

# Annual Report

Committed to  
advancing excellence  
in public relations  
education and the  
industry worldwide



**COMMISSION ON  
PUBLIC RELATIONS  
EDUCATION**

# 2025 in Review



As co-chairs of the Commission on Public Relations Education, we are proud to present our 2025 annual report, a reflection of our collective commitment to advancing excellence in public relations education and strengthening the bridge between academia and the profession.

This year, our strategic priorities included examining how to best align graduate education with professional needs and prepare graduate students for strategic, ethical leadership in a rapidly evolving communication environment. On page 5, learn about the comprehensive graduate research and recommendations provided by our CPRE Research Committee. The CPRE Practitioner Educator Committee hosted a summit in NYC on October 8 that was attended by about 50 practitioners and educators, who discussed how industry and academy could best prepare students for an industry impacted by AI, media fragmentation, political polarization, and declining trust. In 2025, the CPRE DEI committee conducted research on how educators and practitioners are responding to DEI resistance and facilitated multiple workshops at the annual Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference. The CPRE International Committee presented the 2023 CPRE Signature Report to more than 500 people at a virtual Global Alliance meeting.

While there was so much to be proud of in 2025, we were deeply saddened by the unexpected passing of long-time CPRE advocate and leader, Dr. Pamela Bourland-Davis. While Pamela held multiple leadership roles in CPRE and other public relations groups, what we will remember most is how she led. She never judged, never looked for credit, and always had CPRE's best interests at heart. Her commitment to mentoring, service, and collaboration continues to inspire us.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are excited to share the impactful graduate education report and DEI research with broader audiences. We plan to finalize research on preparing student for a workforce that is being disrupted by AI, and to begin other research projects. We aim to initiate more frequent dialogues and collaboration between educators and practitioners so we can best respond and prepare for how to best equip early-career practitioners for success.

Thank you to our CPRE member organizations, committee chairs, volunteers, and friends for your work and support.

Together, we continue to shape the future of public relations education.



*Julie O'Neil*

**Julie O'Neil**  
Ph.D., APR



*Chris Brathwaite*

**Chris Brathwaite**

# CPRE 2025 Presentations



- **Practitioners' Expectations for Graduate Education**

AEJMC Public Relations Division virtual conference, February 27  
Emily Kinsky and Marlene Neill

- **PR as a Driver of Social Change—Being Courageous**

IPR Bridge, April 9-10  
Angela Bradbery, Regina Luttrell, and Spiro Kiouisis

- **Unveiling Insights: Transforming PR Education from the CPRE Landmark Report**

Global Alliance, April 11  
Wole Adamolekun, Anca Anton, Anne Gregory, and Katerina Tsetsura

- **From Momentous Change to Leadership: Preparing our Students for Communication Careers**

AEJMC, August 8  
Debbie Davis, Amiso George, Charles Lubbers, Elizabeth Toth, and Damion Waymer

- **Do Public Relations Graduates Exhibit Work-Ready Intelligence?**

AEJMC, August 9  
Pamela Bourland-Davis, Hua Jiang, Chuck Lubbers, and Elizabeth Toth  
Third Place Public Relations Division Teaching Paper



*Patrick Merle, Marlene Neill, and Anni Qiang received a top-three public relations paper award at AEJMC for their paper "Public Relations Practitioners' Expectations for Graduate Education."*



*Sun Young Lee, Amiso George, Maria de Moya, Sarah Aghazadeh, and Juan Mundel participated in the Exploring Teaching Strategies to Combat DEI Pushback in the PR Classroom workshop at AEJMC.*



# CPRE 2025 Presentations



- **Principled Leadership in Public Relations: Turning Barriers into Opportunities for Teaching, Research, and Practice**

AEJMC Pre-Conference Workshop, August 6

- **Exploring Teaching Strategies to Combat DEI Pushback in the PR Classroom**

AEJMC, August 6

Sarah Aghazadeh, Amiso George, Maria De Moya, Sun Young Lee, and Juan Mundel

- **New Insights from Practitioners & Educators on DEI Pushback**

AEJMC, August 6

Sheryl Battles

- **Public Relations Practitioners' Expectations for Graduate Education**

AEJMC Public Relations Division, August 6  
Patrick Merle, Marlene Neill, and Anni Qiang  
Top Three Public Relations Paper Award

- **Advancing the Profession: Graduate Education in Public Relations**

PRSA Educators Academy, October 6  
Melody Fisher, Marlene Neill, Hongmei Shen, Chelsea Woods



Elizabeth Toth, Chuck Lubbers, and Hua Jiang celebrated receiving a third-place teaching paper award at AEJMC.



Geoff Curtis and Hilary Fussell Sisco helped organize the CPRE Summit.



Deb Silverman presented CPRE-informed research.

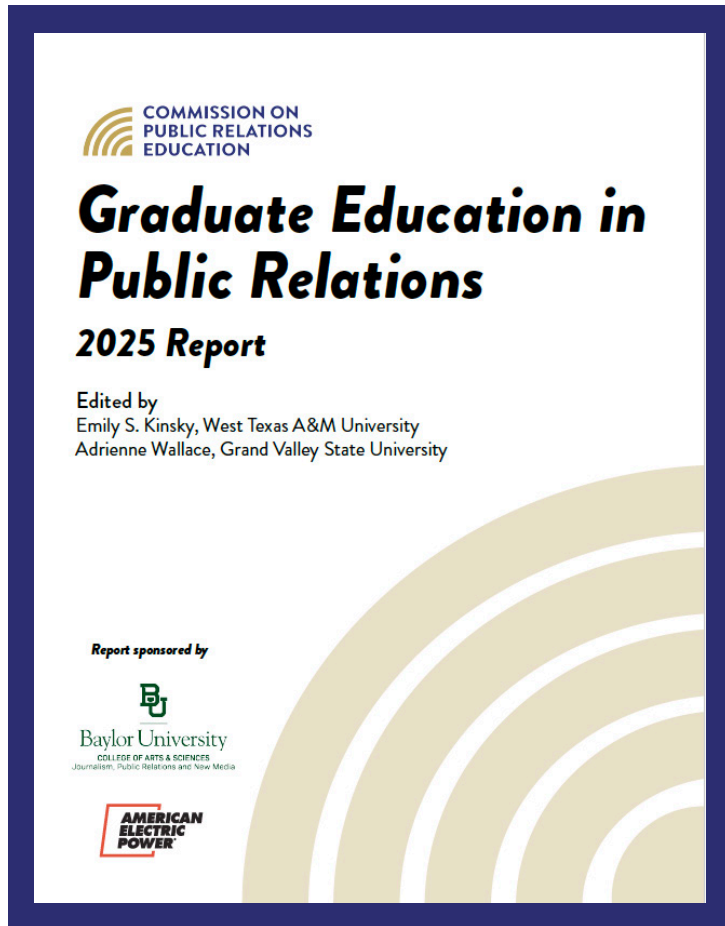


Kim Sample and Tina McCorkindale connected at the CPRE Summit.



# CPRE Releases Graduate Education in Public Relations Report

CPRE launched three studies in 2024 examining the current state and future needs of master's-level graduate education for public relations, an initiative that was desperately needed to update the last master's-level CPRE study that was published in 2012. This work continued through 2025, and the research committee's efforts culminated in this report.



## Graduate Education in Public Relations Report Highlights

1

Comprehensive review of 92 accredited master's programs and certificates in public relations, strategic communication, and related disciplines.

2

Exclusive findings from surveys of over 110 educators and 115 PR professionals, revealing the core knowledge and skills most valued in today's job market—like strategic planning, crisis communication, research, and ethical leadership.

# CPRE Releases Graduate Education in Public Relations Report *Cont.*

3

In-depth guidance for students and academic leaders on choosing and designing high-impact PR graduate programs.

4

Actionable recommendations for achieving program standardization, meeting accreditation benchmarks, and aligning curricula with industry needs.

CPRE acknowledges the valuable support for this report from American Electric Power and Baylor University, College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Journalism, Public Relations and New Media.

We thank the CPRE research committee for their dedication and contribution to this significant body of work. The committee includes Emily Kinsky (co-chair), Adrienne Wallace (co-chair), Denise Bortree, Geoff Curtis, Melody Fisher, Karla Gower, Stephanie Madden, Patrick Merle, Marlene Neill, Ken Plowman, Kathleen Rennie, Hongmei Shen, and Chelsea Woods.

# CPRE Hosts Ready or Not: Rethinking PR Preparation for a Changing Industry Summit in New York City on October 6

The event featured expert panels and facilitated discussions focused on bridging the preparedness and expectation gap between new practitioners, educators, and employers. Key takeaways included:

- Public relations programs across the country vary in resources and how well they prepare students, so practitioners must help bring equity and exposure to students.
- Given the acceleration of AI in the industry, employers increasingly value soft skills such as curiosity, entrepreneurship, and collaboration.
- Employers are most impressed by Gen Z's confidence, passion, and penchant for diversity, intersectionality, and causes.
- Educators are encouraged to embrace ambiguity in their assignments and pedagogical approaches so students are better prepared for friction, complexity, and competing stakeholder interests in their early-career jobs.
- Educators should continue to emphasize the intersections of channels in the PESO model so students can work across all channels, not just earned.

Thank you to our event sponsors, the Institute for Public Relations and the PR Council.



*Julie O'Neil, Stacey Smith, and Deb Silverman served as table facilitators at the event.*



*Event organizers and panelists—Geoff Curtis, Stephanie Mattera, Hilary Fussell Sisco, Kadrie Lamin, Vanessa Wakefield, and Eric Winkfield—celebrated a successful discussion.*



# 2025 Committee Accomplishments

## International

Co-Chairs: Dr. Anna Klyueva  
Dr. Katerina Tsetsura

The CPRE International Committee continued to identify the recent global and international resources and projects that focus on describing the landscape of contemporary PR education practices to create and populate a page on "Global Trends in PR Education" for the CPRE website. The committee continued to emphasize the increased importance of incorporating global PR practices into PR education in the USA. The committee worked on finding ways to integrate global implications and recommendations into the next U.S. education report on the state of master's education in public relations. The committee also continued discussing challenges in teaching differences in global practices as part of the PR education in the USA in light of the changing political and social landscape.

## DEI

Chair: Dr. Rosalynn Vasquez

The committee conceptualized and executed a DEI-focused research project that examined one of the key findings from the 2023 Signature Report focused on "DEI pushback" in higher education and the PR industry. The objective of this new study is to gain new insights into how DEI pushback is being perceived and addressed by U.S. PR educators and practitioners and to determine best practices. The team collected and analyzed data from 22 educators and 26 practitioners. The team is in the final stages of this project and plans to create a summary report of key findings. The committee collaborated with the PRD committee to create and submit an AEJMC PRD pre-conference panel focused on exploring DEI in the classroom and industry. It was accepted and the committees organized and successfully delivered both a teaching panel and a DEI workshop at AEJMC in August.

## Fundraising

Chair: Gary McCormick

The focus of the Fundraising Committee this year was to identify key areas that could be potential funding sources for the Commission. The primary focus was to identify sponsors for the Graduate Report published this year, but several other areas have been identified that will help to focus the efforts in 2026. These included: CPRE Bourland-Davis Research Fellow, named in honor of past CPRE leader Dr. Pam Bourland-Davis; Educator-Practitioner Summits; CPRE Research Leadership; CPRE Spotlight Reports; and Sponsoring CPRE Research Presentations. In addition, the Commission is seeking sponsors to help underwrite the costs of the organization joining the ACEJMC.

## Communications/Promotions

Co-Chairs: Dr. Matt Tidwell  
Jeff Wilson

The CPRE Communications Committee was chiefly responsible for providing direction to The Agency, the student communications firm at the University of Kansas hired by CPRE. Specific projects included multiple social media campaigns related to CPRE published research as well as numerous presentations at academic conferences and other industry events. The committee also provided copy and artwork guidance for the CPRE Annual Report.

# 2025 Committee Accomplishments

## Research

Co-Chairs: Dr. Emily Kinsky  
Dr. Adrienne Wallace

The CPRE Research Committee continued its work on the initiative to study the current state of graduate education in public relations. We approached this from three directions: content analysis of university graduate program websites, a survey of PR practitioners, and a survey of PR educators. The outcomes of these efforts, which began in 2024, have included two presentations, an upcoming CPRE report, and an upcoming special journal issue with three of our studies highlighted.

- The CPRE graduate education research report was published on the CPRE website this fall.
- Three graduate PR education articles will be published in a special issue of the Journal of Public Relations Education in the spring.
- “College Public Relations Practitioners’ Expectations for Graduate Education” was presented at the AEJMC conference on August 9 by Marlene Neill, Patrick Merle, and Anni Quiang, who discussed the results from the practitioner survey. Their work earned a spot in the top papers session for the PR Division of AEJMC.
- A CPRE research panel was featured at the PRSA-Educators Academy Virtual Conference on October 6 with representatives from each of the three studies (Marlene Neill, Melody Fisher, Chelsea Woods) and moderated by Hongmei Shen.

Research committee members are exploring additional insights from the collected data and expect to have at least two more manuscripts written this year.

## Nominating

Chair: Gary McCormick

With the loss of Dr. Pamela Bourland-Davis, Ph.D. as Vice Chair, working with the board the Nominating Committee Chair elected Deborah Silverman, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA to complete the balance of her term. With Dr. Silverman stepping down as secretary, Matthew Tidwell, Ph.D., APR was elected to serve out the remainder of a two-year term. The Nominating Committee then met to solicit and select candidates for the 2026 board. Nominated and elected for 2026 are Co-Chair for Educators - Deborah Silverman, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, Vice Chair - Geoff Curtis, Treasurer - Sheryl Battles, Director - Denise Hill, Ph.D., APR. They will serve with continuing board members Julie O'Neil, Ph.D. - Immediate Past Co-Chair, Chris Brathwaite - Co-Chair for Practitioners, Matthew Tidwell, Ph.D., APR - Secretary and Adrienne Wallace, Ph.D. - Director.

## Practitioner/Educator Collaboration

Co-Chairs: Geoff Curtis  
Dr. Hilary Fussell Sisco

The committee organized and led a Practitioner/Educator Summit called “Ready or Not? Rethinking PR Preparation for a Changing Industry, a CPRE Practitioner-Educator Panel & Roundtable Discussion.” The event brought together dedicated professionals who want to help build the next best in their field. The panelists included Kadrie Lamin of Hilo, Eric Winkfield of M Booth, Stephanie A. Mattera of NYU School of Professional Studies and Vanessa Wakeman of the Wakeman Agency. The summit was sponsored by the Institute for Public Relations, PR Council and CPRE and held at Edelman in NYC.

# Honoring Dr. Pamela Bourland-Davis

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We are deeply saddened to share that Dr. Pamela G. Bourland-Davis passed away in 2025.

Pam was an avid supporter of CPRE. She recently served as co-chair of the Commission's Research Committee, and she co-edited the 50th 2023 Signature report, *Navigating Change: Recommendations for Advancing Undergraduate Public Relations Education*. In that leadership role, she helped develop surveys for educators and practitioners, analyzed the results, and wrote the report. Her leadership and contributions continue to shape how public relations is taught worldwide. In 2024, Pam was elected vice chair of CPRE and was set to assume the role of co-chair for the 2025–2027 term.

Pam's influence reached well beyond CPRE. She was a past editor of the *Journal of Public Relations Education*, led the Public Relations Division of AEJMC from 2000–2001, and served as President of the Southern States Communication Association in 2020. In November 2024, the PRIDE Committee of NCA recognized her for her contributions to public relations education, especially her work on the CPRE Signature Report and her commitment to sharing its findings across the field through NCA, SSCA, AEJMC, and PRSA.



While these many accomplishments reflect Pam's dedication to advancing the profession, what we will remember most is how she led. Pam stepped in when help was needed. She never judged, never looked for credit, and always had CPRE's best interests at heart. She listened more than she talked in meetings. And when she did speak, she offered wise insight. She remained calm during heated conversations, was generous with her time, and supported her colleagues and friends. Dr. Elizabeth Toth said the best word to describe Pam was gracious, noting that Pam "encouraged me every day with her strength, intellect, talent, and friendship."

Pam's passing is felt deeply across the public relations community, including ours. Her commitment to mentoring, service, collaboration, and advocacy will continue to inspire us. We extend our deepest condolences to her family, friends, and academic colleagues.



# FINANCES

## CPRE Inc

### Summary

Available balance: \$26,702.24



### MY INCOME

Total  
\$4,992



## Commission on Public Relations Education Inc.

Profit and Loss by Tag Group  
January 1 - October 21, 2025

	JAN 1 - OCT 21, 2025	TOTAL
Revenue		
Contributed income		\$0.00
Donations directed by individuals	4,991.70	\$4,991.70
Total Contributed income	4,991.70	\$4,991.70
Total Revenue	\$4,991.70	\$4,991.70
GROSS PROFIT	\$4,991.70	\$4,991.70
Expenditures		
Contract & professional fees		\$0.00
Accounting fees	406.73	\$406.73
Stipends	833.64	\$833.64
Total Contract & professional fees	1,240.37	\$1,240.37
Insurance	276.74	\$276.74
Occupancy		\$0.00
Utilities	96.74	\$96.74
Total Occupancy	96.74	\$96.74
Office expenses		\$0.00
Bank fees & service charges	-69.52	\$-69.52
Memberships & subscriptions	71.88	\$71.88
Merchant account fees	1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Office supplies	69.52	\$69.52
Software & apps	50.00	\$50.00
Total Office expenses	1,121.88	\$1,121.88
Payroll expenses		\$0.00
Payroll Processing Fee	365.00	\$365.00
Total Payroll expenses	365.00	\$365.00
Total Expenditures	\$3,100.73	\$3,100.73
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$1,890.97	\$1,890.97
NET REVENUE	\$1,890.97	\$1,890.97

# 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Julie O'Neil, Co-Chair



Chris Brathwaite, Co-Chair



Gary McCormick,  
Immediate Past Chair



Deborah Silverman, Vice  
Chair



Matt Tidwell, Secretary



Neil Foote, Treasurer



Adrienne Wallace, Director

# CPRE Member Organizations



International Association  
of Business Communicators



The Plank Center  
FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS





# CPRE Member Organization Representatives

Each of the **24 organizations** is entitled to appoint **two representatives to the Board** who serve as liaisons to their organizations while conducting the mission of the Commission by sharing their time and expertise within a variety of working committees.

**Arthur W. Page Center**

Stephanie Madden and Marlene Neill

**Arthur W. Page Society**

Sheryl Battles

**AEJMC—Public Relations Division**

Ken Plowman and Hongmei Shen

**Canadian Public Relations Society**

Holly Cybulski and Julia Rim

**Chartered Institute of Public Relations, UK**

Anne Gregory and Anne Nicholls

**European PR Education & Research Association**

Anca Anton and Chiara Valentini

**Global Alliance for Public Relations**

Justin Green and Wole Adamolekun

**Institute for Public Relations**

Geoff Curtis and Tina McCorkindale

**International Assn of Business Communicators**

Debbie Davis and Peter Finn

**Journal of Public Relations Education**

Emily Kinsky and Amanda Weed

**Museum of Public Relations**

Cayce Myers

**National Black Public Relations Society**

Neil Foote

**Plank Center for Leadership in PR**

Karla Gower

**PR Council**

Kim Sample

**Public Relations Society of America**

Angela Eveillard and Jeff Wilson

**PRSA Foundation**

Aerial Ellis and Thomas Bennett

**PRSA College of Fellows**

Brook DeWalt and Philip Poole

**PRSA Educational Affairs Committee**

Kathy Barbour and Susan Walton

**PRSA Educators Academy**

Melody Fisher and Mary Ann Pearson

**Universal Accreditation Board**

Kristie Byrum and Marlene Neill

**The Conference Board**

Joseph DiBlasi and Daniela Banos

# 2025 At-Large Representatives/Past Co-Chairs Council

**At-Large Representatives** do not represent a specific member organization, but they serve as liaisons to the community of public relations educators and practitioners. At-Large members have voting rights and are expected to promote CPRE's mission, attend its meetings, and engage in its initiatives through committee service.

In 2022 CPRE's Board approved the creation of a **Council of Past Co-Chairs**. The purpose of this Council is to acknowledge the long series of advancements in Public Relations education, to recognize the individual contributions of those co-chairs, and to encircle them within the CPRE as non-voting volunteers valued for their insights, counsel, and expertise. Membership in the Council is optional, as is the willingness to serve on committees. Virtual meetings are held twice a year.

## At-Large Representatives

- Michele Ewing
- Spiro Kiousis
- Marta Ronquillo Newhart
- Katie Place
- Gemma Puglisi
- Rai Rashpal
- Kathleen Donohue Rennie
- Hilary Fussell Sisco
- Katerina Tsetsura
- Rosalynn Vasquez

## Past Co-Chairs

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| - Carroll Bateman*        | - Dr. Karla Gower            |
| - Dr. Scott Cutlip*       | - Kathleen Lewton            |
| - Betsy Ann Plank*        | - Dr. Marcia DiStaso         |
| - Dr. William P. Ehling*  | - Judith Phair               |
| - John Paluszek           | - Dr. Elizabeth Toth         |
| - Dr. Dean Kruckeberg     | - Stacey Smith               |
| - Frank Ovaitt            | - Professor Anthony D'Angelo |
| - Jean Valin              | - Maria Russell              |
| - Dr. Judy VanSlyke Turk* | - Gary McCormick             |
| - Del Galloway            |                              |
| *deceased                 |                              |

# 2025 CPRE Donors & Sponsors

## CPRE DONORS:

Kathy Barbour, Chris Brathwaite, Anthony D'Angelo, Debbie Davis, Neil Foote, Spiro Kiouisis, Gary McCormick, Julie O'Neil, John Paluszek, Gemma Puglisi, Maria Russell, Deb Silverman, Adrienne A Wallace, and Jeffery Wilson.

## IN-KIND SPONSORS:

During 2025, the Institute for Public Relations provided invaluable pro-bono support to the Commission, delivering services without requiring us to use important funds. They provided website and administrative support, as well as underwriting a Box subscription for document management.



INSTITUTE FOR  
PUBLIC RELATIONS

## GRADUATE REPORT SPONSORS:



Baylor University







**2<sup>nd</sup> SESSION**  
**UNVEILING INSIGHTS:**  
**TRANSFORMING PR**  
**EDUCATION FROM THE**  
**CPRE LANDMARK**  
**RESEARCH**

Prof. Anne Gregory, PhD  
 Professor Emeritus of  
 Corporate Communication  
 University of Huddersfield (UK)

Asso. Prof. Wole  
 Adamolekun, PhD  
 Associate Professor, Mass  
 Communication  
 Elizade University (Nigeria)

Prof. Katerina Tsetsura, PhD.  
 Commission on Public Relations  
 Education, International  
 Committee Chair (USA)

Asso. Prof. Anca  
 Anton, PhD.  
 Associate Professor, Senior Lecturer/Vice  
 Dean of Research and Internationalisation  
 Faculty of Journalism and Communication  
 Sciences University of Bucharest  
 (ROMANIA)



# The CPRE Annual Report was created and produced by:



## The Agency

We are a group of students from the University of Kansas with a vision to transform businesses, brands and reputations at the intersection of culture and creativity.