Nonprofit inspires alumna to empower girls

by Teagan Welch

Amanda Duquette is a wife, mother, and is making her alma mater proud by working for a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization.

Amanda accomplished much during her stay at ECU. Not only was she president of her sorority, Kappa Delta, but she participated in the honors program, and was a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the Public Relations Student Society of America.

Fast forward to 2017 and Amanda now holds the title of Vice President of Marketing and Communications at the Girl Scouts of America of Northeast Texas.

“I’ve been in the nonprofit industry since I graduated from ECU,” she said. “It’s kind of been my niche since entering the workforce.”

After graduating in 2004, Amanda spent some time as a traveling consultant for Kappa Delta before enrolling in the University of Memphis, where she received her Master’s Degree in Public and Nonprofit Administration.

Although she originally started out as a journalism major at ECU, she said she loves the public relations side of communications because she gets to tell an organization’s story.

Reflecting back on her time at ECU, Amanda recalled learning life lessons that she wouldn’t forget.

“I was in one of my PR classes when 9/11 happened,” she said, “and I remember it vividly. I remember my professor using 9/11 as an example of real life public relations. It’s teachers like that who can take a worldview of what’s happening now and help you understand how that’s going to apply to what you’re going to do in the workforce.”

Amanda noted that the industry is always changing rapidly and that it’s important to stay up to date.

“My advice to students is never stop learning,” she said. “The world is evolving everyday so don’t be afraid to take risks in
Dana Morgan, with his long hair pulled back into a bun and laptop in hand, sits down on the couch and breathes a sigh of relief. It has been a long, eventful day for the 24-year-old ECU School of Communication graduate. Life is hectic as a high touch operations manager by day and club videographer/photographer by night.

The road to these two positions weren’t easy. It took persistence and moving from job to job for Morgan to end up “meeting the right people.”

Morgan graduated from ECU in May 2014. After graduation, Morgan moved back to his hometown in Raleigh, North Carolina. He searched for jobs in news-related fields but had no luck.

“There were slim pickings for media broadcasting opportunities,” says Morgan.

Morgan then made the tough decision of leaving his family and friends to move to Mansfield, Massachusetts and continue his search there. His luck changed when he was offered an internship position as an assistant for a small company called Blink Music in Boston, Massachusetts.

A 30-minute train ride from Mansfield, Blink Music was working on the movie “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story.” Morgan has always been passionate about movies and the intricate process of making one.

“It was really cool to work on the set. But after two months there as basically a ground runner, I felt like I wasn’t learning anything new,” Morgan says.

Morgan also missed his family and hated the cold weather. He packed up his bags and made the journey back to Raleigh.

The same day he came back home, Morgan received a phone call from a friend asking if he needed a job. Within 48 hours, he was set up with an interview at Cisco for a sales support associate position located in Raleigh. Morgan acted on behalf of the account manager and set up deals after sales were made.
Once he got familiarized with the job, Morgan got his hands on a T3i camera and exercised his talent for making videos. His father, a music producer for “Morgan Entertainment,” had just signed a rapper named Yak. Morgan got the opportunity to make a music video and a blog for Yak.

An artist named Arok saw Morgan’s video for Yak and was thoroughly impressed with his work. Arok, a former ECU student, immediately wanted Morgan to make videos for him too.

Soon after, Morgan bought a drone, learned how to mix software programs to edit videos, and took his work to the next level. Word of Morgan’s videography talent quickly spread from artist to artist.

Just last year, Morgan went to an artistry meet-up in downtown Raleigh where there were rappers, singers and DJs. Arok had previously shown the DJs some of Morgan’s videos. They were impressed by Morgan’s work and wanted him to shoot club promotions.

Morgan began shooting rooftop party videos and other events for the DJs at club Stilllife in Raleigh. He calls the experience “mind-blowing.” The only challenge for Morgan was getting used to shooting with low lights. However, he loves his part-time job at Stilllife and meeting new people every night.

Fast-forward to September 2016, Morgan was offered a job position at Cisco as a high touch operations manager. When information systems go down, Morgan is the one to call.

Though he already has two jobs, Morgan also finds time for freelance photography. He recently did an engagement photoshoot and has since been referenced for a maternity photoshoot.

“I never considered myself as a wedding photographer,” says Morgan. “However, the photos came out way better than I expected.”

Ultimately, Morgan wants to own his own “one-stop studio” for photography, videography and music recording. He plans to build up his clientele to make this happen in less than one year.

“I don’t want to be stuck behind a desk for the rest of my life,” Morgan relates. “I want every week to be busy.” Morgan says his former professor, Dr. Mary Tucker-McLaughlin, is the one to thank for his video and photography skills. He says he learned a lot by taking her classes and considers her to be one of his biggest influences.

“Dana was an awesome student,” states McLaughlin. “He was really into the technical aspect of communication so I got some software for him to practice with. I loved having him in my class.”

Morgan advises upcoming ECU graduates to do internships and not to take “no” for an answer.

“Don’t think outside the box because there is no box. People will also try to limit you, so stay true to who you are.”

Special thanks to:

Spring 2017 COMM 3310 Copy Editing and Design students for their contributions to this newsletter.
Duquette
continued from page 1

your job. It’s the only way you’re going to figure out what works and it could be the next great thing.”

At her current job, Amanda takes pride in what the Girl Scouts stand for and how she is able to empower and inspire young girls to take action in their community.

“We’re not just cookies, camps and crafts,” she said. Girl Scouts is the world’s largest leadership program just for girls, according to Duquette. Their goal is to help girls become more confident and willing to take risks and to teach them how to apply these skills in their everyday life.

Although many people know of Girl Scouts for their Girl Scout cookies, some may not know that the cookie program is actually the world’s largest girl-led entrepreneurship program.

“For six weeks out of the year, girls get the chance to run their own business,” Amanda said. “They learn about goal-setting, marketing, social-skills, financial management, ethical business operations and more.”

Amanda has worked with the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas for almost a year now, but she has had experience with the organization in the past. Aside from once being a Girl Scout herself, Kappa Delta’s philanthropy is the Girl Scouts of America, so she has had firsthand experience with them at ECU.

Barbara Bullington is one of the School of Communication instructors at ECU, and has had Amanda as one of her students. “It’s a pleasure to hear about her successes,” she said. “Given her past history of working with youth, I’m not at all surprised that it led her to her current position.”

In March 2017, Duquette was named to the Dallas Business Journal 40 Under 40. The award is given to top rising business professionals under 40 in the Dallas area and presented at an event in May.

Amanda is excited to continue to work with the Girl Scouts in the future, and considers Texas home.

“I love what I do with the Girl Scouts,” she said.
The School of Communication has opened the doors to study abroad in Asian countries with the summer 2017 trip to South Korea.

Dr. Jin-Ae Kang, leader of the program and SOC professor, is also a Korean native who traveled to the United States 12 years ago. She feels Korea is a place that is comfortable to her and a place where students have many educational opportunities.

Kang said she wants to “open students’ eyes to Asian countries” and “expand their comfort zones” through this program. She believes that this trip will provide students with valuable experience and exposure to globalization that will help as they begin their professional lives.

One stop on the trip some students are most excited about is visiting the 2018 Winter Olympics organizing committee in Pyeongchang, and meeting the spokesperson. The focus is to learn the trend of the sustainable international sports event and PR practice in sports.

Kang decided to focus on three themes throughout this trip: health, sustainability and giving.

Health was chosen as a theme because it is directly related to the SOC health communication graduate school program, said Kang, while the theme of sustainability ties into South Korea’s history of being one of the poorest countries 60 years ago to now hosting the 2018 Winter Olympics. The final theme, giving, will come into play when students visit Cheil Worldwide and Dream Touch for All to see pro-bono partnerships between an advertising agency and non-profit organization.

This will be a five-week program starting on May 15 and continuing through June 17. Students will spend the first three weeks taking classes on campus at ECU and will then travel to Seoul, South Korea for the last two weeks to apply what they learned through hands-on experience.

Kang said she thinks students will enjoy comparing cultures and understanding how public relations agencies run in South Korea compared to public relations agencies in the United States.

Destiny Teasley, a junior in the SOC and a student in the program, said she has always wanted to study abroad.
Study abroad continued from page 5

When she found out this trip was related to her concentration, public relations, and would only be out of the country for two weeks, she knew it was the “perfect fit” for her.

Teasley is most excited to meet with the public relations team that is handling the Winter Olympics in 2018. “Being able to get firsthand knowledge and learn something from someone directly related to something on that big of scale is astounding to me,” said Teasley.

Kang is excited to see how students react to the Korean food experience. “When you look at the food, you can see the culture,” said Kang. According to Kang, people often share food at the table and that will be a new experience for some students. Kang said, along with food, the language and size of the city will also give students major culture shock.

Plans for growth of this program are still in the works, but Kang hopes to eventually give students the opportunity to go on this trip every two or three years. She is also open to traveling to other Asian countries.

She hopes students will make friends and establish international relations through this trip. “Making friends leads to global understanding,” Kang said.