

## **UWO students present ad campaigns to Sargento VP**

by Mandy Potts - Tuesday, January 22, 2013

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/24648/uwo-students-present-ad-campaigns-to-sargento-vp/>

For Kathy Fredrickson's students, it doesn't get more real-world than what they just shared for their interim class projects.

For the past three weeks, Fredrickson's University of Wisconsin Oshkosh students spent their winter interim session on a challenge that would not only result in their final grade for the interim communication course but would also put them at the head of a very important presentation. Divided into marketing agency-like teams, the students were challenged to create a marketing advertising campaign -- complete with research, a strategy and TV and radio spots -- about a specific marketing line of Wisconsin-based [Sargento Foods Inc.](#) products. The final challenge: [Present those campaigns](#) to Sargento's vice president of marketing.

"To be honest, it was nerve-wracking," said Claire Doty, who is studying radio-TV-film and theater acting. "Normally, you are just doing this for a grade, but it was more than that this time. But I feel confident I can put this on my reel and it will help me in the future."

Sargento is a family-owned company that spends more than \$40 million annually on marketing and communications, according to Chip Schuman, VP of marketing, who spent the better part of the morning Jan. 18 at UW Oshkosh learning from, offering feedback to and connecting with students through their projects. It's, typically, the kind of creative thinking Schuman gets from the company's marketing agency out of New York.

Beyond the marketing and communication lessons learned through the project itself, Doty and her classmates learned another valuable takeaway from the course: Three weeks is not a long time to devise so nuanced a strategy and pitch.

"I was surprised by all the steps," Doty said. "We came up with plan after plan and we went through a lot of ideas before we got to the one."

Schuman said he was surprised by the caliber of work the students put out. Throughout the presentations, he commented on the creativity of the UW Oshkosh students as well as their ability to think strategically while putting together well-polished final products.

"You guys have really bright futures," he told the class. "I didn't quite know what to expect, but I was really impressed."

David Seering, a junior studying radio-TV-film said the project really made him look at marketing and ad development as a potential career option. His peers-turned-agency-partners said they valued the importance of a team approach.

“This was a test in teamwork. You need to put something together and turn out a product,” said Dave Mellon, also studying radio-TV-film at UW Oshkosh. “It really put real-world pressure on us. It was more than just a grade.”

Schuman said what stood out most through each of the four group’s class presentations was the connection he had to each of the campaigns.

“I really had a reaction to their ads,” he said. “It’s really hard to create an emotional feeling within advertising, and the students did well with this.”

Fredrickson, also proud of her students’ work, said she likes being able to offer her students real-world experiences within her classroom. An adjunct professor at UW Oshkosh, she teaches a variety of communication-focused classes. She has experience working as a consultant serving marketing, branding, public relations and media needs for clients. Each interim semester, Fredrickson brings in high-level representatives from Wisconsin-based businesses to work with her class as she enjoys helping state-based companies thrive; in 2012, the [president of Carmex](#) visited UW Oshkosh to work with students on a similar project.

“They really learn that in the real world you never have as much time or the people you need and that the ideas on paper are different than in real life. They also learn that they’ll get asked the tough questions,” Fredrickson said.

Learn more:

- [Communication Studies at UW Oshkosh](#)
- [Radio-TV-Film at UW Oshkosh](#)
- [PHOTO GALLERY: Sargento VP of Marketing visits UW Oshkosh](#)