

Local public relations executive creates success

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Katie Torok

Because Lakewood resident Katie Torok, 25, realized public relations was predicted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to be one of the fastest growing occupations by 2012, she added an emphasis in public relations to her Communication degree at Cleveland State University.

Torok transferred to CSU as a junior from Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, Ill. While completing her bachelor’s degree in 2004, she did informational interviews with local firms. Her questions to other professionals encouraged her interest in the industry.

Torok said these interviews helped shape the direction of her future and she planned her internship experiences to correspond with a career in public relations.

While attending CSU, she completed two premier internships; one with PJ North, Inc., a local Papa John’s Pizza franchise, and the other with a Cleveland affiliate television station Fox Sports Net Ohio. She said that the media relations and publicity experience were most beneficial to her current career.

In 2006, Torok joined Sweeney, a full-service marketing and public relations firm located in Rocky River. Prior to her position at Sweeney, she worked at Liggett-Stashower, a communications firm located in downtown Cleveland.

She now handles accounts as an executive. Torok said she feels her biggest achievements resulted from her work at these top public relations, advertising and marketing firms – and attributes much of that success to her CSU experience.

Her experience includes a wide range of public relations and communication activities, such as: publicity and media relations, strategic planning, branding, marketing research, corporate communication and trade show support.

Torok said her most influential professors were Eleanor Dombrowski and Rob Spademan.

“Many of the professors at CSU in the communication department brought real-life experience in addition to textbook coursework,” said Torok.

Torok said she feels it is very important for communication students to be actively involved in organizations like PRSSA and the American Advertising Federation-Cleveland.

Her professional goals include being active in more professional organizations, enhancing career skills by continuing education, becoming a mentor once she gains more experience in the field and continuing to create new challenges for herself.

Melinda Urick