

# Public Relations and Strategic Communication



As a student majoring in public relations and strategic communication, you will learn how to help organizations create and promote a positive image by keeping the public informed of the organization's goals and policies and their effects on the community. You will develop skills in using public relations techniques and strategies based on communication theory and research. Students are also encouraged to contribute to the student newspaper to enhance journalistic skills and to work at the university's television and radio studio to develop an understanding of media. Passion to learn, to discover and to do are the hallmarks of a person who will become successful in strategic communication.

**Strategically manage image.** If you're cool under pressure, a team player, possess strong communication skills and like to write, check out a major in strategic communication. Strategic communication professionals are involved with advertising campaigns, strategic planning, special events, competitor analysis and media relations. And they decide which of these elements will help accomplish their goals and combine them into a cohesive, integrated marketing strategy.

**An interdisciplinary background.** Because of our liberal arts focus, you will gain an interdisciplinary background in communication that gives you the breadth of perspective needed to help organizations manage their image through the media and in the community. Courses will develop your skills in writing, speaking, management, desktop communication and research.

**Internships and careers.** Strategic communication majors have interned with the United Way, Deere & Company, and local NBC, CBS, FOX and ABC affiliates. After graduation, students are prepared for jobs in creative agencies and in the communication or marketing departments of corporations or non-profit organizations.

## Ambrose Advantages

**The Ambrose Public Relations Agency.** A highlight of the strategic communication major at St. Ambrose University is the Strategic Communication Campaigns capstone course, which provides hands-on experience working with a local organization. By enrolling in this course you become an associate of the Ambrose Public Relations Agency. As an APRA associate, you complete a personal assessment and are assigned roles and tasks designed to enhance your individual strengths and bolster your weaknesses based on your own career goals, while also working with a team to develop a communication campaign for your client organization. APRA has completed environmental scans for more than 25 community organizations and proposed strategic communication campaigns to



enhance the way that those organizations communicate with their various stakeholders. Our clients have included the River Music Experience, the Figge Art Museum and the Rock Island Arsenal Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center.

## Career Opportunities

Strategic communication professionals work in virtually every industry—business, entertainment, government, tourism, education and healthcare. Increasingly, they are found in company boardrooms, advising top management on long-range strategic planning, policy and vision.

With strong writing and multimedia skills, graduates find positions at public relations and advertising agencies, as social media directors, in government public affairs positions, in nonprofit fundraising, in promotions, and in broadcast and print news departments. A public relations and strategic communication major has proven to be excellent preparation for graduate study in communication, business administration, public administration, and law.

## Career Outlook

- > The job market for market research analysts is among the fastest growing in the nation, with a growth rate of 23 percent from 2016 through 2026, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The position offered a median salary of \$63,120 at the time of the study and was ranked number one among business jobs by *U.S. News & World Report*.
- > The position of public relations specialist is ranked number one in the *U.S. News & World Report* 2014 ranking of Best Creative Jobs. More than 22,900 public relations jobs are projected to be added through 2026. The median salary for PR specialists in 2018 was \$60,000.
- > Technical writing is projected to experience 11 percent job growth through 2026, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Technical writers earned a median salary of \$65,400 in 2012.
- > Public relations and fundraising managers earned a median salary of \$114,800 per year in 2018, according to the BLS.

## Alumni Success Story

Heather Hartley graduated with majors in public relations and journalism. She started her career at a small advertising agency. Now, as advertising manager for the Construction and Forestry division of John Deere & Company, Hartley manages a \$1.6 million annual budget, the bulk of which is spent on printed materials. Hartley's division produces printed materials in eight different languages serving 11 global regions. The future may hold a shift toward digital documentation, but for now the dealers and contractors are looking for printed brochures and materials.

Professionals in this field have to possess excellent communication and organizational skills, Hartley advises. Any one product launch could involve multiple staff within various locations within the Deere corporation, but also outside vendors such as photographers, videographers, or advertising agencies.

Hartley previously spent years managing marketing as a volunteer for non-profit organizations such as the Davenport Jaycees or Hand in Hand. Excellent organization and communication was vital to ensure other volunteers delivered on their commitments to programs and events.

## Where Some of Our Graduates Work

A few of the companies that employ St. Ambrose strategic communication graduates:

- > Adult Child Therapy Service, development assistant for marketing
- > Community Health Care, director of development

- > Family Rescue, Inc., assistant director of development
- > Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, marketing partner manager
- > HON Company, pricing analyst
- > Hopkins-Huebner PC, attorney
- > John Deere World Headquarters, content analyst
- > Mindfire Communications, marketing arsonist
- > RK Dixon, IT account executive
- > THORS, LLC., vice president of sales and marketing
- > U.S. Army, public affairs officer
- > YASH Technologies, communications coordinator

## Your Career: Networking, Internships and Jobs in the Quad Cities

The Quad Cities is a welcoming and fun place to live as a college student. More than that, it offers a great community to help you prepare for—or even start—your career.

We're closely connected to the communication and arts organizations in the Quad Cities. They are a rich community resource, and provide a lively variety of opportunities for careers. The area has an array of opportunities for communication experts in all media. Major daily newspapers, the *Quad-City Times* and the *Rock Island Argus/Moline Dispatch*, provide an arena where writers, reporters and editors can flex their writing skills. Local affiliates for each of the major networks have broadcast stations in the Quad Cities, and a variety of radio stations offer programming that ranges from all-talk to classic oldies, and hip-hop to public radio.

These organizations contribute to the Quad Cities' reputation as a center for communications and arts, and provide exceptional opportunities for networking, internships and jobs.

## Get in Touch With Us Today

We invite you to visit St. Ambrose to learn more about the opportunities here. Our quality academic programs provide one of the best private education values in the Midwest. Check it out for yourself: contact our Admissions Office, 563-333-6300 (toll-free 800-383-2627) or [admit@sau.edu](mailto:admit@sau.edu), or go online to [www.sau.edu](http://www.sau.edu).

*St. Ambrose University offers a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and Strategic Communication. For complete curriculum information and course descriptions, consult the Course Catalog at [www.sau.edu/catalog](http://www.sau.edu/catalog).* 09.19