

# Alumni Spotlight: Olelakan's advice for PW Majors

by Robert Conditt III

Navigating the open job market can be a daunting experience for Professional Writing (PW) majors. The versatility of the degree can be a real asset, but it can also make it hard for some to hone down and find what kind of job they would like or even one that appeals to them.

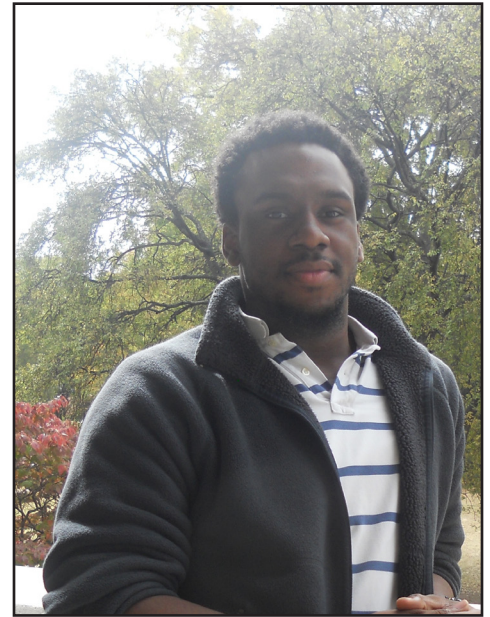
Professional writing is a unique discipline that spans a wide range of professions across an equally wide range of industries. Some of these professions may seem like obvious choices to PW majors, like journalism, editing, or copywriting. But there are some jobs out there that are less obvious, and can be quite rewarding for graduates of this concentration. Businesses today require lots of written documentation. Documentation that ranges from executive level memos and reports to company-wide letters and policy documents, all the way down to the daily orders that workers must follow and complete. Professional writers are needed to create and write these documents, but these types of job opportunities can still be difficult to find if you don't know how or where to look.

Olelakan Dada is a recent graduate from UAB, with a Bachelor's Degree in Professional Writing and Public Discourse, who knows all too well this experience. Currently, Dada (as he likes to be called) is a Proposal Coordinator for Diversified Maintenance (formerly Rite Way Services.) Diversified Maintenance is a janitorial and housekeeping service provider. As a Proposal Coordinator, Dada is responsible for writing the business proposals his company submits to potential clients in hopes to garner contracts. These proposals are the documents upon which client's base the decision to hire or pass on his company's services. Olelakan enjoys this position

and how it constantly challenges his skills as a writer, but finding it was still a difficult process. In a recent interview Dada shared his experience in navigating the open job market. He discussed the strategy he used in finding a job, some pointers for future graduates, and some of the unexpected things that he found as he entered the professional sphere.

After graduating, Dada says that his strategy for employment involved online job searches. The site that got him his current job was indeed.com. He recommends that site for anyone looking to work with small companies. The key, he says, to looking online for a job is to be specific about your searches. This is one of the unexpected things that he found when he entered the job pool, "You can't just type in writer and expect to find a job, well, at least not in Birmingham. You have to look for communicator or marketing associate." In essence, you have to know the title of the job you may be interested in, "then tailor your résumé to that job."

Having an online résumé, as well as a personal website with a digital portfolio of his previous work helped him immensely in marketing himself to potential employers. He built these in a Digital Media class taught by UAB's own Dr. Bacha. He mentions this after being asked about how UAB has prepared him for the job market. "Knowing these skills, and having a place where employers could see my work definitely gave me an edge." He also stressed the point that those who are still in school should keep their résumés up to date with class projects, "because employers want to see what you have done and proof that you have the skills you say you do." Being able to keep track of what you have done



and having the ability to "tap into to your memory on the fly" and know what you are capable of doing can help you get a job, and having good documentation of your previous work can help with that.

When asked about what advice he had for PW majors, or what he wished someone would have told him about being a Professional Writer, he said, "get used to short, hard deadlines. You may be given an assignment at like noon, and it has to be done by the end of the day, or first thing the next morning. You need to be quick and you have to make sure it's good." Having the skills to be an agile writer is a must and he attributes his ability to do so to the time he spent in at UAB. He feels that the classes he took as part of the Professional Writing concentration really tested and improved his skills as a writer. They prepared him for the work that he is doing by teaching him the "etiquette" of professionalism, and made him aware of the different ways to communicate. His final piece of advice: "Take everything that Dr. Bacha teaches seriously. Everything will pop when you see it in the real world."