APPENDICES

comm.UNITY BINDER

Everything You Need To Know About

comm.UNITY
communications for the community

Created by the 2008-2009 E-board of comm.UNITY

[We recommend this manual is updated annually, and that each e-board leaves suggestions for the future for the incoming e-board, as we have left for you]

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HISTORY (AS OF APRIL 2009)

Just as the cold weather started to blanket over Syracuse in October 2007, the idea for a club that would have a profound impact on the Syracuse community and Syracuse University student body was just heating up. After learning about a friend’s involvement in a club formed in the Whitman School of Management where students help local businesses, student Tessa Kurman realized that a similar opportunity for communications students was not available. After sharing the idea with friend Carissa Matthews, the two decided that this void needed to be filled, and spent the rest of the semester laying out the plan for their new student organization, “Communications for the Community,” more commonly known as comm.UNITY.

While starting a new club is not the easiest process, Carissa and Tessa networked across campus, speaking with professors, deans, student affairs, and heads of different academic departments to reach out to the student body to see who would be interested in gaining communications experience while helping local non-profit organizations. Despite the snow and freezing temperatures, there was a huge turnout at the first meeting, and an even greater interest among students who couldn’t make it. During spring 2008 many leaders emerged out of the group to help formulate a constitution, application process, structure for the organization, and more.

It was then that the first order of business was decided: to have a meeting with local non-profits to ask them how exactly we can help, instead of just making assumptions about what kind of services they need. In Early September 2008 comm.UNITY held their first set of forums hosted at the local Syracuse branch of the United Way. The forums were a huge success with a broad range of local non-profits attending. The forums helped both comm.UNITY as well as the non-profits better understand one another and the potential benefits of working together in the future. Following the forum the prospective non-profits filled out applications to work with comm.UNITY.

After many eyes reviewed the applications, seven project leaders were matched up with seven local non-profits. Soon after the non-profits were chosen the project leaders formed committees of passionate students eager to help the non-profits of their choice with their respective communications needs and so began the first set of comm.UNITY projects! The next semester two more projects were taken on board, ending comm.UNITY’s first year with nine clients and more than 70 active members.

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of this organization shall be to connect students interested in various fields of communications with local non-profit community organizations that need help to create sustainable communications plans. comm.UNITY wishes to help students exemplify the Chancellor’s initiative of “Scholarship in Action” by getting real world experience while benefiting the community at the same time.
FACT SHEET

Our Organization: Communications for the Community (comm.UNITY) is a student organization at Syracuse University and State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry that works to train the next generation of socially responsible and community-minded communications professionals. Students will work with local non-profits to create and improve sustainable communication plans.

Our Mission: To connect students interested in communications professions with local non-profit organizations, with the goal of creating sustainable communications plans for those organizations; and to bridge the gap between Syracuse University / SUNY-ESF and the Central New York non-profit sector. All services of comm.UNITY are provided by university students and do not require any type of payment.

About Working with comm.UNITY: Working with comm.UNITY is a special partnership that is mutually beneficial for both parties involved. Non-profits benefit from free services to help with their communications needs, and comm. UNITY will also equip them with the tools and knowledge necessary to continue our practices long after we’re done with our initial work together. comm.UNITY members will benefit from invaluable experience with non-profit organizations.

Capabilities: comm.UNITY members offer help with: • Public relations • Media relations • Event planning • Fundraising • Graphic design • Advertising • Web design • Photography

ESTABLISHED CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Here are the main ones, be sure to see the digital companion CD for an Excel sheet with all contacts:

Newhouse Advisor
Kathryn Lee - Public Relations Department
kelee@syr.edu

Soling Program
Benjamin Zender - Soling Office Coordinator
318 Tolley = copy machine we can use, code = 64531
$400 Budget (not positive for ’09-’10)
Phone: 315-443-3133
brzender@syr.edu

Honors Program
Stephen Wright
shwright@syr.edu

Center for Public and Community Service
Liz Occhino
eecchin@syr.edu
WEBSITE + WEB LINKS

http://comm.unity.syr.edu

http://www.surveymonkey.com
Username: comm.UNITY / Password: orange22

STATISTICS FOR 2008-2009 TERM (# OF MEMBERS, PROJECTS, ETC.)

9 Projects, 7 to Completion
10 E-board members
200+ individuals on listserv
100 engaged members
70+ actively engaged members
4 speakers (Salvation Army, On Point for College, Transitional Living Services, Westside Community School Strategy)
2 workshops (PR + Graphic design)
2 Forums to act as focus groups as well as recruitment for new clients
2 parties (Holiday and End-of-Year)
2 awards: CAPS and 44 Stars

Executive Board Job Descriptions

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

First, the executive director doesn't do everything; more, they oversee the other positions and are ultimately responsible for everything within and about the organization. Basically, they are the last editor to read the paper before it goes to print. It’s important to work with each e-board member and project leader to help them take control of their position. If not, you will be micromanaging more than 15 other people, and that would not be utilizing your strengths. For example, if a project leader is having trouble with their non-profit, they should go to community relations first, and while you should be aware of the problem, CR should try to deal with project leaders first.

JOB TASKS (Many of these are in conjunction w/other e-board members):

- Responsible for steering of organization and overseeing that timeline is followed
- Plan (create agendas) and run Executive Board and general membership meetings
- Meet with faculty advisor and OSL advisor to update him or her on the organization
- Act as a resource for the Executive Board and members, hold office hours approx. 4 hours/week or by appointment, brainstorm goals and tasks w/each member of e-board on semesterly basis
➤ Work with Director of Community Relations to organize the application process for non-profits and narrow down possible non-profits to work with, work on this process over the summer
➤ Oversee elections process
➤ Oversee marketing and recruitment initiatives
➤ Oversee the progress of the organization and represent the organization
➤ Deal with administrative issues from the University
➤ Plan all social events for general membership (may delegate this responsibility)
➤ Problem-solving skills critical for uncertain worlds of nonprofits and student engagement (i.e. what if students drop out of project? or nonprofit shuts down?)
➤ Keep up alliances across campus: Soling Program, Honors, CSPS, etc.
➤ Look out for new strategic alliances on campus

Email: comm.unity.su@gmail.com Password: orange11

DIRECTOR(S) OF MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

JOB TASKS

➤ Plan and execute recruitment campaign for members at the beginning of each semester, must reach out to all colleges at Syracuse University.
➤ Responsible for all press releases and advertisements as pertaining to comm.UNITY affairs. This task may be delegated to members of comm.UNITY but must be approved by the Director of Marketing and Recruitment.
➤ Work with Executive Directors to publicize comm.UNITY to other campus organizations and administrators and work with Director of Administration to make connections for collaboration with other groups and resources on campus.
➤ Work on promotions for other club activities: workshops, meetings, elections in the spring

Past Promotions Strategies:

For General Interest Meetings/Beginning-of-Semester Recruitment:

-Create and Distribute Flyers: (In the future, we can also flyer in dorms with an RSO stamp)
POSTING AREAS: Schine, Bird Library, Bowne, Link, Shaffer Art Building, College Place Bus Stop, Sims, Hall of Languages, HBC, iSchool, People’s Place, Eggers, Maxwell, Newhouse 1,2&3, Crouse Hinds, Whitman School of Management, Marshall Square Mall, ComArt Building, South Campus/Goldstien, Kimmel Computer Cluster

-Table Tents in Dining Halls: Request permission from Lynn Mower at Food Services: 315-443-3608
Print 80 sheets with 4 per sheet (40 table tents per dining hall)
Table tent locations: Shaw, Graham, Brockway, Haven, Kimmel, Schine, Goldstein

-Utilize SU News
To submit a news story or press release:
http://sunews.syr.edu/submitnews.cfm
To submit an event to the calendar go to:
http://suevents.syr.edu/submit_main.php

-Email Newhouse Listservs:
To send e-mails out to general listservs, contact:
Dean Rosanna Grassi Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
Office: Newhouse 3 Rm. 315B Email: rmgrassi@syr.edu

To be featured in the Career Development Center e-mail (CDCNEWS),
contact:
Kelly J. Brown, Assistant Director Career Development, kjbrow01@syr.edu

To send e-mails out to Graduate listserv, contact:
Martha Coria, Master's Admissions Coordinator, macoria@syr.edu

CASNET (Biweekly electronic newsletter for The College of Arts and Sciences)
Tamera Beard at tybeard@syr.edu

Guidelines for Tabling at campus events:
- Marketing materials (Flyers, Poster, Attention Getters-games and/or candy)

-Table at Student Involvement Fair
Find Registration Form online at syr.edu or contact mford@syr.edu
(past Involvement Fair contact)
Must register during the summer, deadline normally the first or second week of classes
First come, first serve basis. Apply early! RSO Status beneficial
Allot time slots for members to represent comm.UNITY at fair

-Table at Juice Jam, must find current University Union contact (Direct. of Admin) for permission
Do during summer, first come/first serve basis as well

-Facebook Invites

-Prepare sign-up sheets for all promotion events

-Permission for activities, such as tabling, in Food.com, contact:
Susan Nash <sknash@syr.edu>

-Class Announcements:
To get class list, go to myslice.syr.edu and search classes
Past classes visited: GRA 217, COM 107, MAG 205, ADV 207, PRL 215, GRA 356

Example of e-mail sent to professors:
Professor Sheehan,

My name is Megan McMonagle and I am on the e-board for a new organization at Syracuse called comm.UNITY. Our main goal is to use the skills we are learning for our majors (particularly Newhouse) to help local non-profit organizations in Syracuse and gain real world experience. We were wondering if we could come and talk to your ADV 206 class on TTh at 11am at the beginning of class and give them information on our first meeting. Anytime during the week of Sept. 1st would be great.

Thank you,

Megan McMonagle
Co-Director of Marketing and Recruiting, comm.UNITY

Green flyer paper:
Staples® Brights 24 lb. Colored Paper, Green
Item: 733093
$9.99 500/ream

For Forum Promotions:
-Create and Distribute Flyer
-PDF Invite for E-mail

For Speakers:
-Create and Distribute Flyers
-Facebook Invites (Coordinating with Event Planning)

Other:
-Create and Order T-shirts
-Update Brochure for Marketing to Nonprofit organizations
  -Distribute to locations in “University Contacts” Excel under “Brochure Contacts”
-Create Brand Identity for comm.UNITY, logo and letterhead, and banner (possibly create brand identity handbook?)
-Lead marketing team to help with poster distribution and advertising ideas
-Press Releases/Pitches to local publications
-Business Cards

Promotions Audiences/Key Stakeholders:
-Future comm.UNITY members
-Current members, active and inactive
-Nonprofit clients
-Future Project Leaders
-Future E-board
-Marketing Team

Facebook group:
comm.UNITY
Need to transfer admin responsibilities from current Director of Event Planning to new Directors of Marketing & Recruitment
T-shirts:
Phone: (315) 445-8193 · Fax: (315) 445-8036
E-mail: info@holyshirt.com
Include t-shirt files - Illustrator files we sent to Holy Shirt

Past Press Release Example:
comm.UNITY (Communications for the Community) is holding a new member general interest meeting on Monday, September 15 at 8 p.m. in Newhouse I room 101 (previously A1). comm.UNITY is a new student organization at SU that enables students to work with local nonprofits to create and improve sustainable communication plans.

By joining comm.UNITY students interested in communications professions get the opportunity to work with local nonprofit organizations while bridging the gap between Syracuse University / SUNY-ESF and the Central New York nonprofit sector. comm.UNITY gives students great experience and encourages them to use the communication skills they are taught in the classroom to help the local Syracuse community - Scholarship in Action at it’s finest. Students from every school and major are welcome and encouraged to attend the meeting!

DIRECTOR OF EVENT PLANNING (Combine w/Marketing & Recruit. for ’09 – ’10)

Basically the Director of Event Planning deals with the function aspect of comm.UNITY. I have arranged for speakers from the non-profits to come to general meetings and talk about their group (these can be arranged via e-mail information from the PLs) and also a workshop for the members to learn a new skill. Additionally, Event Planning helped in the preparation for the holiday party as well as filling in for random tasks over the summer. Occasionally (as in the summer), the position requires you to be a sort of catch-all to help out other people. For advice, plan ahead! This is important especially if (like the past director) you have classes during the meetings. If you give people enough time they’ll more than likely help you out. Also, ask the general membership (via online survey) what skills they would like to learn. This will help spark interest and encourage people to attend the workshop. On that note, ask people to RSVP to these events. It is bad for comm.UNITY’s image to only have a few members show up to something that was planned. (THIS IS PARTLY WHY THIS POSITION WILL BE INTEGRATED W/M&R NEXT YEAR)

JOB TASKS:
- Plans and promotes activities at general membership meetings, from workshops to speakers.
- Works on planning community service activities with the PLs and Executive Directors
- Plans holiday party at the end of the fall semester and year-end wrap-up at the end of the spring
Speakers Arrangements:
- Plan who will introduce the speaker, hopefully the PL if they can attend
- Make the speaker feel comfortable finding the room
- Arrange parking if possible, if at night tell them to park for free in a campus lot, arrange this w/parking services

DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION:

JOB TASKS

- Take minutes at all Executive Board and general membership meetings
- Responsible for communication to the members through e-mails and letters
- Responsible for the creation of a newsletter, created twice a semester, to send to membership, administration and local non-profits. Members from the organization can be recruited to help with this task.
- Responsible for reserving meeting locations, maintaining contact information lists and the listservs
- Maintain list of members’ skills along with all of their other information.

Gmail account: comm.unity.su.admin@gmail.com
Password: cuseadmin
- Check Gmail account at least daily, if not multiple times a day
- Keep general membership updated on organization events and changes

Important E-mails to send:
- Weekly announcements/updates
- Reminder e-mails the night before an e-mail
- Changes to schedule/events planned
- RSVPs for events and meetings
- Forward e-mails to proper locations (general membership, when someone incorrectly e-mails admin back instead of the correct person)
- Minutes from general member meetings to all members, e-board minutes to e-board

Maintain:
- Database of members w/all contact info, majors/minors, year, res. hall, hometown, bday, why interested in comm.UNITY, what relevant skills they have, other clubs, portfolio pieces, etc. (This master list should be updated at least once a semester; it is easiest to pass around the list printed out so that people can initial next to it verifying accurate information. However, this could take a few times of passing around due to varying attendance (email could work as well))
- List of RSVPs for meetings and events
- Groups of contacts based on role in comm.UNITY (E-board, Project Leaders, Administration, General Members...)
Room Reservation:
- Contact chnedosh@syr.edu at beginning of semester
- Need room weekly for e-board meetings and a room for general membership meetings
- Reserve additional rooms for special events and/or speakers

Breakdown of email groups: (located in contacts section)
- ALL MEMBERS = EBOARD + GENERAL MEMBERS + PLs
- EBOARD (self explanatory)
- GENERAL MEMBERS (self explanatory)
- PLs (self explanatory)
- Syracuse Administration: Admin. Contacts
- Abroad/Frozen Contacts

TIP: Usually, it’s best to type minutes in google docs, so that they can be accessed anywhere at anytime by any eboard member

Newsletter:
- Newsletter is created twice a semester
- Send to membership (ADMIN sends), administration (EXEC DIRECT has these contacts) and local non-profits (COMM RELATIONS sends)

TIP: Members from the organization can be recruited to help with this task.

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

As Director of Finance you need to have a good understanding of how to use Microsoft Excel. You need to be organized with all of the receipts that other members will be giving you and input them into Excel to keep our files updated. It is also good to have a separate Excel sheet where you keep track of specific events and list how much was spent on that specific event so that we know for future years how much money may need to be allocated. Also, you need to aid other members in the reimbursement process if they use any of their own money.

Your major contact on campus is Benjamin Zender who works with the Soling Program. He is who will answer any questions you may have about the reimbursement process. He also can purchase things ahead of time, if you give him appropriate notice, using his credit card. His e-mail address is brzender@syr.edu. In the future as a new RSO finance may have a new role overseeing the budget allocation process for SA if we ever pursue that source of funding.

My advice to be a successful Director of Finance would be very organized with receipts and to immediately input the information into Excel so that the spreadsheet stays updated and you never forget about an expense you have incurred.

JOB TASKS

- Responsible for maintaining records of all finances of comm.UNITY
- Must be comfortable using Excel and spreadsheets to record financial data
- Help project leaders create budgets to propose to their non-profit if necessary
- Prepare for and attend all budget hearing meetings for SA if needed
- Research and apply for grants and other sources of funding for comm.UNITY
- Oversees fundraising initiatives for comm.UNITY

**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

**JOB TASKS**

- Act as the liaison between community service agencies on campus and the Executive Board to find non-profits and community service projects
- Plan the forum at the United Way at the beginning of the year to gauge needs and find new clients
- Assist in the non-profit selection process and contact non-profits to explain basic process
- Organize initial information about non-profit for project leaders
- Conduct exit interviews with clients to gauge how successful the experience was for them
- (IDEA FOR FUTURE: DIRECT LIASON B/W E-BOARD AND PLs)

Contact @ The United Way = Frank Lazarski (<flazarski@unitedway-cny.org>)
For more information on the non-profit forum, see the digital CD companion w/the past director's notes.

**DIRECTOR OF TECHNOLOGY**

**JOB TASKS**

- Responsible for creating and updating website on weekly basis (this include newsletters, minutes, contact info, portfolio, calendar, etc)
- Serve as the technology resource for project leaders and general members and determine needs of the organization.
- Forward applications filled out on Web site (have to change in code from current DOT’s e-mail to yours) to Director of Community Relations & comm.unity.su@gmail.com

*The past director will give you a CD that has the entire folder of PSDs, html documents, etc

**E-mails/Passwords**

Mac:
Server: smb://as-fsrv.ad.syr.edu/as-shared/web/community
Enter with your SUID & password (have to get access from SU hosting)

PC: G:"\shared"\web\community
Password for PDFs: orange
Project Leader Job Description

Project Leaders (Not elected at the same time as directors, selected on a project-by-project basis)

- Acts as the liaison between the non-profit, project team members, and the Executive Board
- Responsible for updates at every meeting
- Must be CC:ed on everything pertaining to a specific project
- Organize and run project team meetings
- Responsible for all work the team creates
- Help divide up the work and responsibilities amongst team members (brainstorm as a group) – job is delegation, and communication!
- Sets deadlines and guidelines for team
- Delegates responsibilities to team members.
- Investigate service opportunities for general membership and set-up community service days with Executive Directors

Advice from Past PLs:
“Organization was key. As the PL, I was the liaison between the workers at the Adult Center and the comm.UNITY group. I hoped to maintain a professional manner when working with the Salvation Army, while being more laidback with the comm.UNITY members.”

“Be understanding. It’s important to recognize and accept that the non-profit and the members of comm.UNITY are busy. I tried to coordinate meetings at times that were best for the most people in the group. Because our group was relatively small, I was able to keep track of people’s schedules and find convenient times to visit the center. I also suggest keeping meetings brief. My group meetings never lasted more than fifteen minutes, but we always addressed all necessary issues. Also, smile! It makes everyone, non-profits and comm.UNITY members, happier to work with you.”

“Set reasonable deadlines by breaking the project up into ‘mini projects.’”

“Ask your group members what their strengths are and which part(s) of the project they want to work on.”

“Meet the non-profit liaison IN PERSON. They want to get to know who they are working with and will appreciate you taking the time to sit down with them.”

“Don’t hesitate to follow up with group members and people from the non-profit.”

“Create a contract. You want to make sure you understand their expectations and they understand your capabilities.”

“Discuss how the project will be financed.”
Case Study Write-Up Worksheet

A case study is a snapshot of your project. By outlining the four main steps in the communications process, outside audiences can understand the entire scope of the project: what you started with, your planning, actions, and then evaluation. This is a helpful document to create because comm.UNITY can use it to show future clients and other stakeholders how much of an impact past projects have had on organizations, while also helping you and your teammates consolidate the work you’ve done for your own portfolios and resumes.

You may feel that some areas have more to say than others – maybe you feel as though you didn’t do much research, for example – that’s okay! As expected, this project has been a learning experience and there is always room for improvement. If there is something you wish you HAD done, make sure to include that in the evaluation section: you’ve done great work, but it’s okay to point out what could have made it even better to help members of comm.UNITY for years to come.

These can be concise, coherent paragraphs, or written in bullet points. Please remember that comm.UNITY members will not be the only individuals reading these! This case study is also for audiences who have never heard of comm.UNITY or the client you worked with, so make no assumptions about prior knowledge of your work! Also, be sure at the end to attach your deliverables to the end of the project: graphic design, written documents such as press releases, an outline of brainstorming or event planning sessions, etc. This is a guideline for what to include, but if you believe something else should be in here, feel free to add it!

Situation Analysis

• What was the state of your non-profit before comm.UNITY? It may be easiest to outline this in a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)
• What were the main goals of the organization, and were they being reached at the beginning of your work? What publics/audiences were they reaching and which were they missing? Which audiences would the client like to reach?
• What communications practices did they have in place already, and what were they lacking?
• How did you think comm.UNITY could help the client? Did you have any research, media monitoring, or environmental scanning that gave reasoning behind your decisions?

Planning

• What projects were you assigned from the client? Did you add on anything to these projects, or decide against any of them?
• How did you go about deciding the best way to accomplish these projects?
• How did your students plan for these projects? How did you organize your team?
• Explain all of the behind-the-scene workings of your committees (ie: meetings, small group work, one-on-one communication with client,
how often, and other behind-the-scenes work of the team with drafts and brainstorming, etc.)

Implementation

• How did you actually complete each project? Include a timeline to show the flow of the year – what actions steps were taken?
• If your project included special events, how did your students work with the non-profit?

Evaluation

• Did you meet the deadlines and expectations agreed upon?
• Explain the quality and effectiveness of the completed projects
• What went well with your project? What would you do differently next time?
• How did your work help the non-profit? What did the non-profit think of your work?

Timeline for Club Activities

This timeline begins in April, because this is when new officers will be elected and will begin to look at what they need to do in the upcoming year. This list is not divided by “who does what,” but just has overall objectives and tasks for each month that can be delegated based on job descriptions as well as talents and skills of individual e-board members. Be sure to look at your current month as well as the month ahead for planning purposes!

APRIL

• Select next year’s E-board and invite them to attend e-board meetings for the remainder of the semester
• Conduct exit-interviews/surveys with clients as well as general membership, even e-board if you would like
• Host E-board training, run by the newly elected Exec. Directors
• Collect information from old e-board that needs to be passed on in the future, aka update the binder and collect all needed files
• PLs work on completing case studies
• One-on-one meetings between outgoing and incoming e-board members.
• Brainstorm goals and tasks with each new member of the e-board. That way, each position is clear on what is expected of them for the coming year, and is able to get started over the summer, if possible.
• Meet with advisor(s) to give an end-of-the-year recap.
• Hold end-of-year party for the entire organization to present accomplishments and celebrate
• Look towards next year: start planning!

MAY

• Update contact section on Web site with all new e-board
• Set goals for each position for summer tasks
• Put out final wrap-up newsletter

SUMMER

• Stay in e-mail contact with all e-board members about accomplishing pre-set goals for the summer
• Decide on deadlines for project leader applications, non-profit applications, and dates for meetings. (Pass along these meeting dates to the Director of Event Planning to start working on meetings)
• Plan non-profit forum at the United Way with Community Relations
• Contact past PLs to ask them to recommend possible PL recruits for August
• Re-write any outdated Web content, move old contacts to a new “alum” section so comm.UNITY members will always be able to point back to their old comm.UNITY experiences, and so new comm.UNITY members can network for career advice.
• Make connections in other colleges so you can hit the ground running in August
• Work on collaborations for keeping up with RSO requirements
• Distribute brochures around campus to the same locations as Spring ’09 as well as any new ones you can think of

AUGUST

• Inquire about Internship Fair to see if we can advertise there
• Find out RSO requirements for the year since it is a new process for us
• Try to get involved with orientation programs to get comm.UNITY’s name out there
• Plan and implement marketing plan (very detailed, from creating posters to outlining tactics: see “M&R Job Description” for more details, such as getting permission from University Union to table at Juice Jam in September, class talks, etc)
• See how Honors and Soling can help with recruitment (i.e. speaking at an Honors Civic Engagement meeting)
• Check that application is working on Web site and that Web site is ready for traffic from possible recruits
• Recruit possible non-profit clients (whether that means working with the United Way or an e-mail)
• Recruit membership by planning a general interest meeting
• Recruit project leaders
• Book rooms for the semester through Newhouse or SPCS (as an RSO you can now book rooms anywhere on campus – book a smaller room for e-board meetings and a larger room for general interest)
• Meet with Benjamin Zender from the Soling Program to establish relationship for the year, see if funding is available
• Buy gift certificates for speakers for the year (last year = 4 $15 Starbucks cards for 4 speakers)

SEPTEMBER

• Table at Juice Jam / Student Involvement fair
• Hold general interest meeting for all members, old and new
• Update contact section of Web site with all new PLs
• Hold Nonprofit Forums for recruiting nonprofit clients and assessing needs
• Update portfolio on Web site with new members’ work
• Select PLs and clients for the year
• Host Project Leader training
• Help divide general membership into committees
• Put out first newsletter
• Look for opportunities to get press coverage on campus and in the community for comm.UNITY
• Participate in OrangeSeeds Leadership Panel for publicity
• Plan workshops and speakers for the rest of the semester
• Pursue mentor relationships with Newhouse, iSchool, VPA, Maxwell, and other relevant faculty – e-mail to see if they would be willing to be a resource for comm.UNITY.

OCTOBER

• Meet with project leaders to discuss projects, members, non-profits, and problems
• Plan community service event
• Hold workshop/host speaker
• Plan on ordering t-shirts if desired – start designing and gauging member interest

NOVEMBER

• Put out second newsletter
• Plan holiday party
• Hold workshop/host speaker
• *Remember Thanksgiving break and keep that in planning!

DECEMBER

• Host holiday Party
• Get status updates from all PLs about current progress and plans for spring semester – are they on track?
• Make winter break task/goals list, but not much – it’s called break for a reason!

JANUARY

• Outline semester goals
• Recruit more members, and fill in leadership positions if needed
• Host project leader training, if necessary
• Help to redistribute general membership to committees from end-of-semester drop-off
• Book rooms for the semester through Newhouse or SPCS (as an RSO you can now book rooms anywhere on campus – book a smaller room for e-board meetings and a larger room for general interest)
• *Remember basketball games and keep that in planning!

FEBRUARY

• Host workshop/speaker
• Put out third newsletter
• Plan community service event
• Have PLs suggest good leaders who should run for e-board or be PLs next year, send e-mails to these individuals encouraging them apply for positions come March

MARCH

• Begin recruitment for next year’s E-board and project leaders (hold an info session about leadership)
• Start planning for end-of-the-year event to showcase the year’s work
• Think about pitching end-of-the-year successes to bigger media utilizing SU News Services to get word to the Post-Standard and other local media
• Plan on taking part in SU Showcase
• *Remember Spring Break and keep that in planning!

Past E-board Members and PLs/Past Clients (Alum Directory)

FALL 2008

E-BOARD
Executive Director: Carissa Matthews, Tessa Kurman
Director of Administration: Jenna Passmore
Director of Community Relations: Shayna Meliker
Director of Marketing and Recruitment: Sarah Marshall, Megan McMonagle
Director of Technology: Megan Lange
Director of Event Planning: Kasey Panetta
Director of Finance: Kelsey McCarthy
Project Leader: Megan Hess

PROJECT LEADERS
Liberty Resources: Erica Rosenthal
Transitional Living Services: Christine Mehta, Sarah Marshall
Westcott Community Center: Lindsey Steinseifer
Westside Community School Strategy: Amanda Coriddi
Child Care Solutions: Jen Chaput
Salvation Army: Carolyn McChesney
On-Point for College: Megan Hess
SPRING 2009

E-BOARD
Executive Director: Carissa Matthews, Tessa Kurman
Director of Administration: Megan McMonagle
Director of Community Relations: Shayna Meliker
Director of Marketing and Recruitment: Sarah Marshall, Megan McMonagle
Director of Technology: Megan Lange
Director of Event Planning: Kasey Panetta
Director of Finance: Kelsey McCarthy
Project Leader: Megan Hess

PROJECT LEADERS
Liberty Resources: Jackie Piccolo
Transitional Living Services: Sarah Marshall
Westcott Community Center: Jamian Shapiro
Westside Community School Strategy: Amanda Coriddi
Child Care Solutions: Jen Chaput
Salvation Army: Carolyn McChesney
On-Point for College: Megan Hess
Vera House: Kelsey McCarthy
McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Site: Jackie Piccolo

Templates and Branding

See CD for our PowerPoint template, letterhead, logo, brochure and more. There is also a photo release mock-up that will be vital for projects involving photographers.

Fonts:

Verdana
Ampersand

comm.UNITY green:

R=186
G=217
B=74

web = #bad94a

C: 31%
M: 0%
Y: 88%
K: 0%
Constitution

This constitution is current as of Oct 2007, and likely needs to be updated to reflect changes in the organization – a good project for downtime in October/November.

ARTICLE I

Section I: Name

A. The name of this organization shall be Communications for the Community, hereinafter referred to and formatted as comm.UNITY

Section II: Mission Statement

A. The purpose of this organization shall be to connect students interested in various fields of communications with local non-profit community organizations that need help to create sustainable communications plans. comm.UNITY wishes to help students exemplify the Chancellor’s initiative of “Scholarship in Action” by getting real world experience while benefiting the community at the same time.

Section III: Objectives

A. To train the next generation of socially responsible and community-minded communications practitioners.
B. To help local organizations to create a sustainable communications plan.
C. To bridge the gap between the university and the Syracuse community by exemplifying Scholarship in Action
D. To allow any student interested in communications the opportunity to work with non-profits regardless of major or professional organization affiliation.
E. To work exclusively with non-profits.

ARTICLE II

Section I: The Executive Board

A. List of Executive Board Positions and General Responsibilities

Executive Directors
• Plan and run Executive Board and general membership meetings
• Meet regularly with faculty advisor to update him or her on the organization
• Act as a resource for the Executive Board and members
• Work with Director of Community Relations to organize the application process for non-profits and narrow down possible non-profits to work with
• Oversees the progress of the organization and represents the organization.
• Deals with administrative issues from the University
• Plans all social events for general membership (may delegate this responsibility)

Director of Administration
• Take minutes at all Executive Board and general membership meetings
• Responsible for communication to the members through e-mails and letters
• Responsible for the creation of a newsletter, created twice a semester, to send to membership, administration and local non-profits. Members from the organization can be recruited to help with this task.
• Responsible for reserving meeting locations, maintaining contact information lists and the listservs
• Maintain list of members’ skills along with all of their other information.

Director of Finance
• Responsible for maintaining records of all finances of comm.UNITY
• Must be comfortable using Excel and spreadsheets to record financial data
• Help project leaders create budgets to propose to their non-profit if necessary
• Prepare for and attend all budget hearing meetings
• Research and apply for grants and other sources of funding for comm.UNITY
• Oversees fundraising initiatives for comm.UNITY

Director of Marketing and Recruitment
• Plan and execute recruitment campaign for members at the beginning of each semester, must reach out to all colleges at Syracuse University.
• Responsible for all press releases and advertisements as pertaining to comm.UNITY affairs. This task may be delegated to members of comm.UNITY but must be approved by the Director of Marketing and Recruitment.
• Work with Executive Directors to publicize comm.UNITY to other campus organizations and administrators and work with Director of Administration to make connections for collaboration with other groups and resources on campus.

Director of Technology
• Responsible for creating and updating website
• Serve as the technology resource for project leaders and general members and determine needs of the organization.

Director of Community Relations
• Act as the liaison between community service agencies on campus and the Executive Board to find non-profits and community service projects
• Assist in the non-profit selection process and contact non-profits to explain basic process
• Organize initial information about non-profit for project leader

Director of Event Planning
• Plans and promotes activities at general membership meetings, from workshops to speakers.

Project Leaders (Not elected at the same time as directors, selected on a project-by-project basis)
• Acts as the liaison between the non-profit, project team members, and the Executive Board
• Responsible for updates at every meeting
• Must be CC:ed on everything pertaining to a specific project
• Organize and run project team meetings
• Responsible for all work the team creates
• Help divide up the work and responsibilities amongst team members (brainstorm as a group)
• Sets deadlines and guidelines for team
• Delegates responsibilities to team members.
• Investigate service opportunities for general membership and set-up community service days with Executive Directors

B. Qualifications for Becoming an Officer
1. Must have been an active member of comm.UNITY for at least one month
2. Only ESF/SU students can hold Executive Board positions
3. GPA requirement—2.0 for Executive Board and 2.2 for Executive Director
4. Must possess impeccable communication and organization skills and work well in teams

C. Terms of Office

1. A member will hold an office for the academic year
2. Officers will assume their positions on May 1
3. Officers are slated and approved in March and an officer retreat with old and new officers will occur in April
4. Outgoing officers will work with new officers March through May for training purposes

D. Procedure for Filling Vacated Offices

1. If an office is vacated, the Executive Directors and advisor will appoint a member to fill that office based on recommendations from the Executive Board
2. If no suitable candidate is found, the responsibilities of the vacated office will be distributed among the rest of the Executive Board
3. There is no succession of order among the Executive Board.

Section II: Committees

A. Project Committees

One project team will be organized for each non-profit comm.UNITY works with. Each committee is responsible for helping the non-profit create a sustainable communications plan. They will brainstorm and demonstrate first, then teach the non-profit how to run the communications plan the committee has created for them.

B. Workshop Committee

One workshop committee will be formed in the fall semester to plan the Non-Profit Communication Workshop in the spring semester. This committee is responsible for inviting community non-profits to attend the workshop, organizing workshops for the day-of, recruiting student volunteers, and all administrative tasks related to the workshop. All committee members must be able to attend the whole workshop and will be expected to take a leadership role at the conference. One committee member will be responsible for organizing the student volunteers, one will be responsible for checking in the non-profits, another to ensure all of the different workshops are following the same time schedule, etc.

Responsibilities of committee members include:
• Attending all committee meetings; these are vital to the creation of the non-profit’s communication plan and the success of the non-profit
• Completing all work assigned to them on time and to the best of their ability
• Attending general membership meetings; information about other project committees, community service opportunities, and the Executive Board will be announced
• All work done by a committee member must be turned in to the project leader for approval

At the first general interest meeting, members will sign-up for the non-profit they would like to work with, or for the workshop committee. Members are permitted to sign up for more than one. They must attend committee meetings. At meetings, committee members will brainstorm and plan, and committee members will create products on their own (i.e. media lists or brochures).

Section III: Advisor
A. Selection of Advisor

An advisor will be appointed by the Executive Board. If an advisor resigns, the Executive Board will generate a list of possible advisors with help from the advisor stepping down and other faculty and staff. Once the Executive Board chooses a candidate, the Executive Directors will meet with the candidate and formally ask them to consider becoming an advisor. The advisor that is stepping down will be asked to stay on for two weeks after the new advisor accepts to train him or her.

B. Qualifications

The advisor should preferably teach at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication to help guide members to be used as a resource for projects. He or she should also have contacts at non-profits in the community and be willing to help with the Non-Profit Communication Workshop.

C. Terms of Office

There is no limit on a term for the advisor. A faculty member can remain the advisor as long as he or she wishes to.

D. Roles and Duties of Advisor

The advisor will be expected to meet with the Executive Directors at least every other week, if not every week. The advisor should be able to help the Executive Board get in touch with local non-profits. He or she needs to be a resource for students to utilize when they have questions about a project, and should be able to direct them to other faculty and staff if he or she cannot answer the question. The advisor is critical to helping with school and administrative matters and is expected to help with that.

Section IV: Organization Consultant

Every student organization is assigned an organization consultant out of the Office of Student Life. The Office of Student Life reserves the right to assign and change the organization’s assigned organization consultant. The appointed person will be a professional staff member out of the Office of Student Life and will act as a resource and guide to the organization in the program planning process.

ARTICLE III

Section I: Membership Eligibility

1. Any SU/ESF student, either undergraduate and graduate, who is interested in communications and is in good academic standing with the university is eligible for membership in commUNITY.
2. Members need not be affiliated with any professional organization or pay dues to join.
3. Individuals interested in joining who are not SU/ESF students may become associate members at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Section II: Executive Board Eligibility

1. A member must be involved with at least one committee in commUNITY for a minimum of one month before they are eligible to join the Executive Board.

Section III: Committee Eligibility

1. All members of commUNITY are eligible to join a committee.
Section IV: Executive Board Resignation

1. In the event that an Executive Board member wishes to resign, he/she must fulfill any tasks he/she is signed up to complete. If this is not possible, he/she must delegate these duties to willing members of the organization.

ARTICLE IV

Section I: Time and Period when Selection Occurs

The Executive Board is slated every March for the following Academic year. Once the new Executive Board is slated and approved by the general membership, the new Board members will work and be trained by the outgoing Board members.

Section II: Nominations

All members interested in becoming an Executive Board member must submit a resume and letter of intent to the Executive Directors by the deadline they set in March. If the advisor, Executive Directors, or other Executive Board members see a member with potential to fill a Board position, they may approach the member. The member must submit, in writing, their interest in joining the Executive Board.

Section III: Election Process

The selection of the Executive Board shall be done by a slating process.

- All persons interested in becoming an Executive Board member will submit a letter of intent and a resume to the Executive Directors in the beginning of March
- The Letter of intent should include why the candidate wants to be on the Executive Board, their qualifications, and what positions they are interested in
- The Executive Directors, the advisor, and graduating senior Executive Board members will make up the Slating Committee and meet to decide the Executive Board for the following academic year
- Candidates will be notified one night before the general membership is notified
- Any member or candidate that does not agree with the slated Executive Board may “break slate”—run against a slated candidate
- Those who wish to break the slate must submit a letter of intent to the Executive Directors within one week of the public announcement of the slated Executive Board.
- The general membership will be sent both candidates letters of intent
- One week later, the general membership will meet to hear speeches from all candidates. The unsalted candidates will present first followed by the slated candidate.
- The general membership will then vote. Two thirds of the membership must be present. If enough members are not present, members may submit a vote via e-mail by the meeting date and time. Votes sent after the meeting time will not be accepted. This vote is final
- At the same meeting, the general membership will approve the rest of the Executive Board

Section IV: Notification and Posting of Elections

The slated candidates will be notified the night before the general membership is notified of the Slating Committees decision. The general membership will be notified by an e-mail announcing the new Executive Board. Once the Executive Board has been approved and all decisions regarding breaking slate have been made, an e-mail will be sent out so members who were not there will know about the decisions.

ARTICLE V
Section I: Types of Meetings

There will be 3 different kinds of meetings:

1. Executive Board Meetings – only the Executive Director(s) may call / run these meetings.
   a. All members of the Executive Board must be in attendance.
   i. If an Executive Board member cannot attend, he/she must give 48 hours notice to the Executive Director(s)

2. General Body Meetings – only the Executive Board member(s) may call / run these meetings.
   a. All members of the Executive Board must be in attendance.
   i. If an Executive Board member cannot attend, he/she must give 48 hours notice to the Executive Director(s)
   b. All general membership is encouraged to attend, but it is not mandatory to attend every meeting.

3. Committee Meetings – only the committee leader(s) may call these meetings.
   a. All members of a specific committee are required to attend their specialized meetings.
   i. If a committee member cannot attend, he/she must give 48 hours notice to the Committee leader(s) who called the meeting.

4. Any Executive Director, Executive Board member, or committee leader unable to run their meeting may appoint another member to do so in their absence.

Section II: Time and Occurrence of Meetings

1. Executive Board Meetings will occur bi-weekly on a day that fits the schedules for the members for the Executive Board. Information about these meetings will be disseminated by e-mail.
2. General Body Meetings will occur at the beginning of the semester to encourage and increase membership and will thereafter take place on an as-needed basis to discuss upcoming projects and opportunities for new committees to form. Information about these meetings will be disseminated by e-mail to current members and will also be posted around campus using flyers and table tents.
3. Committee Meetings will take place weekly on an as-needed process: they may meet more often or less depending on the nature of the project. Information about these meetings will be disseminated by e-mail.

Section III: Special Meetings

1. In the case of an emergency or a special opportunity (such as a guest speaker), the Executive Directors may call a special meeting with the consent of the Executive Board and inform the general body by e-mail.

Section IV: Quorum

1. A quorum is defined in this organization as more than half of the general body membership and at least three-fourths of the Executive Board present at a meeting.
2. A quorum is needed in order to create a new committee and take on a new project.
3. If a quorum is not reached at a meeting where this kind of decision is being made, a vote can take place via e-mail instead.

Section V: Parliamentary Procedure
1. Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised will be utilized as the parliamentary procedure in comm.UNITY’s meetings.

Section VI: Voting

1. In order to reach a decision at a meeting, all members present at the meeting may vote towards a decision. A majority rule will win. If a quorum is not present the vote will be taken over to e-mail.

Section VII: Meeting Minutes and Records

1. The Director of Administration and Communication is responsible for taking minutes at Executive Board meetings and general body meetings and disseminating them to board members via e-mail within 3 business days of the meeting.
  a. The Director of Administration and Communications is responsible for electronically storing these minutes and passing the files on to the next person to take over the position.
  2. All members are responsible for reading the minutes and submitting any corrections to the minutes before the next meeting takes place.

ARTICLE VI

Section I: Ground for Removal

An Executive Board member may only be impeached in extreme circumstances. This includes: consistently not performing responsibilities, missing at least half of the meetings, acting inappropriate and/or unprofessional when working with non-profits or administrators.

All impeachments must follow this order:
  1. Charge or complaint is brought against an individual
  2. Evidence to support complaint is presented
  3. Individual is given the opportunity to argue a defense and offer counter evidence
  4. Vote is taken; 2/3 of Executive Board members must vote in favor of impeachment for the impeachment to occur.

Section II: Procedure for Impeachment

If the Executive Directors decide to impeach an Executive Board member, they must first approach the member and have a discussion about their concerns. They will bring it to the next Executive Board meeting and allow the member to plead his or her case before the Executive Board. After this, a paper ballot vote will be taken; 2/3 of the board must agree to impeach the member.

If an Executive Board member wishes to impeach an Executive Board member, they must approach the Executive Directors who will then follow the instructions above.

If an Executive Board member feels that one of the Executive Directors should be impeached, they should approach the other Executive Director and follow the above instructions.

If an Executive Board member feels that both Executive Directors should be impeached, members should approach the advisor, and the advisor should follow the instructions above, taking the place of the Executive Directors.

In the case of impeachment, the Executive Directors and/or the advisor will appoint someone to that position, with recommendations from the Executive Board. If an Executive Board member wishes to move into an impeached position, they can do so. If they are appointed, another member will be appointed to the new empty position.
Section III: Procedure for Appeal of Impeachment

If an Executive Board member is impeached and wishes to appeal this, they must submit a letter to the Executive Directors within one week of the impeachment hearing. This letter must include why they disagree with the impeachment and what they will do to change their behavior or quality of work to combat the charges originally brought against them.

The Executive Directors will schedule a time for the impeached member to plead their case to the Executive Board. He or she will explain what steps they will take to change their behavior or quality of work to combat the charges originally brought against them. There will be time for the Executive Board to ask questions of the impeached member. This is a time to clarify any concerns, not to place blame. A paper ballot will be taken while the impeached member is not in the room. The paper ballots will be tallied, and the impeached candidate will be notified before the Executive Board.

ARTICLE VII

Section I: Amendment

1. Any member of comm.UNITY can propose an amendment.
2. The amendment must be submitted in writing to the Executive Directors.
3. The amendment will be presented at the next general body meeting, and will be voted on at the following meeting.
4. A quorum is required to make an amendment
5. Three-fourths vote is required to affirm an amendment.

Section II: Ratification

1. The constitution will be ratified at the second general body meeting by vote by a quorum.
2. After ratification, the constitution will be in effect immediately.

Advice/Suggestions for Future

This “How-To” binder has been written describing how the club was run from ’08 to ’09. Here are suggestions for how to run the club in the future based off our past experiences.

- Poll students in the beginning of the year about what speakers/workshops they want so you can plan the entire year right away in the Fall
- Do not begin new projects in the Spring. There is enough drop-off from projects to keep new members busy, and it’s too hard to find Project Leaders when dedicated students are, well, too dedicated to their projects to leave
- Expand the “Mentors” list of faculty we can go to with questions
- Give PLs the “Case Study Worksheet” in the beginning of the year to give them an idea of how to think of their projects as a whole
- Give Community Relations more responsibility to be the leader of the PLs and check in with clients more often to make sure everything is running smoothly

- Get PLs back to E-board meetings so they feel connected to the organization

- Combine Marketing and Recruitment w/Event Planning to get rid of the middle man

- Update the Constitution, it is likely out of date from when it was written in October 2007

- Work on marketing the events more, advertise to others interested in hearing about non-profits

- Collaboration--not just with OrangeSeeds, but explore collaboration opportunities for speakers we bring in

- Web training

- Hold a training for PL's and new eboard in the fall, and incorporate goal-setting for each position and for comm.UNITY as a whole (check on it regularly)

- Keep trying to come up with creative ways to branch out to other schools in addition to Newhouse (VPA, Whitman, arts & sciences, etc.)

- Be more visible at club fairs (now that we are an RSO, especially!) and keep speaking to students in classes in the beginning of the school year about comm.UNITY (that's how I got involved, anyway!)

- Emphasize to PL's to encourage/motivate their teams to come to the meetings (hold a short meeting for each project at the end of general membership meetings along with updating the rest of the members as a motivational and productive tool)

- Poll membership right after a speaker/workshop (paper survey) instead of surveymonkey so results are immediate and more people are apt to respond

- Have popular Newhouse lecturers in addition to the eboard/membership hold workshops that people want (based on survey polls)

- Might want to avoid having all gen. member meetings on the same day since that was not successful in the past

*Advice from Liz from CPCS:

- Watch out that students don’t take PR jobs from people who are already established as PR people in bigger nonprofits, there is some animosity about that in the nonprofit community

- We can always turn to CPCS for help, but watch out for risk management risks
TIMELINE

- Oct 24 07 – E-mail confirmation from Eric from Honors that it’s a great idea and will be a good Capstone Project. Wants to see community needs assessment, PR campaign for club, and then a few projects fleshed out.
- Oct 27 07 – Set up meeting with Caryn from SIFE to discuss what SIFE is all about so we can see what comm.UNITY could do in a similar respect except with communications.
- Oct 31 07 – Reached out to Campus Hill PR (Sara and Kiley) to ask how they work and to make sure we weren’t stepping on any toes. Received a negative response, this helped shift focus from PR only to all communications, and to say that it was free to join to set us apart from Campus Hill PR. Then sent out an e-mail to Professor Russell to help us get off the ground.
- Nov 1 07 – Researched goals of PRSSA vs. our club to show that we were different. E-mailed Dean Grassi, set up meeting with Prof. Russell and with Dean Grassi. Dean Grassi suggested we find an advisor and find out university rules about student organizations through Office of Student Life. She suggested Prof. Lee since she has non-profit experience.
- Nov 10 07 – First brainstormed the name comm.UNITY.
- Nov 15 07 – Met with Prof. Kucharavy to discuss comm.UNITY.
- Nov 17 07 – Officially approved for the Honors Capstone Project.
- Nov 20 07 – First draft of constitution, including mission statement and objectives.
- Dec 4 07 – Lee officially accepted the position of advisor.
- Dec 07 (Winter Break) – Created timeline for Spring involving meeting w/Lee and Kinsey, and having a general interest meeting in February by advertising on listservs and flyering campus. Initially thought comm.UNITY would take on clients in Spring 08 at this time – recruit clients for March. Planned on an election process for leadership as well. Questioned the client idea, and also knew branding needed work. Decided that comm.UNITY didn’t need an executive board to go into the Spring semester, and that we could just see who rose to the top from our general interest meeting on. Tessa Kurman, Carissa Matthews and Sarah Marshall were the only official leadership.
- Jan 6 08 – First draft of client application, realized comm.UNITY can’t advertise until there is a general interest meeting. Started to shy away from having clients right away.
- Jan 12 08 – Kept working on planning out the semester and getting organized. Enlisted Sarah Marshall to work on logo designs and branding.
- Jan 24 08 – First round of logos went through critique. Also starting listing important faculty to contact about recruiting, and not just Newhouse – decided that Coplin would be a great resource.
- Jan 30 08 – Second round of logos with the eventual winner from Sarah – based the decision off what looked the most “nonprofit-esque” – wanted it to have a community feel to it, not corporate.
- Feb 3 08 – Sarah made posters for general interest meeting. “Rat Race”, “Leave your mark” were big hits.
- Feb 8 08 – Booked first meeting room in Newhouse from Robyn. Set the date for Feb 26th.
- Feb 10 08 – Carissa brainstormed meeting agenda with Tessa from abroad. Spoke about goals, how leadership might work, and finding out skill sets early on. Realized that the members should take ownership of the club and help make the big decisions, like, should we have a client this semester? How do you want to choose the e-board? More minds help to make the best choices possible.
- Feb 10 08 – E-mails started to go out for recruitment to OrangeSeeds, to different academic departments (all Newhouse majors, some VPA and some iSchool), Tessa pitched the story to the D.O. and made the pitch about the struggles of starting a new student org in order to be newsworthy.
Feb 17 08 – Compiled a media list for future reference and created a Facebook event for the meeting.
Feb 18 08 – First heard that comm.UNITY may be a good fit for Soling after trying to advertise to the “Soling listserv.” Sent information to all Newhouse majors, communications design, advertising design, CRS, IST, Public Affairs, the Soling Program, Honors, ORL. James Tsao, Bill Coplin, Tony Golden, Maria Russell, Melissa Chessner, Dave Molta all very helpful.
Feb 19 08 – Made contacts database, got in CDC e-mail with help from Kelly Brown, picked Ampersand as official font. Also officially decided against trying to get media attention for this meeting since comm.UNITY was still a bit disorganized.
Feb 20 08 – Schoonmaker informed TRF listserv. Shayna Meliker first expressed interest.
Feb 24 08 – Contacted by D.O. writer Paul Stanley about running a short piece on comm.UNITY
Feb 25 08 – First meeting with Jim Spencer from Soling. Made first meeting agenda official. Contacted by Marissa Petruno about the iSchool’s UA but never got back again because of membership problems.
Feb 26 08 – First comm.UNITY meeting! Attendance: 31 people w/9 indicating interest in leadership, 31 people missed meeting and e-mailed with interest.
Feb 27 08 – Created Gmail account: comm.unity.su@gmail.com.
Feb 28 08 – Second page story about comm.UNITY in D.O. (“Club of the Week”)
Mar 6 08 – Cover page story in D.O. about becoming recognized student organization.
Mar 17 08 – Set up next meeting date: March 24.
Mar 24 08 – First leadership meeting, 8 attendees (6 future e-board members).
Mar 27 08 – Shayna starting to brainstorm about community groups we can reach out to and how else to get to them: United Way, CPCs, etc.
Apr 1 08 – Set up meeting for April 7.
Apr 7 08 – “Leadership team” meeting w/attendance of 11 (5 future e-board members).
Apr 14 08 – Set up meeting for April 21.
Apr 21 08 – “Leadership team” meeting w/attendance of 10 (8 future e-board members).
Apr 30 08 – Applications due to Tessa and Carissa for executive board.
May 2 08 – Started selection process for e-board via e-mail between Tessa and Carissa.
May 3 08 – Selected e-board and sent out recap letters to rest of members to update them. Met with Shayna to discuss what needs to be done for the nonprofit forum.
May 9 08 – Carissa met with Megan Lange to discuss the website –what do we need? What can we base this site off of? For clients or for members, or both?
May 14 08 – “Touch base” e-mail w/forum, Soling, website, fact sheet. Carissa laid out what needed to be done over the summer.
May 22 08 – Developed site map.
May 29 08 – All member recap e-mail.
June 11 08 – New task list, no OSL date listed yet
June 26 08 – Still no word from United Way, brainstormed back-up plans.
June 29 08 – Maria Russell said we could drop her name with Frank Lazarski or Marcia Harrington (communications director), e-board update e-mail.
July 1 08 – Web design developed, critiqued second shade of green and worried if we needed more of an SU connection, asked Jenna to develop membership database and asked to collect names, years, majors/minors, dorms/residence, e-mail, cell # (optional), skills, software, special interests, and other student groups involved with.
July 2 08 – Official word that United Way would work with us to host nonprofit forums.
July 5 08 – Megan Lange bought the syrcommunity.com domain name, and hosted the site under the hosting she bought for her own personal website. The domain name cost $10 a year. Created admin separate e-mail address.
July 7 08 – Website went live, Tessa and Carissa continued to write content for about, application, and other sections. Carissa wrote history, prospective clients, and about the process.
July 22 08 – Another checklist sent out of “what needs to be done by the end of the summer,” nixed the online brochure idea (that’s what a fact sheet is for).
July 23 08 – Asked everyone for an update. Sarah and Megan started designing the flyer for the forum and asked for info, started prep for the conference call with the United Way assigning who will say what and getting organized.

July 31 08 – Very successful conference call w/Frank, Shayna, Carissa and Megan about the forum, then e-mailed another recap to the e-board.

Aug 2 08 – Updated Lee on progress and sent her advisor packet.

Aug 4 08 – Went back and forth picking times for non-profit forums. Decided to have two to have options, and asked for what times would be best for non-profits. Kept into account when the first week of Syracuse School District school was (bad time), and The Express premiere (decided that it didn’t really affect us). Kept “Human Services Leadership Council” in mind for future use.

Aug 7 08 – Still no OSL date posted.

Aug 13 08 – Another e-board update, Sarah and Megan made beautiful flyers, miscommunication w/KC making flyers too – showed us how hard it is to not have meetings and face to face communication.

Aug 15 08 – Jenna started to figure out a meeting time for when e-board and general membership would meet and worked on room reservations.

Aug 18 08 – Official forum dates set for Sept. 8 and 10 (Mon and Wed).

Aug 19 08 – Difficulty making 10 peoples’ schedules work for a meeting time.

Aug 20 08 – Marketing started to work on promotional plan. Looked into Student Involvement Fair, tabling in Schine, Juice Jam, and new Facebook group. Couldn’t table since not an RSO.

Aug 22 08 – 3 Non-profits RSVPed to the forum. Also, finally found a meeting room: Newhouse I, Rm 101.

Aug 24 08 – Tessa sent out new e-mail to an IST contact she found, Maria Russell gave us a list of all Newhouse classes so comm.UNITY executive board members could ask professors to speak in classes. Letterhead finalized.

Aug 25 08 – First e-board meeting, finalized constitution.

Aug 27 08 – Jenna sent out minutes from first e-board meeting, Shayna sent out questions for the forum for us to look over.

Aug 28 08 – Megan M. made “class talks” schedule, Kelsey wrote press release for SU media.

Aug 29 08 – Megan Hess made first draft of the Powerpoint for the forum, had a conversation about how to pitch comm.UNITY and make it newsworthy.

Aug 31 08 – Jenna got table tent permission from Lynn Mowers.

Sept 1 08 – Second e-board meeting at Bird Library, prepared recruitment information.

Sept 3 08 – Tessa reached out to IST freshman forums through Prof. Morgan, and finished the OSL packet to become and RSO.

Sept 5 08 – Checked out room at the United Way to see what the space is like, who it could seat, where to put refreshments, etc. comm.UNITY mentioned in Honors Messenger for a civic engagement committee, flyered campus for the general interest meeting.

Sept 7 08 – Juice Jam tabling, approx. 65 people signed up (4 pages of names) and many students said they heard about it in their classes.

Sept 8 08 – First forum, 8:30-10, Dean Grassi sent e-mail to listserv for PRL, e-board meeting and general members first meeting to get acclimated.

Sept 9 08 – Honors sent out a meeting reminder about learning about comm.UNITY on Sept. 12th.

Sept 10 08 – Second forum, 2-3:30, Southside Community Paper contacted Carissa about collaboration but never heard back, Student Voice contacted Carissa about a potential article.

Sept 12-14 08 – Flyered again for general interest meeting, asked by Career Services to attend internship fair.

Sept 15 08 – Featured in SU News Today e-mail, held general interest meeting with 84 people in attendance, listed in “Syracuse Record” events listing, e-board meeting.
Sept 16 08 – Honors sent another reminder about comm.UNITY, received about 10 e-mails because of it, contacted Liz Occhino from CPCS about referring non-profits to work with comm.UNITY, also spoke to Citrus TV about utilizing them for PSAs, finalized GoDaddy Web site purchase.

Sept 20 08 – 217 people on the comm.UNITY listserv. 11 clients applied to work with us.

Sept 22 08 – PL applications due, e-board meeting and went through all client and PL applications and picked those comm.UNITY would work with, 11 clients and 11 PLs applied. Picked: On Point for College (long-term), Westside Community School Strategy (long-term), Child Care Solutions (long-term), Liberty Resources: Fall 08 (short-term), Transitional Living Services: Fall 08 (2 people project) (short-term), Westcott Community Center: Fall 08 (short-term) McMahon/Raymond Child Advocacy and the Vera House, Inc. (Spring). PLs picked: Carolyn McChesney (already is bringing on Salvation Army), Jennifer Chaput, Erica Rosenthal (going abroad), Lindsey Steinseifer (going abroad), Christine Mehta, Amanda Coriddi, Megan Hess.

Sept 24 08 – Carissa participated in OrangeSeeds leadership panel on behalf of comm.UNITY.

Sept 29 08 – Eboard meeting, general member meeting to share information about clients and had students sign up for committees, started compiling portfolio work for the Web site.

Sept 30 08 – KC started to plan workshops for the year, Project Leader training and PLs picked projects.

Oct 2 08 – Carissa met with Liz from CPCS to get advice and more information about campus resources.

Oct 3 08 – Worked with Dick Waghorn, Benjamin Zender and Jim Spencer to get Web site on university server through comm.UNITY’s connection with the Soling Program.

Oct 9 08 – http://comm.unity.syr.edu goes live thanks to Lauri and Megan Lange, must change all marketing materials to this new Web address, reached out to Dr. Mason for photo release advice.

Oct 13 08 – E-board meeting, general member meeting, finalized Soling course syllabus and sent to Benjamin.

Oct 20 08 – Set up meeting with Dean Grassi to discuss comm.UNITY becoming a class, e-board meeting.

Oct 23 08 – Forwarding issues with Web site resolved – IE vs. Firefox issues, Megan M. volunteered to take over administrative responsibilities for Jenna when she goes abroad.

Oct 27 08 – Lynn Hy from Salvation Army comes to general membership meeting to speak, 25 non-e-board members in attendance, for follow-up to Lynn’s talk we decided to send out a feedback form to those who attended, and also buy Starbucks gift cards for all speakers as a thank-you. Denied RSO status after applying weeks earlier.

Oct 28 08 – Sent appeal letter to Office of Student Life.

Nov 3 08 – E-board meeting, conflict with basketball game worked out okay.

Nov 4 08 – Created internal funding request form.

Nov 5 08 – Sarah taught InDesign workshop to Child Care Solutions project team.

Nov 10 08 – Ginny Donohue from On Point for College spoke at general membership meeting, e-board meeting beforehand, smaller attendance, collected feedback from attendees.

Nov 17 08 – E-board meeting, denied RSO status so set up meeting to find out what needs to be fixed.

Nov 24 08 – E-board meeting, all client/comm.UNITY contracts signed, working on mentor recruitment, PR workshop for general membership.

Dec 7 08 – Final e-board meeting of the semester, met new PLs taking over for next semester, holiday party for general membership, Megan took over as Admin, wrapping up some problem solving with Westcott Community Center, Liberty Resources, and The Strategy. Sarah Marshall taking over for TLS, Jackie Piccolo taking over for Liberty Resources.

Dec 27 08 – Started compilation of comm.UNITY binder for future executive boards to help keep the club going. Also worked on resolving unstable projects.
Dec 29 08 – On Point sent out a pitch to the general membership for help with invitation design. Child Care Solutions asked for those interested in design as well. Also decided not to take on any new clients besides the ones decided in the Fall so Comm.UNITY would not spread itself too thin.

Jan 12 09 – Bill from Liberty Resources cut out of budget, ending Comm.UNITY’s work with LR. Later attempts for exit interview were unsuccessful.

Jan 14 09 – New “marketing committee” started, first meeting of this committee.

Jan 16 09 – PL applications for Spring due, first E-board meeting of the semester, class talks throughout week preparing for General Interest Meeting, cancelled meeting for Jan 19 and just combined both for the 26th, esp. because of MLK holiday. Tessa and Carissa decided to start having office hours this semester.

Jan 26 09 – First general membership meeting/general interest meeting, got people involved again and new people involved as well, listed in the SU News Today e-mail, sent out Powerpoint explaining all projects for those unable to attend.

Jan 30 09 – E-board meeting, McMahon/Ryan Child Advocacy Site pitch letter sent to general membership.

Feb 6 09 – E-board meeting, t-shirt poll sent out to general membership getting people to vote.

Feb 9 09 – Graphics workshop hosted by Sarah Marshall, 10 attendees with great feedback, both beginner and intermediate session. Contacted by Honors for Carissa to be nominated for an individual CAPS award, Comm.UNITY also nominated itself for the group award.

Feb 12 09 – Received Recognized Student Organization status by the Office of Student Life.

Feb 18 09 – Pitch story to D.O. about the end of The Westside Community School Strategy's funding, later WCSS would not confirm so the story could not run.

Feb 19 09 – Little League Baseball Team small project introduced to membership from Child Care Solutions employee, not an official “Comm.UNITY project” but another great opportunity for members.

Feb 20 09 – E-board meeting.

Feb 22 09 – T-shirt design finalized and sales introduced.

Feb 23 09 – Elections informational meeting for general membership, sent out e-mail with election process and position descriptions ahead of time on the 18th, 7 attendees because of blizzard.

Feb 27 09 – E-board meeting.

Feb 28 09 – OSL Fiscal training.

Mar 2 09 – OSL Officer Training, Barb Ackley from TLS came to speak to the general membership, approx 15 members in attendance. Aileen Jackowski was supposed to come but had a last minute commitment she couldn’t get out of. Also asked PLs for ideas for future e-board members.

Mar 5 09 – Last day to buy Comm.UNITY t-shirts (day before Spring Break), started planning Comm.UNITY service day for post-Spring Break. Tessa sent out e-mails to all recommended leaders encouraging them to apply for e-board for next year.

Mar 11 09 – Salvation Army responded to an e-mail sent weeks prior about doing community service at the center, but it was too late: we had already told the Bunny at the Zoo organizer we would help with that.

Mar 17 09 – New e-board applications due, Technology was originally due earlier but was pushed back to the same date as the rest of the positions. KC unable to book room for future workshop so it was cancelled.

Mar 21 09 – E-board interviews all day.

Mar 22 09 – Notice sent to membership asking for help for Vera House events.

Mar 23 09 – Final e-board interviews, CAPS Awards for Carissa and Frank Lazarski from the United Way.

Mar 24 09 – E-board selected: Executive Directors: Erica Rosenthal (2009-2010) and Megan McMonagle (Fall 2009)/Megan Hess (Spring 2010), Directors of Marketing, Recruitment, and Event Planning: Lauren Migaki and Kelsey McCarthy (Spring 2010),
Director of Technology: Brad Winckelmann, Director of Community Relations: Jackie Piccolo (Fall 2009). Still holes with Finance and another MRE director.

- Mar 25 09 – Touched base with Lee to let her know about RSO status and to generally catch her up.
- Mar 27 09 – Contacted OrangeSeeds about collaboration for OSL RSO status, but never got back to us until April, meeting set for last week of April.
- Apr 1 09 – Tried pitch e-mail to membership to get more e-board applicants with little success.
- Apr 3 09 – comm.UNITY members volunteered at Anniversary Dinner for On Point for College, was supposed to be an entire comm.UNITY service weekend, but “Bunny At The Zoo” fell through at the last minute because of miscommunication.
- Apr 6 09 – comm.UNITY decided to take a part in SU Showcase, Monique from Westside Community School Strategy came to speak to about 15 e-board and non-e-board members.
- Apr 8 09 – Dmitriy selected for Director of Finance, invitation for comm.UNITY par.TAY sent to membership, clients, and campus allies.
- Apr 9 09 – Still haven’t filled positions for 2nd MRE and Spring CR, must meet as Exec. Directors new and old to figure out a solution.
- Apr 16 09 – comm.UNITY nominated for a 44 Stars Award.
- Apr 24 09 – comm.UNITY end-of-year celebration.

NOT INCLUDED IN THIS TIMELINE ARE EVENTS FROM ALL THE CLIENTS, SUCH AS VERA HOUSE’S WALK AND TLS’S BOOK SIGNING...THIS TIMELINE IS SOLELY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S TASKS.

ORGANIZATIONAL FLOW CHART

Organization of comm.UNITY

This current form of organization leads to a major disconnect between the executive directors/executive board and the general membership, as well as between project leaders and the rest of the executive board. In the future, the organization should be worked to look like this:

Proposed Organization
THE WRITTEN CAPSTONE SUMMARY

Chancellor Nancy Cantor’s vision statement for Syracuse University is “Scholarship in Action,” where students utilize the skills and knowledge attained in the classroom to find solutions for a variety of problems, as well as help others in the community on both a local and global scale. As junior public relations majors, students Tessa Kurman and Carissa Matthews realized that as Syracuse University students they had not yet truly taken part in “Scholarship in Action.” These individuals soon determined the best solution would be to create a new student organization that would connect students with communications skills to local nonprofits that could use help in the areas of public relations, graphic design, advertising, event planning, and more. This idea was the birth of Communications for the Community, or “comm.UNITY.”

comm.UNITY is a completely student-run organization that consists of two leadership groups, each selected through an application process: the Executive Board and Project Leaders. The Executive Board is in charge of the behind-the-scenes workings of the organization: from creating alliances on campus to finding funding, from recruitment and marketing to finding clients, the Executive Board is the backbone of the organization. Project Leaders are individuals who organize a team of students from the general membership to complete specific projects for clients. These nonprofit clients are selected when they apply for comm.UNITY’s services at the beginning of the school year in September.
In addition to working for clients, comm.UNITY also strives to be an educational resource for its general membership, teaching students various communications skills (the recruitment slogan is, “Passion Required. Experience is Not”) as well as introducing them to what it is like to work in the nonprofit sector. To accomplish this, comm.UNITY conducts multiple skills workshops and hosts several speakers throughout the year for the edification of its members.

This Capstone Project explores how the study and application of public relations theory and best practices is a key ingredient for the success of both this new student organization as well as the projects comm.UNITY completes for its clients. Public relations is essential for the survival of any organization because it is “the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Cutlip, 1985).

Specifically, comm.UNITY utilizes the four-step process of public relations and adheres to Arthur W. Page’s “Page Principles.” These four-steps, which act in a cyclical motion, are: analysis of current situation, strategic planning, taking action, and evaluation. The four-step public relations process ensures that communications tactics are strategic and not simply a “best guess,” and also keeps communications professionals accountable by forcing them to calculate and report results.

The Page Principles are a set of best practices for public relations professionals, understood by top professionals as the ideal code of conduct for communications activities. By utilizing these tools to understand the best way to
run, publicize, and organize comm.UNITY, the organization is then able to pass that knowledge to its clients, who, without comm.UNITY, might have no communications expertise to draw from.

The creation and analysis of comm.UNITY and its work is significant for a multitude of reasons. Most importantly, the organization fills a void that is often left empty at nonprofit organizations – strategic communications. Unfortunately for nonprofits doing tremendously beneficial work for the community, funds are almost always tight and will often go toward helping the nonprofit’s target audience before hiring a public relations specialist. Even though nonprofits’ goals are all directly related to maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and communications – fundraising, raising awareness, education – there is typically an employee with a multitude of other tasks assigned to public relations responsibilities, if there is one at all. Not only is there not enough time dedicated to public relations, there is also a lack of expertise.

The project is also significant because it results in two different kinds of case studies. The first is an example of how to begin a student organization that is built to last. Student organizations involve an innate science, as students are difficult to pin down in one place, and retention can difficult at best. In addition there is a host of competition for talented students: how does one make her cause, her organization stand out in the pack? Finally, how can one ensure that the organization will stay strong after the passionate founders of the organization graduate? These are challenges all student organizations face, and by looking at comm.UNITY, one can find a formula for success. Additionally, this written
project may help start chapters of comm.UNITY at other universities nationwide, if that is a project the organization would like to undergo in its future.

This project also results in a handful of case studies that measure the success of students working with nonprofit community organizations – some more so than others. From these the reader learns a multitude of lessons, ranging from how public relations must be valued in the dominant coalition of an organization if the function is to survive budget cuts, to how a highly organized and capable Project Leader can mobilize dozens of students to work on a variety of tasks for a single organization. These case studies not only help comm.UNITY look to the future with a bit more experience and expertise, but also acts to set the stage for other “Scholarship in Action” start-ups that will inevitably begin to formulate in the years to come under Chancellor Nancy Cantor’s direction.