



Memorandum

To: University of Michigan Sport Management and Communications Majors

From: Maeve Everett

Date: February 22, 2023

Subject: Information Regarding the Communications and Public Relations Internship Experience at Michigan Football: How to Secure the Role, Responsibilities On and Off Season, and The Benefits.

Intent of Report

The purpose of this memorandum and the content it includes is to educate University of Michigan students, currently purchasing degrees in Sport Management, Communications, or a related field, who are interested in becoming a Communications and Public Relations Intern at Michigan Football. From personal experience and conversation, I find that many students, here at Michigan, are unaware of the opportunities that exist to get involved with the nation's leading college football program. It is my belief that once students do become aware, they will feel much more inclined to pursuing the position. To bring said awareness, this report will outline the steps involved in securing the role as a Michigan Football Communications and Public Relations Intern, the year-round responsibilities involved, and the benefits associated with the experience. The information provided in this memorandum was gathered through personal knowledge, research on the Michigan Athletics webpage, and an asynchronous interview with Zach Corsum—a Michigan senior and Sport Management student who has worked as a Communications and Public Relations intern for the past three years.

How to Secure the Role

The process of securing a position as a Communications and Public Relations Intern at Michigan Football is a lot less straightforward than your typical Athletic Department role. Most of you are likely familiar with the Victor's Internship Program as it's the predominant route for U-M undergraduate students looking to get sport business experience under Michigan Athletics. The Victor's Internship Program has a variety of opportunities underf nearly every Varsity Sport at

Michigan, except for one: football. Michigan Football is unique in the sense that they hire their own set of interns for various roles, typically four for each, and the catch is, there's no formal applications. To some, no written application might seem like a red light, but for Zach Corsum, it was anything but. When I asked Zach how he got his Communication and Public Relations Internship with Michigan Football, he shared how during his Freshman year, he blindly walked into the Athletic Department and asked those present how he could get involved with Michigan Athletics. From there, Zach was referred to Dave Ablauf, Michigan's Associate Athletic Director for Football Communications. Once Zach got in contact with Dave, things moved quickly. He set up a meeting, met with Dave and Chad Sheppard, the Assistant Director under Dave, got some more information about the position and was offered on the spot to start the following week (Zach Corsum, Personal Communication, February 20, 2023). Zach's journey to securing his internship is testimony to one of the true keys to success: don't be afraid to ask.

In Season Responsibilities

Week Days

I'm sure at this point many of you are wondering what a Communications and Public Relations Intern even does. Which, to say it right away, is a lot. To begin, since football is not a year-round sport, like the players themselves, interns are also in season and out of season. The season for this role starts in unison with the beginning of the academic year, so either in late August or early September. After getting settled with Chad, who is the primary Intern Supervisor, the turnaround time to the first home football game is rather quick. Usually, within a week of getting back onto campus, you will be reporting to Schembechler Hall, twice a week for one and a half hour work sessions. According to Zach, throughout the season, your "office work" will primarily consist of sorting in-game photographs, updating player bios on mgoblue.com with their game performance, and any new career highs (Zach Corsum, Personal Communication, February 20, 2023). From there, it goes into preparing for the main event: game day!

Game Days

Game days as a Communications and Public Relations Intern seem to be a lot of fun. For every game, you are expected to arrive at the Big House roughly forty-five minutes before kickoff. During the game, you are seated in the press box, which you must get to through the SouthWest Tower of the Big House and showing proof of your credential, provided to you by Chad. Once you take the elevator up, you are able to help yourself to a buffet of food and beverages, which in my opinion, is every college student's dream. Upon finding your seat in the second row, right behind journalists from various news outlets, you will be provided with your in-game responsibilities which typically fall along the lines of either taking game notes or tracking player participation. Once the game flies by and Michigan hopefully secures a win, it's now time to complete your post-game responsibilities. This includes, quickly printing game summaries, running down the stands and across the field to hand these copies to both the home and away locker rooms, and then heading to the post-game press conference to facilitate microphones to reporters. For Zach, this season he was able to skip the distribution of game summaries and instead, go with Chad to take players and coaches from the field, to the press room. The press-conference typically wraps up forty-five minutes after the game ends and from there, you're all good to leave for the day.

Out of Season Responsibilities

As mentioned, Communication and Public Relations Interns for Michigan Football operate on a seasonal schedule, similar to the football players themselves. Some years, the season can conclude in late November, while in other seasons, such as last year, games can go until New Year's Eve. However, regardless of when the season ends, also like the players, there's always work to be done. For the interns, as Zach shares, his off- season responsibilities are a bit lighter, only requiring him to go into the office, Schembechler Hall, once a week for no more than two hours. During this time, he focuses on starting the department's preparation for Spring ball and the upcoming season. These tasks include, but are not limited to, flipping the official roster and managing outward facing player information and involvement on mgoblue.com (Zach Corsum, Personal Communication, February 20, 2023).

Benefits of the Role

Connections & Work Environment

Although the role of a Communications and Public Relations Intern for Michigan Football sure seems to pack on its duties, the hard work doesn't come without its fair share of benefits. Off the bat, in this role, you will be getting an experience that is unique to any other sport on campus or college in the nation. Back in 2018, Michigan Football landed in the top three on Forbes list of College Football's Most Valuable Teams as that year, the program brought in \$122.3 million in revenue (Woods, 2018). On top of the financial figures, Michigan Football also has an obvious reputation for dominating on the field, holding the record for the most wins of all-time among all of college football. I don't know about you, but I can't see any negatives in being associated with that reputation, especially when I put myself in the mind of a future employer. Nonetheless, being able to work in such a prestigious and diverse program will offer you the opportunity to create many connections through either introduction or fate, which will certainly prove to be super valuable as you continue your undergraduate degree in Sport Management and/or Communications here at Michigan. The individuals at Schembechler Hall and throughout all of Michigan Football truly care about more than just the game itself. They are charismatic, bright, and most importantly, personable. The culture and the environment they create makes for the perfect place to grow and adapt to the industry of your future.

5 BENEFITS OF THE MICHIGAN FB COMM & PR INTERNSHIP

- 1. Experience**
By virtue of real-world practice, this internship will guide you in becoming well-versed in a variety of both hard and soft skills
- 2. Connections**
Through the tight-knit community at U-M Football, college football's most successful program, you will be able to make influential relationships with the leaders and best
- 3. Free Tickets**
Because you will be helping out in the Big House press box on game days, you have free access to all 7-8 Michigan Football home games
- 4. Outstanding Work Environment**
No one quite captures the "Michigan Difference" as well as the kind, intelligent, & determined individuals at Schembechler Hall do
- 5. Flexible Schedule**
There's no need to stress about missing class, meetings, or other activities since you are able to choose the exact days and times to work during the week

Figure 1. "5 Benefits of the Michigan FB Comm & PR Internship" Information from Wittry, A. (2022, July 25). College Football's 9 winningest teams. NCAA.com. Retrieved from <https://www.ncaa.com/news/football/article/2019-09-22/college-footballs-9-winningest-teams>

Experience

When I asked Zach to share any perks he has been able to find in his role, he started by shining a light on the detailed understanding of sports media he was able to develop as he first-hand witnessed and assisted in what goes on behind the scenes of Michigan Football. He additionally noted how his wide range of responsibilities has inspired him to hone in on his skills of teamwork and time management (Zach Corsum, Personal Communication, February 20, 2023). While Zach primarily focused on sharing the soft skills he has been able to develop through his role, I'd like to draw attention to various other advantages of the internship, such as the assured ability to add some relevant technical skills to your list of assets. This benefit will primarily appear overtime as you will be frequently tasked with working in various software applications, such as Adobe. I find this opportunity to work with applications such as Adobe Photoshop, Bridge, and InDesign to be highly valuable as their usage will offer skills that aren't currently written to emerge from typical course material.

Additional Perks

As a student, one of the most attractive benefits that I find offered through this internship is a flexible work schedule. Apart from game days, you are given the opportunity to work one-on-one with your supervisor, Chad, and coordinate a schedule that works perfectly with all your other time commitments, such as any classes or clubs. Furthermore, the benefits that I'm sure most of you were waiting to hear about are those of material. Unfortunately, Michigan Football can't/doesn't pay their Communications and Public Relations Interns but for those of you in Sport Management, you are able to receive course credit and fulfill part of your SM 403 requirement. Additionally, through this position you will be able to save over \$200 that you would have spent on Football season tickets as you will have access to all games for free. Plus, since you will be in the press box, you won't have to endure the blistering heat or cold. And lastly, to quote Zach, "gear isn't a bad perk" (Zach Corsum, Personal Communication, February 20, 2023).

References

Woods, T. (2018, September 12). Michigan ranks no. 3 on forbes list of college football's most valuable teams. Maize n Brew. Retrieved February 22, 2023, from <https://www.maizenbrew.com/football/2018/9/12/17849648/michigan-ranks-no-3-on-forbes-list-of-college-footballs-most-valuable-teams>