



SJSM/SAM'S CLUB MENTORING CIRCLE



Overview

The Sam's Club Mentoring Circle is a structured, corporate-led professional development initiative designed to prepare SJSM students for careers in corporate communications and related fields. Administered in partnership with Sam's Club, the program connects students with experienced corporate communications professionals who provide direct mentorship, career guidance, and industry insight. It is an opportunity for ADPR students to network with professionals who can serve as mentors while in college and also after graduation. To participate, you must be a junior or senior majoring in Advertising and Public Relations. Application forms will be emailed to all juniors and seniors each September.

This mentoring program provides up to ten students with direct exposure to corporate leadership, practical skill development, and experiential learning opportunities that enhance both career readiness and professional confidence.

Purpose

The program aims to:

- Equip students with practical knowledge of corporate communications roles and expectations.
- Develop essential professional materials, including a polished résumé and professional portfolio.
- Expose students to real-world corporate communication strategies and practices.
- Foster networking relationships between students and corporate professionals.

Leadership

This initiative, coordinated by Dr. Lucy Brown, a Teaching Assistant Professor of Advertising and Public Relations, serves as a high-impact bridge between academic preparation and corporate practice. The mentoring sessions are led by Steven Zapata, Director of Corporate Communications at Sam's Club. Under his leadership, corporate communications professionals from Sam's Club serve as mentors, sharing their expertise in internal communications, media relations, brand messaging, crisis communication, and corporate storytelling.

Structure and Format

The mentoring circle meets over four consecutive Fridays in the fall semester:

- **First Two Fridays – Reading Room Sessions (KIMP 113)**

The first two and last sessions will be held in the Reading Room and will focus on professional skill development and industry engagement:

- **Industry Insight:** Corporate communications professionals will share career pathways, workplace expectations, and emerging trends in corporate communications.
- **Résumé Development Workshop:** Students will draft and refine professional résumés tailored to corporate communications roles, receiving individualized feedback from mentors.

- **Portfolio Development:** Students will curate and strengthen their professional portfolios, including writing samples, campaign materials, digital content, and strategic communication projects.
- **Third Friday – Corporate Site Visit in Bentonville**
This session will include a guided tour of the Sam’s Club Home Office. During this visit, students will observe the corporate environment firsthand, engage with communications team members, and gain insight into daily operations and strategic communication functions within a major corporation.
- **Fourth Friday – Debrief and Review of ADPR Portfolio and Resume (KIMP 113)**
Students present their updated resumes and portfolios to their peers and ADPR faculty for feedback. They also provide a critique of their Mentoring Circle experience and share their networking initiatives with their new Sam’s Club mentors.

Expected Outcomes: Upon completion of the program, students will:

- Possess a refined résumé aligned with corporate communications hiring standards.
- Develop a professional-quality corporate communications portfolio.
- Gain a clearer understanding of career pathways in Corporate Communications.
- Build meaningful professional connections with industry leaders from Sam’s Club.
- Demonstrate increased readiness to transition from academic study to corporate employment.