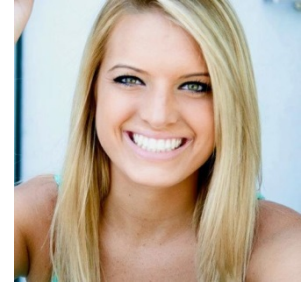


Senior PR Student Dreams Hollywood or Bust

Written by Kirstie Castaneira



The entertainment industry is a hard one to crack into, but **Sterling Cates** (BA-2013) credits hard work, her passion for learning about how brands communicate and the J School to her successes thus far in the industry.

“UNC has given me so many wonderful opportunities through the J School to learn about the PR industry and providing me with the resources I need to find internships,” said the graduating senior PR major. Cates has dreamt of working in the publicity sector of the entertainment industry for years now and finally got her breakthrough opportunity last summer with Paramount Pictures. With only a week’s notice of her big move across the country, the internship showed her early on what a crazy world there is within Hollywood. The role PR plays in that fast-paced environment is what thrilled Cates more than anything. “Every company or organization needs PR in order to be successful, and I have learned that I enjoy being a part of the creative process that makes it all happen,” she said.

Cates landed Paramount’s National Publicity internship position in Los Angeles just a week after last day of classes, but knew she had to jump on it. She spent the summer working on outreach campaigns for Paramount films, creating press junkets and working the logistics for movie premieres and special events. Encountering celebrities like Katy Perry became a part of her daily tasks on the Paramount lot.

This spring, Cates interned with PMG Sports, a marketing firm geared toward representing Olympic athletes. There she worked on clients’ social media platforms as well as producing content for PMG’s blog and websites. She took this position in hopes of spreading her entertainment knowledge into that of sports focusing on athletes as celebrities. Although Paramount has still been her favorite employment experience thus far, Cates understands the importance of every opportunity, “With each new responsibility and role within a company, I was challenged to step outside of my comfort zone and try new things, and I think that ultimately is what has prepared me the most for the future.”

Through her coursework in the J School, Cates has learned the ins and outs of PR as well as the importance of an individual’s personal brand. Understanding how to market herself will be an invaluable trait to her, hopefully celebrity, clients in the future.

With her sights set on an entertainment studio or agency, Cates is looking for opportunities in Los Angeles postgrad. She knows that LA is the place to be for what she wants to do and is willing to work hard in order to stay on that track. Her passions for PR and communications have always been innate, but she wouldn’t have been able to explore them if it wasn’t for the public relations sequence within the J school.