

PR professional gives UNT students tips and tricks on how to land a job after graduating

By Daniel Ryan Carr

Recent UNT graduate, Keoni Holoman, gives tips and tricks to Prof. Poynter's PR Communications class Tuesday.



Keoni Holoman guest lectured at Professor Poynter's class Tuesday.

This past Tuesday students walked into Professor Poynter's PR Communications class to a surprise – a guest lecturer. The guest lecturer's name was [Keoni Holoman](#), a Public relations specialist with Carter BloodCare. She was also a former UNT student who was there to give the students advice on obtaining a job after college and to tell them what a PR job looks like. Holoman was with the class for an hour and had a lot of advice for the students.

Interview tips and tricks for new graduates

“As far as your portfolio goes, definitely bring that with you to your first interview,” guest lecturer Keoni Holoman said. “Bring your print portfolio, have writing samples, any clips you have, social media screenshots, and any video that you've done on your resume.”

Holoman went on to explain how important showcasing yourself as a professional is to employers. They want to know that you know what you're doing, and a portfolio is the best way to show them you do. Employers want to know how to obtain earned media through strategic PR. I discussed this in last week's [blog](#).

“I would definitely put your personal link to your online portfolio [on your print portfolio] because they might want to be interested in your brand and who you are as a person,” Holoman said. “That always helps them. They're always really impressed with that. My current director, she always talks about how interesting that is that I'll have a full book that gives a snapshot of what I do and what I've done for others.”

Holoman said to include projects and assignments that were completed in UNT classes. She went on to tell the class when her PR for Nonprofit's course had Abigail's arms come out and ask for advice.

“Use that,” Holoman said. “Definitely use that. Use it as a way to say that you've done some freelancing and helped them come up with their planning or whatever they needed.”

Holoman told the students to not feel like they needed to leave anything out. She also told the students that when goes in for an interview, she will have prepared a thank you note to leave with the receptionist to give to the hiring manager. Holoman said she likes to include a



note in it about something they talked about in the interview and thank them for the chance to be interviewed.

“That’s how I got this current position,” Holoman said. “I’m sure that added to it and [my current director] still has it on her desk.”

PR specialist job details at Carter BloodCare

“Anything from one day it can be proofreading, copy writing, newsletters, to the middle of the day something has happened that we got to run out to a media interview for.” Holoman said. “I’m also doing internal communications. Anything about new programs or if we have severe weather, which is a considered an emergency for us. We have to send out the memo and get everybody moved to the places they need to be.”

Holoman then described other responsibilities she has had while on the job including most recently during Carter BloodCare’s recent blood shortage nationwide.

“We usually have a sort of war room meeting where we decide what are our calls-to-action, what everybody needs to do,” Holoman said. “As a PR person, you kind of have to know what everybody’s doing so that you’re able to speak on topics or decide what you’re not going to speak on. But it happens in matters of minutes. I was everywhere across town, CBS, Fox 4, NBC 5.”

Holoman continued to describe what her job entails at the nation’s largest blood supply company.

“We run PR for all three of our little major locations,” Holoman said. “So not only is it for the North Texas hub, but it’s also for the central Texas and East Texas hubs as well. I’m getting calls from East Texas and central Texas like Waco area. And, so yeah, really your day can look like anything.”

Holoman’s job requires a close relationship with the media. She often finds herself writing news releases promoting various blood drive events. Many of these end up being published as earned media on local affiliates. An [example](#) of this is when they promoted blood drives in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio.

Networking

During the lecture, Holoman stressed that students should use everything to their advantage. From already producing high quality work to name dropping UNT students and professors.

“You might find this, but if you go into a place in the Dallas area, you’ll probably have someone from UNT who worked there before. That’s how I knew someone, through Professor Poynter, who had worked at Carter Bloodcare before.”

Holoman learned a lot as a PR Major at the University of North Texas. She contributes her employment opportunities to skills she learned in Poynter’s PR Communications class.

“Networking with other UNT students can go a long way!” Keoni Holoman said.

About Daniel Ryan Carr:



Daniel Ryan Carr is a public relations major at the University of North Texas. He is also on staff at Denton Bible Church where he is responsible for office administration and communication. Ryan is also responsible for managing and leading students and leaders at DBC and was previously on staff at his high school newspaper.

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Holoman, Keoni. (2019, September 10). Personal interview.