ODU PRSSA & Communication ePortfolio Team: 5th Year Connections & Reflections

Overview
Dr. Gary Beck, Associate Professor, and Ms. Alison Lietzenmayer, Senior Lecturer, of the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts (Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA) developed the Communication ePortfolio Initiative in 2013 when they recognized an opportunity for upper-level Communication students to showcase their emerging disciplinary skills in an interactive website format. Students curate writing samples and projects from their upper-level Communication courses to highlight their budding areas of expertise. After five years of massive growth in faculty (14+ involved) and student involvement (1000+ served), the COMM ePortfolio team partnered with the University's Center for High Impact Practices (CHIP) and ODU's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) to host a Signature Event to highlight the accomplishments of the program and to encourage other faculty members to adopt the COMM ePortfolio in their courses. The event, held on February 19, 2018, centered around a digital poster session where professors already involved in the program presented their top students' websites, some of which included alumni who successfully used the ePortfolios in their job application process post-graduation. Guest speakers included the Vice Provost (Dr. Brian Payne), and Alice Jones (Associate Director of Student & Alumni Programs).

Research
Primary
1. The COMM ePortfolio Team consulted previous students who completed COMM ePortfolios to determine their perspective of the benefits of having a personal website. We also asked them for feedback on how the ePortfolio curriculum was incorporated in their classes. These results were then used to guide the presenting professors on how to pitch ePortfolios to other faculty and staff who may think it is intimidating.
2. Lead coordinator, Ms. Lietzenmayer, shared a pre-event survey with the Save the Date invitations sent by PRSSA to gather information about attendees' knowledge of project, items they wish to learn and any accommodation requests so the event space would be inclusive and accessible for any potential attendees. These survey results were also used to influence the presentations.

Planning
Goal
Our goal was to highlight the growth and benefits of the COMM ePortfolio program and to encourage other instructors and disciplines to use the project structure in their courses. This event attempted to center the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts as leaders of ePortfolio work completed at the University.

Objectives
1. Motivate at least three new instructors to inquire about using COMM ePortfolio project structure in their course(s) within the next two school years.
2. Inspire and support two instructors currently engaged in the program to utilize the COMM ePortfolio project structure in one additional course for the following school year.

Target Audiences
The target audiences for this event were:
1. Professors and instructors at ODU who *did not* currently implement ePortfolios in their courses
2. Professors and instructors who *were* currently using ePortfolios
3. ODU faculty and staff at the highest level of the university.
   a. Invitees outside of the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts included: C.H.I.P. (Center for High Impact Practices), previous eP 3 workshop attendees, and administrative leaders of the University.

Strategies
1. Engage high-level faculty in the initiative to expand ePortfolios beyond Communication
2. Use communication vehicles to demonstrate the benefits and feasibility of incorporating ePortfolios in their courses

Implementation
The COMM ePortfolio Team designed Save the Date invites (attached) that were sent out via email to preselected faculty and staff approximately one month before the event (January 22, 2018). In order to centralize

communication, lead coordinator, Alison Lietzenmayer, was appointed as a primary point-of-contact along with ODU PRSSA President Hang Tran. Formal invitations were designed by ODU PRSSA and sent out along with a link to RSVP approximately two weeks before the event (February 5, 2018). On the day of the event, PRSSA students arrived to set up equipment, photograph speakers and were on standby to help guests check in, answer questions and offer other logistical or technical support throughout the event.

Tactics
Press releases: ODU PRSSA drafted and sent out press releases to key ODU News contacts and the local Public Relations Society of America chapter in order to gain internal coverage (attached).
Invitations: ODU PRSSA also designed the formal invites that were emailed to preselected faculty (attached).
Digital Posters: Six professors were invited to share and present their top students' ePortfolios as well as showcase how they incorporated them in their courses.
Guest Speakers: Brian Payne, University Vice Provost and Alice Jones, Associate Director of Student and Alumni Programs with the Career Management Center were invited to share their remarks on the ePortfolio initiative.
Raffle: The ePortfolio Coordinators held a raffle giveaway of miscellaneous tech and desk items (projector, notepads, pens and lanyards) to attendees - provided by CHIP

Budget
Breakdown: $750 for PRSSA, $200 each per presenter (6), and $275 for Aramark for catering.
These resources provided by the ODU Communication & Theatre Arts Department helped motivate both PRSSA students and faculty presenters to participate. The catering helped attract more guests and ensured that they would stay longer. All raffle materials and gifts from speakers were donated by C.H.I.P. as their co-sponsorship of the event.

Challenges
1. The coordination of schedules of the presenters, guests, and PRSSA volunteers. We ended up using a third-party scheduling application, Doodle, to help select a final event date and organize volunteers.
2. A physical challenge was the location of the room; it was hidden in the back of the library and some guests had difficulty finding it. We sent PRSSA students out to guide faculty into the room.

Evaluation
Outcome:
Thirty individuals attended the event from across the University community (in addition to presenters, PRSSA students and volunteers and guest speakers). Objectives of additional courses and faculty adopted were exceeded. Four new instructors joined the ePortfolio endeavor in the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts and four new upper level elective Communication classes have adopted the project structure. Due to success of event and interest shown in the COMM ePortfolio project structure, coordinators Beck and Lietzenmayer were asked to speak at multiple University events across campus and online to make recommendations for designing and assessing ePortfolio work in other disciplines and departments. PRSSA also received a glowing review from the coordinators and were recommended for hire for similar and larger events across the Department and campus.

Measurement Methods:
Using the sign-in sheet, Lietzenmayer and Beck sent out post-event 'thank you' emails to all attendees and included a survey link where guests were asked to rate their experience, provide feedback, and rate how likely they were to adopt ePortfolios in their future courses. Over the course of the next few weeks, professors began to contact Lietzenmayer directly with serious inquiries on how to incorporate ePortfolios in their courses.

Lessons Learned
Improvements for the future:
1. Bigger budget = bigger event. In the future, we would hope for a larger budget so that we can reserve a larger and more central venue on campus and invite more people. The extra resources would also go towards more technology, food and marketing materials.
2. We also hope to involve more students next time, both in volunteer positions as well as presenter positions. Having students or alumni personally explain how their ePortfolio helped them network with professionals or land an internship would greatly exhibit the benefits of the program.

5TH YEAR CONNECTIONS & REFLECTIONS

COMM E-PORTFOLIO SIGNATURE EVENT

Monday, Feb 19th 2pm-4pm

LEARNING COMMONS
ROOMS 1310-1311

Digital Poster Session
by Communication Faculty & Graduate Students
w/ Responses from:

Dr. Brian Payne
Vice Provost

Alice Jones
Associate Director, Student & Alumni Programs

Light snacks will be provided

For more information visit:
www.commeportfolioodu.org

5TH YEAR CONNECTIONS & REFLECTIONS

SAVE THE DATE

Please save the date for the COMM ePortfolio Signature Event!

This event will feature a Digital Poster Session with responses from Dr. Brian Payne (Vice Provost) & Alice Jones (Associate Director, Student & Alumni Programs). Light snacks will be provided.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19 FROM 2-4PM

Learning Commons Conference Rms 1310-1311

COMM eP Director (16-17):
Alison Lietzenmayer
alietzen@odu.edu

PRSSA Contact:
Hang Tran
htran001@odu.edu

For more information on the COMM ePortfolio initiative:
www.commeportfolioodu.org

This event is co-sponsored by C.H.I.P. (https://www.odu.edu/chip)