

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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# EXECUTIVE ADDRESSES



## Presidential Address

Though this year posed many unforeseen challenges for our chapter, I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished. Thanks to the leadership of my talented executive board and dedication of our awesome members, we expanded our involvement on campus and in the community through volunteer opportunities, partnered with a leading Michigan agency on a client campaign, hosted a hugely successful internship fair and midnight skate fundraiser, and had a record number of our members nationally published. We grew as an organization both on our own campus and at the national level. More than anything, I'm proud of the way our chapter responded and adapted to COVID-19. Our members' enthusiasm and helpfulness made the virtual transition successful and I couldn't be more grateful for their positivity, adaptability and support. It is this resilience that makes our chapter great and will allow us to continuously grow and learn in the future. Thank you all for a wonderful year- I look forward to seeing all this chapter accomplishes in years to come.

# EXECUTIVE ADDRESSES



## CEO Address

This past year, I was fortunate enough to be the CEO for PR Central. When I joined the program as a sophomore, I knew I wanted to lead this firm one day. My amazing Vice President Sara Trine and I were able to take this firm and transform it into something special for students. Our meetings became more productive and members interacted with others outside their client groups. The cohesive nature of PR Central grew into a family where we all could rely on and collaborate with one another.

Despite this year coming to an end so quickly, PR Central was successful in serving nine clients to the end of their contracts. With just 30 members, we were able to increase client engagement on social media and news media, conduct research and develop web designs for businesses. When you think of public relations, you think of press releases and writing content – which is true. When I think of public relations, I think about building a brand and telling a story. PR Central is the place where students can develop those skills and get the real experience.

I am so proud of this team and every task they overcame. Despite COVID-19 ending face to face engagement with each other, every member stepped up and pushed through obstacles to achieve goals. I wish all the best to next year's CEO Kamryn Lowler as she leads this team into the changing world of communication and continuing development of public relation needs.

# EXECUTIVE BOARD



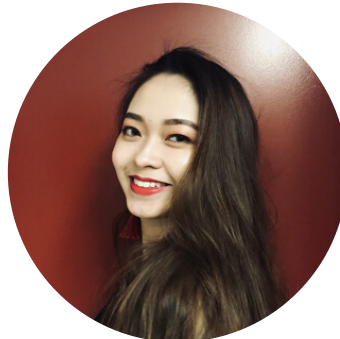
Anna Kendall  
President



Kamryn Lowler  
co-Director of  
Chapter Events



Jenna McDonnell  
Vice President



Shiyao Lui (Mimi)  
co-Director of  
Chapter Events



Terzah Dyer  
Director of  
Professional  
Development



Alexis Schuchert  
Director of  
Publications



Rachel Bendarz  
Director of  
Member Services



Grace Berndt  
Director of  
Community Outreach



Sara Strohschein  
Creative Director



Natalie Batten  
Director of  
Digital  
Communications

# NATIONAL EVENTS



## National Conference

PRSSA National hosted National Conference in San Diego, Calif from Oct. 18 through 22. The conference theme was "The Golden State of PR". Several CMU PRSSA members had the opportunity to attend and were able to network with some of the best in the PR field, learn how to better prepare for the next step in their career and explore the city.

## Leadership Assembly

Due to COVID-19, national committee elections were hosted remotely as delegates voted via Google Forms. National Assembly was then hosted virtually on April 23 from 12-3 p.m. It featured a motivational session, a keynote address and a breakout session. PRSSA members from across the country tuned in and gained insights from all speakers. Following the assembly, delegates received an email regarding who was elected for the national committee.



## 2018-2019 Star Chapter

CMU PRSSA's dedication and hard work was recognized by being honored as a Star Chapter for the 2018-2019 year. Chapters must meet at least eight requirements such as confirming a student-run firm and performing a high school outreach session. The chapter is committed to reaching its maximum potential and is hoping to be honored as Star Chapter for the 2019-2020 year as well.



# GENERAL MEETINGS

## Fall 2019

**Sept. 11:** PRSSA's first general meeting was Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. in Moore 105. The first meeting included a discussion on PRSSA benefits, introduced the executive board members and the committees, and ended with a mentor/mentee ice-breaker.

**Sept. 25:** The president, Anna Kendall, spoke about media pitching while CM Life representatives spoke about broadcast and news media pet peeves. The meeting ended with a media pitching workshop.

**Oct. 9:** CMU alumna Rachel Perkins spoke about how to create a stand-out resume, the importance of customizing cover letters, how to prepare for an interview as well as how to leave an impression once the interview is complete.

**Oct. 23:** DTE Manager of Electric Communications Randi Berris discussed important tips to consider when communicating a crisis. The meeting was followed by a pumpkin decorating social and fundraiser.

**Nov. 20:** Jim Wojcik spoke to PRSSA members about internships. He discussed where students can find internships and how to get the most out of real-world experiences. Wojcik also provided students with information regarding counting an internship for credit through the IPR program. During this meeting the chapter collected non-perishable items to donate to the Student Food Pantry.

## Spring 2020

**Jan. 22:** Wednesday, Jan. 22 was the first general meeting of 2020. Students enjoyed Insomnia Cookies while President Anna Kendall spoke about the chapter and it's benefits. The meeting ended with a pitching workshop.

**Feb. 5:** Ryan Fewins-Bliss, executive director of Michigan College Access Network, spoke to PRSSA members about non-profit PR. Fewins-Bliss suggested for students to enroll in an accounting class before graduation as all of the positions he's had included managing a budget.

**Feb. 19:** The general meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 19 focused on developing your personal brand and how that ties into successful internship experiences. President Anna Kendall shared how a personal brand develops reputation, builds trust and makes you stand out among other applicants.



# SOCIAL EVENTS

## September: Blaze Pizza

Following the general meeting on Sept. 25, PRSSA members attended a chapter fundraiser at Blaze Pizza. Members had the opportunity to create connections with other PR students while enjoying pizza. A portion of the sales were donated to PRSSA.

## October: Pumpking Decorating Bash

The general meeting on Oct. 23 was followed by a pumpkin decorating fundraiser and social. The directors of chapter events provided candy, apple cider, games and pumpkin decorations. Members could purchase a pumpkin for \$1 to help raise money for CMU's PRSSA chapter.

## February: Midnight Skate

Our February social was at the Isabella County Ice Arena. The chapter sold grilled cheese and hot chocolate while members and their friends enjoyed a night of ice skating.





# COMMITTEES

## Publications Committee

Publications committee members are the writers of CMU PRSSA's brand. Blogs, monthly newsletters, the annual report and other publications inform and educate target audiences. The publications are excellent peer-edited portfolio materials that provide a wide sample of writing ability. The role of the director of publications is to edit materials and guide committee members in creating quality and effective content.

## Professional Development Committee

The director of professional development, along with the vice president, oversee the professional development committee. In the fall, CMU PRSSA's PDC plans the internship fair. Committee members invite recruiters from businesses, agencies, campus departments, nonprofit organizations and government groups to share information regarding internship opportunities. They also plan an agency tour for members. In the spring, PDC helps plan CMU PRSSA's annual conference with White Pine PRSA. This committee works to expose students to the PR industry and provides networking opportunities.

## Chapter Events Committee

The chapter events and fundraising committee members are in charge of organizing PRSSA's socials, fundraisers and end-of-year banquet. The members come up with creative ways to increase member engagement through their different events. The role of the director of member services is to oversee the chapter events and fundraising committee as well as keep track of the point system that is used to encourage member involvement.



**CENTRAL**

# PR CENTRAL

PR Central is a nationally affiliated, student-run public relations firm located on the campus of Central Michigan University. It provides students with hands-on opportunities to work with clients in a variety of fields ranging from nonprofit to technology. Members gain portfolio pieces as well as real-life experience of working in a public relations firm.

## Clients

- Courtney Jerome Media
- Ignite Donuts
- evolYOUtion
- Ready, Set, Learn
- IPR Council
- Doherty Hotel
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Best Forevers Podcast

## RUBBER DUCK DERBY

The eighth annual Rubber Duck Derby is postponed until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic. PR Central sells ducks to raise money toward scholarships for PRSSA members. Members use these scholarships to attend PRSSA National Conference in the fall, and PR Central receives a portion of the money to continue as a student-run firm. The rubber ducks race down a water slide and through a lazy river with the first three ducks winning prizes. First place prize wins \$500, second place prize is a two night stay at the Soaring Eagle Waterpark and Hotel with waterpark passes and third place prize is a CMU gift basket. Ducks are still being sold. Visit [www.cmuprcentral.com/duckderby](http://www.cmuprcentral.com/duckderby) or contact CEO Jaime Kesteloot at [kest1jl@cmich.edu](mailto:kest1jl@cmich.edu) for more information.



# PR CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD



Jaime Kesteloot  
CEO



Alexis Thompson  
Director of  
Digital  
Communications



Sara Trine  
Vice President



Jozlyn Gauthier  
Director of  
Development



Cassie Malhado  
Director of  
Membership



Krystal Black  
Director of  
Operations | Fall 2019

# PR CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BOARD



Rachel Casaccia  
Director of  
Internal  
Communication



Bailey Talaska  
Director of  
Finance



Jacob Czopek  
Director of  
Operations  
Spring 2020



Sara Strohschein  
Director of  
Operations Editor  
Spring 2020



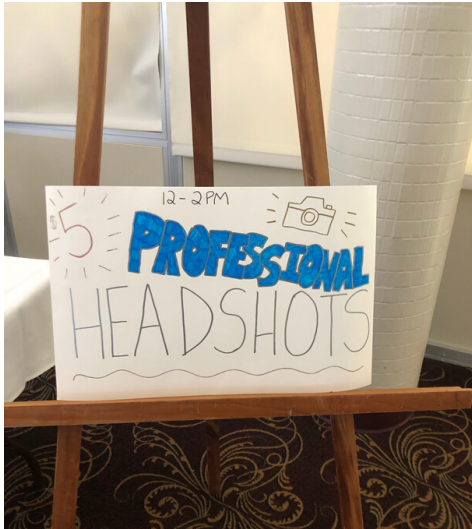
Natalie Batten  
Duck Derby  
Communications  
Spring 2020



Anna Kendall  
PRSSA President

# INTERNSHIP FAIR

CMU PRSSA and the Department of Journalism hosted the annual internship fair on Nov. 6 in the UC Rotunda. With more than 20 companies in attendance, students had the opportunity to speak with PR professionals in the public relations, marketing, communications and advertising industries. This event allows students to build their network and discuss internship opportunities with professionals in the industry.



# 2020-2021 EXECUTIVE BOARD



Christine Seo  
Creative Director



McKenna Pierce  
Director of  
Chapter Events



Delaney Brickley  
Director of  
Publications



Kasia Naessens  
Director of  
Community Outreach



Alexis Schuchert  
Director of  
Digital  
Communications



Rachel Bednarz  
President



Natalie Batten  
Vice President



Tyler Romer  
Director of  
Professional  
Development



Nyah Hodges  
Director of  
Member Services

# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## Virtual Meetings

**April 15:** PANEL - Building a Communications Career During COVID-19

Four CMU alums from across the U.S. provided real-world insights from their varied roles in public relations. They shared how to build a career in communications, specifically during the pandemic, and answered questions on how to move forward in the industry during the next several months.

**April 22:** ETHICS

Megan Soule, who works in Global Advanced Technology Communications for General Motors, lead a discussion about ethical PR. She discussed how to make ethical decisions, overcoming ethical dilemmas and answered audience questions.

## How did PRSSA national handle it?

In the midst of the chaos, PRSSA National has been handling the pandemic very effectively and professionally. Even though every part of life as been effected, PRSSA continues to provide members and professionals with beneficial resources to be successful. For instance, the organization offered free webinars relating to external, internal and digital communications during COVID-19 and instead of canceling the annual Leadership Assembly, it was hosted virtually. PRSSA is making sure individuals get the most out of their membership, regardless of the situation we are in.

## How has it affected the communications industry?

Communication with target audiences regarding clients, events, products and services has now shifted to communicating about the pandemic. Many companies have decided to hold off on promoting "new news" unless pertaining to the pandemic as it may get lost in the midst of the COVID-19 chaos. Instead most are sharing how they are handling the crisis, challenges they are facing and advice for other businesses.

Majority of professionals are working remotely and have found their new normal when communicating with team members including consistent virtual meetings. Clear and concise communication is important now more than ever.

Additionally, many companies within the industry have made the difficult decision to cancel their intern programs. For some it's not in the budget due to the pandemic while others prefer the intern to have an in-person experience. Decisions and communication have become tougher than ever before, but companies are taking the steps they need to reach success.



# GENERAL MEMBERS

Julia Amting  
Kiah Anderson  
Moriah Anderson  
Hayley Ballentine  
Natalie Batten  
Rachel Bednarz  
Laurien Brewer  
Delaney Brickley  
Quinton Broach  
Kate Castillenti  
Kellie Chuba  
Terzah Dyer  
Jozlyn Gauthier  
Taylor Gribble  
Kate Grove  
Lauren Hendrick  
Madison Hert  
Nyah Hodges  
Jessica Johnson  
Anna Kendall  
Jaime Kesteloot  
Elizabeth Kramer  
Bailey Krukowski  
Julia Lammy  
Madison Lillie

Shiyao Liu  
Kamryn Lowler  
Chantel Maczorowski  
Cassandra Malhado  
Jenna McDonnell  
Michael Metiva  
Kasia Naessens  
Colin Nice  
McKenna Pierce  
Dakota Schlafley  
Alexis Schuchert  
Sophia Schulte  
Hayley Seibel  
Kyongia Sea  
Victoria Spencer  
Sara Strohschein  
Samantha Sweeting  
Julia Szwarc  
Bailey Talaska  
Nahum Tesfai  
Alexis Thompson  
Madison Topolinski  
Adrianna Touma  
Sara Trine  
Kymberly Whitehead  
Riley Zuzga

# THANK YOU

CMU PRSSA extends its deepest gratitude to a number of people and organizations.

Our organization would not be possible without all of our devoted members. We hope you learned more about being a PR professional, and we thank you for being committed to the organization and attending general and committee meetings.

Thank you to Jim Wojcik, CMU PRSSA's advisor, for helping to reach our broad alumni network, calming us in times of stress and keeping this organization running smoothly from year to year.

Speakers often traveled from across Michigan to speak to our chapter, and enriched the educational experience of members through sharing tips and professional experiences. Thank you for taking the time to mold the PR professionals of the future.

