The Spring 2023 Bateman class includes members of the Blue (B) and Gold (G) teams. Back row (left to right): Katherine Masko (G), Travis Chambers (G), Alexandria Manthey (G), Alexander Zito (B), Macy Rosen (B) and Grace Kindl (B). Middle row (left to right): Camryn Lanning (G), Sage Mason (G), Professor Stefanie Moore, Laina Rayman (B) and Madison Goerl (B). Front row (left to right): Cassidy Grentz (G) and Mia Elizabeth (B).

Just the Facts

COURSE: MDJ-41192: PR and AD Practicum Bateman Case Study Competition

TERM: January 17 – May 2, 2023

INSTRUCTOR: Stefanie Moore, professor in the School of Media and Journalism

DESCRIPTION: This course focuses on participation in the 2023 Public Relations Student Society of America's (PRSSA) National Bateman Case Study Competition. Each year the client changes.

OBJECTIVE: This course gives students the opportunity to develop and implement a real public relations campaign while working with a team.

ASSIGNMENT: According to the client brief on the competition's web page, "The News Literacy Project is a nonpartisan education nonprofit building a national movement to advance the practice of news literacy throughout American society to create better informed, more engaged and more empowered individuals—and ultimately

a stronger democracy." The client desires a comprehensive campaign that:

» Builds greater awareness about the News Literacy Project and its mission.
» Drives people to learn skills that will help them become news literate.
» Empowers people to help stop the spread of misinformation.

CAMPAIGNS: Two Kent State teams (Blue and Gold) were tasked with creating and implementing a public relations campaign that would achieve the News Literacy Project's goals.

Both teams used social media platforms such as Instagram to reach their target audiences. They emphasized the importance of news literacy in stopping the spread of misinformation (defined as misleading or false information that is hard to identify).

The **Bateman Gold team** targeted rural Northeast Ohioans, ages 18-34, with "Defeat the Deception." They wanted to increase awareness and educate the target audience about resources that can help protect them and their communities from the spread of misinformation.

Through research, the Gold team found that many rural Americans feel forgotten or powerless regarding media coverage. The key message "You Have the Power to Defeat the Deception" was born. The team earned an honorable mention in the competition.

The **Bateman Blue team** targeted college students, ages 18-25, and Kent State students who identify as Latine (a gender-neutral form of the word Latino, created by communities in Spanish-speaking countries).

The Blue team's campaign was "Truth is Trending." The goal was to inspire its target audiences to stop the spread of misinformation and to empower young people in the Latine community to use their voices against media discrimination.

KEY TAKEAWAY: To stop the spread of misinformation, it is important to evaluate and verify information before sharing or reposting it on social media. Both teams encouraged their audiences to use News Literacy Project resources such as RumorGuard and Checkology to help identify misinformation, including RumorGuard's five factors to evaluate credibility (see below).

—Cassidy Grentz, junior public relations major from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

FIVE FACTORS TO EVALUATE CREDIBILITY

1. Authenticity
Social media posts, photos, videos and screenshots can easily be manipulated or fabricated. It is important to determine whether what you see online is genuine.

2. Source
News organizations have guidelines to ensure accuracy, fairness, transparency and accountability. If no credible and reliable source of information has posted or confirmed a given claim it's best to stay skeptical.

3. Evidence
Many false claims are sheer assertions and either lack evidence or present fake and out-of-context elements. Evaluating a claim's strength of evidence is a key fact-checking skill.

4. Context
A common tactic used to spread misinformation online is to use authentic content (such as quotes, videos, data and even news reports) but change its context. For example, an old parade photo can easily be copied and reposted with a claim that it depicts a current political protest. Easy-to-use tools such as those found on RumorGuard can verify the original context of most digital content.

5. Reasoning
Misinformation relies on flawed reasoning and typically targets our beliefs, attitudes and values to overrule rational thinking. Consider cognitive biases and logical fallacies and question whether claims are based on solid reasoning.
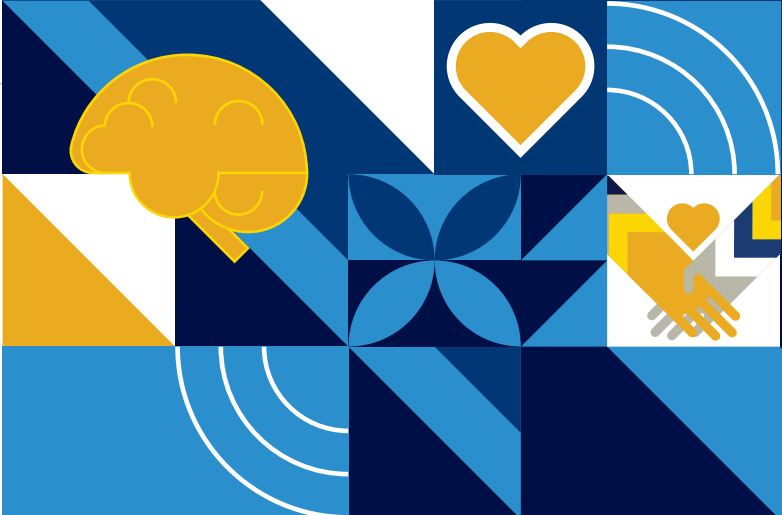
An Open Door to Health and Well-Being

Choosing among the many mental health and well-being services Kent State offers may seem daunting. However, with the recent launch of the Mental Health Resources and Support website, students, faculty and staff now have an online portal to the high-quality, personalized care and consultation available on all Kent State campuses.

Created by a team led by Talea Drummer-Ferrell, PhD '14, associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students, the new website empowers those seeking support for themselves or on behalf of someone else.

Use the portal to learn about the university's enhanced services and support for:

» **Mental health,** with expanded resources and more providers in Counseling and Psychological Services, including a flexible care model and after-hours telehealth support.

» **Assistance with unmet basic needs,** through the Crisis, Advocacy, Resources, Education and Support (CARES) Center.

» **Overall well-being,** with the recent grand opening of the Well Hub in the Warren Student Recreation and Wellness Center.

» **Advanced training and education,** through the Crisis Intervention Team and on-campus mental healthcare providers.

For mental health and well-being services and support visit www.kent.edu/mentalhealth.