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Organizational Communication (COM 317) City as Classroom Project Report

Andrea Pampaloni PhD
La Salle University, pampaloni@lasalle.edu

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Andrea Pampaloni, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication

Course Description

Organizational Communication focuses on the study and implementation of effective communication within various types of organizations, including corporations, nonprofits, and institutions. It examines how communication acts as the foundation of all organizations by considering major schools of thought about organizations and communication networks, functions, and practices. It also explore significant issues in organizational settings including leadership, conflict, power, ethics, culture, and technology.

Project Description

Students in this class are required to interview a (non-family member) professional in a field they may be interested in pursuing to see how various aspects of organizational communication are used in the workplace. As a result of the City and Region initiative, students were encouraged to interview people in the city (by providing names of communication alumni who offered to be interviewed, and offering subway tokens), and questions were added specific to how being located here influences what the organization does and how they communicate.



Outcomes

Although students often balk at having to make a trip to interview someone, they always provide positive feedback on the assignment, in large part because they receive useful and practical information. Making clear connections to the purpose of the assignments and how it relates to what they may be doing while a student, or how it might benefit them after graduation helps emphasize the value of the assignment. I recently heard from a student who interviewed someone from the Philadelphia Union who was so enthused about the project that he would like to approach her about bringing members of the team to La Salle to build interest in the team among potential new fans. Finally, several of the interviewees highlighted benefits of being located in or around Philadelphia, demonstrating to them not only that location can have a bearing on a business, but that this location is prime for virtually all business types.

Lesson(s) Learned

Given the amount of work and outside responsibilities students have, I was tempted to cave in to their complaints about the time necessary to complete this assignment. Instead, I offered subway tokens, which several students requested. There were no complaints, and had I changed the requirement, they could have missed a valuable opportunity