

Forty under 40
2016 nominations
Alyssa Young

January 5, 2016

Dear Forty under 40 judges,

Alyssa's colleagues describe her as intelligent, honest, forthright, strategic, a problem-solver, conscientious, and professional. Given these descriptors, it is not surprising her associates also characterize Alyssa as a leader. It has been a privilege to witness this exceptional young professional as she has developed and exercised characteristics essential to being an effective leader.

Alyssa joined Drake University's communication team in January 2012 as a public relations specialist and quickly demonstrated her value through contributions that went well beyond her primary role. As she pursued a master's degree in communication leadership (which she completed in 2014), Alyssa applied what she was learning in the program to her professional role in ways that had a significant impact on the operation of University Communications.

Whether organizing a litany of objectives and seemingly conflicting priorities into a sound communication strategy, or critiquing a concept for its ability to present a message effectively, Alyssa's problem solving and professionalism have a positive impact on final results. Colleagues and campus partners alike depend on Alyssa's collaborative nature for mentorship and to successfully lead projects.

She has been promoted twice during her four-year tenure, most recently to assistant director of internal and strategic communications. In her current role Alyssa has addressed critical institutional priorities: her work has improved internal communications, enhanced engagement among faculty and staff, and bolstered campus spirit. She recently developed and executed a comprehensive weekly newsletter that is distributed to the entire campus; faculty, staff, and students have praised it as a powerful tool to inform and unite the university.

Additionally, she has strengthened the University president's communications, developed an integrated marketing plan to deepen Drake's international partnerships, and participated in a campus climate assessment initiative designed to improve the University's inclusivity and diversity. Her work has been instrumental in launching Drake's new Executive Education Center, and she collaborated with a team to develop the University's inaugural Women and Leadership symposium. These are only a few of the transformative initiatives that Alyssa has been involved with leading.

Beyond being involved in a number of University groups, such as All Staff Council, Alyssa has embraced Drake's commitment to community engagement. Her work has helped numerous organizations to find their voice and maximize their impact on Greater Des Moines. She is currently the president of the Habitat Young Professionals group, where she has helped the organization advance their marketing efforts, create an engaged membership base, and unify the HYP board. She is also secretary of the Lead Like a Lady organization, a group she's been involved with since its founding. During her time with Lead Like a Lady, Alyssa has led the development and execution of the group's communications strategy. And previously, Alyssa served as the marketing committee chair for the Young Professional Connection, and volunteered for One Iowa and the Youth Emergency Services and Shelter.

Alyssa will undoubtedly continue to advance as a leader and make valuable contributions to both the Des Moines community and Drake University. It is without hesitation that I offer my recommendation in support of Alyssa Young's candidacy to be counted among 2016's Forty under 40.

Deb Lukehart
Vice President
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