

In STEP with students: Tom Hanaway

by Audralynn See - Wednesday, May 25, 2011

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/12497/in-step-with-students-tom-hanaway/>

As part of the Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Tom Hanaway creates camaraderie amongst students, faculty and alumni of the journalism department through the use of social media.

Name: Tom Hanaway

Role: Social media intern

Department: Journalism

Major: Journalism

Year: Recent graduate

Hometown: Greenleaf, Wis.

What specific tasks do you do for your internship?

“My specific job for this internship is maintaining all of the social media channels for the department of journalism. What that means is that I’m connecting students, faculty and alumni through Facebook, Twitter and blogs. I’m posting internship announcements for students, highlighting awards won by students and keeping our alumni in the loop about what is going on in the department.

“I’m more or less the online voice, answering students’ questions and providing them with information about what is going on inside the department and worldwide. I also give presentations in various courses about social media and how it is changing our world.”

How is the internship benefiting your education?

“This internship is really expanding my education. These kinds of skills can’t be learned in just any class. I’m learning how to effectively communicate through sites like Twitter, how to write blog posts and how to be a representative for a department. I’m basically gaining the social media skills that most companies are hungry for.”

How is the internship benefiting your future?

“Being a social media intern will be huge for my future. It seems that every single company out there is looking for social media specialists to represent them online, so by having this internship I am ahead of the crowd. I have already gained the skills to effectively communicate, engage with users and promote the department and the work we do here.”

How is the internship benefiting your department?

“I’m educating students on what is going on in the department, like when to sign up for classes and when

new internships come in. I'm also promoting our department and making us a thought leader in the world of journalism. Our blog, which has received almost 8,000 views since its inception, has become a database for posts about journalism, public relations, advertising, social media and more."

What has been your favorite part of the internship?

"My favorite part is connecting with students and being able to highlight their work and their awards. Their coursework will no longer be put into a filing cabinet somewhere for no one to see. I'm able to put it online for everyone to view and comment on. I am also able to connect with alumni and have them write blog posts to give current students advice about journalism and how to obtain a job after college.

"I also love seeing what resonates with users. Whenever I see people get excited over a photo posting or a Facebook status, I feel like I'm really creating a sense of pride and camaraderie among the department. I like to think what I'm doing is bringing people together and making them proud to be a member of the department of journalism."

Have you faced any challenges? If so, detail how you overcame them.

"Nothing yet. Fingers crossed!"

Supervisor Comments:

"Tom leads the department's online presence, particularly with social media," Supervisor Sara Steffes-Hansen said. "A highly creative individual, Tom crafts words and graphics to interactively communicate with students, faculty and alumni. For the department's blog, Tom writes informative postings related to the department, and manages guest blog postings from students, faculty and professionals. He regularly interacts and informs these audiences via Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter networks. He regularly updates the department website, and every day you will find him posting new information online and actively tweeting updates and responses to students in our program.

"Tom brings professionalism and a high level of expertise to this position. The department's Journalism Advisory Board of media professionals recently commended the social media initiatives of the journalism department. Further, Tom's blogging has inspired others with information and eloquence. COLS Dean Koker referred to one of Tom's blog postings to introduce POLITICO's Jim VandeHei on campus. Tom is actively contributing to important initiatives—we are very fortunate to have this caliber of student working in our department."

The Student Titan Employment Program (STEP) offers students quality educational experiences while providing faculty and staff members with needed assistance in areas such as media services, student-faculty research, supplemental instruction, library assistance, instructional technology and academic computing support, and Web page development and maintenance. The program is funded through a one-time investment of \$500,000. More than 110 students are funded through STEP.

- [See more profiles.](#)