

# TOP 4 BENEFITS OF ENGAGING WITH THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

May 17, 2016 | by [Kerry Barmann](#)

Through hosting panel discussions, PRSSA's Half Day with a Pro, and internship programs, finding ways to open your company's doors to interested college students can be an educational experience for both parties. At Bohlsen Group, we always jump on an opportunity to host a group of students. From as close as our neighbors at IUPUI and Butler University, to as far as Taylor University and Anderson University, we love connecting with students, learning about tomorrow's professionals, and introducing our company culture to others.

Based on our experience, here are the top four benefits of engaging with your college community.

## ENHANCES THE CLASSROOM EDUCATION THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Office visits, panel discussions, and internships help college students put action and meaning behind their classroom lessons. As intern-turned-publicist [Elizabeth Coomer](#) said,

“Public relations at school is different; it's all relative and abstract. Interning at Bohlsen Group made it a concrete idea and made sense of everything that I had learned for the past three years.”

Being able to share in the students' education helps them get a deeper understanding of the work, but also allows you as a company to shape the future members of the public relations field through example and advice.

## FACILITATES NETWORKING FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

Speaking of shaping the future young professionals, hosting visits and conducting a Q&A session also lets you meet them! Hearing their questions and gaining their perspectives on trends can challenge you to either rethink or explain your approach to a particular issue, all while feeling energized by the students. These types of interactions can also promote networking between both students and staff in a less awkward context than perhaps some other events. Encourage staff to reach out to their college connections and pass out those business cards – the ones that haven't landed into the free food fishbowls at restaurants.

## EXPANDS REACH BEYOND JUST THE LOCAL AREA

By reaching out and working with colleges outside of Indianapolis, we've been able to introduce Bohlsen Group, our work, and our culture to students hours away. This gives them an inside look at agency life in Indiana's capital city, as

well as the people, projects, and perspectives usually only visible on our website and social media. While your company's representation online should be accurate and inviting, it's tough to beat the power of in-person interactions and direct communication.

### **PROMPTS COMPANY REFLECTION AND GROWTH**

While visits and internships are largely to give an experience and share insights with students, these engagements also provide an equal opportunity for the company and staff to assess how you are presenting yourselves, how your culture is being conveyed, and what areas may have room for improvement. After a group leaves or an internship session ends, it's just as important to debrief as it was to prepare. What student questions were difficult to answer? How can interns feel more supported? Did the panel provide varied enough backgrounds? Taking this time helps ensure positive company growth and enhanced interactions in the future. After all, we all have something to learn from each other.

Know someone who is looking for an internship opportunity this fall? Fall intern applications are due for our corporate and events & entertainment divisions on June 17. [Visit here to apply.](#)