

PRSSA



2023-2024

Chapter Handbook

An overview of Chapter guidelines and resources

Dear Chapter Leaders,



Congratulations on your PRSSA leadership position! I welcome you to a year of wonderful, and exciting memories, as well as a year of professional and personal growth. Thank you for the energy and passion that you have shown in your time so far, and I am excited to see your growth in this Society. Your time and efforts to our membership are greatly valued, and I am thrilled to work with you and your Chapter to continue growing this wonderful Society.

This Chapter handbook will serve as a go-to guide for PRSSA-related topics, such as membership benefits, executive committee structure, leadership opportunities, and fundraising ideas. It would be a great practice to review this handbook with your executive committee and Chapter to allow all members to fully understand the benefits and national opportunities that come with being a part of PRSSA. Being a student leader is no easy task. I applaud your enthusiasm and dedication to this organization, which is why I want to emphasize that the National Committee and I are here as a resource. Please feel free to reach out anytime with any and all questions, comments, and concerns, as well as share updates and success stories, both individual and Chapter based.

We cannot wait to celebrate you and your Chapter this year and are all eager to start this term, standing right beside you at every step of the journey.

To a year of countless memories!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sankalp Sharma'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Sankalp' and last name 'Sharma' clearly legible.

Sankalp Sharma
PRSSA 2023-2024 National President
nationalpresident@prsa.org



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PRSSA Background

Statement of Purpose

In 1968, 20 years after its own establishment, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) founded the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). The declared purpose of PRSSA is to cultivate a favorable and mutually advantageous relationship between students and professional public relations practitioners. The student Society aims to foster the following:

- Understanding of current theories and procedures of the profession.
- Encouraging the highest ideals and principles.
- Instilling a professional attitude.
- Encouraging Section, Associate and eventually Accredited PRSA membership.

The PRSA Board of Directors is responsible for accepting new PRSSA charters but the PRSSA Leadership Assembly, composed of student representatives, is PRSSA's primary governing body. The Assembly elects a National Committee that is responsible for managing the business and affairs of PRSSA. Both operate within the powers granted them by PRSSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures. The PRSA Board appoints one or two PRSA Board Liaisons to the National Committee each year.

Mission Statement

- To serve its members by enhancing their knowledge of public relations and providing access to professional development opportunities.
- To serve the public relations profession by helping to develop highly qualified, well-prepared professionals.
- To provide exceptional service to our members by enhancing their education, broadening their professional network and helping launch their careers after graduation.
- 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.

Society Origins

The creation of a national student Society was proposed to the PRSA Assembly on April 5, 1967. Delegates asked the Board of Directors to refer the matter to the National Education Committee, which then presented a position paper prepared by Dr. Frederick Teahan to Assembly delegates on Nov. 11, 1967, in Philadelphia. It was approved unanimously.

PRSSA was created the following day by the board, with J. Carroll Bateman presiding. In 1968, under President Edward P. VonderHaar, the board created 14 PRSSA Chapters. On April 4, 1968, nine Chapters were chartered: University of Florida, University of Houston, University of Maryland, The Ohio State University, San Jose State University, University of Southern California, University of Texas at Austin, Utica College and West Virginia University. Three additional Chapters – Central Missouri University, University of North Dakota and Syracuse University – were chartered on June 28, 1968. Kent State University received its charter on Sept. 13 and Northern Illinois University on Nov. 17 in 1968. These 14 Alpha Chapters were the humble beginnings of PRSSA as we know it today.

PRSSA 2023–2024 National Committee

The PRSSA National Committee is composed of the PRSSA National President, PRSSA Immediate Past President, eight vice presidents, National Professional and Faculty Advisers, PRSA Board Liaison(s) and the PRSA senior vice president of programs.

Delegates at the PRSSA Leadership Assembly elect the National President and eight vice presidents. Students on the Committee serve a one-year term: June 1 to May 31 of the following year.

Two or three public relations practitioners (one Professional Adviser and one or two PRSA Board Liaisons) and one educator (Faculty Adviser) serve as counselors to the student officers. These professionals vote on chartering new PRSSA Chapters and participate in ad hoc subcommittees at the request of the President. Each is a member of PRSA and the Professional Adviser must be Accredited.

The senior vice president of programs is a full-time staff administrator of PRSSA. In addition to advising the National Committee, the senior vice president of programs performs all duties typical to the office of secretary. They also maintain PRSSA National's records, conduct general correspondence and coordinate PRSSA membership services. The senior vice president of programs' duties may be expanded by request of the National Committee or by the PRSA Board of Directors.

The National Committee manages PRSSA business and is a resource for Chapters and members. Below you will find the names and contact information for the National Committee members.

National President

Sankalp Sharma, California State University-Sacramento
NationalPresident@prsa.org | @san_shwarma

The PRSSA National President is the principal administrative officer of the PRSSA National Committee. The President also serves as a liaison with PRSSA Advisers, the PRSA senior vice president of programs and the PRSA Board of Directors. The President is an Associate Member of PRSA while in office and serves as the official delegate of PRSSA to the PRSA National Assembly. Some of the more visible responsibilities of the President are the following:

- Organize and conduct National Committee and Leadership Assembly meetings. Conduct International Conference.
- Organize and supervise PRSSA National subcommittees. Regulate Chapter probation and charter revocation.
- Advise and instruct National Committee members on policies of the student Society. Administer PRSSA Chapter and member award programs.
- Promote PRSA Associate Membership.

Immediate Past President

Alyson Hoffman, Ohio Northern University
ImmediatePastPresident@prsa.org | @_alysonhoffman

The PRSSA Immediate Past President shall perform all duties of the PRSSA National President if he/she is absent or unable to perform his/her duties. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Counsel the President.
- Work on special projects as assigned.
- Promote PRSA Associate membership and the PRSA/PRSSA relationship.

Vice President of Brand Engagement

Basia Stachurska, Emerson College
VPBrandEngagement@prsa.org

The role of the vice president of brand engagement is to secure PRSSA brand engagement through internal and external publications such as the National blog, Progressions, and media relation initiatives.

- Manage PRSSA's blog, Progressions.
- Manage the publication of the Annual Report.
- Record all minutes at National Committee meetings and conference calls.
- Manage and produce the PRSSA Podcasts Series

Vice President of Career Services

Melina O'Neal, West Chester University
VPCareerServices@prsa.org | @melinaoneal

The role of the vice president of career services is to develop and promote national internship and job directories, services and programs. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Maintain the Internship Center, PRSSA's official career directory.
- Promote the Internship Center and PRSA's Jobcenter benefits and career information to PRSSA members.
- Maintain and update the Career Manual.
- Build relationships with potential public relations employers to establish internship opportunities for PRSSA members.

Vice President of Chapter Development

Oakley Weddle, University of Memphis
VPChapterDev@prsa.org | @oakleyweddle

The role of the vice president of Chapter development is to oversee Chapter programming and leadership training. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Coordinate Chapter Development Sessions at the PRSSA International Conference.
- Coordinate Leadership Training Sessions at the Leadership Assembly.
- Counsel Chapters on community service projects and programming.
- Manage the PRSSA phone/email tree for national outreach to Chapters
- Oversee Chapter News releases.

Vice President of Digital Communications

Bella Kendrena, California State University-Fullerton
VPDigitalComm@prsa.org | @bella.kendrena

The role of the vice president of digital communications is to promote and manage recognition of PRSSA as a credible, professional organization, and to manage the flow of information from PRSSA nationally to all its internal and external publics through digital channels. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Manage and promote PRSSA Style Guide and PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines.
- Manage PRSSA social media

Vice President of Events and Fundraising

Milagros Orcoyen, Universidad Argentina de la Empresa
VPEvents@prsa.org | [@milagros.orcoyen](https://www.instagram.com/milagros.orcoyen)

The role of the vice president of events and fundraising is to address regional concerns and to aid Chapter in fundraising efforts and the strategic planning of District Conferences. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following: Maintain the Internship Center, PRSSA's official career directory.

- Act as an informational resource for members and District Conference committees.
- Encourage national networking.
- Promote District Conferences to Chapters across the nation.
- Formalize District Conference procedures to make Conference planning consistent.
- Advise on fundraising efforts

Vice President of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

Teo Landoni, Universidad Argentina de la Empresa
VPDiversityInclusion@prsa.org | [@teolandoni](https://www.instagram.com/teolandoni)

The role of the vice president of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging is to allow the Society to sustain a more welcoming and inclusive community; allowing exposure to new perspectives and insights that will enhance our education as strategic communicators and global citizens. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Organize and execute PRSSA Diversity Month while promoting the PRSSA Diversity Initiative.
- Promotes and oversees globalization efforts and manages relationships with international Chapters.
- Creates D&I trainings, educational material, and programming on a National, Regional and local level.

Vice President of Member Services

Ava Kendrena, California State University-Fullerton
VPMemberServices@prsa.org | [@ava.kendrena](https://www.instagram.com/ava.kendrena)

The role of the vice president of member services is to oversee scholarships, awards, competitions and recruitment. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Promote scholarships, awards and competitions.
- Assist Chapters by providing recruitment tactics and promote high school outreach
- Recruit new Chapters that will add to and strengthen the Society.
- Oversee the Affiliate program.

Vice President of Professional Development

Megan vanVollenhoven, University of South Carolina
VPProfessionalDev@prsa.org | [@meganrvan](https://www.instagram.com/meganrvan)

The role of the vice president of professional development is to facilitate the growth and maintenance of Chapter student-run firms and serve as the Society's official voice on ethics. Specific duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Supervise Chapter student-run firms and the National Affiliation process.
- Execute Ethics Month and serve as an ex-officio member of PRSSA's BEPS committee

National Faculty Adviser

Ken Hagihara, APR, Fellow PRSA
California State University, Fullerton
ken@integritypr.net

National Professional Adviser

Michael Chersonon, APR, Fellow PRSA
SCG Advertising + Public Relations
mchersonon@successcomgroup.com | @mchersonon

PRSA Board Liaison

Ray Day
Stagwell Group

RayDay@teamstagwell.com | @RayDay

Heide Harrell, APR
Rose Law Firm
hharrell@roselawfirm.com | @HPHarrell

Patricia “Reace” Alvarenga Smith, APR
Republic National Distributing Company
reace.smith@rndc-usa.com

Jeff Wilson, APR
Padilla
jeff.wilson@padillaco.com

PRSSA Headquarters

Jeneen Garcia
Senior Vice President of Programming
jeneen.garcia@prsa.org | @JeneenG

Chapter Standards

Establishing PRSSA Chapters

A PRSSA Chapter may be established and maintained only at a college or university that offers baccalaureate degrees, is accredited by a nationally- or regionally-recognized accrediting association or board, offers a sequence of at least five courses in public relations and is supplemented by courses allied to this field of study. The five core courses recommended by the PRSA 2006 Commission on Public Relations Education are:

- Introduction to Public Relations
- Public Relations Writing
- Public Relations Research
- Public Relations Strategy and Implementation (e.g., Case Problems, Campaigns)
- Supervised Public Relations Experience (internship)

Other requirements for PRSSA charters include:

- A minimum of 10 potential members, at least one of whom must have satisfactorily completed a public relations course. A minimum of eight of the students must be at or below the junior level.
- Students petitioning for a PRSSA charter must elect a teacher of at least one public relations course at their college or university who is a PRSA member or Associate member as their proposed Faculty Adviser.
- The petitioning students also must elect one or two Professional Advisers, each a member of PRSA, at least one of whom shall be a member who has at least five years of professional public relations experience or is Accredited.
- The PRSA president and four additional members of the sponsoring PRSA Chapter must endorse applications.

PRSSA Minimum Chapter Standards

Many of the benefits of PRSSA membership exist at the Chapter level. The National Committee is committed to supporting the programs and activities of individual Chapters. It is imperative that each Chapter provides the maximum possible support and opportunities for each member. The National Committee has established the following minimum standards for Chapters:

- Each Chapter shall meet at least once during each month that school is in session. To promote attendance, PRSSA suggests a consistent date is set for each meeting. A written summary of the meeting's activities shall be put in the Chapter's permanent files and passed on to the succeeding Chapter leadership.
- Each Chapter's group of officers shall meet at least four times annually. Written minutes of all board meetings shall be kept in the Chapter's permanent files and shall be passed on to the succeeding Chapter leadership. Each Chapter shall conduct annual development activities for the benefit of its members. Suggestions include résumé/portfolio critiques, internship panels and interviewing seminars.
- Each Chapter shall promote the PRSA New Professionals Section and PRSA Associate Membership.
- Each Chapter shall process annual dues promptly and correctly and forward the payment and dues forms to PRSSA Headquarters before the deadlines.
- Each Chapter shall review its bylaws at least once every three years to make certain that they meet the requirements of changing circumstances and that they conform with all the rules, regulations and PRSSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures.

- The PRSSA National Committee shall notify any Chapter that fails to meet minimum standards that it is deficient and that remedial action is required.
- In order to provide for the orderly transfer of leadership responsibilities, records, membership rolls and bank accounts, each Chapter shall elect its new officers before April 15. Prior to the beginning of the new Chapter year, outgoing officers shall transfer to incoming officers all records, membership rolls, bank accounts and necessary orientation information.
- No Chapter may have local-only memberships; all Chapter members must be members of PRSSA National, as stated in the PRSSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures.

Member and Chapter services are top priorities of PRSSA. The PRSA Board of Directors, upon the recommendation of the PRSSA National Committee, will withdraw the charter of any Chapter that consistently fails to meet minimum standards. For more information on the Committee's revocation policy, contact the National President, or see Article X, sections 1–4 of the PRSSA Bylaws.

If you feel that your Chapter is deficient in any of these categories, contact National President Rachel Meltzer to correct the situation.

Naming PRSSA Chapters

In accordance with PRSSA Bylaws, Article XII, Section 2, when a PRSSA Chapter wishes to change its name from that of its college or university, it must submit a written request to the PRSA Board of Directors. The request must contain detailed justification for the name change. Prior to board action, the PRSA senior vice president of programs shall investigate pros and cons of the proposed change, consulting the National PRSSA Advisers, local PRSSA and PRSA Chapter presidents, the PRSA Board Liaison(s) and the PRSSA National Committee.

If the PRSSA Chapter wishes to change its name from that of its college or university to that of a person, the individual must be a living or deceased Accredited PRSA member. For formal or official operations, the PRSSA Chapter must include the name of its college or university as well as the namesake.

If a Chapter has already been named after a person, the Chapter may not change its name except when the person after whom the Chapter was named is either deceased or is no longer a member of PRSA. In the event of the death or the resignation from PRSA of that person, the following shall be the procedure should a Chapter wish to rename itself for another qualified person:

- Formal request for the name change must be submitted to the PRSA Board of Directors in accordance with the procedure described in paragraph one.
- If the board agrees, there shall be a two-year waiting period thereafter, during which the Chapter may either retain the name of the deceased or resigned PRSA member or revert to the name of its own college or university.
- At the end of the two-year period, the PRSSA Chapter must reconfirm, via a letter to the board, its desire to make the name change.

Chapter Board and Adviser Job Descriptions

The National Committee recommends a Chapter executive board include, at minimum, a Chapter president, vice president, historian, secretary, treasurer and public relations director. The secretary and treasurer responsibilities may be shared by one person. A Chapter may create other positions or committees, such as a historian, to suit its needs. Chapter officers' duties are outlined below:

Chapter President

- Motivate executive board and members through enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA.
- Preside at all membership and executive board meetings.
- Appoint committees and advise chairs; advise members about Chapter activities.
- Delegate responsibilities of officers and committees. Direct overall Chapter operations.
- Recommend and establish goals and objectives for the Chapter with the approval of the membership, Faculty and Professional Advisers.
- Assist the treasurer in collecting dues and provide an accurate dues form to PRSSA Headquarters by Nov. 1 and March 1.
- Stay in contact with the PRSSA National Committee.

Vice President

- Motivate members through his or her enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA.
- Perform presidential duties if the president is absent or unable to perform them.
- Help the president coordinate and direct committee activities and Chapter operations.
- Perform duties as delegated by the president. Counsel the president by recommending goals, objectives, plans and programs.
- Coordinate and disseminate information about the PRSA New Professionals Section and PRSA Associate Membership for graduating PRSSA members.

Treasurer

- Motivate members through his or her enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA.
- Work with the president in preparing the annual budget.
- Collect Chapter and national dues, with the assistance of the president, and completely and accurately prepare the PRSSA dues form. Provide financial reports periodically to the Chapter membership.
- Collect fees for any Chapter special events and fundraisers.
- Disburse Chapter funds with proper approval. Provide safekeeping for all Chapter funds and keep accurate financial records.

Secretary

- Motivate members through his or her enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA. Prepare agendas with assistance by the president; handle Chapter correspondence.
- Record and distribute the minutes of all executive board and membership meetings. Maintain a record of Chapter members with school and permanent home addresses.
- Keep the Chapter's charter, other permanent documents and Chapter Handbook.
- Notify PRSSA Headquarters and PRSA sponsor Chapters of changes in Chapter leaders.

Public Relations Director

- Motivate members through his or her enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA.
- Produce the Chapter newsletter on a regular basis throughout the school year.
- Produce or oversee the Chapter website.
- Produce or oversee Chapter News on the national website, prssa.prsa.org.
- Post announcements for Chapter meetings throughout campus.
- Coordinate Chapter press releases, feature articles, advertising and brochures.
- Handle all campus and area press issues.
- Promote recruitment and retention with brochures, fliers and other tactics.

Historian

- Motivate members through his or her enthusiastic attitude toward PRSSA.
- Maintain and record history of Chapter for accurate record keeping from year to year. Collect and archive photographs, press releases and any other important documents for the Chapter.

Faculty Adviser

The Faculty Adviser is the official link between the student Chapter, the college or university and the sponsoring PRSA Chapter. The Faculty Adviser must be the following:

- A full-time teacher of at least one of the public relations courses offered.
- A member or Associate Member of PRSA.
- Recognized as the official faculty representative to the PRSSA Chapter.

Elected annually by Chapter members, the Faculty Adviser carries out several vital functions for the success of the PRSSA Chapter. Some responsibilities include:

- Set a tone of professionalism for the Chapter, its officers and members.
- Motivate members through example and counsel to be active members of PRSSA.
- Provide the resources, support and mentoring to members that enhance their leadership development.
- Stress that PRSSA is a national organization; it is the affiliate of PRSA, the world's largest organization of public relations professionals.
- Stress that a PRSSA Chapter is not a "club." Represent the Chapter in the sponsoring academic department.
- Explain the objectives of PRSSA to other faculty members.
- Obtain the support of faculty and other college or university officials in decision-making positions on behalf of PRSSA and of public relations as a "teachable" profession.
- Communicate department messages to Chapter members and sponsoring PRSA Chapter.
- Continue communication with the sponsoring PRSA Chapter, particularly with the PRSA member who has been designated as the PRSSA Chapter's Professional Adviser, to encourage an active, productive relationship between the PRSSA and PRSA Chapters.
- Meet with the Professional Adviser, PRSSA and PRSA Chapter presidents early in the academic year to establish objectives for the PRSA/PRSSA relationship.

For more information on the role of the Chapter Faculty Adviser, contact the National Faculty Adviser Ken Hagihara, APR, Fellow PRSA, at ken@integritypr.net.

Professional Adviser

Each PRSSA Chapter annually elects one or two Professional Advisers to serve as its connection to its sponsoring PRSA Chapter. The Professional Adviser must be Accredited or have at least five years of professional public relations experience. Associate Members of PRSA do not qualify for this position.

Professional Advisers are usually the most visible role models of the public relations profession. The following are some of the distinct responsibilities of a Professional Adviser:

- Demonstrate that the practice of public relations is an ethical profession.
- Show that the professional practitioner is genuinely interested in and concerned about events that affect the community, the nation and the world.
- The Professional Adviser is accountable to the Chapter president and board of his or her PRSA Chapter and should report to the board at least twice a year.
- Assist in the scheduling of PRSA members to discuss case histories and problems at PRSSA meetings and in classrooms.
- Provide the resources, support and mentoring to members that enhance their leadership development.
- Invite students and Faculty Advisers to attend meetings of the sponsoring Chapter.
- Be available to individual students for counsel about career questions, including job-seeking, résumé writing and interview techniques.
- Arrange one-on-one contact between PRSA and PRSSA members.
- Involve PRSSA members and their Faculty Adviser in PRSA Chapter activities, such as seminars, public service programs, publications and conferences.
- Arrange field trips to public relations departments, counseling firms and media. Conduct internship programs.
- Establish means to identify entry-level jobs in public relations so that seniors and graduates can follow up with résumés and requests for interviews

Benefits of PRSSA

Leadership

- **National Committee** — The National Committee manages PRSSA business and affairs and is a resource for Chapters and members with special projects or problems.
- **Chapter Leadership** — Leading a PRSSA Chapter by serving as Chapter president or as an executive board member teaches essential leadership skills, project management, campaign and event execution and teamwork. These skills translate well in the professional setting and help enhance membership experience.
- **Subcommittees** — Members gain national leadership experience by serving in of the three PRSSA National Subcommittees: Publications Committee, PRoud Council and Social Media Squad.
- **International Conference Committee** — This group plans, organizes and executes all aspects of the PRSSA International Conference.
- **Diversity Initiative** — PRSSA supports diversity and encourages its Chapters to recruit and retain a diverse membership and leadership that represents the demographic composition at their college or university. Each PRSSA Chapter across the nation should evaluate and consider ways it can support the PRSSA policy on diversity.

Member Benefits

- **Networking** — The declared purpose of PRSSA is to cultivate a favorable and mutually advantageous relationship between students and public relations professionals.
- **PRSA Relationship Building** — Each PRSSA Chapter has a PRSA sponsor Chapter. PRSSA members should cultivate a relationship with this Chapter.
- **Scholarships and Awards** — PRSSA, the Champions for PRSSA and the PRSA Foundation annually award more than \$35,000 through scholarship and awards programs.
- **Dr. F. H. Teahan National Chapter Awards** — In an effort to recognize the achievements of PRSSA Chapters and Advisers, awards are presented for Outstanding Chapter, Chapter Firm, Chapter Development, PRSA/PRSSA Relationship, Faculty Adviser, Professional Adviser, Chapter Newsletter, Chapter Website, Diversity, Community Service, University Service and Regional Conference, sponsored by the Champions for PRSSA.
- **PRSSA Website** — The PRSSA National website links the National Committee and Chapters. This resource- rich site guides visitors through the Society's history and programs and makes available almost every document mailed to Chapters. The site provides professional development resources, internship listings, Society news, links to other public relations resources and contact information for PRSSA Chapters.
- **PRSSA Internship Center** — PRSSA's online career resource center is a benefit for dues-paying members. The database contains internship postings from across the country by metro area for both members and employers to explore. Internship Center also contains resources about résumé and cover letter writing, portfolio assembly, interviews, networking, job search strategies and careers in public relations.
- **PRSA Jobcenter** — PRSSA members may access the PRSA Jobcenter, which provides job listings, career advice and tools to tailor job searches.
- **MyPRSA** — Launched as a resource for PRSA and PRSSA members to update their information and receive access to webinars, a database of industry-specific articles and award-winning public relations case studies.
Code of Ethics/Conduct — I pledge: To conduct myself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public, fellow members and to the Society; to improve my individual competence and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the field of public relations; and to adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics/Conduct by the PRSSA National Committee.
- **Webinars** — Members gain complimentary access to all PRSSA webinars and select PRSA webinars throughout the year.

Events

- **District Conferences** — District Conferences are a great way to meet students and professionals who live nearby or to learn about public relations while visiting a different part of the country. These events occur over a weekend in the spring and consist of one to three days of workshops and social events. In addition to providing the attendees with an exciting way to obtain professional development, District Conferences offer host Chapters the opportunity to plan a national event.
- **PRSSA International Conference** — The PRSSA International Conference is the largest annual gathering of public relations students. This event offers an excellent opportunity for public relations and communications majors to interact and forge relationships. The Conference, which takes place each fall, brings students from around the nation to assemble for five days of workshops, networking opportunities, social events, a career exhibition and more. PRSA and PRSSA hold their Conferences concurrently to facilitate networking between the student and professional societies
- **Leadership Assembly** — During this spring event, delegates convene in Scottsdale, Arizona to vote on any proposed changes to the PRSSA Bylaws, policies and procedures and to elect the incoming National Committee. The Leadership Assembly also serves as a learning opportunity for Chapter leaders. One voting delegate from each Chapter, in addition to other Chapter leaders who are interested in leadership training, attend workshops and activities designed to help them guide their Chapter in the upcoming year. Attendees network with members from like-sized Chapters and brainstorm solutions to challenges, ideas for successful programs and how to be a knowledgeable, dependable resource for their members.

Publications and Communications

- **Progressions** — PRSSA's blog allows immediate, topical discussions of news items posted by the content managers. PRSSA also may post news pertaining to annual events, activities and initiatives; however, this is not the primary purpose of the blog.
- **PRSSA Situation Analysis** — An online document published by the PRSSA National Committee that describes the history of the organization and its national leadership roles. The outlined goals at the end of the Situation Analysis will lead successive leaders toward one vision and ensure the Society's growth and success.
- **PRSSA Style Guide and Brand Identity Guidelines** — These manuals are to be used by Chapters to reference PRSSA-specific terms and how to use the PRSSA logo, tagline and other design elements. Issues and Trends — Daily professional e-news compiled by PRSA, its Advocacy Committee and the Professional Resource Center. This service reports on industry trends, advocacy and other issues affecting the profession and the professional. PRSA's Professional Resources Center staff reviews dozens of websites, news, business and trade publications and handpicks the most relevant stories of the day.
- **Strategies & Tactics** — The monthly PRSA newspaper provides information to PRSSA Chapters during the academic year. Tactics is a timely source of current public relations news.
- **Mailings** — PRSSA Headquarters sends materials to Chapter Faculty Advisers every two months during the academic year. Includes information regarding upcoming programs and events.
- **Podcasts** — PRSSA National Headquarters periodically publishes podcasts for our members. These podcasts cover a variety of topics, including internships, career advice, industry news, current events and much more.

Experiences

- **Bateman Case Study Competition** — An annual national Competition that gives students an opportunity to prepare and implement a wide-scale campaign for a client.
- **Student-run Firms** — A PRSSA student-run firm is an operational public relations firm established and managed by PRSSA students. It is one of PRSSA's paramount resources. Firms provide an opportunity for students to experience every attribute of the hands-on expertise of business-client relationships. **Chapter Development Sessions** — Four sessions take place at the beginning of International Conference. Presenting schools have the opportunity to show their peers best practices in fundraising, alumni relations, meeting programming and more through creative presentations.
- **PRSA Ethics Month** — September is PRSA ethics month. PRSSA Chapters are encouraged to plan at least one meeting centered around ethics. Teaching ethics is essential to growth and leadership. Securing guest speakers and discussing case studies are excellent ways to start learning about ethics.
- **PRSA Diversity Month** — October is PRSA diversity month, started in 2014. PRSSA Chapters are encouraged to actively participate by drawing attention to the PRSSA Diversity Initiative and Diversity Toolkit. Securing guest speakers and discussing workplace diversity are excellent ways to celebrate the month.
- **PRSSA Career Development Month** — PRSSA is dedicated to launching the careers of public relations professionals. All throughout January, Chapters and Student-run Firms are invited to participate in career development social events and initiatives.
- **Professional Development Month** — The declared mission of PRSSA is to serve its members by enhancing their knowledge of public relations and providing access to professional development opportunities, and to serve the public relations profession by helping to develop highly qualified, well- prepared professionals. Chapters and student-run firms have the opportunity actively participate in social events highlighting professional development during March.
- **PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month** — PRSSA Chapters and their sponsoring PRSA Chapter jointly participate by planning a meeting and/or social event during Relationship Month (April) enabling Chapter members to develop professional relationships, discuss various issues within both PRSA and PRSSA Chapters and share ideas.
- **PRSSA Ethics Competition** — This competition was created in order to get students engaged and learning about ethics in a fun, competitive manner.

Scholarships and Awards

PRSSA is well-known for its case study competitions, scholarships and awards. Information and application materials are online and made available to all PRSSA members to access. See the PRSSA website for details about all of these scholarships and awards.

Individual Awards and Scholarships

Altschul Champions for PRSSA Outstanding Internship Award

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$300 and Certificate

Axia Public Relations Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$2,000

The Betsy Plank/PRSSA Scholarship Program

Deadline: April 2024
Awards: \$5,000, \$1,500 and \$1,000

Chester Burger Scholarship for Excellence in Public Relations

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,000

Gary Yoshimura Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$2,400

Hall of Fame Award

Deadline: April 2024
Award: Plaque

John D. Graham Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Awards: \$3,000 and two runners-up of \$1,000 each

Lawrence G. Foster Award for Excellence in Public Relations

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,500

National Gold Key Award

Deadline: April 2024
Awards: Plaques

National President Citation

Deadline: April 2024
Awards: Certificates

Neumeier Family Leadership Award

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,000

Ofield Dukes Multicultural Student Award

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,000

PRSA Diversity Multicultural Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Awards: Two awards of \$1,500

PRSA International Conference Grant

Deadline: April 2024
Award: Free Conference Registration

PRSSA International Conference Grant

Deadline: April 2024
Award: Free Conference Registration

Robin M. Urbanski Memorial Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,000

Ron Culp Scholarship for Mentorship

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,000

Stephen D. Pisinski Memorial Scholarship

Deadline: April 2024
Award: \$1,500

Chapter Awards

Pacesetter Chapter Recognition

Deadline: November 2023/April 2024

Awards: E-certificates

The Pacesetter recognizes a Chapter's success in the areas of membership, national participation and/or Chapter development. Chapters may be nominated by members or the PRSSA National Committee.

Star Chapter Awards

Deadline: May 2024

Awards: Certificates

The Star Chapter Award, for which all Chapters are eligible annually, encourages Chapter leadership to provide programming and relationship building opportunities for students, and rewards them for achieving these goals.

Student-run Firm Awards

Deadline: May 2024

Awards: Certificates

The Student-run Firm Awards recognize the top public relations work done by Nationally Affiliated Student-run Firms during the current academic year. Awards honor the best campaign, best tactic and best pro-bono effort.

PRSSA Competitions

In addition to the competitions below, PRSSA periodically sponsors smaller competitions. Members are notified of these opportunities by email and on the PRSSA website.

Bateman Case Study Competition Intent-To-Enter Form

Deadline: TBD | Entry Deadline: TBD

- First Place: \$3,500 and Trophy
- Second Place: \$2,500 and Plaque
- Third Place: \$1,500 and Plaque

The Bateman Case Study Competition offers students the opportunity to exercise the analytical skills and mature judgment public relations requires as they create and execute a campaign for a real client. The competition's name honors J. Carroll Bateman, a distinguished public relations pioneer and PRSA past president during whose tenure PRSSA was established.

Dr. F. H. Teahan Chapter Awards Program

This annual program recognizes outstanding achievements by Chapters and Advisers. The deadline for all Teahan entries is the last Friday of May. The Champions for PRSSA sponsors cash prizes totaling approximately \$3,500 for winning entries in the following categories:

Outstanding Chapter

Awards: \$500 and Plaque

The winner in this category will be outstanding in all areas, including fundraising, university and community service, alumni relationships, promoting PRSA Associate Membership, good relationships with Faculty and Professional Advisers, internship outreach, student-run firm, diversity, active Chapter membership, and demonstrated local and national leadership. This winner cannot win another category in the same year except outstanding Faculty Adviser or Professional Adviser.

Chapter Firm

Awards: \$400 and Plaque

This category recognizes the work of on-campus student-run firms associated with PRSSA. Judging criteria will include the performance and results achieved for clients and the management and operation of the firm in providing strong business and professional experience for its staff. Firms also should demonstrate a commitment to diversity in staffing, management and client selection, while following PRSSA endorsement standards.

Chapter Development

Awards: \$300 and Plaque

This category recognizes Chapter improvement through activities such as newsletters, membership drives, fundraisers, professional relationships, diversity and membership involvement. Chapters with fewer than 20 members or that have been chartered for no more than three years may apply.

Chapter Diversity

Awards: \$300 and Plaque

This category recognizes outstanding commitment to diversity in the PRSSA Chapter. Chapters should embrace members regardless of race, culture, gender, religion, education, age, disability, marital status, socio-economic background or sexual orientation. Judging criteria will include activities performed to promote, generate awareness and encourage diversity within your Chapter.

PRSA/PRSSA Chapter Relationship

Awards: \$300 and Plaque for PRSSA Chapter and Trophy for PRSA Chapter

This category recognizes strong relationships between PRSSA and PRSA Chapters. Judges will look for programs that encourage contact between members, joint events, PRSA support of the PRSSA Chapter, internships, professional advisory councils, shared resources and PRSA awards for PRSSA members. Such programs must be a joint effort. Entry must include a letter from the PRSA Chapter president or PRSSA Professional Adviser.

Community Service

Awards: \$300 and Plaque

This category recognizes voluntary projects executed by a PRSSA Chapter to directly benefit the community, such as producing materials and events, conducting community public relations campaigns, and offering time, talent and services to the community.

University Service

Awards: \$300 and Plaque

This category recognizes voluntary projects executed by a PRSSA Chapter to directly benefit the Chapter's college or university, such as producing materials and events, conducting college or university public relations campaigns, and offering talent and services to the college or university.

Chapter Newsletter

Awards: \$200 and Plaque

This award category honors the outstanding PRSSA newsletter. Criteria include quality of writing, creativity, design and content. Newsworthiness, coverage of important issues (such as ethics or diversity), frequency of publication and scope of distribution also will be considered by judges. Samples of the newsletter should accompany the entry.

Chapter Website

Awards: \$200 and Plaque

This category honors an outstanding PRSSA website. Criteria include creativity, design, content and overall appearance. Chapters should submit information on the steps taken to set up the website and include the Internet address and hard copies of the website.

District Conference

Awards: \$300 and Plaque

Each endorsed Regional Conference is judged on the overall benefit it gave to PRSSA members. Only Chapters that were selected to host a Regional Conference through the official bid process are eligible. To be declared a winner, a Conference must be judged superior in all areas.

Chapter Faculty Adviser

Awards: \$200 for Chapter and Trophy for Adviser

This award is based on a Faculty Adviser's outstanding service to the local Chapter through dedication and creative Chapter guidance, effective student motivation, exceptional contributions to public relations education, supportive Chapter advocacy, and representation within the academic department and with the PRSA sponsoring Chapter and its members.

Chapter Professional Adviser

Awards: \$200 for PRSSA Chapter and Trophy for Adviser

This award honors an outstanding Professional Adviser who encourages professional behavior, increases contact between professionals and students, promotes the PRSA New Professionals Section and Associate membership, advocates for students within the sponsoring PRSA Chapter and displays concern for the student Chapter.

How to Write a Winning Teahan Award Entry:

Be specific in your descriptions and highlight results. Example: If you fundraised \$200, explain what the money was used for.

Point out what makes your Chapter unique in this category.

Gather appropriate supportive materials, such as photographs, clippings and brochures. Follow the rules. Don't waste your work by missing deadlines or exceeding page limits. Remember to include a budget for entry preparation.

Divide the work by delegating writing assignments and having one person compile. Apply even if your Chapter is small. The judges consider Chapter size and resources. Don't procrastinate. You have six months to prepare your entries. Use that time wisely. Proofread for typos, correct grammar and consistent style.

Write concisely. Make the four pages count; do not waste space.

Each entry should be a four-page PDF with only ten pages of additional information. The total number of pages in the PDF cannot exceed 14 pages.

National Resources

PRSSA Website

The PRSSA website (prssa.prsa.org) is the information link between the National Committee and local Chapters. Members should turn to the site as their first source for PRSSA information, as most every document that is mailed to Chapters is published online. Members also can access the Internship Center and PRSSA Google Groups through the website. The PRSSA website is maintained by PRSSA Headquarters. All inquiries regarding the site should be directed to Jeneen Garcia, PRSSA, at jeneen.garcia@prsa.org.

Progressions

Progressions, PRSSA's blog, allows immediate, topical discussions of news. PRSSA also may post news about annual events, activities and initiatives; however, this is not the primary purpose of the blog. If you would like to submit a post or suggest content, contact Vice President of Brand Engagement, at progressions@prsa.org. Progressions' guidelines can be found progressions.prsa.org/index.php/blog-policy.

PRSSA Blog Guidelines

PRSSA respects the rights of those who use this tool. Comments posted on Progressions are not PRSSA sanctioned communications and should not be viewed as a statement or position of PRSSA. The PRSSA content managers monitor all comments.

PRSSA believes in the privacy of member and nonmember users of its website and is committed to the responsible use of any information provided online. PRSSA uses the information collected to improve the Society and the website. PRSSA does not use cookies to distribute information about users over the Internet or to analyze any information received through the site.

Bloggers are legally responsible for their commentary. Individual bloggers may be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous (whether pertaining to PRSSA, or any other individual or organization). Bloggers should exercise caution regarding exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations. In essence, blog at your own risk. Outside parties can pursue legal action against you.

Podcasts

PRSSA periodically publishes podcasts for our members. These podcasts cover a variety of topics, including internships, career advice, industry news, current events and much more.

Internship Center

Resources are available on the Internship Center and Jobcenter to help students find an internship or job. The sites offer internship and job opportunities, directories, links, contacts and an online Career Manual. Access to the Internship Center is available to PRSSA National dues-paying members only. Anyone interested in posting an internship to the Internship Center may contact Vice President of Career Services at prssainternships@prsa.org.

PRSSA Facebook Page

PRSSA National has a Facebook Page and frequently uses Facebook to promote national events and initiatives. If you are interested in receiving information about PRSSA via Facebook, 'like' the "PRSSA National" page (facebook.com/prssanational).

PRSSA YouTube Channel

The PRSSA National YouTube channel (youtube.com/user/PRSSAnational) provides access to video interviews with professionals and the National Committee, and may be expanded to offer professional development, network and career preparation information. If you would like to submit a video or suggest content, contact Vice President of Digital Communications at VPDigitalComm@prsa.org

PRSSA Twitter

Receive PRSSA news, scholarships and awards deadline reminders and links to news about the profession by following PRSSA on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/prssanational>. The PRSSA hashtag is #PRSSA.

PRSSA LinkedIn

Participate in PRSSA discussions and network with current and former PRSSA members in the [LinkedIn group](#) or on the LinkedIn company page at linkedin.com/company/public-relations-student-society-of-america-prssa.

PRSSA Instagram

Stay current with PRSSA photo updates of the latest announcements, events and trends by following the PRSSA Instagram account, [@prssanational](#).

PRSSA TikTok

Learn all things communications, public relations and PRSSA on the PRSSA TikTok account, [@prssanational](#).

Social Media For Your Chapter

The following information is a social media guide created by PRSSA to aid the professional development of its membership. The guide includes popular vocabulary and explores tools such as blogs, social networks and online video that have changed the way public relations practitioners communicate. We hope this guide will help you develop communication strategies for your Chapter and understand social media strategy.

Note that this guide serves only as a snapshot of a variety of social media tools currently offered and provides reasons why and explains how they can be used by your Chapter.

Blogging

Blogging gives your Chapter a platform to provide information and resources to members and professionals.

Content can focus on a variety of topics, including:

- Chapter announcements.
- Event and meeting highlights and recaps. PRSSA scholarship information and deadlines. Relevant news regarding industry trends.
- Interviews with public relations professionals. Highlights of District and National events.

Benefits to your Chapter will include:

- Credibility as a young professional and industry voice online. Résumé and portfolio opportunities for members.
- Relevancy on social media channels.
- Connection to local professionals and networking opportunities.

Best Practices

Boston University PRSSA Chapter's blog (buprssa.com) is updated frequently and uses a variety of content, including meeting announcements, internship opportunities, interviews with public relations professionals, updates from International Conference and videos.

Keys to blogging success:

- Consistent, frequent updates – Decide on a content calendar and stick to it.
- Diverse content – Share information on a variety of topics in an array of formats.
- Vivid imagery – Use photos, videos and infographics to add dimension to the content. Strategize social strategy – Blog content should be included and utilized in your Chapter social media strategy.
- Promote to members – Ensure members are aware of the blog by including the link in Chapter emails and promotional materials.
- Measure success – Set up Google Analytics to track blog statistics and identify opportunities for improvement. Counting the number of comments on each post can also help you to see what kind of content encourages discussion and gets people thinking.

Twitter

Twitter connects people through the exchange of short, frequent updates known as “tweets,” of 280 or fewer characters. These messages are posted to your profile, sent to your followers and are searchable on Twitter. Posts can be grouped by topic or type with the use of hashtags by placing the “#” symbol in front of a topic, and other Twitter users can be mentioned by placing the “@” symbol in front of their username. Messages from other users can be quoted directly by use of the retweet feature. Twitter chats, typically lasting an hour, have become popular live sessions for sharing resources and information about tagged topics. PRSSA National hosts a least one Twitter chat per month during the school year.

Chapter Use

Most Chapters have a Twitter account that is typically run by the communications, digital or social media director. Chapters use Twitter to update their members on meeting times and to connect with other Chapters, organizations and professionals. Chapters often create their own hashtags, tweet during meetings for those who cannot attend, send links to public relations articles and post pictures from events. Retweet content from @PRSSANational to share national news with your members, follow the hashtag for #PRSSA during Twitter chats and follow hashtags such as #PRSSANC and #PRSSALA for National events.

Measurement

Several websites can help you monitor your tweets’ impressions, retweets or mentions. You can see how many people looked at a text-based tweet or recently tweeted URL, including reach (total number of unique viewers who would have seen this in their Twitter stream) and exposure (how many times someone saw a tweet about a particular topic).

Other tools include the following:

- [TweetStats.com](https://tweetstats.com) can provide your Twitter frequency, whom you retweet most, whom you reply to most and what times you tweet most.
- [Bufferapp.com](https://bufferapp.com) allows you to upload media or articles and shares it for you throughout the day.
- [Hootsuite.com](https://hootsuite.com) allows users to monitor several streams and schedule tweets.

Facebook

Facebook connects people via photos, status updates, groups, pages, links, event invitations and more. Users on this social network can upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, participate in conversations, interact with brands and connect with new people. Facebook is a vital tool for keeping specific audiences and relationships up-to-date on breaking news, upcoming events and organizational changes. PRSSA Chapters can utilize Facebook by connecting with members and other Chapters via Facebook pages and groups.

Chapter Use

Chapters should create a Facebook Page and/or a Facebook Group to stay connected with members and fans. A page encourages two-way communication for updates, which is vital in public relations. A group encourages more intimate communication for members. Facebook Fan Page recommendations include:

- Announcing when and where PRSSA meetings will be. Promoting events that PRSSA is holding.
- Making Chapter announcements.
- Announcing scholarship opportunities and deadlines. Sending private messages to all members at once.
- Posting photos from PRSSA events.
- Sharing links and resources that PRSSA members will find useful. Responding to comments and questions on the page.
- Promoting other websites your Chapter is on.
- Connecting with alumni of your Chapter.

Features

- Wall — Allow for your Chapter's fans to leave comments and encourage responses to your posts on your wall.
- Info — Filling out the information will add content to your page, which helps those who may be searching Facebook for your Chapter's page. Add updated contact information and be sure to link to all of your Chapter's websites, including other social sites.
- Photos — Create photo albums or post wall photos. If your Chapter has an event coming up, create a photo album for the event. Encourage fans to upload their own pictures to the fan page to increase interaction.
- Links — If your Chapter has a blog, announce new posts and updates to your blog or website. This encourages fans to visit your blog. Include links to interesting articles for public relations students. Use your page so people see it as a resource.
- Events — Facebook event pages are convenient for publicizing events. After following the easy steps to create an event, make sure to allow others to invite friends.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional, worldwide networking site allowing you to connect, be introduced to and collaborate with professionals. Many Chapters have created LinkedIn groups to stay connected with alumni and provide a meeting place to promote the open exchange of ideas. The multiple tabs for groups are used as follows:

- Discussions — Post questions or start discussions.
- Members – A comprehensive list of all members who belong to the group.
- Promotions — A place to share articles, promote products/services and market.
- Jobs — Post jobs and internships for group users.
- Events — Can be used to find and join communities, network with others, learn new skills and more.

Chapter Use

Chapters can add discussions, promotions and jobs. The more opportunities for interaction you add to your group, the more valuable your group will be to the community. It is a great place to post about meeting times, involvement opportunities, deadline reminders and more. Announcements can be sent to all group members or added as a discussion thread, and you also have the option to mark a thread as a featured discussion for extra visibility.

Best Practices

The biggest challenge Chapters face in social media is motivating two-way communication. The best way to overcome this is through consistently putting out new, relevant content. Open-ended and opinion questions also can lead to more participation and increased discussion.

Additional tips

Your group name is important. Consider which keywords your target members will search for. Make sure your group name follows the PRSSA Brand Identity Guidelines.

Use featured discussions to highlight particular content or offers. Mark a discussion as featured to pin your thread at the top of the discussion board.

Promotion

The following tips will help you get more participation on your LinkedIn Group:

Internally promote group members to follow the group and display it on their profile. Invite coworkers, past colleagues and customers to join and start discussions.

Promote the group on your website, blog, email newsletter and social media networks. Invite key industry experts to join and engage.

Measurement

Follow LinkedIn Company Page analytics to identify engagement trends. To track the click through rate of links in your announcements, use a URL shortening tool with analytics such as bit.ly. And of course, be sure to measure the traffic, leads and customers you get from LinkedIn over time and properly archive the information.

Instagram

Instagram is a visually-driven platform that allows users to share photos and short video clips on their personal profiles and timeline feeds. Instagram uses familiar elements of other platforms, such as hashtags and handles for grouping posts or connecting with others. Instagram is vital to staying relevant in our visual generation.

Chapter Use

Chapters can use Instagram accounts to post photos and videos of future and past events, speakers, conferences, ceremonies and more. Instagram also can be a great platform for encouraging member participation, whether in campaigns, contests or engagement. The value of Instagram is that it allows for a beautiful, simple visual presentation.

Best Practices

Make sure the photos and videos posted are carefully selected. Instagram should be the chosen method of promoting only when the content lends itself well to visual presentation. Because Instagram doesn't allow links in the captions, do not post long or complicated URLs in posts. Only tag Chapter members in photos in which they appear.

Measurement

There are multiple free Instagram analytics tools available to track visibility and engagement.

PRSSA Style and Brand

The PRSSA logo is the official insignia of the Society and should not be altered or changed.

The PRSSA logo is for use in PRSSA publications only and may not be used for other purposes without permission from PRSSA Headquarters. The logo is PRSSA's brand identity. It may not be used as a design element, as in a collage or background. The logo must stand out among competing visuals. For more information, see the Brand Identity Guidelines on the PRSSA website

Following PRSSA Style also means adhering to the official PRSSA Style Guide. PRSSA generally follows AP style, except where indicated in the guide.

View the [PRSA Brand Identity Guidelines](#) to request logos and learn more about the brand.

Chapter Programming

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, and Professional and Faculty Advisers. To ensure uniformity among PRSSA Chapters, elections must be completed by April 15 so those new officers may assume their responsibilities on June 1.

Chapters also are empowered to elect their Faculty and Professional Advisers when electing new officers.

Election procedures should be simple and uniform from year to year. The following steps are recommended for maximum effectiveness:

- At least one month before elections, hold a general meeting. Invite nominations from the floor after announcing the open offices and presenting job descriptions. After each nomination has been seconded, ask the candidates if they wish to accept the nomination. (During nominations, students should be encouraged to nominate themselves if they seek a position.)
- Nominations are closed when no further nominations are received from the floor.
- All candidates then complete a nomination form. The forms should be returned to the Chapter secretary three days after the first general meeting. The forms allow candidates to campaign for a position and the general membership to review all of the candidates' qualifications for the designated office. The Chapter should keep copies of all forms and present them to each Chapter member at the next general meeting.
- At the election, each candidate provides a 10-minute presentation followed by a Q&A. Vote by secret ballot immediately after the Q&A.
- A non-candidate (or several non-candidates) on the current executive board should collect the ballots and leave the room to count them.
- A designated person reports the results to members and all candidates.
- Old and new officers meet to discuss the expectations and goals for the coming year and share officer notebooks.
- The new executive board officers assume their roles beginning June 1.

What to Put in an Officer Notebook

One of the best ways to ensure a smooth transition of new officers is to create an officer notebook that can be passed from the current officer to the incoming officer. Below are several ideas about what to include in officer notebooks. These can be physical notebooks or a virtual folder that is passed from term to term.

- **Calendar of Events** — Include a calendar detailing when the past year's projects occurred to help the incoming officers develop an appropriate project schedule.
- **PRSSA and College/University Documents** — Pass on copies of membership forms, space and office request forms, financial forms, travel forms, previous officer's monthly reports, etc. Looking at previous forms will save the new officers time and prevent confusion. Pass on the Chapter Handbook and the National and Chapter Bylaws.
- **Samples** — Include speaker contacts, meeting posters and agendas, thank you letters, newsletters, membership lists and brochures, award submissions, event photos and Conference roll call ideas. List recruitment, membership and programming ideas.
- **Contact Information** — Compile a list of frequently-used phone numbers (e.g., PRSA Liaison, Professional Adviser, National Committee, National Headquarters, etc.).

- **Job Descriptions and Annual Reports** — These documents prevent job duties from being neglected or changed and will help incoming officers create goals.
- **Chapter Assets** — Make a list of items your Chapter owns, such as a camera, banners and office supplies, so they are not misplaced or forgotten. List where each item is located and who is responsible for its safekeeping.
- **Meeting Protocol** — Include a copy of Robert’s Rules of Order and instructions on how and whom to introduce (Advisers, speaker, special guests, etc.).
- **Research** — Include any research that was conducted during the year.
- **Advice** — Address problems your e-board faced and suggestions for future improvements. Also list ideas or programs that you did not have an opportunity to implement.
- **Budget Information** — Include receipts when possible.
- **Unfinished Task List** — If a project exceeds the length of your term, write clear instructions for the incoming officer.
- **History** — Including this information can motivate your Chapter. Include successes and failures, previous scholarships and awards won, previous Chapter members who have been elected to the National Committee, etc.
- **Event Logistics** — If your Chapter has an annual event, include logistical information that will assist incoming officers with the preparation of the event.

Planning a New Officer Strategy Session

An officer strategy session is a great way to start a new year, for new officers to get to know each other, to learn about PRSSA and become familiar with policies and procedures, and to develop goals for the upcoming year.

All officers and Advisers should attend. If there is a National Committee member in your area, you might consider inviting him/her as well.

Plan a strategy session soon after elections and one in the summer. This will keep everyone focused over the summer and into the coming school year. Allow for the meeting to last at least several hours.

The following is a sample agenda for a new officer strategy session:

11-11:30 a.m.	Introductions and icebreakers
11:30-11:45 a.m.	Discuss PRSSA history and opportunities (International Conference and Assembly, awards, Bateman Competition, etc.).
11:45 a.m.-12 p.m.	Discuss roles of officers and Advisers.
12-12:30 p.m.	What do we want out of PRSSA? What can we offer members?
12:30-1 p.m.	Break for lunch.
1-2 p.m.	Set goals, objectives and evaluation methods for the year.
2-2:45 p.m.	Determine immediate needs; plan fall recruitment, first meeting and newsletter; delegate roles for summer; and set deadlines.
2:45-3 p.m.	Create a directory of the officers; wrap up.

Setting Goals & Objectives

Having clear goals and objectives for the Chapter allows everyone to move in the same direction. Below is information that will assist you in setting goals and objectives.

What makes a good goal?

- Identify what you most want to accomplish. Identify realistic goals and objectives.
- Identify Chapter needs.

What do goals accomplish?

- Organize group and schedule. Make certain decisions.
- Identify priorities. Unify officers.

What are elements of an objective?

- How you plan to achieve a specific goal. Realistic and measurable results.
- A date by which you hope to achieve results.

What makes a good objective?

- Specific Measurable Achievable
- Compatible (with other goals)
- Example:

Goal: Increase our Chapter's involvement on a national level.

Objective 1: Secure the attendance of 10 Chapter members at the International Conference.

Strategy 1.1: Use materials from PRSSA Headquarters to encourage members to attend the International Conference.

Tactic 1.1.1: Share pre-Conference program with members at the next Chapter meeting.

Tactic 1.1.2: Re-tweet Conference-related material from the @PRSSANC account to the Chapter's Twitter account.

New Member Induction

It's strongly recommended that each PRSSA Chapter conduct a formal induction ceremony. The induction ceremony should accomplish the following:

- Encourage ethical behavior and introduce members to the PRSA Member Code of Ethics, which they are expected to adhere to during their membership.
- Identify the PRSSA Chapter as a unit of a national pre-professional Society as opposed to an independent on-campus "club."

The ceremony may be simple. All new dues-paying Chapter members individually accept their membership cards and certificates from the Chapter president. As a group, all new members should recite the following pledge (taken from the PRSA Declaration of Principles):

““ We Pledge:

To conduct ourselves professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public.

To improve our individual competence and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the profession through continuing research and education.

To adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics for the Practice of Public Relations as adopted by the governing Assembly of the Society. ””

PRSSA Headquarters sends digital membership cards and certificates to Chapters in late November after dues have been processed. The ceremony may be held during a Chapter meeting or annual induction dinner. Consider inviting the college or department leaders, faculty, parents, alumni and a PRSSA keynote speaker. Chapters may want to honor current members by awarding presidential citations.

Chapter Publicity

Strong publicity is imperative. Employ the public relations campaign techniques you learn in the classroom to support your Chapters. The following are techniques you may consider:

- When planning special events, send a media advisory prior to the event and a news release after. These materials should go to your campus and local papers, and to the editor of your sponsoring PRSA Chapter newsletter. The advisory should announce the event and invite the media; the release should summarize the event that has taken place and include meaningful quotes and pictures. Do not forget to email a copy of this release, along with pictures, to the PRSSA vice president of Chapter development at chapternews@prsa.org for the Chapter news section of the PRSSA website.
- Send regular announcements to the community relations department on your campus. Most colleges and universities publish a monthly activities list that informs alumni, graduates and undergraduates about school events.
- Let other PRSSA Chapters and audiences know what you are doing and invite them to your event. Mail copies of your newsletter to Chapters in your area and to the PRSSA National Committee. This passes on the news from your Chapter and provides you with ideas from other Chapters. In addition, send a copy to your sponsoring PRSA Chapter and any Champions for PRSSA in your area.

Chapter Recognition

Below are suggestions to help you earn recognition for your Chapter. For more ideas, contact Vice President of Chapter Development.

- Encourage your members to write articles for Progressions.
- Send Chapter News and photos for the PRSSA website to Vice President of Digital Communications.
- Send at least one representative from your Chapter to all local and national events.
- Send a delegate to National Assembly, where he or she can elect the next National Committee, inform others about your activities and bring back suggestions on how to improve your Chapter.
- As invited, attend PRSA luncheons and board meetings.
- Apply to host a Chapter Development Session at the International Conference. Apply for national awards and encourage your members to do so.

Recruiting Tips

Recruitment Reception — Invite prospective members to a reception with officers and Advisers to talk about PRSSA benefits and how to get involved.

Classroom Visits — Have officers visit classes to talk about PRSSA benefits (career preparation, networking, scholarships), opportunities and events, and getting involved. Distribute membership brochures and bookmarks with upcoming meeting dates.

Student Activity Fairs — Set up a booth and have officers available to answer questions. Display publications and other materials as well as pictures from past events. Provide a sign-up sheet so you can get names and contact information from prospective members. Adding a QR code linking to your Chapter's social media or website is a great idea.

Bookmarks — Print double-sided bookmarks on cardstock with a description of PRSSA, meeting dates for the semester/quarter and contact information. Get permission to put the bookmarks in journalism/communication textbooks before classes start. You can also distribute them when you make class visits or ask professors to pass them out to students.

Professor/Faculty Reminders — Put PRSSA announcements in professor/faculty mailboxes. Ask them to remind students about meetings and activities. You may want to attend a faculty meeting at the beginning of the year to explain the organization and the role you would like them to play.

Prospect Letters — Obtain a list of journalism/communications students from your department office or office of admissions. Send a personalized letter to the students explaining the benefits of PRSSA membership and invite them to your first meeting.

Other Departments — Do not limit your Chapter to public relations majors. Recruit students in other departments such as marketing, advertising, graphic design, journalism, political science, communications and/or business.

Extra Credit — Talk to faculty members to see if they will offer their students extra credit for becoming a PRSSA member or for attending meetings and events.

Brochures — Create a brochure explaining PRSSA membership benefits. Distribute them during class visits, at a student activity fair and the recruitment reception.

Newsletter — Use your first newsletter to entice prospective members. Write articles about membership benefits and upcoming Chapter activities. Send your newsletter to prospective members, especially first-year students interested in public relations.

School Newspaper — Run an announcement in the school newspaper and stay in contact with the staff to receive media coverage of successful or creative events.

Information Packets — Include letters from Chapter officers and Advisers, brochures and newsletters, a Chapter awards list, information on how to join the Chapter and PRSSA National information. Send by mail or hand out in class and the first meeting.

Successful Meetings

The following are ways to increase the quality of your meetings:

Speakers — Invite local PRSA members to speak to your Chapter about their career, career preparation, public relations skills or how to get an internship. Ask your Advisers to recommend professionals. Ask faculty or campus staff that deal with public relations issues. A political science professor might discuss political campaigns; the sports staff can discuss sports media; and the alumni office can talk about fundraising. Consider panels with faculty and professionals. Ask a National Committee member to Zoom into a meeting.

Workshops — Workshops are a good alternative to speakers. Reserve a computer lab for a technology workshop or ask members to bring their résumés and have a professional critique them. Ask students in small groups to plan and share their reactions to a hypothetical crisis or participate in a writing workshop.

Socials — Your group will be more cohesive if members enjoy being together. Go to dinner after a general meeting, plan a holiday party, design a float for the homecoming parade or organize a retreat. Invite PRSA members to your socials.

The perfectly planned meeting will be unsuccessful if nobody attends. Always publicize Chapter meetings. The following are a few simple ways to publicize your meetings:

- Start a phone tree to notify members of the time and place of the next meeting.
- Email all members informing them of the meeting.
- Ask professors to make classroom announcements.
- List the meeting place and time in the activity section of your campus newspaper.
- Create a groupchat for the members of your Chapter and send meeting reminders for each meeting.

Professional Development

Student-run Firms and National Affiliation (Supplemental manual available)

Student-run firms provide hands-on experience and give students a broader understanding of the profession. PRSSA Chapters are encouraged to establish student-run firms, adhering to the PRSA Member Code of Ethics and following PRSSA guidelines. Contact Vice President of Professional Development at vpprofessionaldev@prsa.org for more information and download the Student-run Firm Handbook from the PRSSA website.

National Affiliation is PRSSA's acknowledgment that a student-run firm meets certain standards, as established by PRSA leaders and students from award-winning firms. The National Affiliation application is on the PRSSA website. Contact Vice President of Professional Development for more information.

PRSA Associate Membership

To qualify for PRSA Associate Membership, an applicant must be a PRSSA member in good standing when they graduate from a college or university, have a reputation for ethical conduct and integrity, and agree to abide by the Member Code of Ethics. PRSSA members may apply between five months before or two years after graduation, regardless of employment status. Associate Members have full voting privileges in PRSA and receive all membership services but cannot serve in some elected or appointed offices. Apply for Associate Membership on the PRSA website. Dues for PRSSA graduates are \$60 per year, with a deferred initiation fee. However, if PRSSA members join PRSSA the same semester in which they graduate, then their PRSA dues will be \$5.

PRSA New Professionals Section

The New Professionals Section provides career guidance, mentoring and professional development for PRSA members in their first three years of public relations experience. Currently, the annual dues for this Section are waived for PRSSA members. Section members may access the following benefits:

- Timely, relevant trend information about the public relations job market.
- Advice for job hunters and those seeking to excel in their first professional positions.
- Mentoring from senior PRSA professionals.
- Links to Chapter- and National-level networking.

Contact the National President or Immediate Past President for more information on joining PRSA.

More Ways to Grow

Additional ways students can develop strong professional skills include the following:

- Participate in mentoring or job shadow programs.
- Plan a dinner or luncheon with PRSA Chapter members.
- Attend national events, District Conferences and PRSA Chapter events.
- Volunteer for PRSA luncheons and events.
- Join your school's student-run firm (if applicable).

Fundraising Ideas (Supplemental Handbook Available)

Fundraising allows your Chapter to provide better professional development to your members. Keys for successful fundraising include the following:

- Begin early, stay organized, be realistic and have fun. Get as many of your supplies donated as you can.
- Know your school's rules and the state laws for on-campus fundraising.
- Review the Events & Fundraising handbook for more ideas or connect with vice president of events and fundraising.

Fundraising Ideas:

- Prize Auction/Raffle — Ask local organizations to donate prizes. Sell tickets or hold the auction in a heavy traffic area on campus. (Parents weekend may be a good time.)
- Workshops — Provide a public relations, software or résumé workshop for community and campus organizations. Charge participants a fee to attend.
- Speaker Series — Invite a celebrity or local professional(s) to speak to students about public relations. Sell tickets to the event.
- Professional Headshots — Enlist a photographer to take headshots for students of any major for a small fee.

Student-recommended Best Practices

Each year at the PRSSA National events, Chapter leaders network to discuss their challenges and solutions. Below are notes on these sessions from past events.

Advocacy — Engaging in on- and off-campus causes is an opportunity to get more of your members involved in leadership roles.

Meetings and Events — Make your meetings valuable for your members by tailoring them to the specific needs of your membership and offering services and information that other campus organizations are not already providing. For example, make sure that your résumé session offers a unique public relations perspective so that you are giving your members more than what they could already access through the campus career center.

- Agency visits. For some Chapters these are once a year events. For others, these are monthly visits, established with the firm, which different members may attend.
- Résumé, business cards, social media or elevator pitch workshops.
- Keep your first Chapter meetings creative, not just informational. Get the important information across, but include a workshop, case study or other activity.
- Have a brainstorming session or distribute a survey to find out what your members want to do at meetings.
- Have a scavenger hunt on campus.
- Have a case study competition similar to PRSSA National Assembly Day-of Competition. Offer practice interviews with public relations professionals.
- Create opportunities to get real experience writing, event planning, etc.
- Encourage seniors to help underclassmen pick their classes and semesters, advising on their experiences with various courses and professors.
- Mock interviews with public relations professionals; speed interviewing sessions allow students to meet several professionals.

Executive Boards — Managing an executive board in a large Chapter is a big job. Here are some ways to engage your board and prepare underclassmen to take board positions:

- Create video parodies of each e-board position so members can learn about each role.
- Organize committees to support e-board members. Those committees create interest in and prepare members for leadership positions.
- Allow e-board members who are away for the summer to participate in your summer meetings via Skype or Google+ hangouts.
- Share your calendar with your sponsor PRSA Chapter and obtain a copy of theirs so you can schedule complementary events.

Membership Benefits — Retention is just as important as recruitment. Here are some ways to engage your current membership with benefits such as:

- Rewards Points. Give students points based on their participation in meetings and events that earn them access to funding for national events or other membership benefits.
- Offer rewards for active members such as certificates, scholarships, etc.
- PRSSA mentor/mentee programs. Pair new members with a mentor who keeps in touch throughout the year and holds the member accountable for attending meetings.

Fundraisers — The Chapter News section of the PRSSA website and the FUNdraising Playbook are great places to look for ideas that have been successful for other Chapters. Fundraising offers members experience with event planning and promotion.

- Start early in the year before restaurants and other companies have committed to fundraising for other organizations.
- Reach out to the community. Find a restaurant to host a happy hour for students, hold Krispy Crème/Dunkin Donut sales, or deliver pizza for a night and keep the tips.
- Create a book of résumés. Students pay a small fee to be included, and the books are distributed free or for a donation to local businesses, particularly public relations firms.
- Design and print business cards for students on campus. Charge \$5 more than whatever it costs to produce the cards. You also can do a headshot fundraiser.
- Partner with other organizations to fundraise.
- Some stadiums will donate to your organization if you will do the post-event clean-up. Connect with professors to help with fundraising.
- Reach out to local public relations firms asking for donations. Write a formal letter detailing what your Chapter has done and/or how the donation will be used.
- Help campaign with American Cancer Society or other causes.

Socials — Ensuring that each Chapter member knows others in the Chapter is a vital part of member retention.

- PRSSA Day. Go on outings together, hang out as a Chapter and include everyone. Networking events.
- Personal branding sessions or résumé reviews specific to public relations. Ice cream socials, school sporting events and movie nights.
- Tweetup meetups via your Chapter hashtag or Chapter Twitter account.

Retreats — A great way to energize, organize and unify your e-board.

- Invite the outgoing e-board for part of the retreat so they can share transition information with the incoming e-board.
- Visit a local agency as part of your retreat to enhance professional development. Set up a meeting with your sponsoring PRSA Chapter e-board.

Recruiting — One of the most difficult parts of recruiting underclassmen can be getting their attention at a time when many on-campus organizations are trying to reach them. You can attract more attention by emphasizing that public relations provides transferable skills that prepare you for many careers.

- Insert bookmarks with a description of your Chapter and your upcoming meeting times into the “Intro to PR” books at the school bookstore.
- Create a YouTube video promoting your Chapter; incorporate humor.
- Hand out PRSSA merchandise such as pens, cups or sunglasses. Put your meetings times on the back of a coupon for a free drink or free pizza at a local company.
- Visit entry-level public relations or communications classes where students might be more interested in your message.
- Offer food and information at the dorms.
- Partner with another on-campus organization to create a more noticeable booth.
- Reach out to students who hold public relations roles in other campus organizations who need help learning how to do public relations.

Retention — Once you have members enrolled, how do you keep them coming and participating?

- Make sure every member has three things: a friend in the Chapter, a role or a purpose and the information they need to participate.
- Be excited about the organization.
- Always be informative. Share news from PRSSA National and other Chapters and bring new lessons members don’t learn inside the classroom.
- Celebrate your Chapter’s accomplishments.
- Develop personal relationships between the executive board and general membership so that members see the board is invested in their development and wants them to keep coming back.

FAQs

Where do I turn for information, ideas and help?

- Faculty Adviser. He or she should be your primary source for ideas and information and is a connection to PRSSA Headquarters. Be sure to ask your Faculty Adviser about emails sent from Headquarters with essential information for you.
- Professional Adviser(s)
- The National Committee and PRSSA Headquarters
- Champions for PRSSA and members of your sponsoring PRSA Chapter
- PRSSA handbooks and guides such as the District Conference Handbook, Student-run Firm Handbook, Relationship Manual, Advocacy Guide and Fundraising Playbook
- PRSSA website. All PRSSA documents, manuals and applications are online. Other PRSSA members, especially Chapter leaders

When are the dues deadlines?

Dues from your individual Chapter members must be received at PRSSA Headquarters no later than Nov. 1 for members joining in the fall and March 1 for members joining in the spring. Dues are \$55 per person and cover a one-year membership. Prorating is not permitted.

How do I access the dues roster?

Log into the Chapter Admin site using your MyPRSA login information and click on the green “Manage Dues” button to begin. Please note, only Chapter presidents and Faculty Advisers have access to this site. If you are a Chapter president or Faculty Adviser and do not know your login please contact PRSSA Headquarters at prssadues@prsa.org or call (212) 460-1474.

How do I fill out the dues roster?

The dues roster and executive board member information must be completed on the Chapter Admin site by the Chapter president or Faculty Adviser. Incomplete rosters will not be accepted. List members’ names alphabetically with email addresses, permanent mailing addresses and dates of graduation. Dues fees for your entire Chapter must be submitted online with a credit card or sent in one certified or college/university check (personal checks are not accepted). Be sure this check equals \$55 per member. Call PRSSA Headquarters with questions at (212) 460-1474.

If I completed the dues roster last dues period, do I need to send another the following dues period? Only complete a new roster if you have new members.

What do our members receive for their dues?

PRSSA provides opportunities. It is up to your members to take advantage of the many benefits offered by the student Society, PRSA and the Champions for PRSSA.

Descriptions of PRSSA’s many benefits are found in this handbook and online, and include the following:

- **Events** — International Conference, District Conferences, Leadership Assembly
- **News and Resources** — PRSA Strategies & Tactics, PRSA Issues and Trends, Internship Center and Jobcenter
- **PRSA** — PRSA New Professionals Section, PRSA Associate membership (at a discounted rate)
- **Networking** — Mentoring, events, PRSA Sponsoring Chapters, Champions for PRSSA

- Membership certificates and cards
- **Scholarships, Competitions and Awards** — More than \$30,000 awarded for leadership, achievement, dedication to the profession and the Bateman Case Study Competition
- **Leadership Opportunities** — At the local and national level

Chapters offer their own benefits, which could include a student-run firm, professional speakers, newsletters, leadership development, social interaction, and Chapter seminars and workshops.

When are local elections held and how long do Chapter officers serve?

Chapters must hold elections by April 15. Officers serve from June 1 to May 31 of the next year. Send full contact information for Chapter officers to PRSSA Headquarters after elections using the Chapter Admin site available on the PRSSA website.

How can our Chapter continue to develop?

Periodically ask yourself and other Chapter members:

- Are our programs varied and interesting?
- Are meetings scheduled at convenient times for students, faculty and Advisers? Do we invite our Professional Adviser(s) and PRSA members to PRSSA meetings?
- Do we invite qualified, interesting and informative speakers from the PRSA Chapter? Do we regularly write for PRSA national publications Progressions?
- Do we train talented sophomores and juniors for future Chapter leadership?
- Do our Chapter members attend PRSSA national events and Regional Conferences? Do our Chapter members compete for PRSSA scholarships and awards?
- Do we adhere to National and Chapter PRSSA Bylaws?
- Do we perform at least one public service project annually?
- Are we giving back and engaging in the form of high school outreach?
- Are we sufficiently recognized by our school's committee on student organizations?
- Do we have an awards system to recognize outstanding public relations achievements?

Does PRSSA offer graduation cords?

The official PRSSA color for graduation cords is navy blue. How cords are purchased and distributed is up to the discretion of each Chapter's executive board. PRSSA does not require Chapters to have graduation cords.

For answers to other questions, contact a member of the National Committee or PRSSA Headquarters.

PRSSA

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