

Interview Assessment #3

Name of Professional: Kasey Lovett

Profession: Press Secretary

Company: Office of Representative Tommy Tuberville (AL)

Date of Interview: 7/26/2021

Assessment:

This week I had the opportunity to interview a past ISM alumni, Kasey Lovett. I had gotten in contact with Kasey through Coach Goff because we studied very similar topics in ISM 1. Kasey is a graduate of the University of Arkansas with a bachelor's degree in both political science and communication. She also interned at the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce and then went on to intern at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C. She then climbed the ladder of communications in the House of Representatives and held the positions of press secretary and communications director for Congressman Chuck Fleischmann. She then became the press secretary for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is now the press secretary for Senator Tommy Tuberville from Alabama.

Prior to this interview the position of press secretary was something I was interested in looking into but never actually took the steps to research, so I was very excited to get the chance to speak with Ms. Lovett. The first question I asked her was what were the primary tasks or skills that go into working as a press secretary, and she answered with media management, damage control, and knowing your platforms and audiences. She spoke of how when working for an elected official your job is to really establish what their platform and positions are on different issues or topics. It's also your job to make sure that the correct information is put out in a way that can't be misconstrued. This usually occurs after the fact which is where the damage control aspect comes into play. Depending on the situation or the issues at hand different news/information outlets will convey an official's words in their own way. I touched on this idea during my research last year, and Kasey said that it's her job to reach out to these news outlets and correct any discrepancies or issues that could be damaging to Senator Tuberville. A piece of advice that she gave me during our interview to make sure nothing gets overlooked or misconstrued is to always record everything. If your representative or senator is doing any sort of interview or speaking to constituents or performing a speech, make sure it is recorded word for word and you can easily quote it for quick reference. Another question I had for Kasey was the difference between her position with the department of housing and urban development vs. working for a specific legislator. The primary difference she noted was that when working with a department your scope of information is more niche and specific. In that position, your job is to really focus on the agenda and priorities of that department and to spread that information and to get it into the news while when working for a legislator your job is a lot broader in the sense of the issues or topics you would have to look into. She also

mentioned that when she worked for a department she had a lot more opportunities to travel for work and to work on bigger projects. Another aspect of her position that Kasey stressed was that as a press secretary you “always have to be on”. Meaning that there is really no time to stop and rest and that you have to be ready for anything that could happen and you have to be prepared to jump into action and to put out any fires that could pop up.

Overall I really enjoyed speaking with Kasey and she helped open my eyes to a potential job route I could take in the future. If my plans work out as I hope, UT has a great political-communications class that has a curriculum designed for students who want to do jobs similar to press secretary. I also have a lot of experience with managing different forms of media and spreading information from my time in FISSD broadcasting and I think it could potentially be a great fit.