

# FEATURE STORY

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## Success at its best

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill.—“The best thing you can do is listen to your professors and take advantage of every opportunity they give you,” said Sarah Rohner, a Southern Illinois University Edwardsville graduate. Sarah has had many accomplishments stemming from her own advice. She graduated with honors, had multiple internships and landed a job with event management at the Gateway Center in Collinsville. She is well on her way to success.

Rohner began paving her road to success during college. As an SIUE student, she won multiple awards. Through PRSSA, she received the Lawrence G. Foster Award for Excellence in Public Relations, which included a \$1,500 monetary award and was runner up for the John D. Graham Scholarship, earning her a \$1,000 scholarship. Rohner was also on the Dean's List and was a Senior Showcase honoree and presenter.

“I felt very blessed and honored,” Rohner said. “I wouldn’t have gotten them without my professors. They are all so encouraging and would tell me to apply for certain awards; I did not have to look for them. “They want to see you succeed.”

Taking advice, she heard during her first public relations class, Rohner also saved time in her busy schedule for internships. “The first thing Stacey Howard said in my Intro to PR class was that in this field, you need two to three internships on your resume when you graduate to be a competitor in this field. As soon as I heard that, I thought I better get on it.”

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Her first internship was with Financial Solutions Network in Edwardsville and her second was with Think Tank PR & Marketing. The more competitive internships require applicants to have previous internship experience. Rohner said taking the initiative to begin her internships early helped her land her last internship with the St. Louis Rams, and she is currently still helping the Rams in her free time.

Since Rohner has completed her degree and has now landed a job, she has a few tips that she would like to tell all Speech Communication students. “Build relationships – PR is about who you know. I landed all of my internships and jobs through building relationships,” said Rohner. “Never go to an interview empty handed– landing stories and printing copies to take with you at your interview is my secret weapon. Shhh! So try to write any chance you get.”

Overall Rohner is very happy with the decisions she made during her time at SIUE, and she is confident those decisions helped get her the job she has today.

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