

Building Bridges Through The Arts, Forming Archways To Engage The Community

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Abstract

This creative commentary offers an insight into my internship over the 2019 spring semester at the Ware Center, an off campus branch associated with Millersville University and the Arts at Millersville. With my title as the Engagement Project Manager, my goal in my internship was to establish and explore relationships within the community to increase attendance at shows in the Arts at Millersville. The Arts at Millersville is “Lancaster County’s Home for the Cultural Arts “and has two exquisite performing arts centers that feature music, live theatre, film, poetry, community events and art exhibits. During my time in the communication office, I have taken on three big engagement projects. More specifically, I generated a program, Building Bridges Through the Arts, which increased knowledge of and attendance to Mnozil Brass, the world’s premier brass septet, and incorporated the Ware Center in the fall 2019 orientation schedule. This commentary will explore my impact in the Arts at Millersville while explaining the responsibilities, skills, and challenges that came along in the internship. I was expected to raise awareness and increase engagement through higher attendance rates and knowledge about the Arts at Millersville. In this commentary, engagement is defined as attendance to shows and knowledge about the Ware Center. Expect to read about what it is like to work for Millersville University and the possibilities it holds as a future event planner and young communication professional.

The Ware Center is Lancaster’s premier performing arts center and the environment here believes in creativity, learning and understanding. The Arts at Millersville is striving for additional outreach in the community outside of Millersville students. Throughout my internship, I designed Building Bridges Through the Arts to have the potential to be implemented in the fall 2019 semester. With cooperation from Lancaster School District faculty, the program will provide academic success to high school students through

connections in coursework. Through Building Bridges Through the Arts, we are proposing to create an educational bridge between Lancaster classrooms and the programs held at the Ware Center by providing free tickets to students interested in attending shows having relevance to their studies. My education at Millersville has prepared me for this internship as majoring in communication with a focus in public relations has exposed me to AP style writing and Adobe InDesign. Public relations is managing and building relationships with

organizations and their key publics. All of these skills were required to begin implementing Building Bridges Through the Arts with local Lancaster School District high schools.

Building Bridges Through the Arts needed to start somewhere. I began researching high schools that were 30 minutes or less away from the Ware Center. With many things to accomplish in office, it was important to ensure the goal of this project was attainable and time bound. Realizing what is and is not attainable is detrimental in campaign or project management. I narrowed the goal to inviting individual high schools to participate in Building Bridges Through the Arts. I made a goal to contact three Lancaster District Schools and spark discussion with them about the program throughout three weeks' time. Here, I utilized my knowledge of SMART goals; I learned about this concept in Business and Professional Communication and Public Relations Campaign classes at Millersville University. SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time bound. My ability to grasp concepts learned in class and apply them to my internship helped me be an asset to the Arts at Millersville. A challenge that Building Bridges Through the Arts faces is the uncertainty in high school's schedules. Their schedules may not match with the timing and scheduling of our programs. A solution to this is to be aware of conflicts high schools may have over the course of upcoming semesters and programs. We want to spark conversation with faculty in the Building Bridges Through the Arts program soon, so that faculty can incorporate our programs in their curriculums effortlessly.

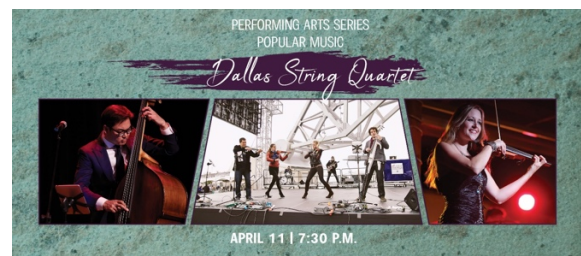
Over the years at Millersville University, I have gained confidence in

building relationships and communicating effectively. There were times where marketing shows took prevalence over Building Bridges Through the Arts. My supervisor, Arts Communication Manager Amy Banks, utilized my communication skills in and out of the office. Amy asked me to begin promoting for Mnozil Brass on campus. I was excited to explore new relationships on campus that the Arts at Millersville could make. When given the opportunity to promote Mnozil Brass to Millersville University, we needed to have "all hands on deck." This international act deserved our best effort and a great audience. Using University staff helped us expand the Millersville community's knowledge about Mnozil Brass. This campaign included distributing Valentine's Day cards with the Mnozil Brass members on them on the front and promotion for two tickets for the price of one opportunity on the back. After two days of contacting and discussing potential partnerships on campus, the University School Store, McNairy Library, the Housing Department and Saxbys all helped make our goal of promoting Mnozil Brass a reality.

My biggest achievement so far in my internship has been incorporating the Ware Center into incoming freshman's orientation experience. I take pride in establishing the framework for the event next semester before I graduate. It is important to share all of what Millersville has to offer with students. From tabling at Organization Outbreak on behalf of the Arts at Millersville, it was prevalent that students did not know about the Ware Center at all. There was a need for me to discover a way for the Ware Center to become on Millersville's students radar. As I learned more about the orientation schedule from communicating with the Director of Orientation and Transportations, he directed

me to a member of the orientation committee to begin planning an event for the incoming class on Saturday, August 26, 2019 at the Ware Center. I have created stickers on Adobe Illustrator advertising the Arts at Millersville to give to students at this event and at future tabling endeavors. These stickers give students the opportunity to talk about their experience at the Ware Center during orientation.

The work that I have come to create inside of the communication office has added extensive content to my portfolio. The Arts at Millersville's branding is very creative. The building's architecture influences the Arts at Millersville's branding and uses the colors of teal, purple, pink, brown and gray to complement Millersville University's staple colors of gold and black to the public. There is room for expanding outside these colors, but we are proud of the brand we upkeep and portray to the public.



I chose my best examples of graphic design that I have created for the Arts at Millersville to provide an example of our branding and the work I created during my internship. The Dallas String Quartet asset is a web slider that was published on artsatmu.com. This website is where the public can purchase tickets and learn more about the Arts at Millersville. The Richie and Rosie asset is a banner that we order through Vistaprint and hung in the front windows of the Ware Center. Amy

encourages her student workers to stay within the brand because it helps keep consistency and familiarity with the public to ensure that they can trust us as a credible and thriving establishment. I will walk away with from Millersville University is using the graphic design programs, InDesign and Illustrator.

As an aspiring communication professional, this internship helped me realize my strengths and how to use them to an advantage. Forming this educational bridge between the Arts at Millersville and Lancaster School District high schools has the ability to not only connect their curriculum to the arts, but nurture appreciation for the performing arts. Building Bridges Through the Arts has been the main focus throughout my time at the Arts at Millersville. Program by program, we have the opportunity to enrich students with education through shows presented by the Arts at Millersville.

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