

# Women Communicators of Austin

at The University of Texas at Austin

Spring 2015

## What I've Received from WCA: Confidence

By: Natalie Gonzalez

As a creative person, structure has never been my friend. The idea of sitting in a tiny office and doing, presumably, the same task every single day has always been one of my biggest fears. The most valuable lesson WCA has taught me, is that confidence is not only gained from practice, but also knowledge. Before attending any WCA events I had a very linear understanding of my job possibilities and was terrified because they all led back to that office cubicle nightmare. Through our speakers, Speed Mentoring, and College Over Coffee events, WCA has introduced me to amazing women who have broken that linear career mold. I have had the pleasure of meeting professional women who work freelance, work remotely for a large company, and even some who have happily found a place for themselves in a non-traditional office environment.



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In my first year with WCA, I have learned the value and versatility of my English degree within the communications world. WCA has provided all of us with the opportunity to learn professional networking skills, while surrounded by people who want us to learn and grow. We have been pushed out of our comfort zones, and I think I speak for all the girls, when I say that the unwavering faith the officers and professional chapter have shown in our abilities is a vital step in gaining confidence. I know that through utilizing the networking connections I have made, I will find a career for myself after graduation. I am willing to walk a new path, knowing that I have the skills to succeed and mentors to help me along the way. Thank you to my fellow WCA members for a fantastic year and congratulations to all the graduates!

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# A Personal Account of my Internship

By: Nidia Cavazos

“Luck is what happens  
when preparation meets  
opportunity.”

May is here, and so is the end of my first year of college. I knew last summer that I wanted to get involved in some sort of media organization, but writing for USA Today College was not what I had expected. USA Today College marks my first internship, and unlike committing certain hours per week with other internships, I wrote campus-related feature stories as much as I wanted. I came across the collegiate correspondent program when browsing my advisor’s blog, and decided to seize the opportunity. I met all of the requirements, and thought it was a “it’d be cool if I got it” kind of fantasy. I was surprised when I passed the first round. When I passed the second round, I was beyond ecstatic. After an interview, I did not get the ultimate correspondent role, but I was offered the contributing writer position. Here are 2 lessons I had learned:

**Lesson 1:** Just do it.

**Lesson 2:** Start now.

First, just do it. Seize the opportunities even if uncertainty lingers in my mind, and even if the deadline is nearer than I’d like. I was not going to be paid nor was it a requirement for me to write every week but I took the chance to get my articles published at a national level. With only a strong love for the news world, I had had no previous experience in news writing. Fortunately, it was enough to lead the way. I had learned how to dive into research and imitate newspaper writing even before I had learned

how to in class, and I began attending coaching sessions at the journalism writing center. First writing for *The Daily Texan*, by the time I was contributing to USA TODAY College I was already proficient in conducting interviews, writing in AP style, transcribing recordings, and putting it all together.

Secondly, start now. There are so many opportunities in college, and enacting my future profession is possible. Why wait? Why not be a reporter now? I’ve learned getting another internship is more likely once you get your foot in the door. I attended the recent communication job and internship fair and I am blessed to say that I have several offers to choose from. Two internship offers were made after recruiters learned I was only a freshman and already contributing to USA Today. Had I started later, offers would not have been made on this basis. I thought I was a lucky person, but as a congratulations card I received reads, “luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity,” landing an internship can happen when the will to work hard is there.



*“I look forward to showing you how my determination to excel will allow me to effectively pitch ideas and uphold the correspondent role to the best of my ability.” -words from my internship cover letter*

# De-Man, Demand It

By: Brigette Reyes

There is nothing more powerful than a driven woman with a pocket full of dreams. The same could be said for a woman who grows where she is planted, and who can accept her flaws and learn from her mistakes. Our world has a panoply of outstanding women with a strong sense of direction. I am inspired by the women that take the world by the lapels, no matter their circumstances. There are women leaders everywhere you look – whether it is the corporate lawyer working long hours, or the single mother of three. I could go on about how strong women are, but as G.D. Anderson put it, “Feminism isn't about making women strong. Women are already strong. It's about changing the way the world perceives that strength.” In a male-dominated society, it is difficult to climb the ‘success’ ladder, but I want to bare a solution to this issue: De-man, Demand It.

“There are women leaders everywhere you look – whether it is the corporate lawyer working long hours, or the single mother of three.”

De-Man It, Demand It, albeit implied, does not mean we oppress the male population. The real solution, however, is to make the idea of a male-dominated society a thing of the past. Powerful women are on the rise and have been for some time. We must demand the equality and appreciation we deserve. There are so many powerful women - women that are constantly changing the world - and yet, we are deemed the lesser sex. De-Man and Demand It.

It is important to teach our younger generation that they can do whatever they set their hearts and minds to. My nine-year-old cousin, Larissa, is a brilliant little girl. She is incredible, and every chance I get I let her know that she is not bounded. She dressed as Einstein for Halloween, her favorite book is The Diary of Anne Frank, and her favorite president is JFK – she is her own person, free to become anything she sets her mind to. My roommate, Natalie, comes from Georgia Tech University, and is in Austin on an internship. She is studying to become a computer engineer. She enjoys coding and making video games. This is the kind of woman that inspires others. We all have women we think of that just naturally spread a good energy. Our mothers, sisters, cousins, and friends are all women worthy of greatness.

Bless the simple women of this world that come from almost nothing, but are determined to build a brighter future. Bless the women that come from more than enough financial support, but remain humble as they build their careers. The key is to De-Man and Demand It. The key is to rise and shine, together as the wonderful and powerful women we are.



# Speed Mentoring Spring 2015

By: JoBeth Janak

We all have questions. Thankfully, there are WCA Speed Mentoring events for when we need answers. Navigating the path to a successful career is tricky, especially if you have a lot of interests. There are a lot of choices to make, and not always a wrong choice among those options. Speed mentoring is a time when students are able to take their questions and have a conversation with someone who has been there and experienced the same things you're presently working through. This event is a chance to sit across the table from someone who has been where you are, and has a better picture of where you will be going.



Speed Mentoring is a biannual event hosted by the WCA in the spring and fall semesters. Women from all different types of communication professions donate their Saturday morning to come and meet with students who want to learn more about their field. With plenty of coffee and breakfast tacos, students are able to have a conversation with these professionals and create connections that will help them in their pursuit of a career.

This spring, WCA hosted two guest speakers for the first time at a Speed Mentoring event. First, Nancy Tack, consultant for NetWorks Communications, talked about corporate culture and the importance of communication through simply being courteous to others. Then, Marc Miller, founder of Career Pivot, talked about how to brand yourself on LinkedIn and how to make the best out of your profile through elements such as your picture, headline, and summary.

Having so many interests, this is always a great event for me. The environment is non-threatening, and I always feel comfortable asking whatever I need because I know these women are there to help me. Speed mentoring is always so encouraging, and I always leave feeling like I can take on the world. That is what WCA does is all about. We empower each other, because we know what we are all capable of, and don't let each other settle for anything less.



# Being on the Internship Lookout

By: Jahnavi Muppaneni

“It didn’t take much effort, other than keeping the business card he gave me when I expressed my interest the year before.”

People are not lying when they say it’s all about who you know, more than what you know. But, what they don’t tell you is how to effectively maintain your connections and network with potential recruiters.

Like any college student, I was trying to land an internship with a Fortune 500 company. Little did I know, these companies receive thousands of applications every day from students who have resumes just as good as mine. I also didn’t know how difficult it would be to even get an interview without having a referral from a current employee. I probably applied to around 20-30 places online and didn’t get a single response. If I didn’t receive an email within 10 minutes saying I didn’t get the internship, I never heard back.

When I attended my first WCA meeting, I realized that I was looking in the wrong places. The speaker for that day, Jenny Magic, mentioned how you should always be on the internship lookout with places and people you know personally. Immediately the next day, I decided to shoot an email to the secretary of a congressman I had the chance of meeting the year before.

About a week later after being interviewed and referred to the internship recruiter, I got the job as his summer intern. It didn’t take much effort, other than keeping the business card he gave me when I expressed my interest the year before. It also helped that I had something in common with him. If you ever find yourself in a place which sparks your interests or you happen to be with someone whose line of work is similar to your ideal career path, remember to talk to them and get their contact information!



# Banner Brunch 2015

By: Amie Meaux

On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, women filled the ballroom in the Hilton Austin. Some were in colorful sundresses and hats, others in slacks, some wearing goofy props posing in the photo booth, while others chatted over mimosas. Though different in many ways, they all had one thing in common: coming together in lieu of WCA's 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Banner Brunch. It was a great time to connect with new and old members, and hear what's going on in the communication scene in Austin.

Emily Courey Pryor was the keynote speaker for the brunch, and gave a great talk on her latest project, Data 2X. Data 2X aims to improve data collection of women throughout the world. Their goal is to advance gender equality and women's empowerment by obtaining more realistic gender data that better represents women of various places throughout the world. It was fascinating to hear about this integration of gender equality with the improvement of data collection and how two very different groups of people are coming together and using their unique skills to improve gender equality.

We also celebrated the annual communication award winners and the Jo Caldwell scholarship recipients.

The Banner Brunch 2015 award winners were:

- **Liz Carpenter Lifetime Achievement Award:** Merily Keller
- **Outstanding Austin Communicator Award:** Kelli Kelley
- **Anne Durrum Robinson Creative Initiative Award:** Monica Maldonado Williams
- **Leadership Award:** Julie Tereshchuk
- **Gladys Whitley Hearst Outstanding Member Award:** LuAnn Glowacz & Ginny Murphy; Michele Chan Santos & Christy Wylie
- **Gene Barnwell Waugh Mentor Award:** Lara Zuehlke
- **President's Award:** Maria Cammack; Julie Lara

The Jo Caldwell scholarship recipients were Chelsea Cua, a senior Public-Relations major at Texas State, and Alanis King, a sophomore Journalism major at UT Austin. Congratulations to these fantastic female communicators, students and professionals alike.

As a student, Banner Brunch was a great experience. I was very fortunate to get to know some lovely ladies in the chapter, as well as recognize and support Austin's finest communicators. Hope to see you next year!



# Another Year at a Close

By: Lily Maldonado

Where has the time gone? The last WCA meeting of the Spring 2015 semester was held earlier this month, and it feels like the semester has come and gone within the blink of an eye. Among industry-leading speakers, professional workshops, and various networking events, there is a great deal to reminisce about from this 2014-2015 school year as a whole. As a member for the last three and a half years, and an officer for the last 2, I owe a great deal of inspiration and opportunities I've had to this organization. My college career would never have been the same had I never joined my freshman year as a way to get more connected with other communications students. I only hope there are many others that feel the same.

Continuing on with our last meeting and end-of-the-year celebration, the agenda went straight to business as the election process began for the upcoming school year. However, not before munching from our very own taco bar and cookie cake! It was great to see so many women willing to lead the future of our organization, which had only made each of our votes that much more difficult! In the end, there is no doubt that next year's group of future communicators will be lead by six very talented women. Congratulations to you all!

As my senior year at The University of Texas at Austin comes to a close, I want to personally thank our WCA organization for giving me the guidance to lead off into the professional world, and for the great deal of memories I hope to never forget. Hook 'Em!



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