

# PRSSA 2018

## Situation Analysis

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## Introduction

This document, established by the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) National Committee, sets goals for the future that will lead successive National Committee members toward a vision and ensure the Society's growth, advancement and achievement. This document will remain a work in progress and be updated annually by the current National Committee.

Included is in-depth information on current National initiatives as well as goals and objectives for future National Committees to support their platforms and programming, and a timeline of major responsibilities. In addition, there is an overall view of the future of the Society from PRSSA 2017–2018 National President Andrew Cook (and former National Presidents) located in the "Future of the Society" section.

The Situation Analysis should be viewed as a guiding document that has two roles. First, future National Committee members should build their platforms from this document and add their creative problem-solving and strategic skills to help advance the Society. Second, Chapter leaders should use this document when setting goals and initiatives. By working together, local and national PRSSA can connect and advance.

### **History**

In 1968, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) founded PRSSA to cultivate relationships between students and public relations professionals. PRSSA aims to foster understanding of current public relations theories and practices, encourage the highest ideals and principles, instill a professional attitude and encourage PRSA Associate Membership and eventual Accreditation in Public Relations.

### **PRSSA Organization**

On April 4, 1968, the PRSA Board of Directors created the first PRSSA Chapters at nine schools that met the charter requirements; these are the Alpha Chapters. Those charter Chapters were: University of Florida, University of Houston, University of Maryland, The Ohio State University, San Jose State College, University of Southern California, University of Texas at Austin, Utica College, and West Virginia University. Three additional Chapters were approved on June 28: Central Missouri University, North Dakota University, and Syracuse University. Kent State University received its charter on Sept. 13 and Northern Illinois University on Nov. 17.

### **PRSSA Management and Leadership**

The National Committee leads PRSSA and includes the following 14 members:

National President	Vice President of Digital Communication
Immediate Past President	Vice President of Events & Fundraising
Vice President of External Affairs	Publications Editor in Chief
Vice President of Career Services	National Faculty Adviser
Vice President of Chapter Development	National Professional Adviser
Vice President of Member Services	PRSA Board Liaison
Vice President of Professional Development	PRSSA Executive Director

Students on the National Committee serve a one-year term, June 1 to May 31, and are elected at the annual PRSSA National Assembly. Officers must maintain full-time enrollment in school through the fall semester of their term. The National Committee manages PRSSA while serving as a resource to members and Chapters.

Note: The National President position is a two-year commitment. The first year is spent as National President; this person transitions into the advisory role of Immediate Past President for the second year.

### **National PRSSA Website**

The PRSSA website experienced a major back-end and front-end overhaul during the 2016–2017 term. This included: a complete reorganization to improve its user friendliness and simplify its navigation, a complete redesign to reflect our Society's advancement, the enhancement of the site's use as a recruitment tool and editing and refinement of each page of the website. The website continues to grow and change, and future National Committees should be prepared to make edits while using this tool as a resource. All publications and communication that occur both internally and externally are posted on the national PRSSA website. The

National Committee should evaluate the content of the website periodically to ensure that additional materials are added as needed or as requested.

#### *Future of the PRSSA Website*

- The PRSSA website should be a recruiting tool and information destination for current and prospective members.
- Keep the website constantly updated and closely monitor it.
- Continue to move toward online usage for scholarship applications, award applications, dues, etc.

#### **Annual Report**

Each spring, the Publications Editor in Chief works with the other members of the National Committee to produce the annual report. This document summarizes the accomplishments of the National Committee and previews the next year. This document should be published each year before the end of May.

#### **Press Releases**

PRSSA National Headquarters and the vice president of external affairs write most press releases. Topics include National Committee initiatives, National Conference, National Assembly, the Bateman Case Study Competition and scholarship winners. The vice president of external affairs should monitor PRSSA activities to determine when such releases are necessary.

Other National Committee members and Chapters write releases as needed. The vice president of external affairs works with PRSSA National Headquarters to manage the publishing of these releases.

#### **Monthly Emails From National Headquarters**

PRSSA National Headquarters can send email messages to the entire membership. Emails are written by PRSSA staff and National Committee members, and provide general information, PRSSA news and updates on various programs. All registered PRSSA members receive constant communication through emails from Headquarters and a monthly email during the school semesters, issued by the vice president of digital communication.

#### **Membership Dues and Online Registration**

The biannual dues forms may receive minor revisions as needed to further encourage Chapters to submit these materials correctly and on time. Incorrect information makes it difficult to ensure all Chapters are in compliance with PRSSA Bylaws. When members omit their graduation dates, it is difficult to update their records and provide them PRSA Associate Membership information.

PRSSA allows members to use online registration for events and some campaigns, and digital forms for dues and membership. This process continues to be refined as it makes the registration process a much smoother and more seamless transition. Although National Headquarters works to make this transition easier, obtaining accurate membership information remains a challenge for each Committee.

#### **National Committee Monthly Reports**

To keep the other National Committee members updated on their projects and events, each National Committee member submits a report via the National Committee Google Group on the first day of each month. The report describes each Committee member's activities. These reports help the National President oversee the National Committee and assist the Committee in collaborating virtually.

#### **PRSSA Vision and Mission Statements (Established in 2016)**

##### **Vision**

PRSSA aspires to advance the public relations profession by developing ethically responsible pre-professionals who champion diversity, strive for an outstanding education and advocate for the profession.

##### **Mission**

To provide exceptional service to our members by enhancing their education, broadening their professional network, and helping launch their careers after graduation.

**Strategic Plan**

**Membership**—Build a more robust and engaged community of public relations pre-professionals. Grow the Society in numbers and in areas such as diversity, creativity and level of involvement. Recruit new universities and reinvigorate existing Chapters. Maintain PRSSA's reputation as the foremost organization for pre-professional students interested in public relations and related fields. Encourage the pursuit of lifelong learning.

**Leadership**—Provide superior leadership training to all members and enhance professional growth with meaningful experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. Act as thought leaders for the education and future of the profession. Keep pace with the quickly evolving nature of the profession and be innovative in advancing the Society. Lead the industry in ethics and diversity initiatives.

**Service**—Give back to local communities and professional organizations. Engage in pro-bono work through student-run firms and Chapters. Be an asset to members throughout their educational journey and beyond. Be approachable, honest and fair. Provide members with national, regional and local opportunities to network, share ideas and grow professionally.

## **Running for a Position on the National Committee**

### National Committee Election Applications

Those applying for a PRSSA National Committee position must submit an application, an essay, and a list of previous accomplishments and proposed goals (platform). Candidates are expected to review the PRSSA Situation Analysis, speak with the Committee member currently serving in the desired position, clearly understand how PRSSA functions and review the job description and responsibilities of each National Committee position.

### National Election Procedures

The PRSSA National Assembly is an annual meeting of Chapter representatives to elect national officers (except for the appointed position of Publications Editor in Chief) and vote on Bylaw amendments. Each PRSSA Chapter sends one official delegate to the event to represent the Chapter in the election proceedings. Any delegate wishing to amend the PRSSA Bylaws during National Assembly must submit a written request to the National President by the established deadline.

### Chapter Election Procedures

Each year, PRSSA Chapters elect a president, vice president, secretary, treasurer (or the combined office of secretary/treasurer), public relations director, historian, Assembly delegate and alternate delegate, and Professional and Faculty Advisers. To ensure uniformity among PRSSA Chapters, elections must be completed by April 18 so new officers may assume their responsibilities on June 1.

PRSSA recommends using the following simple, uniform election procedures from year to year:

At least one month before elections, announce the open offices, present the job descriptions and invite nominations from the floor at a general meeting. After a nomination is seconded, the candidate must accept. (Students may nominate themselves.) Nominations are closed when no further nominations are received from the floor.

Candidates have three days to return a completed nomination form to the Chapter secretary. The forms allow candidates to campaign for a position and the general membership to review all candidates' qualifications. The secretary should provide copies of the forms to each Chapter member at the next general meeting.

At this meeting, candidates present and then answer questions. Immediately after all presentations are done, a closed-ballot vote should happen. The secretary and other non-candidates on the current executive board should collect the ballots, count them in another room and then return to report the results to the membership and candidates. Old and new officers meet to discuss their expectations and goals for the next year. The new executive board assumes its responsibilities at the next general meeting.

## National President

The National President is the principal administrative officer of the PRSSA National Committee and liaison to the PRSSA Advisers, PRSSA Executive Director and Board of Directors. He or she organizes agendas and programs for National Committee and PRSSA National Assembly meetings. The National President supervises the PRSSA National Conference, regulates Chapter probation and charter revocation, advises and instructs National Committee members on policies and procedures of PRSSA and administers PRSSA Chapter and member award programs. The National President has the responsibility to initiate a platform, as do all officers of the National Committee when elected, and to maintain progress toward achieving the platform throughout the term to the best of his or her ability. The National President also works with the Immediate Past President to promote PRSA Associate Membership.

### Current Programs

#### PRSA Associate Membership

The National President and Immediate Past President work in tandem to oversee and promote PRSA Associate Membership. This program provides discounted PRSA membership fees to PRSSA graduates for their first four years out of school. PRSSA currently works with the PRSA New Professionals Section and PRSA as a whole to effectively communicate the benefits of Associate Membership and track progress from year to year. PRSSA works closely with the PRSA New Professionals Section to advocate for Associate Membership and active involvement upon graduation. The National President also should work to educate members about the transition from student to professional and include this in Associate Membership promotion.

#### *Challenges of Promoting PRSA Associate Membership*

- Students may be unaware about the benefits of joining PRSA as an Associate Member, and therefore do not join at all.
- PRSA Associate Membership is not perceived as relevant to students who are not graduating, and awareness of the value proposition differs from Chapter to Chapter and student to student, making this a subject that will need to be continually reinforced.
- Many graduates take post-graduate internships rather than obtaining immediate full-time employment, and face tight budgets, thereby delaying their interest in joining PRSA.

The future of promoting PRSA Associate Membership includes continuing to work with the PRSA New Professionals Section and providing structure to the program to close the transitional gap between the societies and help members successfully move forward in professional development outside of school and the workplace.

PRSSA and the PRSA New Professionals Section should work together on programming and communication to give graduates the tools they need to be successful in their careers. In addition, the New Professionals Section can help orient its audience on a career path that involves active PRSA membership.

#### Regional Ambassadors

In line with the current strategic plan's objective of growing the Society in levels of involvement while also developing students as future leaders, the 2017-18 National Committee developed a new tier of leadership known as Regional Ambassadors. The mission of the Regional Ambassadors is to engage each Chapter within PRSSA while strategically building regional communities within the Society and promoting National events and initiatives. This is done principally through the Phone Email Outreach Tree initiative managed by the vice president of Chapter development. Regional Ambassadors are regional leaders that play an important role in reaching Chapters that show signs of decreased activity or membership and may be in need of specific attention or assistance. Regional ambassadors may also be utilized to assist in promoting National Committee's programs and initiatives.

#### Tactics

- Assist the vice president of Chapter development in selecting a group of student leaders that are qualified and committed to carrying out the PEOT initiative that is representative of the Society's geographic and demographic diversity.
- Support the vice president of Chapter development in training and managing the Regional Ambassadors.

- Manage the relationship between the National Committee and Regional Ambassadors and facilitate opportunities for both groups to support and collaborate with each other.

#### Future

- Developing the optimal timeline to be able to best foster relationships between Chapter presidents and Regional Ambassadors.
- Ensuring that Regional Ambassadors receive sufficient value for their service to the Society.
- Develop the Regional Ambassador role to include chartering new Chapters as an additional focus

#### PRSSA Situation Analysis

The National President oversees additions and edits to the Situation Analysis. Each year, the National President should collect and review job descriptions from National Committee members. The National President also completes the “Where to Go” section, giving the Society a vision for the future.

#### Research

Based on his or her platform presented at National Assembly, the incoming National President must release the annual PRSSA membership survey in May before the beginning of the new term. The survey was first conducted in 2004 and continues to measure the effectiveness of national programming and composition of membership. The National President should work in tandem with PRSSA National Headquarters and the Immediate Past President to ensure a timely execution for this initiative.

#### Counsel

The National President counsels National Committee members throughout their terms. The National President should respond to the Committee’s monthly reports. The National President will hold a transition meeting with the Immediate Past President and PRSSA National Headquarters in May before the term begins.

#### Handbook Updates

The National President is responsible for updating the national handbooks at the start of his or her term while working with the Immediate Past President to incorporate best practices from the previous year, making the handbooks a more relevant tool for new Chapter leaders to use.

#### Leadership Rally

The National President plans and serves as the co-host for the PRSSA Leadership Rally, which annually invites incoming Chapter presidents and, as of 2016, student-run firm directors of Nationally Affiliated firms to Scottsdale, Arizona, for Leadership Rally.



## **Timeline**

### *Ongoing*

- Promote Associate Membership and the New Professionals Section via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels.
- Support members of the National Committee and Regional Ambassadors with responsibilities

### *May (before term begins)*

- Attend transition meeting with current National President at PRSSA National Headquarters.
- Work with incoming National Committee to develop yearlong, achievable platforms; conduct phone calls to go over platforms.
- Co-host PRSSA Leadership Rally and Retreat with Immediate Past President.

### *June*

- Attend PRSA Leadership Rally; co-host PRSSA Leadership Rally with Immediate Past President.
- Host National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Assist National Committee in revising platforms for the upcoming year.
- Assist in the recruitment and selection of Regional Ambassadors

### *July*

- Represent PRSSA at the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations board meeting in Chicago.

### *August–September*

- Draft letter to PRSA Chapters to encourage outreach and communication to PRSSA Chapters.
- Assist in training the Regional Ambassadors
- Assist in promotions for the National Conference

### *October*

- Serve as spokesperson for the Society at the PRSSA National Conference, the PRSA International Conference and the PRSA Leadership Assembly.

### *November–December*

- Work with National Committee to develop goals for the future; include in the Situation Analysis.
- Evaluate the success of Regional Ambassadors and make any necessary adjustments
- Edit the Situation Analysis.
- Begin preparations for National Assembly.
- Begin planning for the upcoming National Conference by attending the Conference site visit and participating in Conference update phone calls.

### *January*

- Release revised Situation Analysis.
- Represent PRSSA at the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations board meeting at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.
- Begin preparations for Leadership Rally.

### *February*

- Assist National Committee candidates as they prepare to run at Assembly.

### *March–April*

- Host National Assembly.

### *May*

- Update and release PRSSA survey to national membership.
- Assist incoming National President and National Committee with transition.
- Co-host the PRSSA Leadership Rally and Retreat with the incoming National President

## Immediate Past President

### **Current Programs**

The Immediate Past President advises the National President and works on special projects. The Immediate Past President shall perform all duties of the National President if the National President is unable to do so. The Immediate Past President also will help the National President promote PRSA Associate Membership, work with the PRSA New Professionals Section to assist members making the transition from student to professional and manage PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month.

### PRSSA Situation Analysis

The Immediate Past President helps the National President revise the Situation Analysis, including the “Where to Go” section and the next national survey.

### PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month

The Immediate Past President provides Chapters with support in strengthening their relationship with their PRSA sponsor Chapters. This support should include promoting PRSA Associate Membership for graduating PRSSA members, PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month in October, the PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Manual and other useful incentives throughout the year to encourage maintaining the relationship.

During Relationship Month, PRSSA strives for Chapters to host events with their local PRSA Chapters. The Immediate Past President must maintain Relationship Month’s success by:

- Making it relevant to diverse Chapters within the Society and promoting participation.
- Encouraging PRSSA members to continue to reach out to PRSA (despite possible past challenges).
- Encouraging Chapters to plan an event during October.
- Encouraging PRSA/PRSSA mentor relationships.

Past promotion for Relationship Month included Twitter chats, social media mini-campaigns, e-blasts and a series of posts on Progressions with relationship tips and Chapter best practices. Establishing more programs will solidify this program in Chapters’ routines.

### PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Manual

The PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Manual was designed to help Chapters understand the benefit of their relationships with local PRSA members and vice versa. It is an important tool for helping members form stronger relationships with local professionals and engaging potential mentors. The Relationship Manual was revamped in 2011. The Immediate Past President must continue to expand the current document to include more examples and case studies, as well as ensuring content is up-to-date.

### *Challenges of PRSSA/PRSA Relationships*

- Helping PRSSA Chapters find methods to connect with PRSA Chapters.
- Maintaining Chapter interest in PRSSA/PRSA relationships throughout the year.

### *Future of PRSSA/PRSA Relationships*

- Plan a joint PRSSA/PRSA networking event at National Conference.
- Incorporate more education about PRSA, what it is and why members should join.
- Increase the number of Chapters and student-run firms engaged in consistent mentorship programs with their sponsor Chapters.

## **Timeline**

### *Ongoing*

- Promote Associate Membership via existing PRSSA channels.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.
- Promote the PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Manual.

### *May (before term begins)*

- Attend transition meeting with next National President at PRSSA National Headquarters.
- Review National Committee platforms with incoming National President.

### *June*

- Assist with National Committee Leadership Retreat, as needed.

### *August-September*

- Plan programming and content for PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month.

### *October*

- Serve as spokesperson for the Society at the PRSSA National Conference when the National President is unavailable.
- Execute Relationship Month, including a Twitter chat.

### *January*

- Revise the Situation Analysis with National President.
- Promote PRSA Associate Membership to December/January graduates.

### *March-April*

- Attend National Assembly and assist with programming, as needed.
- Promote PRSA Associate Membership to graduating seniors.
- Assist in releasing PRSSA membership survey.

### *May*

- Assist incoming National President and National Committee with transition.
- Continue to promote PRSA Associate Membership.

## Vice President of External Affairs

The vice president of external affairs strategically advocates for the Society and profession on the Society's behalf, building relationships with key audiences and developing opportunities for PRSSA National media relations. He or she also oversees diversity and globalization initiatives.

The vice president of external affairs acts as a day-to-day resource for members executing Chapter diversity and media relations initiatives. He or she also oversees globalization efforts and build relationships with the Society's international Chapters.

### **Diversity**

PRSSA embraces all individuals regardless of ethnicity, culture, education, major, age, disability, gender or sexual orientation. PRSSA recognizes the importance of different experiences, perspectives, and voices in making a viable Society that aids the profession. In recent years, this has included those with physical handicaps, veteran status and nontraditional or returning students who seek to change professions.

The vice president of external affairs should work to advocate for diversity and its relevance to the profession. This includes writing blog posts, assisting Chapters with on-campus diversity initiatives, planning Diversity Month and helping the Society understand the importance of incorporating diversity into the public relations practice. He or she should take a special interest in executing the Society's Diversity Initiative (est. 2006, updated 2017) and should work closely with HBCU and HACU schools with PRSSA Chapters. When planning Diversity Month, the vice president of external affairs works closely with the PRSA Diversity and Inclusion Committee. In addition, the vice president of external affairs must focus on how the National Committee can better connect with the international Chapters.

### Diversity Initiative

The vice president of external affairs facilitates the PRSSA Diversity Initiative, which clarifies and enforces PRSSA's stance on diversity in the profession. PRSSA supports the Diversity Initiative of PRSA and encourages Chapters to recruit and retain a diverse membership and leadership representing the demographics at their school. Each PRSSA Chapter should evaluate how it will support the PRSSA Diversity Initiative and use the Diversity Toolkit as a guide to help promote and support diversity on their campus. In 2017, the vice president of external affairs updated the Diversity Initiative for the second time since its creation in 2005.

### *Diversity Toolkit Content Expansion*

- In 2013, the Diversity Toolkit was expanded to include a section titled "Guide to Recruiting and Maintaining a Diverse PRSSA Membership." This guide will help members understand the meaning of diversity and will teach them how to recruit a diverse membership from their college campus.

### *Objectives of the Diversity Initiative*

- Promote the Diversity Toolkit and help Chapters apply its principles; expand the Toolkit as necessary.
- Incorporate diversity into Regional Conferences and local Chapter programs.
- Teach members how to effectively incorporate diversity into a public relations campaign.
- Promote diversity through PRSSA publications and other channels.

### *Challenges of the Diversity Initiative*

- Ensuring that Chapters maintain and promote diversity and understand diversity's broad definition.
- Measuring which Chapters are utilizing the Diversity Toolkit.
- Helping Chapters understand elements of a diversity campaign.
- Keeping the Initiative and Toolkit updated and relevant.

### *Future of the Diversity Initiative*

#### Objective

- Continue to promote diversity to PRSSA members in new and creative ways.

#### Possible Tactics

- Promote the continued diversification among members.
- Encourage members to include students with disabilities in the definition of diversity.

- Encourage Chapters to participate in campus-related diversity events or weeks.
- Conduct an annual review to update the Diversity Toolkit

### **External Affairs**

The 2016–2017 National Committee proposed a bylaw amendment to realign this position to include external affairs. At the 2017 National Assembly, the delegation voted to change the title of the position from vice president of advocacy to vice president of external affairs.

The title change external affairs initiative places emphasis on the responsibility to strategically enhance the voice and presence of the Society. The vice president of external affairs should serve as a resource to assist Chapters in developing their own plan to increase media placements. He or she should also work with Headquarters to curate national news about PRSSA National initiatives and announcements.

### **Past Programs**

#### Advocacy Guide

During the 2010–2011 term, an Advocacy Guide was created to consolidate the necessary information for the vice president of external affairs. Incorporated in the Advocacy Guide are the Ethics Action Guide, Diversity Toolkit and High School Outreach Playbook.

#### Public Relations Student International Coalition

During the 2006–2007 term, an international coalition was created to study global public relations in various countries. The Public Relations Student International Coalition (PRSIC) was designed to educate existing members about globalization and the public relations industry in other countries and cultures. Nineteen country profiles were compiled online using primary research and online resources such as the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management, the CIA World Facebook and Geert Hofstede’s website on cultural dimensions.

#### Synergetic Education Outreach

Synergetic Education Outreach, a national education program, educated various constituencies about public relations and PRSSA. To further this program, PRSSA created and distributed a 10-minute DVD, “Public Relations 101,” during the 2007–2008 term. Chapters were encouraged to show the DVD to freshmen and sophomores who may not have chosen a major. “Public Relations 101” also was used to show to high school students or at PRSSA introductory meetings to introduce students to the Society. The DVD contained an overview of the profession, a summary of various specialties, interviews with professionals and information on how to pursue public relations and join PRSSA.

#### PRSSA Advocacy in Action

Issue: Techcrunch, a popular technology blog, posted a story alleging that a public relations firm used its interns to post positive reviews on the iTunes app store for clients.

Action: PRSSA provided guidance to its members about how to avoid and react to similar situations through a blog post, and encouraged further discussion of ethics.

Issue: Respectful discourse had given way to negative and personal campaign messages during the 2008 elections.

Action: PRSSA presented the Fair & Ethical Campaigning Initiative, encouraging Chapters to advocate fair and ethical campaign practices on their campus and providing guidelines for these efforts.

Issue: The public relations profession does not reflect the diversity of society at large, which deprives the profession of the creativity, sensitivity and innovation that varied perspectives can provide.

Action: PRSSA implemented the Diversity Initiative and created the diversity toolkit to help Chapter leaders increase diversity among their Chapter membership.

Issue: The news cycle is accelerating, confusion over ethics is widespread and the attention given to the public relations profession is increasing.

Action: PRSSA added the vice president of advocacy, now vice president of external affairs, as an officer on its National Committee to address issues of importance to the profession and public relations students.

## **Future of the Vice President of External Affairs**

Moving forward the vice president of external affairs will work to balance the three areas of responsibility: diversity, external affairs and globalization. As an ex-officio member of the PRSA D&I Committee they should make sure that the Society's efforts parallel that of PRSA's. While in the position they should make sure that the Society reflects the climate of the profession but also takes into consideration current events. In the future, the vice president of external affairs should consider creating a resource kit for members to use in developing Chapter media relations.

## **Timeline**

### *Ongoing*

- Daily monitoring of trade publications and major news publications for advocacy issues.
- Supervise Chapter use of the Diversity Toolkit
- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels and editor in chief via *FORUM* and *Progressions*.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.
- Participate in monthly PRSA Diversity & Inclusion Committee phone call

### *June*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives (as determined by vice presidents).
- Begin planning for PRSSA Diversity Month.

### *July*

- Finalize plans for PRSSA Diversity Month.
- Update Diversity Toolkit, as needed.

### *August*

- Execute plans for PRSSA Diversity Month.

### *September*

- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.

### *October*

- Attend National Conference.
- Pitch National Conference to various outlets.

### *November–December*

- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.

### *January–April*

- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.

### *April–May*

- Transition the incoming National Committee member.
- Encourage Chapters to apply for the Teahan Chapter Diversity Award.

## Vice President of Career Services

The vice president of career services' responsibilities include, but are not limited to, recruiting employers to post internship positions on the PRSSA Internship Center; managing the PRSSA Internship Center; communicating Internship Center updates to members; updating and promoting the Career Resources Manual; answering Internship Center inquiries from Faculty Advisers, Chapter presidents, members and employers; working with the Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firm Agency of Record to create promotional material and conduct outreach; promoting the Champions for PRSSA and collaborating with other positions to promote national internship directories and resources.

### Current Programs

In 2013, National Assembly delegates voted to change the position title from vice president of internships and job services to vice president of career services. In 2016, the National Committee voted to officially include promotion of the Champions for PRSSA within the vice president of career services' responsibilities.

#### Internship Center

In July 2002, the PRSSA Internship Center was created as a comprehensive, online database of public relations internship and job opportunities for PRSSA members.

During the 2012–2013 term, the vice president of internships and job services held discussions with PRSA Headquarters to redesign and re-launch the Internship Center. In June 2013, the new Internship Center was launched and now offers employers and members a streamlined interface for job posting and job searching.

In 2014, the vice president of career services worked with National Headquarters to give Internship Center administrators the ability to personally post positions as an “employer.” This internal ability allows the vice president of career services to post positions without having each employer create an account.

In 2015, the vice president of career services took an active role in the PRSSA website redesign task force, which, among other sections, included an analysis of all possible areas of improvement to the Internship Center.

As a first-time visitor to the Internship Center, an employer registers and creates a profile, which includes contact information and a company summary. Profiles are included in all the employers' postings. A registered employer can add, edit or delete a posting at any time.

Members can log in using a MyPRSA username and password. All current PRSSA members have a MyPRSA account. To obtain MyPRSA login information, members must go to the Internship Center homepage and click “Retrieve your login or password.” Members and employers can manage their accounts independently, with assistance from the vice president of career services, if needed.

Members may post their résumés online for registered employers to view. Only signed-in employers can view résumés, preventing third parties from accessing members' information. Registered employers can search résumés by date, last name and keywords.

Each PRSSA Internship Center posting includes the company's name, address, website and contact person. Postings also show the date posted, the position available, a job description, qualifications, compensation and instructions on how to apply. The Internship Center lists opportunities in all aspects of public relations, including firms, corporations and nonprofits.

PRSSA Internship Center promotion occurs through Chapter mailings, *FORUM*, Monthly Update, the PRSSA National Twitter handle, PRSSA National Facebook and LinkedIn pages, PRSSA Twitter chats, updates in the Chapter presidents' Google Group, Career Development Month and Progressions.

#### *Challenges of the PRSSA Internship Center:*

- Lack of awareness of the PRSSA Internship Center by employers and students.
- Lack of employment opportunities in certain states and regions.

- Lack of awareness among PRSA membership.
- Low number of active employers compared to new employers.
- Low number of internships in popular geographic areas.
- Lack of students' knowledge about how to access the Center.

#### *Future of the PRSSA Internship Center*

- Represent as many dimensions of the profession as possible (i.e., agency, nonprofit, corporate, etc.).
- Represent as many states and regions as possible and continue to explore International locations.
- Grow the number of users of the PRSSA Internship Center.
- Implement a new Twitter account for the Internship Center.
- Create and implement new strategies through Internship Center communications plan.
- Continue to utilize PRSSA student-run firms to assist in Internship Center outreach and promotion.
- Compile and showcase employer and student testimonials.

#### Internship Center Statistics for Recent Years

Year	Number of Internships	New Résumés Posted	New Employers	New Candidates	Active Candidates*	Active Employers
2008	452	189	474	1,545	x	x
2009	156	206	182	1,375	x	x
2010	123	141	149	1,288	x	x
2011	231	264	196	1,228	x	x
2012	201	211	86	1,015	x	x
2013	147	80	129	2,502	x	x
2014	127	194	148	1,412	13,300	x
2015	168	143	188	1,160	16,675	104
2016	190	173	132	1,202	15,730	85
2017	277	148	239	1,091	18,311	129

\*Active candidate and active employers statistics are unavailable for denoted years.

#### Career Resources Manual

The Career Resources Manual began as a collection of webpages with interview tips, a skills inventory and a personal press kit. In 2011, the vice president of internships and job services partnered with the National President to update pages of the Career Resources Manual and create a new page covering the professional transition. Using the existing information coupled with new primary and secondary research, career resources should be continually updated. Lindsey+Asp redesigned the manual in 2015.

#### *Challenges of the Career Resources Manual*

- Increasing awareness and usage among members.
- Finding relevant secondary sources to complement current material.
- Identifying necessary new topics to add to existing content.
- Utilizing unique aspects of the Career Resources Manual effectively (ex: Student Activity Planner)

#### *Future of the Career Resources Manual*

- Increase promotion of Career Resources Manual material.
- Utilize Joomag as a platform that allows members easier access.
- Utilize the Student Activity Planner as a recruitment tool to collaborate with Career Services

#### Career Services Subcommittee or Student-Run Firm

The Career Services Subcommittee or a student-run firm working with the Internship Center as a client, if established by the current vice president of career services, encourages organizations to post employment opportunities on the Internship Center. Members of the subcommittee or firm may contact PRSSA Chapters to promote the PRSSA Internship Center and career resources or may conduct outreach to organizations to increase employer awareness of the Internship Center. Members gain experience such as:

- Interaction with the National Committee, Chapters and professionals throughout the country.



- Professional experience in a national PRSSA leadership role.
- Opportunity to polish networking skills and strengthen the Society.

The 2013–2014 vice president of career services organized a subcommittee of five members to conduct outreach to employers throughout the country. Each subcommittee member was assigned two PRSSA regions to focus on for outreach. Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firm Lindsey+Asp of the University of Oklahoma worked with the 2014–2015, 2015–2016 and 2016–2017 vice president of career services. Capstone Agency of the University of Alabama was selected in 2017 as the current Agency of Record for the Internship Center. Moving forward, the Agency of Record will be selected through an RFP process every two to three years. Note: Responsibilities of the subcommittee or student-run firm differ from year to year at the vice president of career services' discretion.

#### Champions for PRSSA

A new responsibility voted upon by the 2016-2017 National Committee, the vice president of career services will work more directly with the Champions for PRSSA. This relationship and promotion will increase awareness and value of mentorship through the Champions to highlight the important role they play in career development.

#### Intern Talk

In 2011–2012, the vice president of internships and job services (now known as the vice president of career services) partnered with the *FORUM* editor in chief (now Publications Editor in Chief) to introduce *Intern Talk*, a monthly Progressions blog post that touches on the many facets of the internship world. Generally, this is a written blog, but it also can be a podcast.

The series continues to cover various aspects of the public relations industry, giving PRSSA members the tools to secure internships and make the most of their professional experiences.

#### *Challenges of Intern Talk*

- Securing professionals to serve as sources for posts.
- Determining topics most useful to members.
- Determining effective timing for posts.

#### *Future of Intern Talk*

- Produce *Intern Talk* on a frequent basis.
- Increase promotion and readership of *Intern Talk*.

#### Career Development Month

The 2015–2016 vice president of career services designated January 2016 to be PRSSA's first Career Development Month. This month seeks to inform members of all the National career resources available to them through the Society. Tactics should be coordinated with the editor in chief and the vice president of digital communication, with the help of the subcommittee or firm of record as needed. The vice president of career services oversees all aspects of this month.

#### *Challenges of Career Development Month*

- Increase awareness after its first year.
- Prove its value to members to justify future Career Development Months.
- Develop new and original content for members.

#### *Future of Career Development Month*

- Increase career-related initiatives throughout the month.

## Timeline

### *Ongoing*

- Maintain recruitment efforts for employers and encourage members to use the Internship Center.
- Contact new employers to encourage posting of internship opportunities.
- Work with vice president of digital communication and editor in chief to promote platform via social media channels and publications.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.
- Work with the Champions for PRSSA to promote offered resources

### *June*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Draft editorial calendar for Intern Talk, working closely with editor in chief.
- Develop subcommittee, if needed, or send out RFP to Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms.

### *July*

- Finalize any changes to the Career Manual.
- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.

### *August*

- Direct subcommittee or student-run firm to promote National Initiatives.
- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.
- Host kickoff call with Champions for PRSSA Co-chairs to discuss the year's goals

### *September*

- Encourage PRSA Chapters to use Internship Center to post new positions for their members' companies and/or search for candidates.
- Utilize subcommittee or student-run firm members to oversee regions.
- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.

### *October*

- Attend National Conference; highlight Internship Center resources to both PRSA and PRSSA members.
- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.
- Promote the Champions for PRSSA events at National Conference and throughout mentorship month.
- Prepare Career Development Month content to run in January. Coordinate with vice president of digital communication and publications editor in chief.

### *November–December*

- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.
- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.

### *January–April*

- Encourage PRSA Chapters to use Internship Center to post new positions for their members' companies and/or search for candidates.
- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Produce an Intern Talk blog post for Progressions.

### *May*

- Transition the incoming National Committee member.

## Vice President of Chapter Development

The vice president of Chapter Development's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, coordination of the Phone/Email Tree and immediate supervision of the regional ambassadors, programming for the PRSSA National Conference Chapter Development Sessions and Chapter President's Leadership Workshop, planning Leadership Training Sessions for the PRSSA National Assembly, planning PRSSA's Community Service Initiative at National Conference and serving as a resource for Chapters and their leadership.

### Current Programs

#### Community Service Initiative (CSI)

The vice president of Chapter development coordinates and promotes a community service project at National Conference. The story of the initiative also is pitched to journalists for traditional and nontraditional media placements with the vice president of external affairs. Creating the pitch involves strategic planning led by the vice president of Chapter development in conjunction with PRSSA National Headquarters.

#### *Some Past Community Service Projects*

- 2017  
Rosie's Place, Boston. Students brought donations for Rosie's Place, a women's shelter.
- 2016  
Richard L. Roudebush VAMC, Indianapolis. Students produced handwritten notes of encouragement and gratitude to local veterans leading up to Veterans Day.
- 2015  
Ron Clark Academy, Atlanta. Students donated new or gently used books to be used in a redevelopment of the middle school's library.
- 2014  
Access Housing Inc., Washington, D.C. Students donated travel-size toiletries to benefit homeless veterans.
- 2013  
Career Wardrobe, Philadelphia. Students donated women's business clothing and accessories to benefit local women trying to re-enter the workforce.
- 2012  
University of California, San Francisco Medical Center and Children's Hospital. Students created homemade cards on campus and on site to benefit those receiving medical treatment at UCSF.
- 2011  
Salvation Army of Orlando. Students donated clothing items for local community members looking to build their road to recovery.
- 2010  
For the Love of Children, Washington, D.C. Students donated ink cartridges, money and used cell phones to help FLOC raise money for new computers.

#### *Challenges of Community Service Initiative*

- Encouraging Chapters and members to participate.
- Promoting the CSI in the limited time after CSI planning ends and Conference begins.
- Finding a community service project suitable for the Conference location and facilities.
- Creating something members can participate in on site. If asking attendees to donate items, recognizing that certain items are difficult to travel with and can take up too much room in luggage.
- Creating an effective media list; thorough and proper media pitching and follow-ups with journalists leading up to and after Conference.
- Creating a way for students who cannot attend Conference to participate (remote participation).

#### *Future of Community Service Initiative*

##### Objective

- Launch a CSI that engages Chapters attending National Conference and also Chapters that cannot attend. The initiative could continue to exist annually after PRSSA commences the original program.

## Tactics

- Add a social element to the initiative by coordinating it along with a Twitter chat, or in a social environment – a bowl-a-thon, benefit night at restaurant, etc.
- Begin the search for a service project earlier in the term, with ideas ready to discuss at the Leadership Retreat; have all finalized by the first Phone/Email Tree).
- Keep in mind logistics – Will the organization come to collect the items? Do they have to be dropped off?

## Chapter Development Sessions

These sessions occur at the beginning of National Conference. Schools bid to share best practices in fundraising, membership retention and other Chapter initiatives through creative presentations earlier in the year. The incumbent vice president of Chapter development and incoming vice president of Chapter development select presenters with optional suggestions from the incoming National President.

- Select eight Chapter presenters, and one or two alternates if desired, using the following criteria:
  - Presentation will pertain to all PRSSA Chapters or members, regardless of size or location.
  - Presentation idea is adequate for allotted 25 minutes.
  - Topic is unique but relevant and incorporates a “how to” element (e.g., how to retain members, how to fundraise for Conference, etc.).

Divide Chapters into four sessions (two 20–25 minute presentations for each and 5–10 minutes Q&A), pairing complementary topics and appropriate titles. Email a congratulatory message when selected and follow up with an email in June, including initial thoughts about the application, what made it stand out and what will need work.

Work with Chapters beginning the summer before National Conference to ensure Chapters have necessary information, guidance and supplies for their presentations. Provide Chapters with a deadline tracker that outlines checkpoints throughout the summer and into October. Be available for questions and advice. All sessions will be made available on the PRSSA website.

Arrange weekly conference calls with each team for September. During the calls, Chapters should present as if they were at Conference, including submitting their presentations for review. Make suggestions, give constructive feedback and check slideshows for errors and proper PRSSA style usage. Make them aware that:

- A computer and USB drive must be brought with their presentations on them.
- Internet access is unavailable in the hotel.
- Each Chapter using a Mac needs to bring an HDMI cord.
- All PowerPoints should be saved as a PDF to avoid formatting errors when switching computers.

Before National Conference, assign each National Committee member (except vice president of Chapter development and National President) a session to introduce. Provide the presenters' names and the Chapter contact's phone number. National Committee members may contact presenting groups to prepare.

Check in regularly with presenting Chapter contacts as needed leading up to National Conference. Presenting Chapters should arrive at Conference as early as possible to avoid travel delays. If the time frame permits, coordinate in-person rehearsals with presenting Chapters.

Work with presenters after Conference to publish presentations online on the Chapter Development Session section of the website so members who did not attend National Conference can still receive the valuable information provided.

## *Challenges of Chapter Development Sessions*

- Keeping Chapters on target with their sessions and topics, and providing constructive criticism.
- Maintaining communication with presenting Chapters during the summer.
- Effectively balancing all responsibilities on-site at National Conference.
- Keeping Chapters motivated to adjust presentation to an online format after Conference.

### *Future of Chapter Development Sessions*

#### Objective

- Continue to hold sessions that are original, exciting, diverse and provide members with beneficial information.

#### Tactics

- Have Chapters promote sessions ahead of time to encourage more attendance at Conference.
- Ensure Chapters are engaging during their presentations, and research other Chapters' alternative solutions so information applies to Chapters of all sizes and needs.
- Encourage new Chapters who have had recent success to apply to host a CDS in the future.
- Collect finalized presentations at least a week in advance of the event and utilize them as an online resource after Conference.

### Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop

The Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop is a development tool for Chapter presidents who attend National Conference. The vice president of Chapter development sets the theme, secures pro bono speaker(s) with PRSSA Headquarters' and the National President's approval, works with speakers to determine an agenda and contacts Headquarters with audio/visual requirements.

#### *Challenges of Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop*

- Securing speaker(s) and arranging audio/visual needs.
- Finding a topic that is not repetitive of another session at Conference or a Chapter Development Session.
- Tactfully discussing the presentation with the speaker to ensure it meets Chapter presidents' needs and the vice presidents' expectations.

### *Future of Chapter President's' Leadership Workshop*

#### Objective

- Continue this session as a leadership enhancement tool for Chapter presidents.

#### Tactics

- Presidents continue to look for tips about how to successfully lead in the following areas:
  - Goal setting and motivation
  - Chapter and personal branding
  - Fundraising
  - Helping members find their passions
  - Member involvement
  - Diversity, credibility/ethics
  - Substantive meeting content
  - PRSA and mentor relationships

### Leadership Training Sessions at National Assembly

Leadership training sessions allow the PRSSA National Committee, Headquarters and PRSA leaders to provide information and professional development to Chapter leaders. The vice president of Chapter development is responsible for the following:

- Setting themes and outline three one-hour sessions alongside the National President.
- Providing outlines to National Committee members hosting each session.
- Contacting PRSSA Headquarters with audio/visual requirements.

#### *Challenges of Leadership Training Sessions*

- Creating sessions that are beneficial for a range of PRSSA members and a range of Chapter sizes.
- Ensuring that the sessions have an interactive element in them to drive participation.

### *Future of Leadership Training Sessions*

#### Objective

- Continue to hold successful Leadership Training Sessions at National Assembly.

#### Tactics

- Continue three one-hour sessions.
- Continue with an ethics session, first introduced at the 2011 National Assembly with success.
- Develop back-up plans for sessions if they fail to appeal to the audience on site.

### Chapter Presidents' Google Group

The Chapter Presidents' Google Group was created in 2003 first as a listserv, replaced with the PRSSA Blog (now called Progressions) by the 2006–2007 National Committee and reestablished in fall 2008 due to interest among Chapter presidents who attended the first Leadership Rally. In 2012, the listserv was converted into a Google Group as the latter platform better suited members' needs.

The Chapter Presidents' Google Group is an open message chain through which Chapter presidents can ask questions and share successes. To receive emails, Chapter presidents must sign up via the PRSSA National website. The vice president of Chapter development monitors the Google Group and oversees the appropriateness of using it as a tool for promotion and announcements from PRSSA National with the National President.

#### *Challenges of the Chapter Presidents' Google Group*

- Getting Chapter presidents to pose questions to and respond to questions in the group.
- Increasing the number of Chapter presidents who join and respond to questions.
- Updating the Chapter presidents in the group to current position holders.
- Explaining to Chapter presidents how the Google Group operates.

#### *Future of the Chapter Presidents' Google Group*

##### Objective

- Continue using the Google Group as a resource and discussion platform for Chapter presidents.

##### Tactics

- Encourage Chapter presidents to join and participate in the Google Group.
- Provide topics of discussion to engage more Chapter presidents and open lines of communication.
- Use information shared on the Google Group as contributing information to the Best Practices Guide.
- Submit a promotion plan to the vice president of digital communication outlining planned interactive conversations (regarding membership, events, fundraisers, etc.) and continued promotion of the resource.

### C.H.A.R.T. Guide

Created initially by the 2006–2007 vice president of member services, the C.H.A.R.T. (Chapter History, Accomplishments, Records and Transition) Guide helps each Chapter create and maintain a record of its history and accomplishments. Its main purpose is to help prospective Chapter leaders understand the responsibilities of local officers, and ensure smooth and effective leadership transitions.

In January 2009, the C.H.A.R.T. Guide became a permanent part of the vice president of Chapter development's job description. The change to the Leadership Transitions Guide was suggested by the 2012–2013 vice president of Chapter development and completed by the 2013–2014 vice president of Chapter development to create a better understanding of what the guide offers. In the future, the guide will be made more tangible and moved online for Chapters to download and utilize.

#### *Challenges of the C.H.A.R.T. Guide*

- Promoting the content so that more Chapters use the guide as a resource.
- Some Chapters have their own methods of keeping historical records.

#### *Future of the C.H.A.R.T. Guide*

##### Objective

- Convert to the Leadership Transitions Guide and increase use among Chapters.

##### Tactics

- Promote via social media, *Progressions* and at National Assembly and Leadership Rally.
- Include the guide in the Chapter Handbook, along with a SWOT analysis worksheet for Chapter planning and transitions.
- Update annually, accordingly, including rebranding the material as necessary.

### PRSSA Phone/Email Tree

The PRSSA Phone/Email Tree is used by the Regional Ambassadors and National Committee to communicate with Chapter presidents. The PRSSA Phone/Email Tree was created to decrease the time taken by the National Committee to contact Chapter presidents and to encourage communication between the two parties.

The vice president of Chapter development is responsible for coordination of this program. Each National Committee member and Regional Ambassador is made the point of contact for a group of PRSSA Chapters.

The vice president of Chapter development is in charge of coordinating and training new ambassadors for this role.

The vice president of Chapter development should connect with the National Committee, Regional Ambassadors and National Headquarters at least one week prior to sending out talking points for each Phone/Email Tree discussion. The National Committee should reach out to their assigned region two to three times during the school year.

In 2012, the responsibility of the PRSSA Phone/Email Tree was officially transferred from the vice president of digital communication to the vice president of Chapter development.

In 2016, the PRSSA Phone/Email Tree included a video slideshow component, encouraging Chapter presidents to share National announcements with their Chapters in a digestible format.

#### *Responsibilities include:*

- Updating Chapter presidents' contact information.
- Emailing each National Committee member the Phone/Email Tree, which includes:
  - List of Chapter president contact information and Chapter information;
  - Talking points for email and phone conversations; and
  - Sample email to send out and sample script for phone call.

#### *Challenges of the Phone/Email Tree*

- Getting Chapters to update contact information via the Chapter Officer Form.
- Coordinating the 30 or more phone calls per person in a timely manner.
- Finding Chapters that have been absent on a national level and assisting the corresponding Regional Ambassador in establishing contact with the Chapter leadership.

#### *Future of the PRSSA Phone/Email Tree*

##### Objective

- Continue utilizing the PRSSA Phone/Email Tree.

##### Tactics

- Encourage Chapters to submit updated Chapter Officer Forms each year to provide the appropriate contacts for the National Committee, and provide National Committee members with concise, specific talking points for ease of outreach.
- Continue to develop the role of Regional Ambassadors and enhancing the training process.

#### **Timeline**

##### *Ongoing*

- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels and editor in chief via *FORUM* and Progressions.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.

##### *May (before term begins)*

- Review Chapter Development Session applications and select presenting Chapters with current vice president of Chapter development.
- Research potential organizations to partner with for Community Service Initiative.

- Review and revise the Regional Ambassador application

#### *June*

- Attend leadership retreat; share ideas for Community Service Initiative and Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop, and updates for Chapter Development Sessions.
- Contact selected Chapter Development Session presenters.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives (as determined by vice president).
- Release the application for Regional Ambassadors and work to recruit potential candidates

#### *July–August*

- Stay in touch with Chapter Development Session presenters; arrange calls to listen to presentations.
- Organize first outreach to Chapters via PRSSA Phone/Email Tree (phone calls).
- Plan Community Service Initiative and develop media list with vice president of digital communication.
- Finalize plans for Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop speaker(s).
- Select Regional Ambassadors and implement training, etc.
- Begin first round of PEOT in early August

#### *September*

- Send Chapter Development Session audio/visual needs to National Headquarters and plan rehearsals with presenters; assign National Committee members to assist and introduce.
- Submit finalized Community Service Initiative media list to National Headquarters for approval.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.
- Analyze and organize PEOT data to be shared with Headquarters and National Committee.

#### *October*

- Finalize all Chapter Development Sessions; obtain copies of presentations for online archiving.
- Execute and monitor Community Service Initiative, Chapter Development Sessions and Chapter Presidents' Leadership Workshop; attend National Conference.
- Pitch Community Service Initiative to media before and after with vice president of digital communication.

#### *November*

- Promote transitions toolkits for mid-year leadership transitions.

#### *December*

- Begin planning for outreach to Chapters via PRSSA Phone/Email Tree.
- Revise the Situation Analysis.
- Select topics for Leadership Training Sessions with National President, send to Headquarters for review and send instructions to National Committee teams.

#### *January*

- Choose topics for leadership sessions at National Assembly.
- Execute second round of Phone/Email Tree (phone calls).

#### *February–March*

- Distribute outlines to National Committee for leadership sessions at National Assembly.
- Attend Regional Conference and National Assembly.

#### *April*

- Review applications for the Chapter Development Sessions.
- Promote transition toolkits for year-end leadership transitions.

#### *May*

- Choose Chapter Development Sessions with incoming vice president of Chapter development.
- Transition the incoming National Committee member.



## Vice President of Member Services

The vice president of member services is primarily responsible for understanding and promoting PRSSA's member benefits. The responsibilities include, but are not limited to, recruiting new Chapters, working with current Chapters on recruitment and retention efforts and overseeing and expanding the PRSSA scholarships. This individual also will promote PRSSA to traditional four-year colleges, educate members about the PRSA Associate Membership, and oversee the Affiliate program.

In addition, it is now the responsibility of the vice president of external affairs to oversee the high school outreach program and execute the annual High School Outreach Session initiative at National Conference and assist Chapters in carrying out their own high school outreach sessions.

### Current Programs

#### The Affiliate program

The Affiliate program was created to provide students at four-year schools and community colleges not meeting charter requirements with professional development opportunities and select member benefits, such as *PR Tactics*, *FORUM*, access to the Internship Center, other educational materials from National Headquarters and contact with a local PRSA Chapter. Originally set for \$82 annually per student, Affiliate membership was lowered to \$65 in 2015, due to lower mailing costs that resulted from moving various communications to online publication. The vice president of member services oversees this program and acts as a liaison between Affiliates and the PRSSA National Committee.

In December 2006, the program opened, but was not promoted by PRSSA and the vice president of member services until the 2007–2008 term. In October 2007, the PRSA National Assembly voted to establish a PRSA/PRSSA Affiliate Task Force to contact and aid affiliates and potential new Chapters. In November 2007, the vice president of member services started a Community College Outreach Initiative to educate colleges about the requirements for a charter and encourage students to join as Affiliates. In March 2008, the PRSSA Assembly voted to allow international affiliates. The Affiliate Task Force concluded its work in 2010, leaving all Affiliate program responsibilities to the vice president of member services.

#### *Challenges of the Affiliate program*

- Members of PRSSA and PRSA are enthusiastic and want the program to advance quickly in numerous directions. PRSSA must focus on improving it before expanding the program beyond its means.
- Providing a PRSA contact for Affiliates who are too far from a PRSA Chapter.
- Educating PRSSA Chapters about what the Affiliate program is and what it means for them.
- Reaching Affiliate members and establishing an ongoing conversation.
- Helping Affiliates understand and use the benefits available to them.

#### *Future of the Affiliate program*

##### Objective

- Create and implement a plan for Affiliate member retention and outreach to community college students and other colleges and universities without Chapters.

##### Tactics

- Encourage grassroots outreach to engage Affiliates; create plan to ensure Affiliate contact occurs.
- Use Community College Outreach Session to promote the Affiliate program to potential members.
- Reach out to current Affiliates to assess the program's success and implementation.
- Pair Affiliate members with successful Chapters in their region.

#### High School Outreach

At the PRSSA 2008 National Conference, PRSSA hosted a well-received session for students who attended high schools near the Conference site. This event also was held in 2009, 2010 and 2013. In 2015, 2016 and 2017 the vice president of external affairs and other National Committee members conducted a high school outreach presentation at a high school local to the Conference site.

The vice president of member services should encourage Chapters to conduct their own high school outreach sessions in their communities. The goal of the high school outreach sessions is to further both the profession and the future professional. The sessions were incorporated in the Regional Conferences and Star Chapter application in 2015 to incentivize Chapters to engage with the community.

#### *Objectives of High School Outreach*

- Promote the public relations profession to high school students.
- Educate target publics about PRSSA and the opportunities offered through the Society.
- Support Chapters as they facilitate their own high school outreach programs.
- Encourage members of PRSSA to conduct high school outreach programs at the high school from which they graduated, allowing members to be advocates and mentor in their home community.
- Create an opportunity for PRSSA Chapters to partner with their sponsoring PRSA Chapter to conduct high school outreach sessions together so that students see the industry from a professional's point-of-view.

#### *Challenges of High School Outreach*

- Encouraging busy Chapter members to host sessions at high schools close to their own Chapters throughout the school year.

#### *Future of High School Outreach*

- Promote and distribute high school outreach handbook to help Chapters develop similar sessions and programs locally.
- Guide Chapters in building relationships and mentorship programs with local high school students.
- Annually update the high school outreach tools for members.

#### Day-of Competition at National Assembly

Founded at the PRSSA 2003 National Assembly, the Day-of Competition gives students hands-on public relations experience and an opportunity to meet and network with a range of public relations students and professionals. It supplements Leadership Training Sessions provided during Assembly.

The vice president of member services obtains a sponsor and client (typically the same organization) for the Day-of Competition. The client develops a public relations challenge to pose to competition participants. Teams of participants have one hour to develop a public relations plan and present before the client and other public relations professionals. The winning team receives recognition at the welcome reception and on the PRSSA website, and team members receive a personalized plaque and monetary reward.

#### *Challenges of the Day-of Competition*

- Finding a sponsor for the event.
- Promoting competition participation to PRSSA National Assembly attendees.
- Maximizing the experience of the 60 participants and sorting them into event teams.

#### *Future of the Day-of Competition*

The Day-of Competition will remain part of National Assembly programming. The vice president of member services should maintain records of procedures and potential clients for future use. Participation is currently capped at around 60 members. The current goal is to begin securing two sponsors to allow more members to participate.

#### Recruitment Package and Membership Guide

Every fall, PRSSA Chapter presidents receive a recruitment package from PRSSA Headquarters with talking points, handbooks and manuals, and copies of the Membership Guide. The Membership Guide, created in 2003 and redesigned most recently in 2015, is a one-stop resource for information about the programs, services and member benefits PRSSA offers. The guide includes the background on the Society; PRSSA's Code of Ethics, mission and vision statement; and information about the Society's organizational structure, communications vehicles, affiliation with PRSA, travel opportunities and scholarships. It also is available for download on the PRSSA website, along with a Member Benefits PowerPoint and fact sheet, added in 2013.

#### *Challenges of Recruitment Package and Membership Guide*

- Maintaining up-to-date information in the Membership Guide.
- Making Chapters and members aware of Recruitment Package and Membership Guide.
- Educating Chapter leaders on how to use these resources for member retention and communication.
- Ensuring Chapters are receiving and using the information provided.

#### *Future of Recruitment Package and Membership Guide*

##### Objective

- The Membership Guide receives updates over the summer and is utilized by Chapters to recruit and retain members.
- The Membership Guide is sent to Chapters with less than ten members in the Spring semester to enhance recruitment efforts.
- Maximize recruitment resources available online.

##### Tactics

- Include any new or updated materials from all members of the National Committee; review additional materials before adding them to the Recruitment Package.
- Include communication in Monthly Update, *FORUM*, Progressions and other channels.
- Share current best practices to help Chapter presidents recruit new members.
- Keep the PowerPoint and fact sheet updated with relevant information.
- Host a yearly “Why to join PRSSA” Facebook live or webinar event to educate all members on how to talk about PRSSA.

#### Scholarship, Award and Competition Promotion

With the help of the PRSA Foundation, PRSSA offers more than \$31,000 in individual and Chapter scholarships and awards annually. Funding comes primarily from PRSA members and their families, public relations agencies and the Champions for PRSSA.

#### *Challenges of Scholarship, Award and Competition Promotion*

- The application process may seem daunting to those unfamiliar with it.
- The lack of digital applications
- Receiving due dates in a timely manner from PRSA Foundation to inform members on when applications are open.
- Many members inaccurately believe they are not qualified for PRSSA scholarships or awards.
- Communicating with the PRSA Foundation; learning the exact dates of response to winners.

#### *Future of Scholarship, Award and Competition Promotion*

- Effectively brand and promote the Star Chapter and Pacesetter Chapter Recognition Awards as status symbols for Chapters to attain each year.
- Educate members about the requirements of PRSSA scholarships and awards.
- Infuse scholarship, award and competition promotion into Chapter programming.
- Promote scholarships and awards as a portfolio and recognition builder.
- Understand how online submission of scholarships can be well executed.
- Communicate with all scholarship applicants on acceptance and rejection of scholarships.
- Continue the Star Chapter award while also making a special distinction for Chapters meeting the five and ten year consecutive Star Chapter award wins.

##### Tactics

- Create and follow a standard promotion timeline for all scholarships and awards.
- Work with the vice president of digital communication to release scholarship and award information.
- Work with the PRSA Foundations to create an email notifying all applicants on the status of their scholarship application.

#### Community College Outreach Session (CCOS)

The Community College Outreach Session targets community college students and increases awareness of PRSSA and the Affiliate program. In partnership with the vice president of external affairs, the Community

College Outreach Session models the High School Outreach Session. Ideally, the session would take place during the PRSSA National Assembly.

#### *Challenges of the Community College Outreach Session*

- Locating an appropriate community college within proximity of the PRSSA National Assembly hotel.
- Handling logistical aspects of the session and establishing a concrete agenda that will benefit the target audience within a specific timeline.
- Establishing rapport with hosting CCOS professor and acquiring an appropriate keynote speaker.

#### *Future of the Community College Outreach Session*

##### Objective

- Host a CCOS at National Assembly and promote PRSSA and the Affiliate program.

##### Tactics

- Consider holding Community College Outreach Session on the Wednesday before the PRSSA National Assembly; must be able to work with hosting professor's class schedule.
- Promote the PRSSA Affiliate program.
- Incorporate elements from the PRSSA Membership Guide into the presentation.
- Establish a working document of all CCOS outlines, agendas and outcomes for future CCOS events.

#### **Current National Scholarship, Award and Competition Opportunities**

- Altschul Champions for PRSSA Outstanding Internship Award
- Axia Public Relations Scholarship
- Bateman Case Study Competition
- Betsy Plank/PRSSA Scholarships
- Chester Burger Scholarship for Excellence in Public Relations
- Daniel J. Edelman/PRSSA Award for Outstanding Public Relations Student
- Gary Yoshimura Scholarship
- Hall of Fame Award
- John D. Graham Scholarship
- Lawrence G. Foster Award
- Marcia Silverman Minority Student Award
- National Gold Key Award
- National President's Citation
- Ofield Dukes Multicultural Student Award
- Pacesetter Chapter Recognition
- PRSA Diversity Multicultural Scholarship
- PRSSA National Conference Grants
- Robin M. Urbanski Memorial Scholarship
- Ron Culp Scholarship for Mentorship
- Ruth Edelman/PRSSA Award for Achievement in Women's Leadership Development
- Star Chapter Award
- Stephen D. Pisinski Memorial Scholarship
  
- Teahan National Chapter Awards
  - Outstanding Chapter
  - Chapter Firm
  - Chapter Development
  - PRSA/PRSSA Chapter Relationship
  - Community Service
  - University Service
  - Chapter Diversity
  - Faculty Adviser
  - Professional Adviser
  - Chapter Newsletter
  - Chapter Website
  - Regional Conference

## **Past Programs**

### Recruitment DVD

The 2004 fall recruitment package included a recruitment DVD. The DVD provided a general description of the Society's mission and goals, with interviews of national and local PRSSA members. The DVD content is currently not in use among Chapters; future vice presidents of membership may consider re-launching this initiative. In 2013, the recruitment PowerPoint was included to allow for a recruitment tool the vice president of member services can easily update every year.

### *Recruitment Opportunities*

In 2016, the vice president of member services created a promotional video that is shareable online. The video highlights the voices and testimonials of PRSSA members and the membership benefits found within the Society. The video is updated and more relevant than the previous recruitment DVD.

### *Challenges of the Recruitment Video*

- Distributing the video to Chapter leaders for recruiting purposes.
- Educating Chapter presidents and members on the proper use and best practices for sharing recruitment materials and packets.

### *Future of the Recruitment Video*

#### Objective

- Implement a more enticing and relevant resource for Chapters to use in their recruiting practices and campaigns.

#### Tactics

- Promote the new Recruitment Video
- Consider creating a Chapter best practices proposal for use and distribution of the Recruitment Video.

## **Timeline**

### *Ongoing*

- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels and editor in chief via *FORUM* and Progressions.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Work with Regional Ambassadors to continuously promote benefits with Chapter presidents.
- Connect with Affiliate members.
- Promote and develop the High School Outreach Playbook.

### *June*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives.
- Contact all Affiliates to introduce self.
- Revise Membership Guide and Recruitment Package, if necessary.
- Begin contacting Chapters with less than ten members from Spring recruitment to establish relationships with incoming Chapter leadership.

### *July–September*

- Publicize fall scholarship deadlines.
- Recruit members for Affiliate program student subcommittee, if necessary.
- Promote recruiting tactics and best practices.
- Encourage new members and Affiliates to attend National Conference.
- Assist with “Setting the Pace” column for *FORUM*.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.
- Begin plans for High School Outreach Session for National Conference

### *September*

- Finalize plans for High School Outreach Session for National Conference.

*October*

- Attend National Conference.
- Execute High School Outreach Session at National Conference
- Begin promoting National Committee position to members.

*November–December*

- Publicize January scholarship deadlines.
- Brainstorm and research Day-of Competition sponsors; share with National Headquarters.
- Contact community colleges in the area of National Assembly to being working on the community college outreach session.
- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.

*January–April*

- Work with regional ambassadors to promote recruitment efforts.
- Work with Chapters to execute high school outreach sessions.
- Finalize recruitment promotions with Vice President of Digital Communications.
- Finalize sponsor and promotion materials for Day-of Competition; implement event.
- Plan and execute Community College Outreach Session.
- Publicize spring scholarship deadlines with strategic promotion plan.
- Assist with “Setting the Pace” column for *FORUM*.
- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Day-of Competition and Community College Outreach Session.

*May*

- Publicize June scholarship and award deadlines.
- Transition the incoming vice president of member services

## Vice President of Professional Development

The vice president of professional development's responsibilities include helping new PRSSA student-run firms start and improving existing student-run firms, with a heavy focus on Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms, coordinating the CreateAthon partnership and promoting ethical principles through Ethics Month.

### Current Programs

#### Student-Run Firms

The vice president of professional development works to enhance the network of all student-run firms, including those in their early stages, those seeking to meet PRSSA's National Affiliation standards and those already Nationally Affiliated. To foster this network, the vice president of professional development must:

- Stay informed on the issues firms face, while actively developing solutions with those firms
- Adequately help firms of different sizes and different stages of the development process.
- Revise the Student-Run Firm Handbook as necessary.
- Enforce the Affiliation standards and ensure they are achievable, yet stringent.
- Encourage student-run firms that meet the standards to apply for National Affiliation.
- Encourage Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms to apply for PRSSA Student-Run Firm Awards.

#### National Affiliation Program

Currently more than 20 firms have earned National Affiliation. Firms must meet standards in three categories: a solid PRSSA/PRSA connection, a high level of professionalism and an effective structure.

To be considered for National Affiliation, firms must submit the following:

- A letter from the director explaining how the firm exceeds the three criteria — ethical, strategic and supported — of successful student-run firms.
- A letter of support from the Chapter's Faculty or Professional Adviser.
- A brief history of the firm.
- A client list with a brief description of each organization the firm works with.
- At least one case study detailing a public relations program implemented by the firm.

Headquarters does not charge an Affiliation application fee or any sort of commission or fees once a firm is Affiliated. Once approved, Affiliated firms must reapply three years after the initial date to remain Affiliated.

Of the more than 60 student-run firms operated by PRSSA Chapters in the United States and South America, those that are Nationally Affiliated are held to high standards and receive specific benefits, which include prestige, access to special awards, listing on the PRSSA website and the opportunity to work with the PRSSA National Committee. These firms have the opportunity to be the first to engage with new PRSSA firm initiatives.

Recently added benefits include:

- Spotlight on one Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firm as the "Firm of the Issue" in *FORUM*.
- Firm directors receive special nametag ribbons and attend Firm Director Luncheon at National Conference.
- Potential to work with National Committee by responding to RFPs to take on PRSSA as a client.
- Opportunity for Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firm directors to attend the PRSSA Leadership Rally alongside Chapter presidents.
- Opportunity to host a CreateAthon event if selected through the application process.

The vice president of professional development should constantly seek opportunities and benefits for Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms. Such benefits may include more recognition and providing more tools and tactics for firm development and success on a consistent time frame.

#### Student-Run Firm Awards

While all student-run firms are eligible to apply for the Teahan Chapter Award for Outstanding Chapter Firm, the Student-Run Firm Award for Best Tactic and Student-Run Firm Award for Best Campaign were formally launched in 2010 exclusively for Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms.

Eligible programs must be executed June 1 to May 31. Award categories may be added in the future as more firms earn Affiliation and competition increases. The vice president of professional development should promote the award opportunities through all available channels. These awards will be presented at National Conference.

#### Student-Run Firm Handbook

Each year, the vice president of professional development updates and publishes the Student-Run Firm Handbook, which is available on the PRSSA website. The handbook contains information and advice on firm structure and best practices. Additionally, sample campaigns and tactics are included based on the best submissions from the Student-Run Firm Awards.

#### *Challenges of Student-Run Firm Management*

- Firms may not be closely connected with Chapters, making it harder to connect.
- Maintaining an accurate list of current firms and firm directors.
- Encouraging Affiliated firms beyond the three-year term to re-apply for National Affiliation.

#### *Future of Student-Run Firm Management*

- Increase awareness and recognition of Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms.
- Increase number of student-run firms applying for National Affiliation.
- Create valuable benefits for Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms.
- Create a stronger network among student-run firm directors across the nation.
- Discuss possibilities for a formalized national student-run firm director event.
- Better connect student-run firms with their PRSSA Chapters and PRSA sponsor Chapters.
- Provide a platform for Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms to share some of their best campaign work.

#### PRSSA and CreateAthon Partnership

In 2016, PRSSA and CreateAthon created a partnership, which allowed three Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms to host CreateAthon events at their respective schools. A CreateAthon event consists of a 24-hour creative marketing blitz that enables firms to complete pro bono work for nonprofits. Nationally Affiliated firms must submit bid forms and be selected by PRSSA National and CreateAthon staff.

#### *Challenges of CreateAthon*

- Promotions must be concise and frequent, otherwise there is a lack of comprehension.
- There is a great time and resource requirement from student-run firms, making participation difficult for some.

#### *Future of CreateAthon*

- Increase awareness and recognition of PRSSA and CreateAthon partnership within the Society.
- Grow the number of CreateAthon events happening across the country.
- Strengthen the PRSSA and CreateAthon partnership.
- Publicize the pro bono work and philanthropic aspect in the public relations industry.

#### PRSSA and Ethics

Ethics are systems or sets of moral principles and a branch of philosophy dealing with good, bad, right, wrong and responsible human conduct. The vice president of professional development should work to educate members of the Society about the ethical decision making process, bringing attention to those issues that could help demonstrate how an ethical approach can be taken to solve a communication problem. The vice president of professional development works with BEPS to provide and receive feedback and resources. In addition, September is PRSA and PRSSA Ethics Month. The vice president of professional development leads PRSSA planning to support this month in collaboration with BEPS.

Past promotion for Ethics Month included Twitter chats, social media mini-campaigns, e-blasts, a mini ethics case study competition and series of posts on Progressions. Establishing more programs will solidify this program in Chapter's routines.



The vice president of professional development is an ex-officio member of the PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards (BEPS).

#### Past Ethics Initiatives

PRSSA has introduced several programs in the past to address ethics issues.

##### *2005 Bateman Case Study Competition*

In 2005, Bateman Case Study Competition teams created public relations campaigns to educate college students on their campuses about the importance of advancing ethical behavior in academic performance.

##### *2008 Fair & Ethical Campaigning Initiative*

This initiative, introduced by 2008–2009 National President Brandi Boatner, encouraged Chapters to promote ethical public relations practices among candidates at all levels of the 2008 election. Review the Fair & Ethical Campaigning Resource Guide (PDF) for more information about this initiative.

#### Professional Development

Throughout the term, the vice president of professional development should work with National Headquarters to offer and promote professional development advice or programs. Past promotion included themed posts on Progressions and the frequent offering of PRSA webinars free to PRSSA members. The vice president of professional development can also promote events and Regional Conferences as professional development opportunities.

#### **Past Programs**

##### *The Firm Newsletter*

*The Firm* newsletter was created in 2008 to share student-run firm best practices achievements. In June 2009, this publication was discontinued as similar information is now included in *FORUM* and Progressions.

## Timeline

### *Ongoing*

- Assist student-run firm directors, Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms and Chapters starting firms with all needs.
- Seek professional development opportunities in conjunction with PRSA to share with members.
- Assist with Adviser-related questions.
- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels editor in chief via *FORUM* and Progressions.
- Participate in monthly teleconferences as an ex-officio member of BEPS
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.

### *June*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives (as determined by vice president of professional development).
- Begin contacting Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms to build a relationship with directors.
- Update the Student-Run Firm Handbook, as necessary.

### *July–August*

- Contact student-run firms and update database with contact information.
- Begin preparation for Student-Run Firm Workshop at National Conference.
- Begin plans for PRSSA Ethics Month

### *September*

- Promote Ethics Month via PRSSA channels.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.
- Finalize plans for Student-Run Firm Workshop.
- Plan student-run firm leader meet-up at National Conference.

### *October*

- Attend National Conference; execute Student-Run Firm Workshop; encourage National Affiliation.
- Announce PRSSA Student-Run Firm Award winners.

### *November–December*

- Contact Chapters starting new student-run firms.
- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.

### *January–April*

- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Encourage top-tier student-run firms to apply for National Affiliation.
- Work on promoting professional development opportunities to members.

### *May*

- Transition the incoming National Committee member.
- Thank student-run firm directors for their service.
- Finalize remaining National Affiliation applications.

## Vice President of Digital Communication

The vice president of digital communication's responsibilities include the following: issuing the Monthly Update; managing Chapter News; managing and promoting the PRSSA Style Guide and PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines; managing and promoting the monthly PRSSA Member Spotlight; and managing PRSSA social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat).

### Current Programs

#### Monthly Update

In 2014, the vice president of digital communication changed the Biweekly Update to the Monthly Update. The Monthly Update is typically sent out during the first week of every month. This update is emailed to PRSSA members, Faculty Advisers and Affiliate members. It highlights national event updates, National Committee news, scholarship reminders, upcoming dates, membership opportunities and other important PRSSA updates. In addition, the update links to PRSSA social media and new postings on the PRSSA Internship Center.

The vice president of digital communication collects and edits submissions from National Committee members, promoting specific programs and initiatives. The submissions should be 75 words at most. Once assembled and edited, the vice president of digital communication sends the email to National Headquarters for final edits, email distribution and online posting. At the beginning of his or her term, the vice president schedules the update so that the publication is released every month, and the content is collected from National Committee two weeks prior to sending to the President.

In 2012, the vice president of digital communication incorporated the "Pacesetter," recognizing a Chapter of the month whose accomplishments and Chapter improvements gained the Chapter national recognition. The Pacesetter winner is now chosen by the vice president of member services and included in each Monthly Update.

In 2013, the vice president of digital communication started including up to two selected images to utilize under important and visual blurbs. Also in 2013, up to three of the most recent Chapter News updates — linking to the PRSSA website — were included after National Committee updates.

#### *Challenges of the Monthly Update*

- Encouraging members to read the Monthly Update.
- Resolving the issue that some members do not receive PRSSA emails due to spam filters or errors in contact information. Recent changes from National Headquarters have decreased this number. However, it is important that members provide correct contact information to avoid missing updates.
- Ensuring that members of the National Committee understand what information to contribute and submitting this information in a timely fashion.

#### *Future of the Monthly Update*

##### Objective

- Increase the number of subscribers and the number of members who open the email by providing succinct and informative content.
- Increase the number of visuals incorporated.

##### Tactics

- Promote the Update as a member benefit.
- Create informative, reader-friendly National Committee updates that provide new information on current programs and initiatives.
- Highlight members and their successes in the email.
- Send out link to Monthly Update on social media channels and encourage National Committee to promote it.

##### Other Ideas to increase number of subscribers and opens:

- Make email subject lines more telling of what each issue has to offer.
- Send Monthly Update in the evening to avoid inbox clutter.

### Chapter News

In the Chapter News section of the PRSSA website, Chapters publicize or highlight events, community service initiatives, fundraising activities, campaigns and Chapter growth stories. Articles are submitted to the vice president of digital communication through [chapternews@prsa.org](mailto:chapternews@prsa.org) (linked from the Chapter News section of the website). These are edited by the vice president of digital communication, then the National President, then approved and edited by National Headquarters and sent back to the vice president of digital communication to be posted on the website. In order to keep Chapter News as timely as possible, it is recommended that all Chapter News be edited and sent to Headquarters within 5–7 days of submission.

Chapter News releases should be solicited through social media channels and through the PRSSA Phone/Email Tree. The best tactic for Chapter News submissions has been to personally tweet or Facebook a Chapter after seeing a possible news item posted or tweeted about online.

In 2011, video releases for Chapter News were first solicited and approved from Chapters. All members who participate in the video must sign the PRSSA video release form. The video is edited and reviewed by the vice president of digital communication, then sent to the National President and National Headquarters for review. Finally, the video is returned to the vice president of digital communication for posting on the PRSSA YouTube channel.

### *Future of Chapter News*

#### Objective

- Increase the number of Chapter News postings in press release and video format.
- Encourage Chapters to use past Chapter News postings as guides for best practices.
- Increase the number of Chapter News submissions by targeting any Chapter that has participated in or hosted a newsworthy event.
- Increase diversity of Chapters submitting Chapter News.

#### Tactics

- Use PRSSA social media to follow PRSSA Chapters and solicit Chapter News.
- Encourage PRSSA National Committee members to solicit submissions through their regional contacts.
- Use established Chapter News guidelines and submission process page to refer Chapters to how to submit Chapter News.
- Encourage more video releases for Chapter News for the PRSSA YouTube channel.

### PRSSA Style Guide

The PRSSA Style Guide contains the official style guidelines for PRSSA publications. The Style Guide is used in addition to AP Style for reference when communicating to PRSSA Chapters and members. The Style Guide contains PRSSA and PRSA terminology, the official boilerplate, other styles for PRSSA capitalization and more.

Following the PRSSA Style Guide is important for professionalism and cohesiveness when communicating to PRSSA Chapters and members. The Style Guide also covers how to properly write datelines and news releases for PRSSA Chapter News and National News. This guide is revised annually and promoted by this position.

The vice president of digital communication should consistently monitor Chapter usage of PRSSA style across all platforms and encourage changes if necessary.

### *Challenges of the PRSSA Style Guide*

- Adapting to industry trends and changes.
- Promoting as official writing guidelines without confusing members about AP Style.
- Increasing awareness of the guide.

### PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines

The Graphics Standards Manual was first developed in 2003. In 2010, PRSSA redesigned and renamed the publication to reflect PRSA's also redesigned Brand Identity Guidelines. The Brand Identity Guidelines explain the proper way to use PRSSA logos, colors, typeface and templates to maintain brand consistency.

The vice president of digital communication should consistently monitor Chapter usage of the PRSSA logo and brand across all platforms and encourage changes if necessary. The Brand Identity Guidelines are updated every year by the vice president of digital communication. The updates are presented to the National Committee at the National Conference for further discussion and approval prior to being published for member use.

#### *Future of the PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines*

- Create stronger PRSSA National brand consistency while allowing specific exceptions for local Chapter logos.
- Create PRSSA video branding guidelines for Chapters to follow, ensuring consistency across platforms.

#### *Challenges of the PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines*

- Enforcing PRSSA National branding while simultaneously allowing Chapters to adapt logos to industry trends and changes.
- Allowing Chapters to reflect creativity in creating Chapter logos while avoiding redesign of the official PRSSA logo.

#### PRSSA Social Media

The 2009–2010 National Committee moved management of PRSSA social media to the vice president of digital communication. The vice president of digital communication is responsible for the strategy behind all PRSSA social media usage and responsible for streamlining social media updates to official PRSSA accounts.

All PRSSA information and updates should be sent through the official PRSSA social media accounts before individual National Committee handles so that members and Chapters know to reference and source the PRSSA accounts for information and updates.

The vice president of digital communication should create weekly social media calendars to strategically map out key messages to effectively communicate via social media channels to be approved by National Headquarters.

The 2016–2017 vice president of digital communication' overall strategy for social media was to:

- Inform audiences of relevant industry topics.
- Explore best practices.
- Prepare students and pre-professionals to launch as new professionals.
- Share PRSSA benefits (scholarships, Twitter Chats, webinars, etc.).
- Build brand solidarity.
- Encourage two-way communication and engagement.
- Create and implement the Member Spotlight
- Showcase the diversity within PRSSA in partnership with the vice president of external affairs.

#### *PRSSA Facebook Page*

The vice president of digital communication develops content for and manages the PRSSA Facebook page to distribute news, reference posts from Progressions, promote events and answer general questions about PRSSA. Any questions presented via social media should be answered directly by the vice president of digital communication after consultation with National Headquarters and other National Committee members, if needed.

National Committee members should contact the vice president of digital communication with information on initiatives and updates that need to be posted to the PRSSA Facebook page.

Facebook is a popular channel for PRSSA to reach members on a larger scale. The PRSSA Facebook page provides a way to find news about the Society, watch videos, follow @PRSSANational tweets, read notes and find links to other social media sites and websites created by PRSSA.

The PRSSA National Conference Committee manages social media for the National Conference page.

#### *@PRSSANational Twitter Account*

The @PRSSANational Twitter account is used to deliver messages and reminders about deadlines, events and news, and used to promote posts from Progressions, host PRSSA Twitter chats and other PRSA- or PRSSA-related events and initiatives. The @PRSSANational account is an effective platform to connect with students and professionals to increase engagement, answer questions and connect members and Chapters to each other. Blog posts, articles, Twitter chats, Chapter News, internship/job postings and scholarship deadlines are all disseminated through the @PRSSANational Twitter account.

In 2011, the monthly Twitter chats were moved to the vice president of digital communication position. All Twitter chats should be managed from the @PRSSANational account as the official PRSSA account should be used and seen as the official source of information and communication.

The National Conference Committee manages the social media for the @PRSSANC account and Conference-related Facebook pages.

#### *PRSSA YouTube Account*

In 2009, PRSSA created a YouTube account, YouTube.com/prssanational, to serve as a multimedia database of video information for members to reference PRSSA local and national events, interviews from industry professionals and PRSA, as well as PRSSA leaders. The vice president of digital communication manages this account.

The YouTube channel also is used for National Committee, Conference Committee and Regional Conference updates. Chapters can submit Chapter News via video format for the PRSSA YouTube channel.

#### *PRSSA LinkedIn Account*

Since LinkedIn is a social media platform dedicated to professional and career development, the 2016-2017 vice president of digital communication and National President opened an official LinkedIn Company Page for PRSSA in the fall of 2016 to accompany the PRSSA LinkedIn group. The LinkedIn company page will share Progressions and FORUM content, internship postings from the Internship Center and industry news, along with occasional organization updates and event announcements.

The PRSSA LinkedIn group is one of the Society's top social media resources for professional development. It is used to stimulate industry-related discussions and to complement other social media vehicles. The LinkedIn group can also be used for occasional LinkedIn announcements and a place for continued dialogue between Chapter members and professionals in the workplace.

#### *Future of the PRSSA LinkedIn Account*

- Consistently share Progressions and FORUM content to increase visibility and discussion about PRSSA National articles and news.
- Consistently share internship postings from the Internship Center to show available opportunities and increase visibility of the Internship Center.
- Expand popularity of the LinkedIn company page.
- Thoughtfully promote discussions in the PRSSA LinkedIn group concerning industry related news to engage with PRSSA members.

#### *PRSSA Instagram Account*

In 2012, PRSSA created an Instagram account. This account creates a place for content from the PRSSA National Committee and general members to collaborate. It is used primarily in conjunction with other PRSSA social media platforms.

#### *PRSSA Snapchat Account*

In 2016, PRSSA created a Snapchat account. The Snapchat account will allow the vice president of digital communication to quickly disseminate updates and tell stories during national and/or regional events. It will be used to tell visually appealing stories that resonate with PRSSA members.

#### *Future of the PRSSA Snapchat Account*

- Explore other opportunities to utilize Snapchat beyond national and regional events.

- Allow other National Committee members to perform Snapchat takeovers, allowing for personal engagement with the Snapchat audience.
- Develop a strategy for paid/boosted content

#### *Challenges of PRSSA Social Media*

- Providing valuable information about PRSSA events and programs as quickly as possible.
- Developing an effective strategy to reach PRSSA members while streamlining communication.
- Increasing membership feedback.
- Reaching out to members on different platforms with different messages could mean not all messages are received.
- Managing all platforms at the same level of efficiency.

#### *Future of PRSSA National Social Media*

##### Objectives

- Increase number of followers on the above channels and provide effective information for members, while creating a dialogue among the PRSSA National Committee, Chapters and members.
- Continue implementing Snapchat geofilters at PRSSA National events.
- Increase the amount of PRSSA-created graphics, videos and podcasts.
- Improve the efficiency of acquiring and scheduling social media content through a clear, well defined process.

##### Tactics

- Keep messages consistent and follow the PRSSA Style Guide and Brand Identity Guidelines.
- Follow social media trends to determine if PRSSA should maintain a presence in that platform/trend.
- Engage members by asking questions, offering advice and responding frequently.
- Appoint a subcommittee of members to create PRSSA graphics and videos.

#### Past Social Media

In 2016, the PRSSA 2016-2017 National Committee voted to eliminate two social media channels on which PRSSA had accounts: Pinterest and Google+. This decision was made based on the lack of content and length of time between content posted to these channels. It was decided that these channels weren't a necessity for PRSSA and that time was better spent creating content for other channels with stronger followings.

## Timeline

### *Ongoing*

- Create social media calendar in conjunction with National Headquarters to plan social media outreach.
- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with National Committee to promote platforms via social media channels and editor in chief via *FORUM* and Progressions.
- Seek Chapter News, written and video, items from Chapters.
- Work with National Committee to create the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts.
- Promote content from the Plank Center for Public Relations.
- Serve as resource to Chapters in designated region.
- Manage and promote the monthly Member Spotlight September-May
- Coordinate and execute PRSSA National Twitter chats

### *June–August*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Plan the Monthly Update schedule.
- Plan the Twitter chat schedule.
- Update the PRSSA Style Guide and Brand Identity Guidelines, as necessary.
- Host a Twitter chat.
- Work with vice president of external affairs for Diversity Month.

### *September*

- Coordinate outreach with vice president of Chapter development for Community Service Initiative.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.
- Work with vice president of professional development for Ethics Month.
- Update the PRSSA Style Guide and Brand Identity Guidelines (if necessary), to be presented to National Committee at National Conference.
- Host a Twitter chat.

### *October*

- Attend National Conference.
- Host two Twitter chats.
- Work with the Immediate Past President for Relationship Month

### *November–December*

- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.
- Work with publications editor in chief for content focused on improving writing skills.
- Host Twitter chats.

### *January–April*

- Work with vice president of career services for Career Development Month.
- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Promote and select monthly Member Spotlight recipients
- Host Twitter chats.

### *May*

- Gather information and finalize the PRSSA Annual Report with the editor in chief.
- Transition the incoming National Committee member.
- Select Member Spotlight recipients
- Host Twitter Chat



## Vice President of Events & Fundraising

The vice president of events & fundraising manages the bidding, promoting, planning, hosting and attending of Regional Conferences. Other responsibilities include maintaining and updating the Regional Conference Web page and handbook, as well as managing and promoting the FUNdraising Bowl and serving as an event coordination resource for Chapters. This position requires strong organization, management and problem-solving skills, as well as event planning experience.

### Current Programs

#### Regional Conferences

Regional Conferences are planned, staffed and hosted by Chapters each spring semester. A traditional Regional Conference consists of 1–3 days of speaker sessions, networking events and socials.

Chapters interested in hosting a Regional Conference in the spring must submit a bid the semester before. Only Chapters who meet all of the requirements will be considered. Along with the bid form, Chapters are required to submit a letter of recommendation from their Faculty Adviser. All Chapters that meet the fall deadline will complete a phone interview with the vice president of events & fundraising and National President. Chapters with the highest total sum of points from the bid form and interview will be selected to host a Regional Conference. In the scoring process, location also is taken into consideration. The vice president of events & fundraising must make a fair effort to provide even representation of conference locations across the nation. Selections are finalized in September; all coordinators are then required to attend the Regional Conference Workshop conducted by the vice president of events & fundraising at National Conference.

The number of applicants, the diversity of topics offered through conference programming and the geographic range represented determine the number of selected bids. Generally, this translates to about 10 Regional Conferences a year.

The role of the vice president of events & fundraising is to address regional concerns as Chapters prepare to attend and/or host one of the annual Regional Conferences. Specific duties include:

- Promote the benefits of hosting a Regional Conference.
- Solicit and target Chapters located in areas with high member representation to encourage bid form submissions.
- Create and encourage open dialogue about hosting a Regional Conference.
- Review and select the current year's Regional Conference host Chapters.
- Plan and host the Regional Conference Workshop at National Conference.
- Act as a resource for Regional Conference coordinators.
- Provide Regional Conference coordinators with resources to better plan, program and promote each individual conference.
- Serve as the liaison between PRSSA National Committee and the Regional Conference coordinators; manage National Committee assignments for each Regional Conference.
- Encourage group communication and problem solving.
- Establish and maintain a relationship with each Chapter hosting a Regional Conference.
- Create a reporting method that outlines the effectiveness of each Regional Conference.
- Create a distinction between Regional Conferences and other regional Chapter events.
- Manage data from prior years' Conferences to better inform the next year's leadership.
- Incorporate PRSSA National Initiatives into each Regional Conference.
- Write an official letter on behalf of PRSSA to chapters' deans and department heads to affirm the selection of the bid.

#### Regional Conference Handbook

This concise handbook is a tool for any Chapter interested in hosting a Regional Conference. It carefully walks Chapters through the process of hosting a Regional Conference from the bid form to the wrap-up report.

#### *Challenges of the Regional Conference Handbook*

- Encouraging members to reference the handbook.
- Clarifying National Committee expectations.

#### *Future of the Regional Conference Handbook*

- Mandate bid applicants be more familiar with the handbook.
- Include a list of general concepts from the Handbook that interviewees are judged on.
- Include and/or reference templates including but not limited to an example of the bid-form document and an event wrap-up report for reference.
- Inclusion of a Regional Conferences contract.
- Regional Conference branding guidelines.

#### Regional Conference Bid Forms

Chapters' bid forms help members plan their event and reflect on their commitment to hosting a Regional Conference. Bids are judged independently – with no points given for past selection – based on the following:

- *Letter of Recommendation* – From the Chapter Faculty Adviser, expressing confidence in the Chapter's plan, coordinator, committee and Chapter officers.
- *Bid Form* – Shows the judging committee how creative, organized and prepared the Chapters are. The bid form analyzes the Regional Conference's theme, schedule, planned speakers, budget, promotional plan, registration process, incorporation of National Initiatives and High School Outreach, sponsorship possibilities and coordinator/committee details.
- *Bid Form Instruction* – Shows the Chapter's ability to follow the bid form instructions, including formatting, style and size (this allows for uniform entry and fair judging).
- *Optional Materials* – Any other material that enhances your application, such as possible promotional materials to be distributed at the PRSSA National Conference.

#### Regional Conference Phone Interviews

After submitting the bid, Chapters have a phone interview with the vice president of events & fundraising and National President. Interview questions assess the Chapter's ability to hold a successful Regional Conference and provide an opportunity for Chapters to explain and sell their unique plan. It lasts anywhere between 15–60 minutes, and the coordinator is required to participate. Additional planning committee members may join. Interviews are scored on a quantitative rubric; a total of 50 points may be earned in the interview, optional criteria may grant points for additional supplementary materials .

#### *Challenges of the Regional Conference Phone Interviews*

- Helping Chapters understand how much the interviews impact conference host selections.
- Having Chapters expand on their actual bid and overall plan for hosting a Regional Conference without detracting from the content of their bid form documents.

#### *Future of the Regional Conference Phone Interviews*

- To help Chapters better prepare and understand the fairness of interviews, it may prove helpful to include a list (in the handbook) of general concepts interviewees are judged on.

#### Regional Conference Bidding Promotion

To help ensure all interested and well-qualified Chapters are part of the pool of bids, it is vital for the vice president of events & fundraising to promote bid applications throughout his or her entire term.

The window of promotion was changed in the fall of 2012. After conducting primary research with members across the country, it was discovered that the previous window of promotion was ineffective (from summer to early September). Since many Chapters found it difficult to meet and plan a Regional Conference over the summer and the new vice president starts his or her term in June, it is now the responsibility of the vice president of events & fundraising to create a reserve of interested Chapters for the incoming vice president of events & fundraising.

Promotion techniques include soliciting and targeting Chapters located in areas with high member representation, opening dialogue among Chapter presidents to encourage future planning, and using social and digital platforms to better reach members. A great promotion plan utilizes *FORUM*, PRSSA National social media and Progressions.

Promotion extends to all Chapters. In particular:

- Chapters who have previously hosted a Regional Conference or expressed interest in hosting.
- Chapters in typically underrepresented areas.
- Chapters located in areas with high member representation.
- Chapters who have demonstrated leadership at other national PRSSA events.
- Chapters who have been recognized for leading other successful regional events in the past.
- Chapters who have submitted applications to PRSSA awards and presenting opportunities.

#### *Challenges of Regional Conference Promotion*

- Difficulty in reaching Chapter presidents after the spring semester ends.
- Difficulty ensuring the transfer of leadership at the Chapter level is being completed before the spring semester ends.

#### *Future of Regional Conference Promotion*

- Create a reserve of at least 1–2 interested Chapters in each region for the incoming vice president of events & fundraising. The Chapters in the reserve should be in the process of preparing to fill out a bid form. The incoming vice president of events & fundraising can assist these Chapters in finalizing their submission with the updated bid form.
- Better inform members of upcoming Regional Conferences and how to get involved.
- Create a promotional piece that can be distributed at Leadership Rally and National Assembly.

#### Regional Conference Selection

Chapters interested in hosting a Regional Conference submit the completed bid application to the vice president of events & fundraising, National President and the vice president of education via email. The bid deadline is in September, with a specific date to be set by PRSSA National Committee. The vice president of events & fundraising and the National President evaluate and select the following year's conferences after interviewing the coordinators and reviewing the bids. Chapters with the highest total sum of points from the bid form and interview are selected to host a spring Regional Conference.

Because bids are selected before National Conference, Regional Conference host Chapters should attend National Conference to meet with the vice president of events & fundraising and network with members interested in attending their Conference. Selected Chapters are all announced before National Conference.

Note: PRSSA does not follow the same regional distribution as PRSA. If a Chapter is the only Chapter submitting a bid in a specific region that does not ensure they will be selected. In addition, more than one Chapter from the same region could be selected.

#### *Challenges of Selection*

- Difficult to evenly spread Regional Conferences throughout the large regions in the West.
- Accurately assessing your expectations and following a clear and fair process for selecting bids.
- Remaining focused on the needs of the Society throughout this process.
- Encouraging Chapters in underrepresented regions to submit an application.
  - Ensuring that those Chapters will be able to meet their attendance goals.

If the goal for the term is to have an even distribution of Regional Conferences, adjust promotional plan and selection process accordingly. Chapters submitting bids need to know if they are competing against Chapters nationwide or just in their region.

#### *Future of Regional Conference Selection*

- Strategically promote for a more even spread of Regional Conferences bids across the country.
- Actively push for involvement in Regional Conferences and hosting from international chapters.

#### Regional Conferences Workshop

The Regional Conferences Workshop started at the 2000 National Conference. The workshop provides information about general event planning, how to submit a bid to host a Regional Conference and how to plan for and promote a Regional Conference once selected. The workshop's content is left to the discretion of the

current vice president. Previous workshops have included presentations by former Regional Conference host Chapters, lectures from event planning professionals and ideation sessions encouraging creativity and teamwork.

#### *Challenges of Regional Conferences Workshop*

- Creating a workshop that serves multiple audiences.
- Effectively using the time period given.

#### *Future of Regional Conferences Workshop*

- Promote the workshop as being beneficial for all audiences, including Advisers.
- Provide more interactivity and excitement, with more workshop focus.
- Employ the use of small group exercises that encourage group communication.
- Host a follow up informal session near the end of National Conference to brainstorm between host chapters.

#### Regional Conference Planning and Implementation

After National Conference, the vice president of events & fundraising helps selected Chapters prepare to host high-quality, successful conferences they can be proud of. Serving as a resource, guide and channel to national promotion, the vice president gauges conference preparations and counsels coordinators. The vice president calls and emails Regional Conference coordinators periodically to check in. Often, coordinators must submit communication plans or progress reports to the vice president. Since 2010, the vice president and coordinators imputed the task items outlined in the handbook via Google Docs. In 2014, the vice president introduced the use of Google Form reporting to better organize and aggregate information from year to year. The use of Google+ Hangouts and Google+ Hangouts On Air also was implemented in 2014. These live broadcast group video conferencing services allowed for webinar training sessions to occur in the areas of sponsorship, outreach, promotion, branding, logistics and programming.

The vice president assigns a National Committee member to attend each Regional Conference. Extra conferences are at the delegation of the vice president.

#### *Challenges of Regional Conferences*

- Creating a system for the vice president and coordinators to keep all information organized.
- Holding coordinators to deadlines and remembering to send reminders.
- Creating a strategic promotional plan to attract many attendees.
- Empowering Regional Conference coordinators to take personal responsibility for the promotion and success of their conferences.
- Promoting to attend a Conference that fits an individual's budget and interest.

#### *Future of Regional Conferences*

- Continue finding ways to promote Regional Conferences nationally.
- Create a timeline of when items are due to the vice president.
- Use data to better inform future leadership of trends and issues management.
- Develop contracts as an accountability system that is mutually understood and can be referenced.
- Create a Facebook group for collaboration and quick issue response.

#### Co-Hosted Regional Conferences

Chapters can collaborate to bid, plan and host a Regional Conference by co-hosting, which may bring together diverse experiences and styles. Co-hosting can work well, but comes with challenges. Regional Conferences were co-hosted from 2008–2010 and 2013–2017. Chapters should know they have the option to co-host.

#### *Challenges of Co-Hosting Regional Conferences*

- Co-hosts face potential power struggles or uneven workloads.
- Co-hosting works best when Chapters have clear reasons for wanting to co-host and already have built a relationship with each other.
- Co-hosting can have financial challenges or financial benefits.

#### *Future of Co-Hosting a Regional Conference*

- While the potential issues of co-hosting should be clearly communicated, the option of co-hosting should be promoted more strongly. Promoting this option to smaller Chapters will assist in the goal to provide more evenly spread Regional Conferences across the regions.

#### National Initiatives

Beginning in 2010, National Initiatives became a required part of the Regional Conference programming. Hosting Chapters can choose to invite high school students to attend their conference, incorporate charitable causes into their conference and/or include international elements into their conference. When the National Committee updated its Diversity Initiative in 2014, Regional Conference diversity became a key focus.

Beginning with the 2016 Regional Conferences, all host Chapters are required to include a High School Outreach component to their conferences. This was implemented to increase high school students' knowledge of the public relations industry as a future career choice and awareness of PRSSA. Then, for the 2017 conferences, a rubric change allowed for bonus points for National Initiatives, similar to the value added section.

#### *Challenges of National Initiatives*

- National Initiatives may change or receive a different priority.
- Chapters must be reminded of the National Initiative focus.

#### *Future of the National Initiatives*

- Ensure the focus of the National Initiative selected is discussed leading up to the conference.

#### Event Planning Database

Beginning in 2016, a database of resources started developing. This database included templates and examples of event planning resources such as contracts, sponsorship packets and Regional Conference bids from previous hosts.

#### *Challenges of the Event Planning Database*

- Finding a host space for the database, as being included in the Handbook could become overwhelming.
- Chapters were unaware the vice president of events & fundraising had the resources to share.
- Securing the samples before conference coordinators graduated or left for the summer.

#### *Future of the Event Planning Database*

- Make the database available online for Chapters.
- Promote the resource to Chapters.
- Integrate collection of resources into the evaluation system.

#### National Promotion

National Conference is the first major forum for Regional Conference promotion. With bid submissions increasingly more creative, it was realized that more forums for promotion at a national level needed to be available. Beginning in 2016, two changes occurred. First, the National Committee attendee who was assigned to a Regional Conference became their designated national promoter. Second, when Chapters were discussing their plans for promotion, it became apparent there were no designated forums for promotion at National Conference.

#### *Challenges for National Promotion*

- Working with National Conference hosts to secure time and/or space for Regional Conference promotion and create said environment in an unbiased fashion.
- Ensuring all host Chapters have promotional materials prepared nearly immediately after accepting their bid.

#### *Future of National Promotion*

- Suggest Logo and Social Media inclusion in the bid form.

- Be included in conversations with the National Conference hosts for the following year to provide a forum for Regional Conference promotion and adequately communicate that to bidding Chapters.
- Social media plan development begins with host chapters, supplying a full media kit for the vice president of digital communications, as well as the vice president of external affairs.

#### National FUNdraising Bowl

In 2004, student-submitted fundraising ideas were compiled into “The Playbook,” and the FUNdraising Bowl was created. The program motivates Chapters to raise money for Chapter purposes. It has three parts:

- *Regular Season:* Chapters send fundraising ideas to the vice president of events & fundraising. The ideas are added to The Playbook and posted online. The vice president of events & fundraising chooses one winning Chapter per month during February, March and April.
- *FUNdraising Bowl:* One overall winner (randomly selected from the previous three winners) receives two free registrations to the upcoming National Conference.
- *Rest of Year:* Chapters use ideas in The Playbook to raise money for their Chapter.

#### *Challenges of National FUNdraising Bowl*

- Raising awareness about and encouraging participation in the program.
- Encouraging members to review the current Playbook.
- Integrating its promotion and engagement with Regional Conferences

#### *Future of National FUNdraising Bowl*

##### Objective

- Raise the prominence of the FUNdraising Bowl.

##### Tactics

- Promote FUNdraising Bowl at National Conference and publicize monthly winners February–May.
- Promote “The Playbook” during National Conference and National Assembly.

## Timeline

### *Ongoing*

- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with the vice president of digital communication to promote platform via social media channels and editor in chief via *FORUM* and Progressions.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as an event planning and fundraising resource to Chapters.
- Recruit Chapters to bid for Regional Conferences.

### *June–August*

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives (as determined by vice president of events & fundraising).
- Finalize bid process for Regional Conferences; promote to Chapters; assist with bid process.
- Update Regional Conference Handbook, as necessary.

### *September*

- Develop and finalize plans for Regional Conference Workshop.
- Accept Regional Conference bids; conduct phone interviews with bidding Chapters.
- Review applications and select Regional Conference host Chapters.
- Prepare information to promote current programs during Career Exhibition at National Conference.

### *October*

- Email bidding Chapters about selection results.
- Launch Chapters' Regional Conference websites and social media platforms.
- Attend National Conference; execute Regional Conference Workshop.
- Work with hosting Chapters to create checklists and detailed timelines.
- Provide adequate and frequent training opportunities for Regional Conference coordinators.

### *November*

- Coordinate the travel and communication between Regional Conference coordinators and National Committee members.
- Begin biweekly check-in and planning assistance with host Chapters.
- Develop speaking materials and Regional Conference briefs for National Committee.
- Send reminder email to hosting Chapters to keep a thorough record for Teahan award submissions.
- National FUNdraising Bowl preseason—organize information and promotion for FUNdraising Bowl Playbook.

### *December*

- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.
- Develop Regional Conference evaluation instrument.
- Assist Chapters in securing speakers and sponsorship.
- Continue biweekly check-in and planning assistance with host Chapters.
- Collect press releases for National website – “Chapter News.”
- Begin gathering biweekly attendee count from hosting Chapters.
- Finalize information for PRSSA National FUNdraising Bowl Playbook; revise as necessary.

### *January*

- Begin targeting strategy for soliciting intent to bid form submissions.
- Promote the National FUNdraising Bowl.

### *February–April*

- Assist host Chapters with executing Regional Conferences.
- Gather biweekly attendee count from hosting Chapters (that have not yet hosted).
- Collect surveys and data on all Regional Conferences.
- Gather resources from host Chapters for the database upon conference completion

- Communicate with members interested in running for next National Committee.
- Attend at least one Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly.
- Promote and select monthly winners for the National FUNdraising Bowl.

*May*

- Compile evaluative research and all materials for National Headquarters.
- Send reminder email about Teahan award to all hosting Chapters.
- Randomly select the National FUNdraising Bowl champion.
- Transition the incoming National Committee member.



## Publications Editor in Chief

The Publications Editor in Chief oversees the operation and publication of PRSSA's tri-annual newspaper, *FORUM*, as well as PRSSA's blog, Progressions. Additional responsibilities for this position include recording the minutes at all National Committee meetings, creating Storify recaps of every Twitter chat, creating the Annual Report and managing the in-house *FORUM* publications staff. The editor in chief also is responsible for monitoring analytic reports for both publications and providing suggestions to increase readership.

Delegates to the PRSSA 2013 National Assembly voted to change the title of the position from *FORUM* editor in chief to Publications Editor in Chief.

### Current Programs

#### FORUM

##### *Content*

*FORUM* provides essential opportunities for the organization to communicate its programs, events and services to all members. The editor in chief is responsible for developing a wide variety of article topics that are written by a diverse body of people, including Chapter members, National Committee members, PRSA representatives and industry professionals. Content is most helpful and interesting to Chapter members when it directly applies to their lives and activities in PRSSA, university programs or the professional world. To ensure all articles are interesting and relevant to members, the editor in chief should research members' interests, set article word limits of between 300–700 words and develop photo assignments for select articles. The 2011–2012 National Committee voted to eliminate the print version of *FORUM* and publish solely online due to:

- Survey results from members saying they were not receiving the print edition.
- The rising increase of e-readership.

The 2014–2015 National Committee chose to switch the *FORUM* publishing platform from Issuu to Joomag due to:

- Better analytics on Joomag.
- Ability to add videos and other multimedia content on Joomag.
- Poor mobile readability on Issuu.

To continue the success of *FORUM* online, all articles should be edited for the Web – to maximize search engine optimization (SEO) – incorporating photos and infographics and linking to relevant pages on the PRSSA website and to external resources. Chunking and subheading should be implemented in most – if not all – articles.

##### *Design*

A cohesive, consistent and visually appealing design is imperative to continue increasing *FORUM*'s readership. In 2011, a total redesign of the *FORUM* templates was implemented to sustain a modern, consistent design for several years to come. The new templates use Adobe InDesign and have incorporated PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines with new styles. In 2015, another redesign was implemented to move the visual appeal of *FORUM* toward a magazine appearance rather than a corporate newsletter appearance. Modern, interactive elements were incorporated, including a “center spread” in each issue that is written and organized to cater to a large, visual layout.

Visuals and infographics also are important to *FORUM*'s success because they retain reader attention throughout the issue. For this reason, the editor in chief should aim to incorporate two or more infographics and/or videos in each issue.

##### *Publicity/Outreach*

The editor in chief should collaborate with the vice president of digital communication to promote *FORUM* in all stages of publication and increase readership by leveraging social media outlets. Success can be measured by monitoring *FORUM* analytics online, which will continue to grow in importance as PRSSA members consume more media using mobile phones, tablets and computers.

### *Advertising*

In 2004, *FORUM* began accepting paid advertising. With assistance from National Headquarters, the editor in chief solicits advertisements for *FORUM* from employers, graduate programs, industry service providers, trade publications and others. National Headquarters must approve all ads. Though the *FORUM* publications staff may actively solicit advertising, it is not mandatory to do so.

### *Staffing*

The editor in chief is responsible for organizing a publications staff at his or her local Chapter. In the past, positions have included a managing editor, copy editor, design editor, Web editor, multimedia editor and advertising manager, but the team can be truncated or expanded at the editor in chief's discretion.

### *Challenges of FORUM:*

Ensuring journalistic best practices are observed by contributors who may be unfamiliar with journalistic writing.

- Maintaining high levels of promotion for the newspaper throughout entire publication process.
- Keeping audience interest throughout entire paper by integrating visual content.
- Providing the best readership experience possible when viewing the publication from mobile or tablet.
- Securing advertisements to provide additional funding for PRSSA.

### Progressions

#### *Content*

Similar to *FORUM*, *Progressions* is an outlet to provide commentary on behalf of the organization on recent trends and issues facing students and the profession. By engaging with members and potential members online, the blog provides an extension of the PRSSA social network with career advice, industry news and Chapter development in formats longer than other social media platforms. Blog posts are written by Chapter members, National Committee members, PRSA representatives and industry professionals. Posts are frequently coordinated to correspond to PRSSA or PRSA initiatives (e.g., Diversity Month and Ethics Month). Readership has increased significantly by incorporating various formats of content in the blog, such as photos, infographics, podcasts, quizzes, videos and how-to's. The editor in chief can use member research, conversation on social media pages and blog analytics to discern what topics and formats should be addressed on the blog. Another important aspect of the blog is using consistent, SEO-relevant tags and categories for each post to ensure the blog is highly ranked in search engines. The ultimate goal is to have three or more posts each week to ensure consistent traffic to the blog.

#### *Redesign*

The 2011–2012 *FORUM* editor in chief (now known as the Publications Editor in Chief) collaborated with National Headquarters and the National Committee to redesign the format of the blog and officially rename the PRSSA blog as *Progressions*. The redesign reflects the new PRSSA brand and the style of the new PRSSA website that was updated in 2011. Additionally, the new design incorporated more social elements, including links to PRSSA's Twitter and Facebook pages.

In 2014, the online platform for *FORUM* was switched from Issuu to Joomag. This was done so the editor in chief could incorporate videos into the newspaper and gain more comprehensive metrics at a reasonable price to PRSSA.

### *Challenges of Progressions:*

- Ensuring journalistic best practices are observed by contributors who may be unfamiliar with journalistic writing.
- Developing consistent content that interests members and hasn't been covered.
- Incorporating multimedia posts on a regular basis.
  - Engaging comments on the blog versus social media.
  - Continually growing readership.

### Annual Report

Each spring, the editor in chief collaborates with the vice president of digital communication and the National President to create the PRSSA Annual Report. This document should be published before the end of the current National Committee's term (May 31).

#### Future of the Publications Editor in Chief

For the future, it is important to develop and maintain a content strategy for *FORUM* and *Progressions* that focuses on key tactics the editor in chief can implement to improve both outlets. *FORUM* continues to grow in importance as PRSSA members begin to consume more media using mobile phones, tablets and computers. This shift from print to online reflects a similar shift in the modern newspaper industry, where finding ways to remain relevant and easily accessible to readers – such as researching and implementing different publishing platforms – is paramount to *FORUM*'s success. As social sharing features become more prominent on the Web, it is reasonable to consider ways to improve sharing of posts on *FORUM* and *Progressions*.

The editor in chief should monitor analytic reports for *FORUM* and *Progressions*. For this position, it is encouraged to set goals that will increase visitors, page views and comments each year. The editor in chief also should be willing and able to teach student contributors about AP Style and journalistic-style writing, while holding contributors to the highest levels of journalistic integrity.

In 2015, *Progressions* and *FORUM* content editing moved from Microsoft Word track changes to Google Documents to ease the collaborative editing process and better ensure an educational value for student contributors.

The awareness of these publications and the opportunity for students to build their résumé and portfolio by writing for these publications is still fairly low among the Society, according to the most recent annual survey. In an effort to increase this awareness, publications-focused social media content was published throughout the month of November 2015, and the editor in chief and vice president of digital communication presented on such opportunities at the PRSSA 2015 National Conference during a professional development session. Though not mandatory, incorporating a session on publications, social media and writing, much like the Regional Conferences and student-run firm workshops, at National Conference may help raise awareness of these opportunities for members.

#### PRSSA Podcasts

In 2017, PRSSA launched two podcasts produced on a monthly basis. The first program, *Podcast with the Pro's*, focuses on sharing the perspective of an exemplary professional with PRSSA members. The second program, *Hidden Gems*, highlights lesser known benefits of PRSSA and allows members to enhance their membership experience. Podcast episode interviews were conducted by the Publications Editor in Chief, subcommittee members and members of the National Committee. Episodes were published to *Progressions* and promoted via PRSSA social media channels.

## Timeline

### Ongoing

- Solicit content for *FORUM* and Progressions (including podcasts); layout and publish accordingly.
- Publish at least three articles per week to Progressions.
- Produce and publish an episode of both PRSSA podcasts on a monthly basis
- Promote initiatives via existing PRSSA channels.
- Work with vice president of digital communication to promote *FORUM* and Progressions via social media channels.
- Contribute to the PRSSA Monthly Update and other communication efforts, as needed.
- Serve as a resource to Chapters in designated region.
- Generate Storify recaps for monthly PRSSA National Twitter chats.

### June–August

- Attend National Committee Leadership Retreat.
- Assign *FORUM* and blog reporter(s) to the Leadership Rally.
- Finalize yearlong initiatives (as determined by editor in chief).
- Review *FORUM* design templates with design editor.
- Determine meeting schedule with *FORUM* staff and train staff members in each position.
- Begin contacting sponsors for *FORUM* advertising (with National Headquarters approval first).
- Create and publish first issue of *FORUM*; post to all appropriate channels.

### September

- Plan for second issue of *FORUM*.

### October

- Attend National Conference; manage a reporting team for live blogging.
- Begin communicating with members interested in running for next National Committee.

### November–January

- Create second issue of *FORUM*.
- Publish second issue of *FORUM*; post to all appropriate channels.
- Generate content for the Situation Analysis.

### February–March

- Plan for third issue of *FORUM*.
- Attend Regional Conference.
- Attend National Assembly; manage a reporting team for live blogging.

### April–May

- Publish third issue of *FORUM*; post to all appropriate channels.
- Assist vice president of digital communication with layout and editing of the Annual Report.
- Transition the incoming National Committee member.

## **Additional National Committee Members**

### **National Faculty and Professional Advisers**

The National Faculty and Professional Advisers represent the faculty and professional viewpoint to the National Committee. They attend the Leadership Rally, National Conference and National Assembly. Since 2009, the Advisers have been selected via an application process and serve a two-year term. Both Advisers hold the following responsibilities:

- Vote on new applications for PRSSA charters.
- Work with Chapter Faculty and Professional Advisers and members.
- Host the Google Group for Faculty and Professional Advisers.

The National Faculty Adviser is an ex-officio member of the Educators Academy board to report on PRSSA matters. Both Advisers must be Accredited members of PRSA.

### **PRSA Board Liaison**

The PRSA Board Liaison maintains open lines of communication between the PRSSA National Committee and the PRSA Board of Directors. Two liaisons may share the position.

In 2004, the PRSA Board Liaison and the National President worked to unite both Societies by having PRSSA National Committee members serve on PRSA committees. These PRSSA officers will serve as ex-officio members of the following PRSA committees:

- Vice president of external affairs is an ex-officio member of the PRSA Advocacy Advisory Board and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee
- Vice president of professional development and vice president of events & fundraising are ex-officio members of the Professional Development Committee.
- Vice president of member services is an ex-officio member of the Membership Committee.
- PRSSA Immediate Past President is an ex-officio member of the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Vice president of professional development is an ex-officio member of the Board of Ethics and Professional Standards.

This concept is currently being revisited on the basis of PRSA Committees and changes that have taken place over the years.

### **Executive Director**

The executive director is a full-time PRSSA administrator. In addition to acting as general adviser to the PRSSA National Committee, the executive director performs all duties normally incident to the office of secretary. He or she maintains PRSSA national records, conducts general correspondence and coordinates services to the PRSSA membership. The executive director's duties frequently expand per request of the National Committee or the PRSA Board of Directors.

## The Future of the Society: Where to Go

### Andrew Cook, 2017–2018 National President

#### The Current State

During its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, PRSSA took time to remember its founding while also continuing to evolve in order to better serve the membership moving forward. National leadership implemented changes made to specific vice president positions adopted in the previous year while continuing to identify areas where innovation was necessary. Chapter leaders were instructed to place a greater emphasis on collaborating with other Chapters in the Society while members of the National Committee focused their plans on executing existing duties. Leadership executed a platform focused on the following areas:

- Adopting a “Global Perspective” and building an inclusive Society culture that empowered members of all backgrounds.
- Focusing on creating a more collaborative Society. Tactically this included the creation and development of the Regional Ambassadors position.
- Evaluating existing National programs and initiatives and making the necessary changes to ensure that as the efforts of National leadership achieve impact in an effective manner.

The institution of the Regional Ambassadors position was an exciting development that has strengthened the Society. In addition to improving the impact of the Phone Email Outreach Tree initiative, the Regional Ambassadors creates another tier of national leadership and creates a development pipeline for potential National Committee candidates. Their participation in PEOT allows the National Committee to focus on the specific responsibilities of their position. Regional Ambassadors also work to strategically develop regional communities within Society, with Chapters already regionally grouped through PRSA sponsoring Chapters.

In 2017, PRSSA achieved a record conversion rate of 636 students from PRSSA to PRSA. This was largely due to the Conversion Task Force that adopted several new approaches to promoting PRSA membership to students.

PRSSA developed a podcast that offered two monthly programs: “Podcast with the Pro’s,” featuring advice and insights from an exemplary PRSA professional and “Hidden Gems”, which highlights lesser-known member benefits. New digital promotional tools were also explored including the use of Sprout Social to enhance the operations of PRSSA social media channels.

The redefined VP of external affairs position allowed PRSSA to better assess its relationship with external audiences by tracking media placements and underscored the need to continue to pursue placement in professional trade publications and to assist Chapters in securing placements in local and campus publications in order to better advocate for the profession.

We continued to support the international expansion of PRSSA by hosting the first Spanish Twitter Chat, producing the first Spanish Progressions post and working with the Peruvian Chapter at the University of San Martin de Porres to execute a Chapter Development session at the 2017 National Conference in Boston while also selecting PRSSA USMP to host the Society’s first international Regional Conference. The PRSA Foundation also awarded \$20,000 in grants to support the attendance of eight students from HBCU colleges and universities at the National Conference.

#### Future Opportunities

This is an exciting time for PRSSA and there are several areas of imperative need where the Society must focus in order to continue its success:

- Exploring and developing opportunities to charter more International Chapters and providing students with resources for working internationally.
- Ensuring that each member of the National Committee understands which areas of PRSA correspond with their position and facilitating relationships between both organizations.
- Continuing to expand the High School Outreach initiative as a recruitment opportunity for future public relations students and PRSSA members.

- Mobilizing Regional Ambassadors to decrease the number of Chapter charter probations and revocations while also increasing membership engagement through better focus on regional communities.
- Increasing Chapter charter applications by reviewing Chartering requirements and procedures.
- Improving leadership transitions and providing leaders with better training to communicate the value of PRSSA to members and external supporting publics (faculty, administration, PRSA members).

### **Emma Finkbeiner, 2016–2017 National President**

#### The Current State

The 2016–2017 year was one marked by positive change. At the Leadership Retreat in Scottsdale, Arizona, the 2016–2017 National Committee spent time discussing goals and a vision for the year ahead, which bore the “North Star” document. This vision outlined how significant changes, such as the impending website overhaul, were going to help us create a community among our members that was more robust and engaged, would facilitate growth and would aid in the development of the profession and future professional. Our action items resulting from this vision included:

- Actively recruiting universities to charter new Chapters while reinvigorating our existing Chapters.
- Updating our Chapter resources and providing superior leadership training and transition.
- Providing exceptional service to our members by communicating frequently and efficiently.

Prior to the new year, PRSSA had chartered nine new Chapters and we saw an increase in interest and applications to charter new Chapters. We also began work on a Leadership Transition Guide, which is to be completed prior to the end of the term.

Thanks to projects set in motion by the previous National Committee, the complete overhaul of the PRSSA website began in the 2016–2017 term led by myself and three National Committee members alongside the PRSSA headquarters staff. The new website was launched at the PRSSA 2017 National Assembly in Seattle, Washington and we expect it to be a drastic improvement with its modern design and simple navigation.

This website overhaul spurred several other projects set in motion in 2016–2017. The PRSSA mission and vision statements were reviewed and updated, and a strategic plan was laid out moving forward. The National Committee also spent a significant amount of time reviewing the current National leadership structure and shifted responsibilities to better align with the Society’s goals and each position’s intended purpose. The PRSSA bylaws were also reviewed for regular maintenance updates.

We also made strides with one of our international Chapters this year, organizing a site visit where our vice president of external affairs and vice president of Chapter development were able to visit the Universidad de San Martin de Porres in Peru. This trip allowed the Committee members to learn about the challenges USMP has faced, as well as the reasons behind its success. As one of the largest Chapters in PRSSA and by far our most active international Chapter currently, this visit produced a case study, which can provide guidance for future international Chapter engagements.

#### Future Opportunities

The steps forward taken this term opened our eyes to many opportunities for PRSSA’s future. Some suggestions for growth to consider are:

- Globalization and international Chapter relations.
- Building our relationship as a National Committee with PRSA to better collaborate on advancement and growth initiatives.
- Continuing to expand the High School Outreach initiative as a recruitment opportunity for future public relations students and PRSSA members.
- Better understanding Chapter struggles in order to decrease the number of Chapter charter probations and revocations. Increase our Chapter charter applications by actively searching for universities that may qualify or assisting those who are interested in reaching the curriculum requirements.
- Finding ways to improve our services with our online capabilities, such as moving the dues process online, making the Internship Center more user friendly and providing subscription options for certain benefits such as publications.

## **Laura Daronatsy, 2015–2016 National President**

### The Current State

The 2015–2016 National Committee focused on two areas of improvement: investment and authenticity. The Committee found tremendous success in providing additional resources and opportunities to PRSSA members (investment), while remaining an approachable leadership team (authenticity).

This year's Committee worked specifically on increasing the Society's value of High School Outreach; raising awareness of member benefits; creating long-term career preparedness in the areas of life skills, character and industry knowledge; implementing more relevant communications streams between National Committee and members; incorporating visual content on a more regular basis; and more.

### Future Opportunities

While the 2015–2016 Committee achieved success in the areas of investment and authenticity, there will be many growth opportunities in the future in these areas. Additional growth areas to consider are:

- Ethics in the changing media and technological spheres.
- Providing opportunities for members to learn business acumen.
- Communicating public relation's role in light of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and other competing industries.

## **Heather Harder, 2014–2015 National President**

This year was largely successful for PRSSA in terms of increasing dialogue, both online and offline, as well as updating multiple outdated materials and initiating new, creative tactics for every position. The National Committee was encouraged to develop strategic communications plans, similar to what public relations professionals would develop for their organizations, to achieve their goals.

The 2014–2015 National Committee focused on three key areas to achieve our success: engage, adapt and develop.

### Engage

Objective: Increase dialogue between National Committee and Chapter members and leaders.

#### Tactics

- Increase prominence of Chapter President Phone/Email Tree.
- Develop strategic member engagement plans for national events.
- Encourage National Committee to monitor social media conversation daily and reply to members and Chapters on a regular basis.
- Pursue opportunities for National Committee to speak at Chapter meetings, in person or virtually.

Outside of PRSSA membership, this year I focused on connecting with industry publications and organizations that naturally fit with PRSSA, including *PRWeek*, PRSA and the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations.

### Adapt

The media and public relations landscape is constantly changing. As students, we are expected to follow emerging trends and stay up-to-date on industry conversation.

Objective: Keep PRSSA National Committee and members informed of industry trends and stay on top of updating all national materials accordingly.

#### Tactics

- Switch *FORUM* to a more user-friendly application (successfully changed from Issuu to Joomag).
- Focus on adapting to increasing number of international interest in PRSSA, via an International Chapter Task Force.
- Update all PRSSA National Committee materials that are outdated.
- Obtain feedback from members to deliver better content and conversation in publications and on social media.



## Develop

Objective: Increase national presence and career development of PRSSA Chapters.

### Tactics

- Highlight National Initiatives in conversations with members and encourage promising Chapters to participate in them.
- Promote conversation about current industry events, going beyond surface-level analysis.
- Tap into Nationally Affiliated Student-Run Firms for work outside National Committee capabilities.
- Promote transition from PRSSA to PRSA as the logical next step for graduating members.
- Promote participation in Twitter chats, PRSA webinars and other professional development tools.

This year's National Committee worked hard to engage, adapt and develop, but there is still work to be done. Future National Presidents and National Committee members must monitor public relations issues and trends and PRSSA-related conversation on a daily basis, taking insights to develop and update strategic plans as needed.

## **Brian Price, 2013–2014 National President**

### The Current State

The 2013–2014 National Committee made a commitment to execution and stability in the Society to drive further awareness and increased participation in member benefits. PRSSA continued on in the path of providing new and exciting opportunities for members and worked to advance existing programming. The evolution of the digital landscape has created rapid change in the communications environment, which affects PRSSA not only in what it should provide, but how it can provide and communicate benefits. It was with major digital decisions facing PRSSA in the near future in mind that the leadership aimed to provide a year of consistency at the highest level PRSSA is capable of to provide a strong base for the future.

PRSSA also experienced tremendous and exciting progress in membership, as it grew to more than 11,500 members at 342 Chapters, including a second international Chapter in Colombia. PRSSA increased its level of content on social media and on Progressions, worked closer with Chapter and student-run firm leaders and increased the participation in Chapters seeking recognition and chartered 18 total Chapters.

### Future Opportunities

PRSSA has exciting opportunities on the horizon, although many carry on from the building blocks of previous years. Outlined below are several opportunities for PRSSA leadership to consider when deciding on investments of time and resources.

- PRSA Associate Membership: As PRSSA grows, it not only expands in membership size, but also in the amount of quality, invested members. With the Society still seeing a high volume of seniors, a tremendous opportunity lies in the ability to galvanize support for carrying on the PRSSA experience into PRSA. Engaged Chapter leaders should have an interest in assisting to lead, or start, a PRSA Chapter's New Professionals Section. Funneling PRSSA leaders into PRSA leadership positions could lead to sustained PRSA membership for those in the beginning of a career in communications.
- Content: In an age of consistent smartphone and tablet use and multitasking, today's communication student seems to always be looking for an article to read while walking to class, an infographic to follow while streaming video or a quote to help through a time of stress. PRSSA provides content for the career-minded student, from what "business casual dress" really means in 2014 to career insights and job hunting tactics. The Society has the opportunity to fulfill the ever-growing hunger for information by pumping out increased levels of content that are not only thoughtful, but provide value to the membership.
- Consistency: It was a theme in 2013–2014, but as PRSSA experiences growth and advancement, it must consistently aim to provide both the new and the existing programming at the maximum level of which the Society is capable. Future leaders should ensure that all active initiatives meet a standard that bears in mind quality and necessity to create true and exceptional value to those who participate. Consistency should not mean remaining static, but continuing to provide value each year by exploring and accomplishing methods to advance PRSSA's offerings.

### **Lauren Gray, 2012–2013 National President**

The 2012–2013 National Committee saw and made many changes to stay current with members' needs, wants and habits as well as societal changes and updates. This was the first year *FORUM* was solely online instead of distributed as a print publication. Money saved from ceasing the print publication will be spent on the Internship Center redesign and a focus on student grants for National Conference.

The focus for this year was on:

- Increasing membership to PRSSA and PRSA.
- Raising awareness and knowledge of member benefits and National Initiatives.

#### PRSSA and PRSA Membership

PRSSA membership grew to more than 11,000 students nationwide by the end of 2012. The Society and leadership hopes to continue to increase this number while stressing that just as PRSSA is important during college, PRSA is just as essential post-graduation.

Objective

- Increase PRSSA membership and PRSSA transition rate to PRSA annually.

Tactics

- Outreach to diverse populations on campuses and at community colleges for PRSSA membership.
- Leadership should familiarize themselves with PRSA membership benefits and Section memberships (such as the New Professionals Section).
- Promote PRSA Associate Membership to graduates and seniors.

#### Member Benefits and National Initiatives

The member benefits to joining PRSSA are important and need to be thoroughly communicated to potential members. Likewise, as a Society, we work toward initiatives each year. This year, a new member benefits section and a new national initiatives section was added to the PRSSA homepage for members' convenience.

Objective

- Increase awareness of member benefits and national initiatives among the membership. Analyze awareness through surveys distributed to members and anecdotal research.

Tactics

- Continue to promote the new member benefits page.
- Continue communication of member benefits to Chapter leaders at national events for them to disseminate information to Chapter members.
- Evaluate need and budget for new benefits.

*A Note to Future Leaders:* Diversity is important for PRSSA and society as a whole. Reach out to potential members in different organizations, majors and students with different interests. Our differences make us greater and stronger. Embrace differences and diversity.

### **Adam Aisner, 2011–2012 National President**

This year, PRSSA has seen tremendous success and growth. PRSSA membership has grown to more than 10,600 members with more than 320 Chapters nationwide. In addition, the Society has one international Chapter, located in Argentina. The above statistics prove that membership is always on the rise within our Society. But while membership numbers increase, there are still Chapters that fall behind for various reasons. It is up to the National Committee to assist those Chapters in need to ensure that charter revocation does not happen. To ensure continuous growth of our Society, the National Committee must assume responsibility in strengthening the Society from within. By focusing on Chapters and preventing charter revocation, the Society can continue to grow from a solid foundation.

During the 2011–2012 term, the National Committee worked hard to streamline communication, making everything easily accessible to the membership. In the future, PRSSA should ensure that all communication channels remain constant, fresh and relevant to the student membership. In addition, the leadership should

make sure that a well-planned strategy is formed before communicating with the membership. By streamlining communication and focusing the strategy, PRSSA members will find information easily accessible and get the most out of their membership.

PRSSA is designed to prepare students for entry into the profession. This should be a constant goal of the National Committee, ensuring that our members are prepared to succeed in the professional world. While PRSSA and PRSA have a great working relationship on various levels, there is always room for improvement. Next year, the PRSSA National Committee should work more with the New Professionals Section and PRSSA Headquarters to promote PRSA Associate Membership more heavily. The National Committee will continue to educate members about the process of transitioning into the professional world.

Lastly, an attention to ethics *must* remain constant and at the forefront of the Society. Public relations is an industry built on trust and morals. Members should be educated about the importance of ethics to our Society and how it can make or break the profession at any given time. The key to learning ethics with the Society is to engage in constant discussion and to help them learn the process of ethical decision-making. By the time members graduate from their colleges/universities, they should be well versed in the PRSA Code of Ethics and should be able to make intelligent decisions on the job.

### **Nick Lucido, 2010–2011 National President**

The 2010–2011 National Committee has worked hard to incorporate a holistic vision for the future in this document. Each Committee member has included his or her own statements and identified key objectives as to the future of their individual positions to help guide future National Committee members. This section is the overarching vision for the future of the Society, with key objectives that should be accomplished in the near future. This vision is broken down into three sections: membership, communication and professional development.

#### *Membership*

PRSSA membership is robust and benefits are numerous. In terms of membership numbers, PRSSA has maintained steady growth, both in Chapters and individual members. Yet a systemic problem the Society faces is the de-chartering of problematic Chapters, averaging about five per year. In the next three years, the National Committee should focus on Chapter retention in order to pre-emptively identify struggling Chapters and appropriately assist them before probation and charter loss is required.

#### Objective

- Decrease charter loss by 25 percent in the next year and 50 percent in two years.

#### Tactics

- Identify Chapters experiencing problems before probation is needed.
- Assign a National Committee member to regularly check on problematic Chapters' progress.
- Assist Chapters by helping them set achievable goals.

#### *Communication*

The way PRSSA members access information about the organization has changed dramatically in recent years. Instead of solely looking for information on the PRSSA website, members now discuss the organization on Facebook and Twitter, post videos on YouTube and photos of events on Flickr, and keep in touch with alumni on LinkedIn. As a national organization, PRSSA must remain agile and adapt to future changes. As past National Committees have set the strategy for communication, future Committees must successfully integrate digital tools in their platforms and be mindful of how these tools affect their initiatives.

#### Objective

- Use communication tools to further connect the PRSSA National Committee and PRSSA Headquarters to local Chapters and members.

#### Tactics

- Utilize regional assignments for the PRSSA National Committee to follow, monitor and engage Chapters and members through various media:

- Comment on Chapter blogs.
- Fan Chapter Facebook pages, follow Twitter accounts.
- Share relevant information via whichever media is most appropriate.

Encourage National Committee members to use technology to be part of Chapter meetings to not only promote the national aspect of PRSSA, but also engage in meetings and ask questions.

Create a sustainable but flexible plan for this communication that can be updated each year by the next Committee, yet provide a solid framework from which to work.

#### *Professional Development*

As a pre-professional organization, PRSSA should continue to seek innovative learning opportunities and develop relevant programs for members. PRSSA should further its collaboration with PRSA on webinars and conference calls to provide students with quality information and speakers at minimal costs to individuals, Chapters and the student Society at large.

#### Objective

- Incorporate more national professional development opportunities in addition to those offered at national events, and make these opportunities available to all members.

#### Tactics

- Offer three webinars each year in collaboration with outside organizations.
- Set a long-term plan for future professional development opportunities, including cost, timing and participation specifics.

*A Note to Future Leaders:* It is important for Chapter and National leaders to always remember that PRSSA is a learning organization. Leaders should be working to advance the interests of members, not of themselves. And most importantly, PRSSA members should embrace change and diversity with open arms.

#### **Rebecca Timms, 2009–2010 National President**

From the start of the 2009–2010 term, my vision for our Society was grounded in the terms “stop,” “start” and “continue”:

1. **Stop** creating new communications channels unless we know they will be used consistently by both Society leaders and members.
2. **Start** thinking of PRSSA as part of a lifelong learning process; this, in line with PRSA’s mindset for both organizations.
3. **Continue** growing PRSSA membership through new avenues like high school outreach, the Affiliate Program and chartering new Chapters.

Looking back on the year, I would say my National Committee has succeeded in all of those areas.

Shortly following our election, my Committee examined each communications channel PRSSA used and vetted the value of each before deciding its future. As a result, we decided to eliminate *Connecting With PRSSA* as a standalone publication and incorporated that National-Committee-supplied content into *FORUM* and the PRSSA Blog. My hope for next and future years’ National Presidents and Committees is that they will introduce, alter and eliminate media as needed with much thought and deliberation to keep a solid communications plan for the Society.

Our “start” and “continue” efforts were, in many ways, coupled throughout our term. We specifically focused increasing work with the PRSA New Professionals Section to successfully transition PRSSA graduates, hosted a third fruitful High School Outreach Session at the PRSSA 2009 National Conference and continued to support the Affiliate Program. We also remained receptive to and proactive in starting new Chapters.

Connecting members with the next step in their professional development – PRSA – must be a focus of the National Committee as we prepare our students for their first jobs and support our parent Society’s efforts. Maintaining and moving PRSSA’s growth forward also should always be a main focus of the National Committee, but should be tempered with an understanding of the time, money and effort required to support

that growth. Changes must be made gradually, along with infrastructure support, to ensure those changes are lasting and not prone to crumble in years to come.

To that point, my greatest advice to future National Committees is to achieve what you can now and set up future student leaders for success in later years. There are countless examples of programs and initiatives — many now mainstays in this document and our Society — that were mere ideas formulated years before they could be enacted. Current challenges or pushback should not deter National Committees from pursuing large goals. They need only to break those goals down into reasonable, actionable steps to ensure they are achieved later on in our organization's life.

**Brandi Boatner, 2008–2009 National President**

The incoming National President will be responsible to maintain several initiatives implemented to ensure the growth of the Society as PRSSA embarks on another 40 years of excellence.

The first-ever High School Outreach Session introduced at the PRSSA 2008 National Conference in Detroit was highly successful and educated high school students about the public relations profession. The National President should continue this program and assist with the execution of the event at future National Conferences.

To increase the number of PRSSA members who transition into PRSA, the National President should work with the Immediate Past President to promote the transition, and the vice president of professional development to research, create and implement a reverse mentorship program between PRSA professionals and PRSSA members.

The National President also should continue the efforts made to increase membership in the Affiliate program. Along with the vice president of member services, the National President should continue to identify and contact possible PRSSA Chapters and Affiliates.

Diversity also plays a significant role in the growth of the Society. The National President should continually work with the vice president of advocacy to reinforce PRSSA's commitment to diversity and the Diversity Toolkit, and advocate national diversity causes. The National President also should ensure the International Coalition continues to educate and create awareness of the expanding scope of global public relations. The National President and vice president of advocacy should review the country reports and develop a plan for the future of the Coalition.

PRSSA held its second annual Leadership Rally in June 2009 during an economic crisis. Despite external factors, the event was a success, and I urge the National President to continue to improve the event with more learning and networking opportunities for those leaders who attend.

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