

CT Intern Academy 2013
Speaker questions

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1. What do you look for in a resume?

When we have had the opportunity to hire in the Communications Office, one of the most important things for me in evaluating candidates was their presentation skills, starting with their resume. If their resume or cover letter had typos and/or was poorly constructed, they were immediately weeded from the pool of candidates. In addition to showing good written and verbal communication and interpersonal abilities, demonstrating good time management, analytical and problem solving and experience in public relations/communications are important. Showing that you have an interest in the field is key.

2. What classes do you recommend for students interested in your field? What skills are important to develop? (writing, fiscal analysis, public speaking, etc.).

Regardless of your academic major, it's important to develop core skills - like writing, public speaking, critical thinking, and analysis - particularly for a career in public relations. Developing expertise in new technology and applications, such as social media and video production, is also important.

3. What keeps you motivated in your job day-to-day?

For me, working in public health is motivating because the work we do is very important to the people of the state. Because the agency has so many diverse and varied programs, the work never gets stale.

4. Do you work in a constantly changing field and how does that affect your job?

Public health is constantly changing as is the field of communications. The changing ways media is delivered makes it even more important for public health communicators to provide timely and accurate information. Staying connected to professional organizations, such as the National Public Health Information Coalition, can be very helpful to stay on top of these changes as well as to update and develop your knowledge and skills.

5. What was your career and educational path to your current position?

I have a BA in English and a MBA with a concentration in Healthcare Management from UCONN. I completed an internship while an undergraduate with DPH, working for the Board of Examiners for Nursing. After I graduated, I was hired as an investigator for the unit that licenses health professionals and investigates complaints concerning the care and services they provide. I also worked as an assistant to the agency's Chief of Staff and later became Director of the Office of

Communications.

6. What risks did you take?

Taking a semester off for a COOP internship while an undergraduate seemed like a big step at the time. I'm so glad I did, as that internship gave me great experience and introduced me to DPH and the world of public health.

7. What terms and acronyms do people need to know?

Public health professionals routinely use an alphabet soup of acronyms. The challenge for communicators is to strive for public messaging that is free of jargon and other specialized terms, acronyms, etc, that the public may not be familiar with.

8. What sources of info do you check regularly?

We monitor the media by visiting a variety of news sites, Google search, and a video media monitoring service. The federal health agency websites (cdc.gov, epa.gov, etc) are a great source of reliable information. Other good sites: astho.org, nphic.org, and ct.gov/dph.

9. What's your best advice to students? What to do and what not to worry about?

Never stop learning. Network every chance you get. Don't worry about figuring out your entire career path all at once. Pursue your interests and aptitudes. Get out there, even if it means volunteering for organizations you're interested in.