development teams and the alumni.

Throughout my time as an intern, I improved my communication and business skills as well as my time management ones. The interviews were conducted via phone, and all other communications were done via email. I reached out to the entire list of alumni at the beginning of the internship to ensure that contact would be possible and that my time would be budgeted wisely in terms of scheduling interviews and creating deadlines for articles. Through this, I realized that early communication is vital in effective time management. A major result of this was the development of a flexible management and outreach plan that was based on the responses of the alumni.

Another skill gained was the ability to professionally interview someone. Speaking with alumni improved my relationship building and listening skills. As interpersonal communication was not possible in many cases, I had to rely solely on verbal cues to determine the direction in which to take the interview. In order to cultivate warm relations between the alumnus/alumna and myself, as the face of the CLAS, I crafted individualized approaches. From the beginning of the process, I wrote emails and did outreach that was tailored to the alumnus or alumna's existing relationship with the university. For those who were in close contact with the university, I used a more familiar tone. Conversely, I used a more formal tone with those who had no relationship with the CLAS. The interviews were also personalized, as I asked different questions depending on the person's friendliness or willingness to speak about their background, experiences at Wayne State, and donation history with the university. After this stage, I wrote the articles about their experiences and successes.

In terms of execution, I developed skills in Microsoft Word and Microsoft Office 365. I also became familiar with the AP style guidelines, as every published article from this internship adhered to those rules. Using Microsoft Word and Office 365, I wrote the articles, and then emailed them to the editing team. Before publication, I sent the articles to the alumni to ensure that the information was correct and that the story fairly represented them. Afterwards, the marketing director used the Content Management System (CMS) to publish the articles. For follow-up, I sent the alumni the link to their story and expressed my gratitude for their cooperation and participation in my work.

Below is a short analysis of a few articles.

### **Alum Combines Love of Science with Law**

This is the story of Mary McLemore, who chose to attend law school after receiving a degree in biological sciences and beginning the science master's program at Wayne State. Throughout her life, she has applied the logical thinking skills gained in her science undergraduate years to

the study of law. She urges students to not fear the unexpected path in life, as it led her to a career that she loves.

### **Chemistry Alum Embraces the Humanities**

Dr. Larry Roy pursued a chemistry degree, later attending medical school, but it was the liberal arts education at Wayne State that developed his different passions and skills. The writing, literature and arts education in his undergraduate studies contributed to his sense of creativity that he uses as vice president of Advocate Children's Hospital in Illinois.

### **Political Science Alum Gives Back to the University that Changed His Worldview**

This article features Paul Ashba, who pursued a political science degree at Wayne State and a law degree at Georgetown. As senior corporate counsel for a biologic pharmaceutical company, Ashba is fortunate for the liberal arts education at Wayne, which taught him "to learn how to learn." As a steady donor to the CLAS, he credits his own financial aid history with the university as his reason for giving back.