

FAST FORWARD: An Overview of the Commission on Public Relations Education

#PReduFastForward



CPRE: *The authoritative voice for public relations education*

- 1973: The Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ) asked by industry leaders concerned about new graduates skills
 - “They can’t write”
- AEJ created The Commission with PRSA as first partner
- Today 20 member organizations from around the world
 - Work together to develop major reports that identify research-based standards for curricula
 - Explore issues and best practices to prepare students to meet industry needs
 - Standards now used by educators in many countries and by PRSA/PRSSA for program certification

Commission Members

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- Arthur W. Page Center
 - *Arthur W. Page Society*
 - Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, PR Division
 - *Canadian Public Relations Society*
 - Conference Board
 - *Chartered Institute of Public Relations*
 - European Public Relations Education and Research Association
 - *Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management*
 - Institute for Public Relations
 - *International Communications Association, PR Division*
 - International Communications Consultancy Organization
 - *National Black Public Relations Society*
 - National Communications Association, PR Division
 - *Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations*
 - Public Relations Council
 - *Public Relations Society of America*
 - PRSA Educators Academy
 - *PRSA Foundation*
 - PRSA College of Fellows
 - *Universal Accreditation Board*

CPRE has always been voluntary, based on a shared vision

- CPRE is based on a vision and a shared commitment to public relations
- We are a village of volunteers, appointed by member organizations, and supported by our employers, including universities, who absorb research costs, travel, etc.
- PRSA and the Institute provide in-kind services, and as funds are needed to produce reports and related expenses, industry and member organizations help
- The most recent report was supported by contributions from Ketchum, Weber Shandwick, Wells Fargo, the Arthur W. Page Society, the PRSA Foundation, Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations

CPRE's Key Role: Research on Industry Needs → Reports & Recs to Educators

CPRE reports link educators and practitioners via common vision

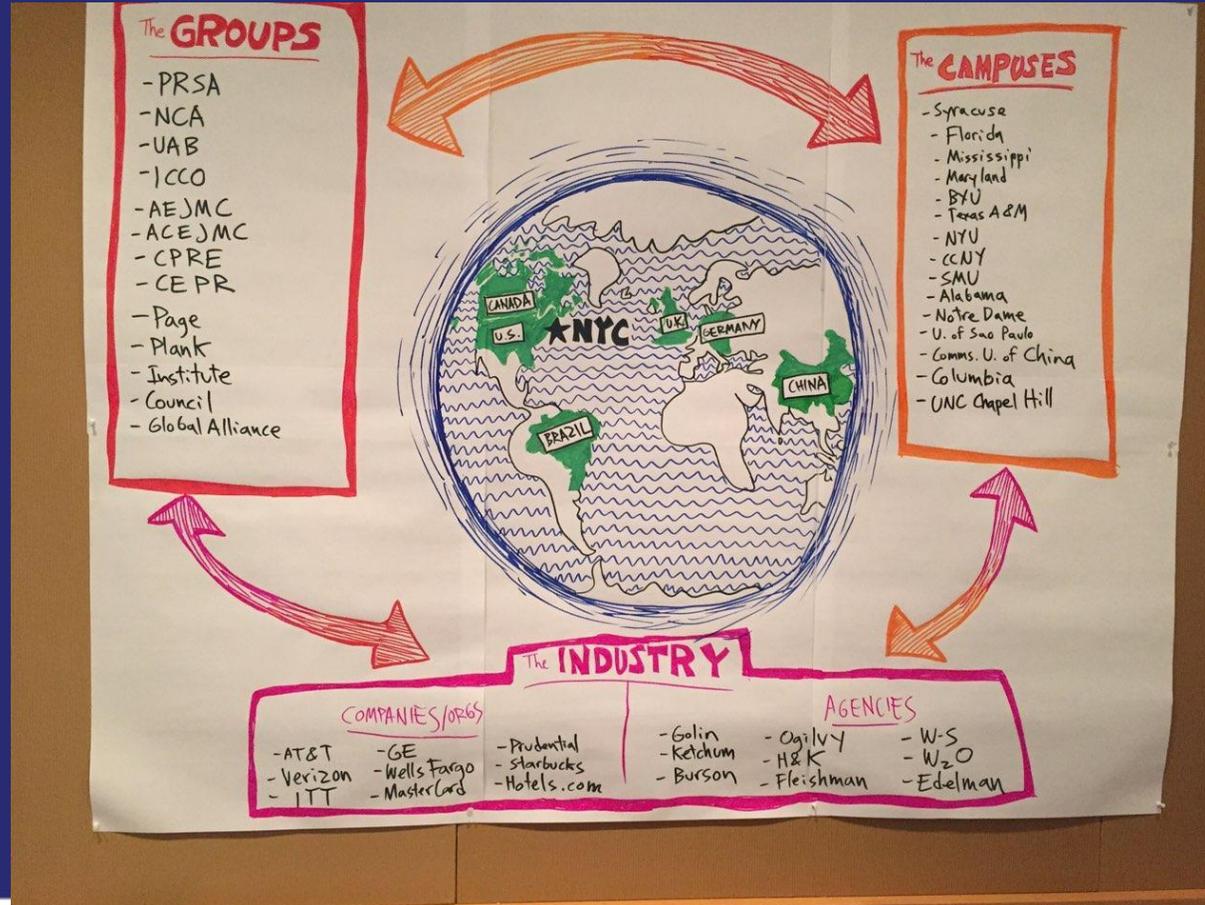
- 1975: A Design for Public Relations Education
- 1981: Updated edition of “Design”
- 1987: “The Design for Undergraduate Public Relations”
- 1999: “A Port of Entry” (added graduate and continuing education)
- 2006: “The Professional Bond” (graduate and undergraduate)
- 2010: “A First Look: Analysis of Global Public Relations Education:
• “Philanthropy for Public Relations Education
- 2012: “Standards for a Master’s Degree in Public Relations: Educating
for Complexity

AND IN 2017

The 2017 Report: Landmark Research, Broadest Focus and Recommendations

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- 2014 – when WAS the last undergraduate PR report? (Hint: a long time ago)
 - Consensus clear – new report needed
 - Where to start? At the top: First ever Summit of Industry and Educators
 - 30 global agency CEOs and major corporate CCOs asked can you spare a workday? And they said yes!
 - Leading educators and association execs added perspectives

The Summit united the profession



High energy, high expectations

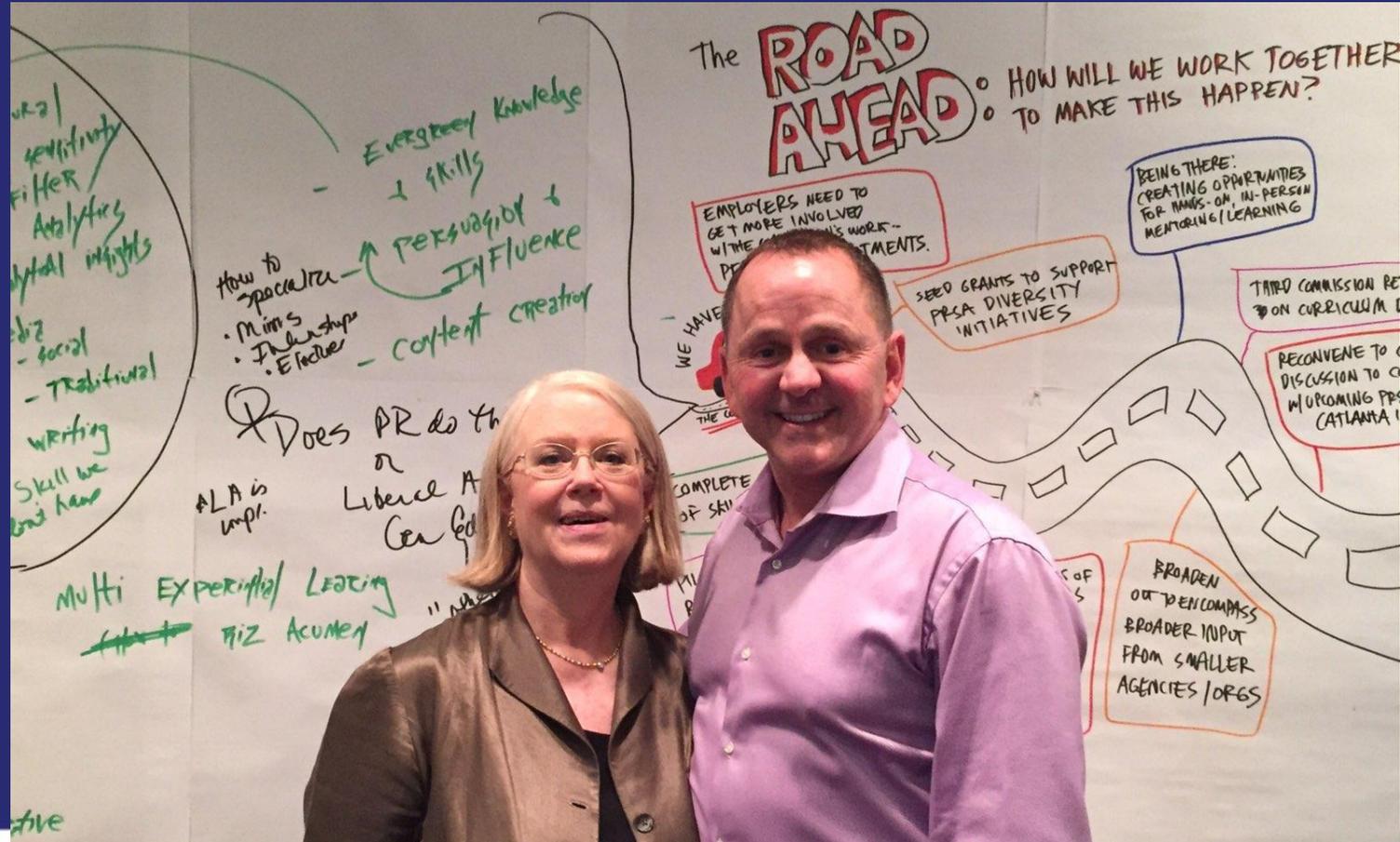
- Full morning in small groups answering the Q: A new graduate should be prepared on first day to _____?
- And then the group got down to business – what do we really need, what really matters?
- Groups then focused on broad topics like diversity, ethics.



The industry leaders were candid and demanding

- We had a good sense of their needs and concerns
- And their buy-in to the process and need for their ONGOING HELP!
- Knew their views needed to be validated with survey of “real world” – PR heads at smaller agencies and businesses, not for profit, etc.
 - Survey found agreement and disagreement among hirers
- Summit cemented a key CPRE approach: LISTEN to the “hirers”

The final white board reflected group consensus after much intense discussion



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NEXT UP: 3-year research effort into final phase

- 2014 global focus groups, 2015 Summit (validated via focused survey of broader group of industry hirers) fed into major Omnibus Survey.
 - Dozens of questions in separate sections, with some for educators only, distributed via email to CPRE members who were then responsible for inviting, via emails and social media, members of their organizations and colleagues
- Data in hand, 60 Commission member subject matter experts in 16 teams reviewed secondary and primary research to ID current state and future challenges and wrote and wrote – 172-page landmark report with dozens of recommendations.

“Content created to bring people up to date on topics, lead to major recommendations, and also add to the education body of knowledge.”

FAST FORWARD FOUNDATIONS + FUTURE STATE. EDUCATORS + PRACTITIONERS.

The Commission on Public Relations Education 2017 Report on Undergraduate Education



Diversity is a major concern

Diversity is a major concern at all levels of the industry and the academy. No surprises there, but the need to address this challenge at every single opportunity is ever more intense. Chapter authors note that it starts well before minority students enter the college classroom, with special attention to recruitment and "onboarding" and student support throughout their campus years.

Research studies cited show that there are significant challenges to retention of minority practitioners at the entry-level, which is a problem that must be addressed by industry but also by educators who need to help students prepare for what they may encounter on the job. One key concern is that minority students have problems on their first jobs; they may not only have public relations, but may also tell their friends on campus. Neither situation helps the industry address one of the most significant and difficult challenges we face.

The most profound recommendation from chapter authors: focusing on the "business case" for diversity is no longer enough, and far too limiting. The case for diversity is that it is simply the right thing to do.

A global perspective is increasingly important

A global perspective is increasingly important for our profession and it should begin during the undergraduate years. It's a given that businesses and organizations and issues are global today. Which means public relations practitioners have to go global, beginning with the simplest of steps: understanding that public relations practice varies with banks and languages, around the world. Having a global perspective isn't an elective anymore; it is essential. The fact that there are career opportunities worldwide should be a way to capture student attention.

Education Industry-Educator Summit

of CPRE's 1999 and into issues related to the student, academic perspectives, future CPRE up concerning supervised acknowledge the eclectic and the experience for includes critical concepts and harassment, workers' exploitation, assimilation, and challenges such as class

working lack of agreement about the "ideal" for an entry-level position in public relations, a reflects the fact that the profession is changing. Industry employers are changing, and those from industry sector to industry sector. A small not-for-profit association is looking for abilities from a new graduate than is a senior at a global public relations agency.

A simple exercise of asking employers across for a list of proposed qualifications for an in public relations, we found everything from agreement to great divergence. This challenge for educators. The most agreement of personal traits and characteristics, or actually "taught" in a classroom. And was on the desired skills and knowledge—educators are expected to teach. Our of industry are complex and it's no one-size-fits-all list of and skills that is applicable for able relations setting. This is students aspiring to a career in those who seek to educate and those who want to hire them.

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It is understood that adding a sixth course is a significant recommendation; CPRE believes adding a required course in ethics is an essential change."

need for more
relations practitioners
program evaluation
standardized credentialing
the resources to meet

Key findings reflected consistency

- Industry is changing fast – education has to be equally nimble, adaptive
- WRITING. Writing. writing. Across all platforms.
- Ethics – now more than ever. The ever-expanding chapter.
- Diversity – begins on campus. Because it's right thing to do.
- Core areas of study:
 - Liberal arts education
 - Six required courses -- the current five (principles, research, writing, campaigns, internships) AND new addition: ethics
- The foundations – especially research and theory) are still essential
- The value of a PR degree has to be emphasized to hirers

Key findings reflected consistency

- Focus on experiential outside the classroom experience
 - Ideally, all internships are paid
- Address online education – it is the future
 - Not yet totally accepted by majority of educators and practitioners
 - Need to develop consistent standards to build credibility
- Shape evolving faculty model: traditional Ph.D.s, + professors of practice + adjuncts – all able to teach *and* have professional experience
- Continuing dialogue and partnerships among educators and industry is essential

BUT there were gaps between hirers, educators

- “The difference between what educators believe they are teaching and what practitioners believe they find in new hires continues to be an issue
 - Disagree on grads abilities in communications, research, editing, and media relations, social media
 - Educators teach campaigns, practitioners want media relations
- “I am so tired of interviewing kids who can do and expect to do whole campaigns, and I need them to first and foremost organize, write, interact with clients and pitch.”*

And hirers don't always agree with each other

- Summit participants (big agency CEOs, corporate CCOs) want”
 - High level knowledge and skills desired; i.e., strategic planning, business acumen, understanding influence and network theory
 - Much emphasis on interpersonal skills and traits (not easily taught in a classroom)
- Hirers in smaller markets, firms, companies have simpler expectations than the Summit group -- more basic entry-level work

“Some of the people who put this list together operate in a rarefied atmosphere and expect entry-level people to not only walk on water, but be able to make it rain and fill the pond.”

Major recommendations

✓ Curricula

- Add the sixth required course : ETHICS
 - Current five required: Principles, research, writing, campaigns, internships
 - Require writing in every course
 - Topics to be covered via PR sequence courses or courses from other departments: social media, strategic communications, measurement and evaluation, content creation, publicity/media relations

Other major recommendations

- ✓ Ramp up quest for diversity in the classroom
- ✓ CPRE must partner with educators on enhancing value of a public relations degree (to potential students, to hirers, to influencers)
- ✓ Expand focus on online education including specialized training for online teaching, program quality and assessment
- ✓ Help educators and practitioners-to-be stay current on emerging tech
- ✓ Ensure students have an accurate perspective on global practice of PR
- ✓ Grow and sustain industry-academy dialogue
- ✓ Advance faculty model: All prepared to teach, all have public relations experience
- ✓ Internships ideally must be paid
- ✓ Emphasize extracurricular and co-curricular involvement as integral part of student development

ACTION: Work groups focusing on:

- Determine how best to achieve “write better”
- Identify and share models for ethics course
- Begin to find answers to online education challenges
- Define educators’ role in making our profession as diverse as the world we serve
- Gather insights, ideas on emerging model for faculty experience with emphasis on preparation of adjunct faculty
- Explore “what’s in a name” – impact of myriad of program titles
- Expand industry-educator dialogue at global, national, local level
 - Regional Summits: Washington, Columbus, San Diego
 - Advisory Board chaired by Page and PR Council leaders

Involvement in the CPRE village of volunteers!

Members appointed to the CPRE Board have many ways to become involved beyond Board meeting participation

- Strategic plan development
- Advancing industry-educator dialogue
- Promoting diversity and inclusion
- Helping current Work Groups that are leading implementation of the 2017 Fast Forward Report recommendations
- Helping with communications efforts to promote awareness of the Commission, its work and the report recommendation

To get involved, contact Elizabeth or Judy to share your interests

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PUBLIC RELATIONS
EDUCATION