

Raising Awareness about Credit Unions

By: Jessica Wurst

Cailin O'Brien uses her reporting experience to implement modern marketing practices for the Georgia Credit Union Affiliates in an effort to make credit unions more present in financial discussions among Georgia residents.

In a presentation given at the University of Georgia in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication on March 26, O'Brien said that even though she always pictured herself as a reporter, her current position as media relations manager allows her to continue helping people through education.

"Here I have a mission and that mission is, you know, we educate people on finances, we help people afford life, and we tell people that there's another option out there besides the bank that you commonly think of," she said.

According to O'Brien, not many people are aware of the benefits that a credit union can provide. She works to solve this problem through various communication tactics and a strong online presence.

"We're always experimenting on several fronts," she said. "I am one of two people in my office that is under 40 so it's pretty much up to us to stress the importance of getting online and getting on social [media] and trying to bring people in that way."

In addition to raising awareness, O'Brien helps credit union employees communicate effectively with the press. This allows them to create a positive image in the public eye without detracting from their daily operations. In the near future O'Brien aspires to scale-up this process and incorporate consumer-focused messaging with a larger communication team.

"What has been alluded to me by my superiors is that I will be able to move up and take on the level of training them to message to media, to message beyond the credit unions, to message to consumers, and then I'm hoping that makes me a director of communications," she said.