

# the comm-unity newsletter

## PRSSA Junior Board President Shares Her Experience at Leadership Conference in Arizona

by **Olivia Donovan**

When I was told that Manhattan College's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter would send me to Scottsdale, Arizona, for PRSSA's 2023 Leadership Assembly, I immediately started packing my bags.

I'm an active member of PRSSA, currently serving as junior board president, and I'll be running for an executive position in the upcoming school year. I knew my current responsibility required me to be a leader. However, I still wasn't sure what to expect from this conference — working on leadership skills in the heart of the desert was about as much as I knew.

PRSSA's Leadership Assembly annually brings college student representatives together from across the United States. It seeks to give attendees the necessary resources and skills to help shape society and become active and contributing community members. The assembly included numerous skill-building workshops, leadership training, networking opportunities and guest speakers. Just



as importantly, the assembly taught students how to improve student and club member engagement, effective communication, and job-searching skills. It was a personable and warm experience— from the moment I stepped foot in Scottsdale, everyone was extremely welcoming. Everyone immediately wanted to know about your school and what you like to do. They wanted to learn.

One of the most significant lessons I took from this trip came from one of the event speakers, Ray Day, who claimed “Serving others will bring you more power than power itself.” As I grappled with these words, I realized that his words embodied the heart of the Manhattan College mission. I felt I could relate to this vision of service because going on this trip was not explicitly for personal gain or to build my network. It was for attendees to gain the necessary skills to foster and develop their campus community. True power and professional development will come from my experiences, adding to our campus as a whole.

Sending students on this trip connects them to something much bigger than what they are used to seeing and positions them to bring positive change back with them. I was especially enthusiastic about connecting what I see each week on campus to the nationwide experience. Many other PRSSA chapters run events similar to our chapter. Likewise, many other chapters can relate to the obstacles our chapter experiences. The little differences made the strongest impact—pooling our chapter resources together, exchanging fundraising ideas, and even speaking to professionals who would love to meet with our chapter in the future.

This trip introduced me to some of the smartest, most hardworking, inspirational young professionals I have ever met. I am incredibly grateful for the experience and the knowledge I gained in just a few short days. Trading skyline views for cacti seems unusual, but PRSSA’s Leadership Assembly leads the way for the next class of leaders. All of the PRSSA students at Manhattan College work tirelessly all year to contribute to this national organization, and it was an enormous honor to represent this extraordinary group of people. This experience would not have been possible without the help of each one of them. ★