

Majoring in Mass Communications



Pre-Major Focus Group Reveals Student's Motivations and Views

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this project was to explore attitudes and motivations of pre-mass communications majors regarding four specific objectives. These objectives were:

- To explore why students choose mass communication, and specifically the public relations and advertising sequences.
- To discover what students expect to learn in their classes.
- To understand students' perceptions about what it is like to work in public relations or advertising.
- To explore the benefits of an education within USF's School of Mass Communications.

METHODOLOGY:

The research was conducted through a single one hour focus group held on March 9, 2009. The group had two members in total and both were recruited from a Mass Communications and Society class via an email sent to the class instructor. The instructor sent an email to the class stating that anyone who participated in the focus group would receive extra credit for the class. The two participants were advertising major Alex Santiago and public relations major Jimneshia Smith. Both are students at USF who are just beginning to take Mass Communication classes. The focus group was recorded with a hand held recorder.

RESULTS:

To explore why students choose mass communication and the public relations and advertising sequences:

Students find that they like the field after stumbling upon public relations and advertising activities. Alex Santiago's path to discovering his passion for advertising began with a fondness for music. His meager budget led him to use the Web to advertise and market his production studio.

- “I discovered that what I was doing is what I’m coming to school for now ... might as well go to school, get the degree and get paid for my work. “I was lured into the world of advertising world without knowing it had a name.”—Santiago.

Jimmeshia Smith was first introduced to public relations when her aunt suggested that she should go into the field.

- “I did research about the personality required and things public relations deals with ... and knew it would be a good major for me because of the person I am.” — Smith.

Advertising and public relations majors dabble in multiple majors before discovering that mass communications is the best fit. Smith first majored in business and finance before discovering that she did not like the long hours of book work and lectures.

- “I liked the whole setting and the jobs one could get with PR so I switched my major and declared public relations.” — Smith

Santiago was initially a business major with a concentration in marketing, but after having a position in creative copy writing he changed his major to advertising.

Students choose mass communications because they like interactivity. Santiago said that the communications classes he is currently taking are very interactive and provide ample time for discussion. Smith said she likes hands on experiences and working with groups.

“My ideal class would be interaction with real working industries ... taking classes and doing projects within companies. I want to start meeting students in mass communications classes.”—Santiago.

To discover what students expect to learn in their classes:

Students expect to learn how things are in the real world. Students do not know what is expected of them since they do not have much professional work or internship experience. In the classroom, they want to learn how to relate to real life situations.

- “My desire is to know the workforce and the expectancy of the market and real world.”—Santiago.
- “I want to learn how to approach every situation in my career and be the best at what I am doing.”—Smith.

Students want to know how to use industry strategies. New students do not have adequate knowledge of tactics and strategies used to achieve objectives and wish to thoroughly understand how to implement them.

- “I want to know the strategies so I can also find my own ways of doing things. I want to learn how to do my job well and be able to overcome the obstacles I will face.”—Smith.
- “I want to have the legitimacy to do the specific job I am trying to do.” —Santiago.

Students desire to be better than competition. Students majoring in public relations and advertising at USF want to be among the best because they know that there is tough competition on the road to finding a job as well as rising in ranks to obtain promotions and higher positions. Smith said she wants her future company to recognize her PR skills.

- “The benefits I am seeking include being the best in PR that I could ever be.”—Smith.

To understand students' perceptions about what it is like to work in public relations and advertising:

Students believe that they must be people oriented. Smith said that she sees the sequence as a people oriented major that involves direct communication with people all the time.

- “My major I see as a people person major and you're gonna be more direct with people since it's communication.”—Smith.
- “The benefit it's going to give me is 1) do this, meet new people in the field.”—Santiago.

Students expect the industry to be diverse.

- “Communicating with different agencies and companies, spokesperson of a company, get rid of bad criticism and anything to make the business stand out and keep moving.” —Smith.
- “Hopefully, three hours of brain storming, few hours of meeting with the group, few more hours of finishing up different jobs.”—Santiago.

To explore the benefits of a USF School of Mass Communications education:

Students like the potential interaction with professors and classmates. Smith’s friends that are in the School of Mass Communications tell her that that it’s more hands-on than other areas and that the Public Relations Student Society of America, USF chapter offers many professional growing activities.

- “Friends say classes are open and there is more discussion versus a teacher getting up there and teaching you straight from the book.”—Smith.

Santiago said that he likes that USF classes offer debate and discussion, which fosters a better understanding of the industry.

The professional market in Tampa offers many opportunities.

- “We have a cool edge at this school because of the market, come on Gainesville versus Tampa? We also have Zimmerman.”—Santiago.

Students believe that advisors are helpful. Smith said that the advisors helped her a lot when she went to them with questions about internships and they constantly keep students updated through email.

- “They even had a list of work jobs and what you need to do for different majors.”—Smith.
- “Counselors and advisors are on the top of their game, they are solid,” —Santiago.

CONCLUSION:

The focus group reveals that students entering the School of Mass Communications in the public relations and advertising sequences have experimented with other majors, but once in mass communications, they are dedicated to their major and do not wish to switch. Students express a desire to work in the communications industry and to have a solid background of tactics and real life scenarios upon entering the work force. They want to be prepared for anything that is tossed their way and to have experience to back up their decisions. Overall, pre-major students have a positive view of the USF mass communications program.

The School of Mass Communications can attract students to its sequences by highlighting its key aspects that students and prospective employers find beneficial. Topping the list are interactive classroom experiences that provide real world problem solving and planning scenarios, diverse courses that cover a multitude of area specifics, as well as Tampa’s huge professional market, which offers numerous résumé and personal growth opportunities.

APPENDIX:

Pre-Mass Comm Major Discussion Guide

Objectives:

- To explore why students choose mass communication and the ___ sequence.
 - To discover what students expect to learn in their classes.
 - To understand student's perceptions about what it is like to work in ___.
 - To explore the benefits of a USF School of Mass Communications education.
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Introduction:

Thank you for joining our focus group about the School of Mass Communications. We hope to explore today why you are interested in majoring in mass communication, what you expect to learn in your classes, and what you think it will be like to work in the ___ field. We will then talk more specifically about what USF offers.

My name is ___ and I will be the moderator for today's discussion. I am here to simply guide the discussion and my teammates are here to take notes. This discussion will last about 45 minutes to one hour.

Before we get started, if you haven't done so already, please sign-in. You will be able to get extra credit in Professor Batchelor's class, so we need a record of who is here.

We are conducting this focus group for a class project. **Your identity will be protected—we will use just your first name in our report—and nobody will be contacting you about this.** We won't be asking questions that are too personal, so please share any thoughts or opinions with us, whether positive or negative. We are aware that not everyone will have the same thoughts or opinions, which is why we encourage everyone to participate.

Also, I need you to know this discussion is being audio/video recorded so that we can type a transcript to use for our project.

Here are some ground rules:

1. I would like only one person talking at a time. I'll be sure that everyone's comments are heard.
2. I would like honest answers. However, there are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.
3. Try to feel as comfortable as possible. We are not here to judge anyone, just to listen to what you have to say. Feel free to speak openly.

4. There is no need to raise your hand to answer a question.

Introduction

First, I would like everyone to introduce themselves and tell us your hometown.

General Discussion: Choice of major

Let's start out by talking about choosing a major.

1. What majors were you considering when you entered college?
2. Did you declare a different major prior to your interest in mass comm.? What was it? Why did you initially choose it and why did you change your mind?
3. Let's do a word association. Say the first word that comes to mind when I say the following words: Mass Communications, ____.
4. Why are you interested in mass communications? What initially attracted you to mass comm.? What attracted you to ____?
5. Did someone or something inspire you to think about this field?
6. What are the benefits of majoring in ____?
7. Do you consider yourselves committed to ____? Why?
8. What kinds of research/reading have you done to learn about ____?
9. Are you interested in pursuing a double major? Or a minor? What other areas of study interest you?
10. What advice have you heard from parents or friends about ____?
11. What, if anything, concerns you about the requirements to get into the School of Mass Communications?

General Discussion: Learning expectations

(Students can reference the course lists.)

Now let's talk about your expectations once you are admitted into the School of Mass Communications.

12. What classes are you looking forward to taking and which classes are you dreading?
13. Describe your ideal class. What kinds of projects would you do? What experiences would you have?
14. What do you hope to learn in your classes?
15. What skills do you hope to acquire while you are in school?
16. How do you follow what's going on in the field?
17. What do you think you need to be doing right now to prepare yourself for the job you want in the future?
18. What advice have you heard from parents or friends about what you should do to prepare yourself while still in college?

19. Are there any extracurricular activities that you could participate in to help you prepare for your career? What activities have you already been involved in that you think will help?
20. What kinds of work experiences do you think will help you prepare for your career? Have you already had any work experiences that will help?

General Discussion: Post-college expectations

Let's talk about your plans for after college.

21. Have you considered grad school? When would you go? To study what?
 - a. (If mass comm.-related field) How do you think graduate school will help you?
22. Do you plan on working in the field?
 - a. Have you explored the job opportunities in this field? What kinds of jobs related to this field have you explored or would you be interested in exploring?
 - b. What is your dream job in this field? How committed are you to striving for that dream job?
 - c. What do you consider to be a realistic job in this field after graduation? What job skills do you think you will need to be successful?
 - d. Are there any concerns you have regarding this career field?
 - e. Take a moment to think about what your day would be like working in this field. Now, what would you be doing?
 - f. In what geographic region do you hope to land your first job after graduation?
 - g. What are your expectations regarding earnings? (initial and potential)

Specific Discussion: USF School of Mass Communications

For our final part of this conversation today, we will talk more specifically about the School of Mass Communications.

23. Do you see USF's School of Mass Communications as having any particular benefits over schools like UF or other schools that also have mass comm. programs? Any disadvantages?
24. Did you have any prior knowledge of the USF School of Mass Communications before enrolling at USF?
25. Tell me about your experience this far. Has your experience with the mass comm. program changed your mind at all about mass comm. or about your chosen field?
26. What do you see as the strong points of the School of Mass Communications? What are the weak points?

We would like to thank everyone for participating in our focus group. Everything we heard today has been very helpful.

Transcription of Focus Group

William "Billy" Cooper: Alright, guys. So thanks for joining us for our focus group on school of Mass Communications. Today we really want to talk about why you're interested in majoring in Mass Communications, what you expect to learn in your classes, and what you think it will be like to work in the advertising and what field were you in?

Jimnesia Smith: PR

BC: PR field. Alright, great. So then we're going to talk about more specifically about what USF has to offer. So I'm Billy.

Derek Smart: I'm Derek.

BC: And you might want to sit here so that we can hear you since you're way down at the end of the table. Alright, so obviously since we have this little recorder please talk loudly. I'm probably not talking quite loud enough, but we're probably alright. Okay. So did everybody sign in?

JS & AS: Yup.

BC: Great. Thank you so much. Alright, and obviously only one person talking at a time. That should not be very hard since there's only two of you.

DS: You obviously don't need to raise your hand.

BC: Let's be honest, you know, we're all friends here. We're not gonna judge you. As you can see, this is just a school project, it's not really anything that serious. It's not going to come back to bite you so, you know.

DS: And we're not gonna release your names, maybe your first names, but your identity will be protected.

BC: Yeah, so pull no punches. And yeah, so, let's get going. Derek, you want to start us off here?

DS: Sure. Can you guys start by stating your name and what your major is?

JS: Well, my name is Jeneisha Smith and my major is Public Relations.

Alex Santiago: I'm Alex Santiago and I'm an Advertising major.

DS: Okay. Did you declare a different major prior to this one?

JS: Yes, well, I transferred from community college and my first declared major was business. I was gonna major in Finance, but I was like, I became like less interested in it and my auntie actually referred me to public relations because she knew a student that graduated with PR and I did my research on PR and I kinda liked the whole setting and the jobs you can get as PR so that's why I changed my major and declared Public Relations.

AS: I was a business major, concentration in marketing, and I decided to go back into Liberal Arts because I was pursuing creative copywriting positions. So I decided to do Advertising and focus on the creative copywriting side of the communications world.

DS: Cool.

BC: Okay so I'll do the next one. So let's do a word association. Alright, so say the first word that comes to mind, okay? So, you first. Mass Communications-- first word that comes to mind.

JS: People.

BC: How about you?

AS: Sales.

BC: Any others?

DS: Alright, how about more words. Advertising.

AS: Writing.

JS: Commercials.

DS: Public Relations.

JS: Companies.

AS: Corruption.

DS: Corruption. Yeah, PR when you get in trouble, we know how it is.

BC: Well, after hearing that, so why are you interested in Mass Communications? What initially attracted you to Mass Comm?

JS: Well, like I said before, I was introduced to it by auntie because she had a former client that she--she was also a former business major, but she had switched her major to PR and I think it was like more something interesting for

me to do because I guess because I was referred to it and I looked it up and I liked what it was.

AS: I said earlier I got to see the Advertising world firsthand and I fell in love with creative copywriting and my main focus is in the hispanic market so basically I want to create advertising--to work for hispanic oriented agencies and do writing for that market.

DS: Well, before you guys did any research or looked into these fields, what were your preconceived notions about them? Before you looked into them and learned more about them.

JS: Well, my whole thing was something more, like with communications, you can interact more with your professors. In the major I was in, in Finance, it was gonna be a whole lot of book work. And even though each major you're in there's a lot of book work to accomplish your studies, it's like more hands-on, it's more open, there's more discussion versus a teacher getting up there and just teaching you straight from the book. I got two friends that are in this major and they all tell me about it and they're like, "It's great, especially when you get into your major in Mass Communications and it's very great and it's awesome." So I was like alright, that sounds like something I'd be interested in. I'm all about fun and education.

DS: So your friends kind of introduced you to the whole—

JS: Yeah. My auntie introduced me and my friend, he gave me more hands-on information. He actually helped me set up my classes to take.

AS: What was the question again?

DS: What were your preconceived notions of Public Relations and Advertising before you got into the major?

AS: Like I said actually, I guess it--recently I got to experience it myself. I've been doing music marketing and I've always done marketing and advertising for myself and kind of lured myself into the world without knowing it was called Advertising. I just kind of jumped into it, there was no notion--I was doing it and one day I realized oh, this thing has a name and that was it.

BC: So what benefits. What are the benefits of majoring in PR, for you, and Advertising, for you?

AS: Like I said, I left my job because I wanted something very specific. The benefit it's going to give me is 1) do this, meet new people in the field and 2) basically open the door as far as having the education, having a degree, having the legitimacy of being able to do the specific job I'm trying to do.

JS: Well, I could say the same thing as well. The benefits I seek from this are being able to know the major more and what's out there in the career more. Just being the best in PR that PR could ever be, I guess.

DS: Great. So you guys are both committed to this field then?

AS: Yes.

JS: I wasn't committed to my first one, but I really like this one. Last semester was my first semester and I really enjoyed it and I did awesome in my classes, so I'm very dedicated and committed to it

DS: So this is your second semester?

JS: Yeah.

DS: How long have you been?

AS: Actually I just came in, I have four, including this semester, four semesters and counting. Actually I'm doing this and working for agencies at the same time so I really just need to get the paper. I'm already doing what I'm coming to school for so basically I just need to have the paperwork to be looked at by companies.

DS: Right, but this is it, though, you're not going to change your major or anything?

AS: Right, I'm already working in the field. I'm already doing advertising and writing.

DS: Awesome, what about a double major? Did you guys think about maybe a double major or minor or something like that?

AS: I was gonna do a Spanish minor, now I'm thinking about doing a marketing minor.

DS: What about a marketing minor attracts you?

AS: I was a marketing major. They both go hand in hand, I think, to be able to write for a product or service or organization, whatever it is, you need to understand the marketing concept and marketing mix so you can really be sufficient.

DS: What about you, are you thinking of a minor or double major?

JS: Not really, but if I was to do so I would do--my whole thing is owning my own business, so it would be cool to own a PR firm--that's why I did business first, I did Finance and General Business. I would double major and do General Business so I could have some knowledge of business as well and Public Relations.

BC: So, does anything concern you guys about the requirements to get into the school of Mass Comm here at USF?

AS: The test, the EDT test, I think is--I know why they're doing it, I know why it's so tough to get into the school, I came to this university because I worked with people who graduated from here and it's become top ten in the country so you have to have a hard method to get in. That's the only thing that kind of threw me off, having to have such a high score on the EDT. It's pretty hectic so far, deep into it.

JS: I'd say the same thing with the EDT. I know the standards, I understand where they want us to be at as students, so I can understand the test, but it can be stressful at times. I took it once and I did well on my first time, but I have to aim higher. That was my problem with the EDT, I didn't know they required it, but if that's the standard they need us to meet, then I think we should.

DS: Five points?

AS: I was five points away.

JS: I was five points too.

DS: And they keep raising the price, too

AS & JS: Yeah.

BC: When we took it, it was only \$20, now it's \$40, right?

JS: \$40, yeah

DS: Do you think that deters people from the field of Mass Comm at all?

JS: Well, I know a friend that switched her major from Mass Communications to Communications because she could not pass the EDT. I don't want to get like that, I don't want it to turn me away from Mass Communications because I really like the major. So, hopefully all goes well.

BC: Are you guys in Writing for Mass Media right now?

AS: I couldn't get in it because I was five points away. You have the first score to get into that class and the second score to get into the school and I took those classes five years ago so if you're a transfer person and you transferred late, and you've taken all those english classes to that detail, manner so late in the game, you don't really retain all that specific information. The counterattack to that is they do have a lot of things to help test for it, you know, they have the classes and that is fair. I guess it just came as a surprise and if we have a meeting after this I guess we'll know, because if I don't pass it this summer then my whole plans are gonna be shifted around so we'll see how it goes

BC: Let's go on to our general discussion here. You guys can reference your course list. So let's talk about your expectations when you get in. You guys look really smart so I'm sure you'll have no problem. What classes are you looking forward to taking once you get in and which classes are you dreading?

JS: I'm looking for--I see the Pubic Relations: Issues, Practices, and Problems. I'd like to know more of the issues and more details of it, but what I'm dreading is the Writing for Public Relations. I like research because I just took a research class and I liked it, I like knowing how to research, but the writing is my big deal. I'm not a great writer, I have to give it my all versus anybody else and that's the only thing.

DS: And you said your friend was in Public Relations, has he told you about any classes to watch out for or something?

JS: Well, he switched majors to Broadcast. He didn't tell me about any class, but he told me that Professor Batchelor was one of the great professors and he teaches a majority of the PR classes, so he told me it wouldn't be a problem. I'm not too worried about it.

AS: I actually found this curriculum online before I even applied to the school and basically I'll be waiting five years to take all these classes because they're exactly—I want to take every single one from the creative side, Creating Campaigns and Research and Managing, so you can go further with creative directors. I'm actually looking forward to my next four semesters and getting to my specific classes.

DS: Is there anything about your field that you would like to learn about that's not in the course?

AS: Actually, I want to be a hispanic market specialization. That has not become a scholar issue yet, it's a booming industry, but it has not translated into the scholarly side of things, but in the next couple years, maybe five years, you're gonna see more segmented classes perhaps. I know that Spanish, they have more different Spanish so you have a more specific language. If they offered that, it would definitely be a very big enticement for me, for anybody going into a

specific market, but I'm different because I have something specific I want to do, so maybe someone coming in for something general would be different.

BC: Describe your ideal class like what projects you would do and the experience you would have.

AS: My ideal class would have to be, and I don't know if there's places like this, definitely having a real interaction with working industries, perhaps having a weekly going to work places, going to places that actually are doing what you're going after. A lot of the later classes you have to do some sort of internship, but actually having classes or classrooms with your peers in those kind of locations to give you an idea of what you're actually going after, how it actually feels. You know, maybe somebody thinks writing is great because they're in a pond somewhere and they're inspired, but being in a cubicle with 40,000 other people may not be as kosher. So I think that would be a really cool addition to the curriculum, actually going out and taking classes and doing projects within companies. Like actual on the field--I think it would be a very innovative thing to do for classrooms.

DS: How about you?

JS: I could say the same thing, like, the hands-on, having projects that you do within companies, practice PR and get more in depth with it. I know there's a group they have—

DS: PRSSA?

JS: Yeah. I've been wanting to join it, but I never have. I think things like that can also help the interaction as well. So if you don't get the whole learning experience that you want, like the hands-on experience in class, that organization right there will help you out. Do you know when they're looking for members again?

DS: On PRSSA? I'm pretty sure you can sign up any time. Even if you can't make the meetings, you can put your name on the list and they'll send you e-mail notifications of what's going on.

BC: They have a lot of events and stuff like that that you can be a part of.

JS: One guy in one of my classes mentioned it every class.

DS: Well, check it out.

BC: Definitely.

DS: Going into your field, obviously you have minimal knowledge about the field, what do you hope to learn or do and what skills do you hope to acquire?

JS: Well, I could say I want teachers that teach me--I want to learn how to do my job well and any kind of sidetracks that come my way, learn how to overcome them and what's the best way to--like how to approach each situation in my career and be the best at what I'm doing. Just strategies, I want to know the strategies so I can find my own ways of doing it as well.

AS: One really, really cool thing that Batchelor has kind of introduced and a lot of people are not aware is the critical thinking aspect of thing. As much as it's drilled and people think it's a good thing, not to sound pompous like I'm already in this world and I've got to experience things already and I have a skewed view of the skills, obviously I'm just seeking interaction with intelligent people so I can have a better self growth. I appreciate conversations, so when you have a conversation with a professor and high end students, you have much more guidance to help you shape yourself and succeed on that aspect of things. My desired skill is to be able to understand the workforces and what's coming your way once you do go out and there are no jobs. The expectancy of the real market and the real world out there.

BC: That kind of goes into our next questions. Do you guys follow what's going on in your perspective fields at all and if so how do you do that?

AS: I do 110%. My baby is AdAge.com--I live in that Web site to know what's happening in that world right now. Mostly it's Ad news right nows, just kind of stay on top of things. I found some agencies and people in agencies that have social networking places and I stay in touch with what they're doing personally and what they're going after to kind of keep myself grounded and keep myself—being successful to shadow somebody who's also successful. Kind of study what they're doing and study their words and their knowledge.

JS: On my behalf, I would say that I'm not getting the feel of this major, I'm not as involved as I want to be because of other things, but as time progresses--I'm always on a PR Web site. I Google it all the time, looking at jobs and salaries and incomes to see if it's changing, if it's hard to get in, looking up famous PR people and jobs in journalism, government and education, stuff like that.

DS: So you said you're looking to get involved in PRSSA and, you know, there's Ad Club for Ad majors.

AS: Yeah, I've not gotten myself into it. I'm a little too busy. Once I get into my concentration class... That's what I want to do there, start meeting people in the Mass Communication classes.

DS: A little off that topic, has anyone told you any advice about your field?

JS: Not really, I go to my Auntie. She mentioned this to me first and gave me knowledge of it. She told me it would be a good major for me because of the person I am. She didn't really do research on it, she knew someone going into the field and she and I have the same personality. She said she thought I would like it. I researched it and told her everything and she said, "yeah, that would fit you."

AS: I had a Mass Communication graduate, she was one of the copyrighters at Publix and once I switched from Liberal Arts into the writing world, I had really good sources. My stepmom got her MBA in this school as well, so she was really excited. I just, my brain kind of shifted, I was kind of like math and business and got sucked into literature and writing so that kind of came out. Most people definitely saw where it shifted to and where it was going and they were pretty happy. My dad actually hates advertising so he was pretty pissed. He's all business, he's a business man.

DS: So you're trying to sell to him why it's important.

AS: No, not at all. I was gonna be Psychology then Marketing and he was like, "what are you doing?" and now I'm in Advertising.

BC: Are there any extra-curricular activities that you could participate in to help you with your career and just name a few you can think of and any you're involved in.

JS: I'm interested in PRSSA. Right now I'm not involved because I'm very busy. I work all the time so if I'm not in school I'm working, but I'm trying to slow down to get more involved within PRSSA. I'm trying to get more involved with the extracurricular activities because it looks good on your resume and you get more involved and know more of it. I know other groups I wanted to join, like Student Government.

AS: I've not really researched the Ad Clubs so I'm not familiar with what they really do. The only extra-curricular I have right now is with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa and Polk County. They have a Hispanic Initiative right now and I'm part of that Board of Directors and I'm working on doing translations and working on an advertising campaign right now. We're super baby steps...that's my biggest one right now. And I'm also trying to...I'm coming up with some copy for one of the first Hispanic agencies in Tampa right now and trying to get in. I'm working on some sample work for the owner--super busy. On top of a family: a wife, a baby, now. Stupid crazy, my life.

BC: You just really touched on this a lot. What kind of work experience do you think will really help you prepare for your career and also have you come in with any work experiences?

JS: I've been working since I was 16. My major I see as a people person major and you're gonna be more direct with people since it's communication. I've done almost every kind of job: retail, office work, everything, on campus... I feel like I'm experienced when it comes to work experience, but being knowledgeable of the major, like working in PR, I don't think I'm experienced in that. As far as community service, I've done all of that. I feel I have the experience as well, not in the major. That's why I want to join this [PRSSA] even though you don't get paid, it's ok, it looks good on a resume.

DS: Also they do a lot with setting up internships.

JS: That's what I'm looking forward to, the internships.

DS: Have you looked anywhere yet?

JS: I've looked on the board in the advisor's office, but I looked up a couple of jobs in Tampa. I've been doing that 'cause I'm almost there...interning. I didn't know you could intern at any time.

DS: I'm pretty sure the general consensus with interning is if you find a place, go for it.

BC: There are internships where they want people at a certain level, but if you can find them you can have them.

DS: Do you think Mass Comm provides enough help to find an internship?

JS: Yes. Even the advisors, tell you to look at the board, and I do when I notice, I think they even had a list of work jobs and what you need to do for the different majors. If you want more information always go to the advisors. I felt they provided a lot.

DS: How about after college. Have you considered grad school at all?

JS: I don't know. I've been in college since '05. It's a long journey, but I feel like the more knowledge you have the easier you get in the door. I haven't thought about going though, have to have more conversations and talks about that.

BC: You both plan on working in the field you're in, have you explored job opportunities in those fields and, if so, what kind? What would you be interested in doing?

AS: Yeah, I have. My specific is creative copywriting, English and Spanish. I'm oriented toward agency rather than corporate. More interactive agencies and nonprof.

JS: I'm interested in entertainment, it interests me. You could get a job that pays your jobs, but are you happy with that job? Just being a PR specialist for an agency or an artist. My dream job would be to own my own record label--that's where the money at.

AS: I have an indie one, we should talk. I have my own world. I started as a musician and didn't have any resources, so I started my own studio. That's how I ended up in Advertising because I discovered the internet and juiced it to the last drop and discovered I was doing what I'm coming to school for now. That's why I said if I'm doing this now for no money, might as well get the degree and work for money.

BC: So what's your dream job?

AS: Consultant, I think. Consultant, public speaking. That would be the ultimate. I really love the Hispanic market, it's so unique and there's so much money. I love the minority groups, but my goal is trickling that back to the general market and creating better understanding. I'm really interested in international. I love food as well, I worked for Publix for 8 years. Food is an industry I'm aware of and enjoyed working for. Music and food.

DS: What's the name of your record label?

AS: New Approach Records.

BC: So how committed do you think you are in working towards that?

JS: Well, I was the secretary of a group promoting musicians. First I wanted to be an artist manager then I said why not own my own label. I never saw a woman own a big label, so it would be cool to be the first female to do that. Like the female Russel Simmons or female P. Diddy. That's my whole push to it.

AS: I live it every day, right now I'm just figuring out how to bring in the money. One step at a time. I've started some projects, it's been a long journey. I bought a house when I was 18 to have something and I've been working steady on that and coming to my terms like you can do these things, but you might have to put your time somewhere else first. You can have a career where you can have a good time, but then you need to earn enough to have the supplies to fund your own ventures.

DS: What do you consider a realistic job in your field, out-the-door?

JS: As a specialist. Since I want entertainment, like a secretary for a record label and hope they notice my PR skills. That's why I want to intern.

AS: Hopefully I can be a junior copywriter for a small or medium sized agency.

Maybe do some freelance work.

BC: Do you have any concerns about this field? Feel free to say no, tell us what you really think.

AS: I don't, I'm just a creative monster. As long as the capitalist system exists, Ad and PR are going to exist. Things are scary, but it happens every decade or every other decade. I'm not too concerned, I have my youth and there are plenty of McDonalds we can work at if we need a job.

BC: Take a moment to envision your realistic job, what you want to do in the field, think about a day in the life of your realistic job, what do you think you'd be doing?

JS: Busy, busy, busy. Communicating with different agencies and companies. Trying to sign an artist, determining benefits. Trying to get my name out there, to be the spokesperson of a company, get rid of the bad criticism. Anything to make the business stand out and keep moving.

DS: So you're expecting a lot of communication with other people and companies?

JS: Yes. Briefcase, laptop, and phone. And some heels.

AS: Hopefully, three hours of brain storming, few hours of meeting with the group, few more hours of finishing up different jobs.

DS: What do you expect to get paid coming out of school?

JS: Professor Batchelor taught us a good thing, we're still students, but I don't know. Last time I researched it, it was \$40,000-\$69,000. As we get up there, maybe \$85,000 a year. I'm not looking to make that just starting, but within the first range.

AS: How much I think or how much I know? I'm expecting, I'd be content with \$35,000-\$38,000.

DS: Are you planning on sticking around Florida?

AS: No way, I want to go to Chicago, that's my goal.

JS: The Big Apple. Home of dreams.

AS: But, I'll probably get stuck here.

JS: I'll start here for experience, to get on top of my game.

BC: Do you see USF School of Mass Comm having any particular benefits over other schools. How about disadvantages?

AS: Yes. We have Zimmerman. We have a really cool edge at this school, and the market. Gainesville, Tampa, come on.

JS: I don't know

DS: What do you see as strong points and weak points in Mass Comm?

AS: I don't know of any weaknesses yet, it's my first semester. I've only had one professor from Mass Comm, he was great, Batchelor. Counselors and Advisors are on top of their games. Those are definitely solid.

JS: I agree, I don't know of any weaknesses. Advisors constantly e-mail you and update you. The professor, Batchelor, is full of encouragement.

BC & DS: Wrap it up and thank members.