



working group on

# Diversity & Inclusion



## our charge:

The 2018 Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) report issued a call to action for a better focus on diversity and inclusion in public relations education.

1. The field still has a way to go to reflect the diversity of our communities. We must develop a more-diverse pipeline of future practitioners.
2. We must equip our students with multicultural competencies, to understand and appreciate the value of diversity.
3. As the PR Coalition said in 2005, public relations has a role to play in championing diversity in our organizations, and in our communities. We must begin these conversations in the public relations classroom.

# What we know: Highlighting best practices

[“Racial and Gender-Based Differences in the Collegiate Development of Public Relations Majors: Implications for Minority Recruitment and Retention”](#) Kenon A. Brown, Ph.D., The University of Alabama Damion Waymer, Ph.D., The University of Cincinnati

- ✓ Create recruitment materials for incoming freshmen that better explain the need for (and importance of) diversity in PR.
- ✓ Recruit a diverse representation of student ambassadors when reaching out to incoming freshmen and potential majors.
- ✓ Incorporate discussion of racial and gender differences in the public relations industry in all major courses.
- ✓ Proactively recruit males and UREPs to join PR and communication-related organizations
- ✓ Create a more diverse pool of professionals for networking, guest speaking and mentoring opportunities.
- ✓ Inform all public relations students universally of internship opportunities to eliminate alienation of UREP and male students.
- ✓ When placing students in teams for classroom projects, make the teams as diverse as possible.
- ✓ Develop a culture that de-emphasizes the mandate to diversify—emphasize the rich values and benefits of diversity of people, ideas, nationalities, experiences and so forth.





# What we know: Our calls to action

★ Colleges and universities must reach out to high schools and educate young high schoolers about the public relations field, what it means and what it does. Establish opportunities for high school students to visit PR programs, perhaps sit in on a course, or take a special course.

★ PR firms have a responsibility to make a concerted effort to offer more internships and opportunities for students on all fronts. Edelman offers a summer internship to a student of diversity/inclusion each summer. All firms should provide such opportunities.

★ Perform a diversity and inclusion audit of your school's syllabi, curricula, and course content. Are opportunities being missed or maximized?

★ Identify opportunities and connections with diverse alumni - establish fellowship programs and networking opportunities specifically for students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds.

# D&I on campus: Highlights from CPRE reviews

**University of Alabama** - Developing roadmap for achieving greater diversity: Reach students earlier in their academic careers and recruit more diverse faculty.

**Ball State University** – Office of Institutional Diversity, a university-wide program, addresses underrepresented demographics with mentoring opportunities toward graduate work outside of the university to encourage students to pursue doctoral studies and return to Ball State as a faculty member.

**Monmouth University** – The PRSSA chapter planned a diversity and global workshop at the time of the recent CEPR site visit. A review of syllabi by the site team: “diversity is an ongoing topic of discussion in many courses.”

**Radford University** – The public relations program exceeds the overall university’s student population in diversity. Public relations courses include study of diversity in audiences, diversity’s impact on communication and the need for consideration in audience segmentation and messaging.

**Syracuse University** – All undergraduates are required to take a Diversity and Communications course and diversity and inclusion is woven throughout the curriculum. In the process of pursuing fresh initiatives that show D&I progress.





# D&I on Campus: Examples of our ongoing work

**American University School of Communication:** Established a “Diversity & Inclusion Award” for one faculty member and one staff member. Also in 2018 sponsored a \$500 Diversity & Inclusion Award for the PRSA Educators Academy Super Saturday research paper competition

**University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication:** Established a Dean’s Student Advisory Council comprising students who reflect the student body as a way to provide regular, open feedback to the dean, particularly related to issues of diversity.

SOJC faculty and staff diversity committee working in 2019 with the dean’s student advisory committee to create a student liaison internship who will help ensure student groups hosting multicultural events are connected with each other, and connected with the journalism school.

**Plank Center, University of Alabama:** Dr. Kenon Brown, whose work is cited and outlined in this report, is pursuing additional, similar research.

The Plank Center held its first D&I Summit in November in Chicago, which included 90 people, a balanced mix of educators, professionals and diverse students. Plank provided five, \$1500 scholarships to 5 students to travel to and participate. A similar event will be held in Chicago in November 2019.

The Center is the financial sponsor for this year’s Bateman Competition, whose client is the PRSA Foundation and their new book, *Diverse Voices*.

# Our thought leaders: Highlighting key resources

**PR Museum** [compiled biographies of inspiring African-American public relations leaders](#) spanning from Inez Kaizer, the first black woman to open a public relations counseling firm (Kansas City, 1957), to Terry Edmonds, the first black speechwriter in The White House.

**The PRSA Foundation** published “[Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership](#)”, which profiles 40 leading African-American, Latino and Asian public relations professionals who serve as models and mentors in their respective fields. They share candid anecdotes detailing their successes, as well as the obstacles they have overcome and lessons they have learned along the way.

**PRSSA** took on the PRSA Foundation as their client for the 2019 Bateman competition. Bateman teams across the country developed campaigns to promote diversity and inclusion on their campuses while showcasing the *Diverse Voices* book.

**PRSA** [has assembled a diversity & inclusion tool kit](#)

**The Institute for PR** (with PRSA Foundation support) commissioned [a multidisciplinary report](#) of diversity research to understand the implications for PR.





## Next Steps: Our six-month plan, & beyond

1. **The low-hanging fruit:** Continue compiling what is happening related to D&I in our public relations classrooms, curricula and students. Begin with the educators who work with CPRE. Crowdsource leaders from public relations programs nationally.
2. **More low-hanging fruit:** Work with PRSSA's 2019 Bateman competition to incorporate best practices observed in the campaigns for the PRSA Foundation's "*Diverse Voices: Profiles in leadership.*"
3. **6 months to 2 years:** Develop a resource featuring diversity & inclusion-related "case studies" — best practices of D&I initiatives addressed in our PR curricula, in our PR classrooms, and with our PR students. (See separate CFP)
4. **6 months to 2 years:** Start identifying PR practitioners, students, and educators who have a story to tell - a story focused on a professional "Aha" moment. We've all had one! The goal is to profile a diverse range of individuals, discussing their PR experience. Leveraging Apple's model, it is not about discussing diversity, rather reflecting it.

# 2019 Timeline of deliverables:

**Feb. 28: Determine 6-month action plan.**

**March - April: Crowdsource current D&I activities from educators working with the Commission**

**March - April: Initial outreach for case study CFP**

**April: Report initial results at Bridge conference regarding current D&I activities reported and initial response to case study CFP**

**April - August: Continue monitoring D&I activities and compiling information for case studies. Identify possible individuals to provide testimonials and share professional stories**

**September 2019: First draft of initial case studies**

**Fall 2019: Begin solidifying personal stories, and determining best platforms**

