

Communication Department Hosts Alumni Events

by Madalyn Johnson

In the past year, the communication department has hosted numerous alumni events to give current students the chance to get advice and network with recent graduates. Last semester, Manhattan College's Public Relations Student Society of America hosted an alumni panel that featured four former students who now hold jobs as public relations practitioners.

Isabelle Battin, Junior Account Executive at Lippe Taylor; Christina Brancato, Account Coordinator at Fox News; Victoria Buri, a Social Media and Communications Coordinator at LimeLife by ALCON; and Anna Occhino, then Graduate Development Professional and present Assistant Account Executive at FleishmanHillard, presented their job hunting and work experience in the public relations field and related industries. The event was part of a yearly alumni panel hosted by the Manhattan College PRSSA chapter.



Last year, the department also hosted an all-women alumni panel in the Alumni Room at O' Malley Library that featured women who provided a variety of perspectives on the rapid and chaotic environment that communication workers generally undergo in the media production field. The panel included alumni Stephanie Brooks, Erica Celluci, Rita Damiron, Becca Falbourn, Tina Fernandez, Dominique Giradi, Gabriella Girgis, Lindsay Gordan, Nereida Millan, and Nia Stevens. These alumni work for major media and entertainment companies in New York City such as NBC, CBS, Viacom, UTA, Sound Lounge, Engel Entertainment, Cheddar, and SNL.

Junior Jessica Solan, who was present at the panel last year, shared that the event motivated her and positively reflected upon successful graduates of Manhattan College.

"It really enforced what I wanted to do even more so. I really love[d] seeing everyone there, especially how passionate they are about their jobs. It really seems like a lot of inspiring people have come out of Manhattan College," Solan said.

At the end of the fall semester, another alumni networking event was held at New York's prominent Flatiron building, where alumni from CBS, NBC, CNN, Vice, Sound Lounge, BuzzFeed, Lion Television, The Dr. Oz Show, MultiVu, UA, BCW Global, and SideSwipe Media were present. This event was held amidst Manhattan College's

Experiencing Veterans and Artist Collaboration (EVAC) art exhibition, which was on display from November 2019 to January 2020. The alumni event was organized by Michael Grabowski, chair of the communication department, and the EVAC gallery was sponsored by Flatiron 23rd Street Partnership, the Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation, and GFP Real Estate.

Many of the communication department's professors were also present at the alumni event at the Flatiron Building. Joe Ruggiero, producer/director for the sports media production program, thought the art display perfectly represented the veteran alumni of Manhattan College, in addition to being a great venue for the communication department alumni event.

"It was great to see Manhattan College at the forefront of NYC. It is meaningful to all who work here. Especially those who have been here a long time," said Ruggiero. "It shows the dedication the college has to support our veterans. Especially those who are Manhattan College Alumni. It is great to see the connections still being made because the school is only as strong as its alumni."

The communication department is most notably recognized for the achievements of their alumni from across the country, not just from New York City. Manhattan College's alumni reunions invite graduates that live and work in locations as far as California.



Many alumni are gracious in engaging with current students of Manhattan College, which leads to internships and jobs in firms they represent. For instance, three students from the department currently intern for The Dr. Oz Show, where two alumni work, four students intern for Engel Entertainment, a company that has employed two Manhattan alumni, and an intern worked

at Lippe Taylor, where two communication department alumni currently work.

Grabowski explained that the purpose of these events is to provide communication students an idea of what their careers will be like in a city home to the biggest communication corporations. He stated, "Our goal with [these events] is for our alumni to meet current students so they can offer advice, give a picture of what careers look like in New York, and set up an opportunity to network and build relationships that will last beyond graduation."

The communication department was scheduled to host another student-alumni networking event in the Alumni Room at O' Malley Library on Thursday, March 26, but the event was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic and switch to online courses

for students and faculty. Nevertheless, professors, alumni and students remain hopeful that the event will take place as soon as it is safe to do so.