

I believe that my education at WVU and through the Communication Studies Department has provided me with all the tools I require to be successful in any position I apply for. It is easy to link the courses I have taken at WVU with the jobs I have applied for. I have also completed multiple types of professional field experience through courses at WVU. However, there are some areas of my education I wish were more of a requirement and I would have liked to take advantage of more opportunities throughout my college career.

### **Desired Occupation**

The industry that I would like to enter is the Marketing or Promotions industry. I do have a desire to work with people and promote a company or service that I believe is valuable. I am hoping to work for General Electrics Aviation Branch as a Communications Marketing Specialist. The position requires the applicant to demonstrate strong organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills. The positions requires being able to plan/execute meetings formal and informal, arrange events for customers, and set short and long term goals for myself and others. This position is largely centered on forming relations with co-workers, clients, and customers which is something that my education at WVU has prepared me for. While taking this course I do believe that my desired occupation has been narrowed to Marketing and Promotions. This course made me look into a specific field and decide its right for me. I do believe that Marketing and Promotions is something I am capable of doing and also would enjoy. The informational interview and professional field experience have reinforced my decision along with easing my mind about not attending graduate school right away. Graduate school is something I may want to return to school for, but right now I'm focusing my energy into breaking into a Marketing position.

## **Communication Studies Coursework**

The communication studies courses that had the most impact on me and I believe will help me the most in my career are Persuasion, Intercultural Communication, and Nonverbal Communication. All of these courses made me think in a different way and helped develop my critical thinking skills.

Persuasion might have been my favorite college class because every day was intriguing. No matter what the topic, there were a million different correct responses because everything was based on our own personal perspective and every member of the class had the ability to change the direction of the discussion with his or her input. Persuasion was never something I consider myself to excel in but after taking the class I consider the art of persuasion a useful tool. Persuasion helped me become a more confident consumer and also prepared me to analyze media messages and statistics. The class taught me how to become more aware of media messages and statistics and that can be put to use in my career every single day. For example, the class taught me to not just believe statistics that are thrown at you but to stop and think before allowing yourself to believe this message and consider the possibilities for how they arrived at that statistic. In the class we watched a 1980's circuit video that was quit amusing but also very informative. A segment called "Nail that Number" is permanently imbedded in my brain. The segment showed a brand of toothpaste that said it was recommended by 4 out of 5 dentists. The video then went on to ask a series of questions like, "How many of the dentists were employed through the company? How many were receiving free samples to give to customers?" I feel silly admitting now that none of those questions had ever crossed my mind before, I was an oblivious

consumer. What employer wants an employee who doesn't poses the skills to be a critical thinker and believes all the propaganda handed to them. To succeed in the Marketing world, this is an invaluable skill. It is important to understand how to market a company or service to the public in a way that is attention grabbing, but also with truth behind the message.

Intercultural Communication taught me the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures customs, traditions and languages. I do not consider myself a cultured person, at least not yet, because I haven't ever traveled outside of the United States. But I feel this class gave me perfect insight on how to prepare myself for when I do travel to different countries whether it is for business or pleasure. I learned the importance of researching a countries government, history and current events before traveling to a different country. If I do get hired by GE I plan on applying for a program through General Electric which would require me to travel to different areas and learn what it is they do at each location. One possible location is Hong Kong and I am more than confident that my employer would not want me to go to a branch of the company completely unaware of the social norms. I won't lie, I currently do not know much about Hong Kong and their social norms, but if I were assigned to that location I would most definitely research everything I could before entering a foreign land. Also, Intercultural Communication gave me a better understanding of the rest of the world's social norms without traveling. In the class we discussed how other parts of the world educate students, which cultures were more feminine or masculine and whether the people were more individualistic or collective. I consider this information imperative for anyone's career because the more you know about the world the more mindful you will be.

The Nonverbal Communication course taught me the importance of looking into someone's eyes when speaking and listening, to have good posture to show attentiveness and how to read others nonverbal signals. Looking into an employer's eyes when interviewing or listening to instructions shows that you are engaged in the conversation and that you are paying attention to the topic at hand. Good posture indicates that you are involved in the conversation as opposed to slumping down in your chair ready to take a siesta. It is also important to be able to read employers and customers nonverbal signals as an indicator to how you're doing or how a customer feels about their service or interaction with you.

### **Professional Field Experience**

Business and Professional Communication was by far the best class/professional field experience I took in college pertaining to my future career. This class taught me how to work in large groups, how to be a leader and how to present to a client. I was a bit hesitant to work in such a large group, hoping that fate would be kind to me and bless me with eight hard working group members but, that was not the case. There were five group members committed to winning and doing our best and three that didn't want to be there. But my group worked together to pick up slack and always made our group look prepared for the client.

I was a group leader for one of our projects and I learned how to delegate tasks, keep our group on task, how to make decisions, how to present to a client, the importance of talking to the client and the importance of listening to the client. It wasn't as easy as I thought, assigning tasks for group members to complete because not everyone was as dedicated as I was to winning. So to try to keep the group on task, I created mini deadlines for the each individual for different parts of the project. So we could finish one part before we moved onto the next step. I think the

deadlines worked well because nobody wanted to show up to meetings with nothing to bring to the table and look like the social loafer! Gaining experience with working in groups is an invaluable resource seeing as how I will most likely be working with others throughout my career, whether is be with GE or whomever.

I also learned the importance of making an on the spot decision. I wanted to win and do well so badly I was afraid to make a mistake. I soon got over that when I realized you can always go back and fix your mistakes! If you make the wrong choice you can always go back but if you make no decision at all it leaves the group in limbo and unable to proceed. Also, I don't know very many companies who want to hire someone who isn't confident enough in themselves to make a decision.

The most important skill I learned from this class though was how to present to a client. You could be the most intelligent person in the world but if you can't deliver a simple speech and be a confident about what you are presenting, I can't imagine you being employed for too long. After our first practice assignment, we received feedback on how to present in a professional manner and one of the main factors was being able to transfer your audience's attention. I have used this simple piece of advice in all presentations following because it really does make you seem more organized and prepared. What employer isn't looking for those skills?

For the project I was group leader for, I believe we won due to the fact that I made sure we delivered what the client wanted. My group members and I took detailed notes in the first meeting of what our client wanted. After meeting as a group and brainstorming, I went back to pitch her our ideas, made another visit to show her our progress, and I final visit to ask if there was anything else she thought might be helpful to her that we could provide. We gave her

everything she asked for and a little bit more. If I hadn't been so willing to set appointments with her and go over our work, I do not believe we could have delivered as well.

I completed my professional field experience with WV PEIA Weight Management Program, and it was a learning experience in a field I still have a lot to learn. I was able to assist in research, edit dissertations and an expert system, edited press releases, and created a podcast summarizing my research. The research I conducted and the podcast I created are two large parts of my portfolio that I am very proud of, and my final booklet of research and my podcast will be excellent examples for future employers to demonstrate my written and oral communication skills.

### **Gaps in Education**

The only gap in my education, while in the Communication Studies program is public speaking. I know many communication studies students who fear speaking in front of people. I don't fear it, but I do wish that my education included more public speaking. I am aware that you can take a public speaking course, but in a Communication Studies program I believe it should be more of a requirement rather than an option.

As for my educational gaps, I should have done more extracurricular activities. I wasn't in a sorority or in Lambda Pi Eta, but I was a full time student, held a part time job, and have held 4 different internships through out my college experience. I'm not disappointed in myself, but WVU offers so many opportunities such as traveling to other countries while receiving college credit which is one thing I regret not doing.

My desired area of occupation is in the Marketing and Promotions industry, and I would absolutely love to be employed through GE. My education has prepared me for the working

world in many different aspects. I do consider my time spent at WVU an invaluable resource, and I have recently fully started to appreciate my soon to be finished college degree and how much easier my life will be with a degree. Although I do have some regrets about not fully utilizing my college opportunities, I do believe that I got a lot of good experience and knowledge through my education.