

MINUTES

COMMISSION ON PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

2019 BOARD CONFERENCE CALL

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2019 3:00 PM EST

Attendance: Executive Committee: Elizabeth Toth, Co-chair Educators; Judy Phair, Co-chair, Practitioners; Kathy Lewton, Past Co-chair, Practitioners; Sandy Duhe, Vice Chair; Gemma Puglisi, Secretary-Treasurer.

Organization Representatives and At-large Members: Bruce Berger, Denise Bortree, Shannon Bowen, Doug Cannon, Debbie Davis, Joseph Diblasi, Melissa Dodd, Denise Ferguson, Neil Foote; John Forde, Jeneen Garcia (PRSA), Karla Gower, Gregor Half, Flora Hung-Baesecke, Michael Kent, Carolyn Kim, Emily Kinsky, Spiro Kiouisis, Sarah Kochhar, Tina McCorkindale; Neil Mortine, Dean Mundy, Mickey Nall, Marlene Neill, John Paluszek, Alexander Parkinson, Sonja Popp-Stahly, Dave Remund, Maria Russell, Kim Sample, Hilary Fussell Sisco, Stacey Smith, Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, Katerina Tsetsura, Jean Valin, Richard Woods, Ansgar Zerfass, Terry Flynn, and Kathy Rennie.

1. Welcome and Introduction—Judy Phair and Elizabeth Toth

The meeting commenced at 3:01 p.m. EST. Judy welcomed all; Elizabeth followed with a special welcome to new members. Elizabeth reported that the Commission is making progress in achieving greater diversity among both practitioner and educator members. The 66-person Board, she added, includes representatives from 20 global and national organizations, as well as several appointees to at-large positions.

Judy and Elizabeth each gave brief biographical profiles. Judy, who was president/CEO of PRSA in 2005 and served on the PRSA Board from 2000-2007, was recruited to the Commission in 1997 and served until 2004. She returned to the Commission Board in 2013 and has been a member since then. She is also a PRSA representative on ACEJMC, and has participated in several PRSA certification and ACEJMC accreditation site visits. This is the first year of her two-year term as co-chair. Judy expressed her enthusiasm for both building on the significant achievements of the Commission and moving in new directions that will position us for success in the current and future PR education and professional environment.

Elizabeth is in her second year as co-chair, representing educators. She is professor and past department chair at the University of Maryland College Park and has been a member of the Commission for several years.

Introduction of Steering/Strategic Planning Committee: Judy introduced the eight-member Steering/Strategic Planning Committee that will help the Commission focus on priorities and achieve goals. In addition to executive committee officers (Phair, Toth, Duhe, Puglisi, Lewton), the committee includes Neil Foote, Tina McCorkindale, and Mickey Nall.

Judy also thanked Kathy Lewton for her outstanding service as co-chair for the past two years.

Brief History and Structure of CPRE: Judy described the founding of the 46-year-old Commission in 1973 by the public relations division of the Association for Education in Journalism (now ACEJMC). PRSA became a co-sponsor the following year, with the late PRSA and industry leader Betsy Plank playing a key role. The Commission's primary goal was to improve "the unsatisfactory and disparate state of public relations education" in the United States. Among major issues the Commission sought to address were not enough PR people in C-suites, multiple names for the profession, a shortage of PR degree programs, and a general consensus among employers that the graduates they hired couldn't write. As Judy commented, some things have not changed.

Since its inception, the Commission – now global in its membership and outreach -- has issued six influential reports on public relations education. It is an informal – not legally recognized – organization that has continued to grow in reputation and influence, mainly because of its significant reports and its special mission to improve PR education for the benefit of educators, practitioners, and students.

The Commission is not part of PRSA, but PRSA does provide in-kind support, including staff and administrative services and a "home base." Judy cited, in particular, support from Jeneen Garcia at PRSA. The Commission approved its first set of policies and procedures in April 2018.

Website Access and Content: Elizabeth encouraged members to visit the newly designed website. <http://www.commissionpred.org/> The site includes a Power Point orientation presentation, mission statement, list of Board members, policies and procedures, and link to the recent *Fast Forward* report. She expressed the hope that the site will be a resource for internal and external audiences.

Approval of October 2018 Board Minutes: Mickey Nall moved approval, and Kathy Lewton seconded. The Board approved the minutes unanimously by voice vote.

2. Objectives/Priorities for 2019

Strategic Plan: Noting that the Commission has never had a strategic plan, Judy said that the time is right to take that step. Although the Commission's reports have been widely-recognized for their excellence and have strongly influenced public relations education, the Commission has often gone into "quiet periods" between reports, losing an opportunity to play a larger and more consistent role for public relations education and the industry-academia dialogue. Today, that dialogue is more important than ever. The Commission is poised to increase its visibility and influence on the future of public relations education, building on its most recent findings and helping to develop new initiatives. Judy said that the Steering Committee members also comprise the Strategic Planning Committee. Four subcommittees have been established to begin the work of the plan. They are:

- Mission and Vision (including bylaws, policies and procedures)
- Position: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities
- Strategic Objectives and Priorities
- Performance Indicators

Some members are in place for each working group; Judy said others will be added. More information, including volunteer sign-ups, will be posted on the web site within the next few weeks. Judy added that the strategic plan review will include examining the overall structure of CPRE, which is not a “formal” organization and has no budget of its own. For example, the Commission could consider becoming a 501 (c)(3), similar to IPR and the PRSA Foundation.

Industry and Academia Connections: Judy introduced a discussion of the two Industry-Academia Summit meetings that will take place in 2019. These events, which bring industry and PR education leaders together, are an outgrowth of the work of the **Industry-Academia Dialogue working group**. They bring practitioners and professors together to discuss key issues and make recommendations to benefit both PR education – and students – overall. The first Summit following up on *Fast Forward* was held last year at American University in Washington, D.C. Since there is no allocated budget for these half-day events, CPRE relies on in-kind donations of space and food (generally lunch).

Judy reported that plans are underway for a West Coast summit on Friday, October 18, in San Diego, with San Diego State University a potential location. The event is the day before the PRSA annual Educators Academy Super Saturday in San Diego; the PRSA ICON follows October 20-22. CPRE is putting together a planning committee for this event.

Elizabeth and Kathy Lewton discussed the Columbus, Ohio Summit, scheduled at Capital University in May. Kathy said that roundtable groups of industry and academic leaders at this summit will focus on the same issues that were highlighted at the American University meeting last year: writing, diversity, ethics, on-line education, and ways to create/foster regular industry/academic dialogue. The expectation is that insights from these summit meetings will be published and distributed to key industry/university audiences.

Fast Forward Report Working Groups: Elizabeth asked for brief reports from the leaders of several working groups formed to propose actions based on the *Fast Forward* report findings. Elizabeth has created an Excel spread sheet of the seven working groups to track their progress. In addition to the work of the Industry-Academia group, detailed above in the discussion of summit meetings, the Board heard these reports:

- **Writing:** Denise Ferguson said information has been gathered from public relations programs/departments and PRSSA on best practices and writing centers.
- **Nomenclature:** John Forde said that data has been collected from 112 department chairs regarding the different names of their programs.

- **Ethics:** Denise Bortree reported that the group will recommend adding a public relations ethics course as a formal requirement for a public relations degree. Judy noted that the PRSA Educational Affairs Committee has approved adding the course as a requirement for certification (CEPR) compliance under Standard One (Public Relations Curriculum). Denise expressed the group’s pleasure with that decision, adding, “We have put together a course proposal and collected syllabi that schools can adopt.” Elizabeth noted that the Commission will need to develop a strategy on communicating and delivering these materials.
- **Faculty/Adjuncts:** Ken Plowman said the group is drafting a survey for adjuncts and identifying prospective survey respondents. Group co-chair John Deats was unable to attend this meeting because he had a conflict with a teaching commitment.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** John Paluszek said that Dean Mundy is doing secondary research on the work of universities in this area, and the group will prepare a document on best practices. John also recommended that Board members read the new book *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership*, published by the PRSA Foundation in partnership with the Museum of Public Relations.
- **On-line:** Carolyn Kim noted that the group will conduct a survey on best practices in late March.
- **Industry-Academia Dialogue:** Kathy Lewton said that her work on the Industry-Academia Dialogue group led to her decision last year to create a volunteer Advisory Board for both the *Fast Forward* working groups and the Commission overall, as needed. The Advisory Board members are:
Co-chairs: Roger Bolton and Kim Sample, Arthur Page Society
Members: Ephraim Cohen, Managing Director, Fleishman Hillard; Luke Lambert, CEO, G&S; Lynn Casey, CEO, Padilla; Tom Martin, College of Charleston; Rosemary Mercedes, CCO, Univision; Shira Miller, CCO, National DCP; Richard Woods, former CCO, Capital One and Revlon.
 Commission members should contact Kathy to arrange for counsel with the Advisory Board.

3. Opportunities for Member Involvement

Judy and Elizabeth cited the impact of these activities and initiatives in raising the visibility and reputation of the Commission. They noted that both ongoing projects and new priorities offer numerous opportunities for Board members to get involved in areas that appeal to them. Right now the Commission has just one standing committee, Nominations. However, Judy said the Steering Committee is looking at adding standing committees in Diversity and Inclusion, Communication, and Industry Outreach. She said that opportunities for involvement will be posted on the website within the next few weeks. Judy and Elizabeth also encouraged members to contact them directly about ways they would like to become involved.

4. Discussion/Questions

All Board members on the call were invited to make comments and ask questions.

Katerina Tsetsura thanked Board leaders for reports and updates on activities. She said that the possibility of translating the report into different languages was mentioned at the last Commission meeting and asked if that was still of interest. Judy and Elizabeth agreed that translations were desirable and gratefully accepted Katerina's offer to help move this forward.

Jean Valin said that a global code of ethics for public relations was discussed at a recent Global Alliance forum he attended in Oslo and suggested that the work done thus far by the Alliance would be an excellent resource for the Commission.

John Paluszek added that he and Elizabeth Toth worked together on course project several years ago and suggested that agency and academic leaders might collaborate on a research course that would include both applied and big data research perspectives.

Emily Kinsky, editor of the AEJMC PR Division's *Journal of Public Relations Educator* said she has asked the Commission to nominate representatives for the journal's editorial board. Judy and Elizabeth agreed that this would be an excellent opportunity for AEJMC and CPRE to work together for mutual benefit.

5. Next Meeting

The second of the Board's four formal annual meetings will take place on Wednesday, April 10, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Georgetown University School for Continuing Studies on Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, DC. Judy thanked Tina McCorkindale and IPR for providing the space for the meeting and lunch for all who attend. Tina said she would contact all Board members with a request for response on in-person attendance no later than April 1 so that she can plan appropriately. Telephone access will be available for those who cannot attend in person.

Judy and Elizabeth reminded Board members that the Board meeting schedule for 2019 includes two conference calls and two in-person meetings. The second in-person meeting will take place during the PRSA ICON in San Diego on Sunday morning, October 20, at the PRSA conference hotel. Specific time and location are still being determined. The final conference call will take place in mid to late November.

Judy and Elizabeth thanked the Board members for their participation. They praised the Board for its willingness to devote time and talent in the cause of excellence and integrity for the benefit of our industry, public relations education, and the students who are tomorrow's leaders.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m. EST.

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