

A Note from Natalie

We're almost *there*. *There* can be spring break or the end of the mini-mester. *There* could also be the April 1 deadline for AEJMC papers; make sure that if you are submitting you review the Paper Call and pay attention to specific requirements.

Good luck to those wrapping up and finalizing their submissions to our division and any other division.

There can also mean the Montreal conference. August is not that far away, so make sure that you have your passports in hand and ready to

go by that time. In this issue, we have included our schedule of division panels, presentations, and events.



Natalie Tindall,
Public Relations Division Head

I hope you get a chance to get out of the hotel and see Montreal. Via Twitter and Facebook, I solicited some great things to do and see while in the city from friends who have lived and visited the city.

A sample of a few recommendations include:
Susan Grantham: The Botanical Garden has living plant sculptures -<http://www.designboom.com/art/living-plant-sculptures-at-the-montreal-botanical-gardens/>

Richard Waters: The farmers market

[@rwmonty](https://twitter.com/rwmonty): Or take a drive to Chambly for lunch at Fourquet Fourchette <http://www.fourquet-fourchette.com/site/en/concept.html>

[@RRRJessica](https://twitter.com/RRRJessica): Schwartz Deli schwartzsdeli.com

[@GingerCM](https://twitter.com/GingerCM): please eat Poutine for me -- fries, cheese curds, gravy, Yum.

[@rwmonty](https://twitter.com/rwmonty): Try the shepherd's pie at La Salle à Manger lasalleamanger.ca

I hope that gets you excited for the conference. If you have any other ideas, email, Tweet or Facebook me.

Enjoy this edition of the newsletter, and remember that we are almost *there*. ■

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PRD 101: What does the Vice Head Elect do?

By Tiffany Gallicano, PRD Vice Head Elect

Are you interested in joining the executive leadership of our division? It's a four-year commitment, beginning with the role of vice head elect and concluding with the past president position. As vice head elect, your primary responsibility is planning the Bill Adams/Edelman luncheon.

There are plenty of other duties behind the scenes, as well. The vice head elect starts training for the vice head position (or "head of vice" as we like to joke) by supporting the vice head in her primary responsibility, which is planning the conference program. I was cc'd on all planning emails and weighed in with my thoughts about panels. The vice head elect can also assist by helping to plan a panel. This year, I assisted by helping Cary Greenwood get the whistleblowing

panel off the ground. I helped with this panel because our five-year review stated that we have not represented the area of free expression as well as some of the other areas AEJMC wants us to cover.

As part of the executive leadership team, I read the five-year review and talked with the vice head (Denise Bortree) and division head (Natalie Tindall) about how we can engage in long-term planning and continue to strive for excellence.

The vice head elect also pitches in as needed. For example, Natalie asked me to organize the conference call meetings with our committees for the year. I also drafted a digital cross-promotion policy for other organizations' requests to use our listserv and

social media channels. In the spring, I will assist with Natalie's annual report.

If you're interested in joining the executive leadership team, you can respond to a call for nominations that is sent by the past division head (Susan Grantham) in the spring. You're welcome to nominate yourself. The nominating committee will then gather additional information and make a recommendation. Usually, the person selected by the nominating committee is someone who has shown exemplary initiative and service in one of the other leadership positions in our division. To join one of the leadership positions in our division, you can attend our leadership meeting at the conference. This will be held at 7 a.m., August 7. ■

Connect with the Division

Website

<http://aejmc.net/PR>

Twitter

http://twitter.com/aejmc_prd

LinkedIn

<http://www.linkedin.com/groups/AEJMC-Public-Relations-Division-4067864>

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/AEJMCPRD>

Storify

http://storify.com/AEJMC_PRD

Pinterest

<http://pinterest.com/AEJMCPRD/>

Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Award Announcement

By Jensen Moore-Copple, Tricia Farwell, Matt Ragas & Sung-Un Yang

It is with great pleasure that the Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Award Committee announces changes to the award for 2014. Supported by a grant from the PRSA Foundation, the Public Relations Division is now able to provide **three** Kaiser Awards that **cover the expenses of graduate students** traveling to the AEJMC National Conference.

Dr. Inez Kaiser is a former educator who founded the firm, Inez Y. Kaiser & Associates in Kansas City, MO. In the 1960s, Kaiser was the first African-American woman to belong to PRSA and to head a public relations agency with national clients. Later, she served on the advisory panels of both Presidents Nixon and Ford for minority women in business. In 1972, Kaiser founded the National Association of Minority Women in Business. In 1997, she received the National Minority Advocate Award at the 15th Annual National Minority Enterprise Development Week Conference in Washington, D.C. Kaiser was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Women in Public Relations. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth created the Inez Kaiser award in her honor.

Diversity and inclusion are important issues in the public relations field and reflecting our global society is arguably one of the most pressing concerns in public relations education. The goals of the Kaiser Award are to: 1) increase

the number of minority graduate students interested in teaching and research in the PRD and at the AEJMC National Conference, 2) develop a training program for minority graduate students that addresses issues these students face when applying for public relations teaching positions and in the public relations classroom, 3) develop a training program for minority graduate students that provides networking and mentoring opportunities.

The Kaiser Award will achieve these goals by supporting minority graduate students' research and teaching endeavors, increasing the diversity in public relations education thereby improving public relations curricula; strengthening relationships at minority institutions; connecting graduate students with seasoned public relations educators and professionals; helping institutions recruit and hire a more diverse faculty.

It is important for minority students to receive the training, mentorship and experiences that will enhance diversity in the classroom and profession. The PRD believes that having minority public relations graduate students recruited, retained and mentored by professors whom they can identify with will increase understanding of racial, ethnic and gender issues as well as encourage and advance a future generation of

minority public relations educators and leaders.

Recipients of the Kaiser Award will receive free 1-year memberships to AEJMC and the Public Relations Division as well as travel and lodging for the AEJMC National Conference. Recipients will also get to take part in a daylong workshop held at the annual AEJMC National Conference. The workshop will cover a variety of teaching issues, including: creating a teaching philosophy, preparing syllabi, using teaching evaluations to improve instruction, using technology in the classroom, handling classroom issues, reviewing best practices in teaching diversity, learning how to market yourself in an academic job search, and exploring how PRD and PRSA can help you become a better public relations educator. Finally, each recipient will be matched with a PRD mentor. The mentoring relationships consist of monthly contact via telephone, email or computer chats. The Kaiser recipients will be introduced to their mentors and PRD members during social and programming sessions at their workshops.

Information about the awards and nomination forms can be found online at: <http://www.aejmc.us/PR/kaiser.htm> ■

Teaching Tips: Strengthen Your Student-Run Agencies

By Amy Shanler

Amy Shanler is a visiting assistant professor at Boston University's College of Communication and director of PRLab, one of the nation's oldest student-run PR agencies.

Student-run PR agencies offer the promise of real-world PR experience under the umbrella of a university setting and faculty guidance. However, delivering on that promise requires commitment, innovation, controls and flexibility to ensure accountability, quality service, and tangible work both students and clients will appreciate.

Boston University's PRLab is a cornerstone of the public relations program at the College of Communication (COM). Students pursuing a public relations degree must fulfill a practical requirement, through either an external internship or four credit hours with PRLab. Many COM students take advantage of both options, and in doing so, have a wider appreciation for the professional demands in the corporate world.

An effectively managed student-run agency provides a deep experience, putting students in the driver's seat to research, plan, implement and evaluate PR projects on behalf of clients. While every student-run agency is unique, here are some lessons from PRLab to help others make the most of this unique and important practical experience for students.

Develop Standard Operating Procedures

To ensure consistent client service across account teams and avoid misunderstandings between team members, student-run agencies should establish standard operating procedures. PRLab produces a manual each semester that outlines specific expectations, requirements, processes, and forms. The faculty member stresses the importance of adhering to the policies by requiring a signed pledge form and administering a quiz on the manual content.

Facilitate Structured and Unstructured Communication

A successful student-run agency also places a high value on communication across all levels of the agency:

- All-agency meetings (class lectures) give students the opportunity to learn tools they need to conduct the client work, receive important instructions and updates, and share experiences across various account teams. Students appreciate the perspectives of other students encountering similar challenges or sharing the joys of accomplishments.

- The weekly e-board meeting allows the leadership team to discuss agency business, operations and client status confidentially.

An effectively managed student-agency provides a deep experience, putting students in the driver's seat to research, plan, implement and evaluate PR projects on behalf of clients.

- Account teams meet as a group once a week to ensure client work is progressing on track.

- Students meet with their clients weekly for status updates, usually through conference calls or web conferencing, but meet in person for the first, mid-point, and final meetings (when geographically possible).

- E-board office hours provide account teams easy access to student leaders for additional support in between class lectures.

Provide a Full View of PR Agency Operations

While students appreciate the tangible work they produce for their portfolios, they also greatly benefit from understanding how a PR agency operates. PRLab takes students behind the scenes to understand agency finance and staffing models, business development, shared services, and working with other marketing providers. Not only do they learn how PRLab operates, but students also hear from PR agency professionals for a richer real-world experience.

Invest in Leadership

Any agency's most important asset is the staff, and the agency is only as good as the students who drive it every day. Therefore, any student-▶

run agency needs to have defined roles and responsibilities. PRLab has a co-president structure with one president focusing on agency operations (finance, marketing, business development) and another president overseeing client services. These leaders oversee directors and account supervisors and together, form the executive board (e-board). While the supervisors oversee the client work the account executives perform, the presidents and directors steer the overall agency. The faculty member works with the e-board exclusively to provide training on leadership principles, strategic planning, creative development and conflict resolution. This additional investment outside of class time results in more confident, dedicated and prepared student leaders.

Staff for the Future

To sustain agency operations amid the revolving door of graduating students, those studying abroad, or changing priorities from semester to semester, successful student-run agencies must staff with an eye on the future. For its executive board, PRLab promotes leaders from within and selects new students from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and grades. In addition, PRLab also has an intern program to allow students who have not yet fulfilled the prerequisite courses to experience PRLab and ideally, fuel their interest in returning as a leader in future semesters.

Cultivate the Clients

To provide the best experience for students, agencies need to conduct ongoing client evaluations and prospecting. Clients who cannot settle on a project focus or expect

interns rather than an agency will not provide tangible work for students. Agency leaders must feel empowered to conclude client relationships in favor of those who provide a more worthwhile experience. To get those "good" clients, agencies must constantly market and prospect for new business and keep a pipeline of potential clients.

In addition, agencies should educate their clients about how to best work with the student account teams. Large-company clients may not understand the subtleties of interacting with students, and small start-ups may not understand public relations, both leading to frustration. Taking the time to bring clients on board, keep them on track with a scope of work and weekly client updates, and ask them for feedback will yield better results for everyone involved.

Leave Room for Fun

Just as commercial agencies pride themselves on an engaging culture, student-run agencies must also establish their own ways of encouraging camaraderie and teamwork. Whether it is candy or foosball in the working agency room, a surprise pizza party, movie night or an end-of-semester client thank you reception, allow your students to connect and engage casually and naturally. These sorts of shared experiences build tighter connections and networks students will carry with them long after graduation. ■

PR-Related Journals

In case you missed the list of PR-related journals and publishing tips in the last issue, you can now find it posted on our PRD website:

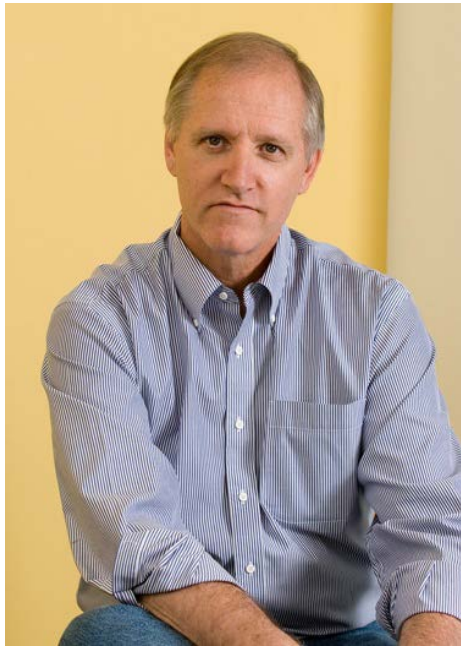
<http://www.aejmc.us/PR/resources/journals-pr.pdf>.

Listserv Instructions

Members can receive and send important messages to other PRD members by subscribing to the AEJMC PRD Listserv.

To subscribe, send an email message to Dr. Alan Freitag (arfreita@uncc.edu) saying "subscribe AEJMC PR Division listserv." To unsubscribe, please email Alan with "unsubscribe AEJMC PR Division listserv."

Thank you to Alan for all his work keeping the listserv list up-to-date and protected from spammers.



Industry Connection with Bill Kolberg

Getting Down to Business at Public Relations Agencies

Planning for a career is, at best, an inexact science that requires some planning and some luck. But certainly the best chance for achieving success is through preparation.

When I used to teach my introduction to public relations class, I would use a portion of the first class to discuss career options for those committed to the discipline long term. I would ask about specialty areas of the occupation that most interested students, starting with the entertainment sector. This was, after all, Southern California. Without fail, this was the most popular choice. The second option I would explore was non-profit PR. This traditionally received good support. Next came corporate work, which attracted a smaller number of hands. Finally, I introduced the prospect of the public relations agency option. There were very few “takers.” How unfortunate that so many of these individuals had underestimated a plentiful job bank, a terrific career choice and an even better learning opportunity.

What I’ve found is that too many students come out of their college and university classrooms and emerge wide-eyed from their many internships not totally prepared for the task ahead. They’ve understandably spent virtually all of their time and energy on studying theory and application of the

discipline. But what they’ve missed was one important component that is the underpinning of all that public relations touches and which is particularly critical in the agency model: the understanding of business.

Agencies, of course, traditionally represent clientele across the spectrum of commerce. They derive their revenues from being chameleons, adapting to the client environment often as an extension of their departments. It’s important for agencies to be innovative with strategies for and applications of the latest social media platforms, lead the way in identifying and immersing in micro-audience segments or unveil the very latest “black box thinking” around analytics and measurement. That’s where they bring the greatest value. However, when it comes to the basic understanding of business, they’re playing catch up.

It’s already difficult enough to get young recruits to understand the intricacies of the agency’s own business model and how all the administrative nuisances like time sheets, expense reports, master services agreements, etc., all fit together to ensure profitability and, with publicly owned agencies, adhere to Sarbanes-Oxley regulations. But the other important dimension is comprehending how enterprise organizations operate. How different is it to work with a CPG or MLM company? What about B2B versus a franchising organization? Different business challenges and, ▶

most certainly, different stakeholder universes.

A more than basic knowledge of business should be the greens fee for all public relations graduates. In fact, the *Princeton Review* has gone so far as to suggest that a broad education is the best preparation, not simply a degree in public relations. But the more well-rounded the practitioner, the more value he or she brings to the occupation. Solid business acumen adds immensely to this robust repository of knowledge.

One of our well-documented industry aspirations is to become a trusted advisor and earn a seat at the table in the C-suite. Yet how can we aspire to advise chief executives—or their CCOs—without first understanding the complexities of the business problems they face? How can we have meaningful relationships and conversation with business writers? How can we prepare sales and marketing materials for their companies? And, how can we interpret business data in this era of more and more sophisticated metrics?

Here are a few important, yet common sense, suggestions to better prepare newly minted graduates to tackle these challenges before they enter the workforce:

• **Use internships more strategically:** Vary your internship targets. Agencies DO make fine internship opportunities, but think more broadly about companies in various sectors or employing different business models. Look beyond the immediate internship mentors to interview or shadow

senior executives who run various facets of the company’s business. Get outside of the comfort zone of public relations to broaden what you learn.

• **Read business periodicals:** Colleges and universities have excellent textbooks on the subject, but stay abreast of the business world by regularly reading such important business publications as *The Wall Street Journal* or *Forbes Magazine*. Pour through the excellent business case studies curated by the *Harvard Business Review*. Understand the key business cycles (earnings, government reports, seasonal sales) that affect different businesses.

• **Use your electives wisely:** Absolutely, without question, DO take that introductory business class. Besides learning from the course, talk with business majors who might be doing internships. When communication majors complete an internship, it’s typically under the mentorship of a PR or corporate communications director. Business majors could report to any of a handful of mentors. By understanding who, it will provide insight and focus about what should be important to explore and understand. Better yet, adopt business as a minor during your undergraduate studies.

• **Seek out and attend business seminars:** Captains of industry are magnets for high-profile speaking engagements. Take advantage of any upcoming appearances to attend one of their speeches or presentations. Research their business and come prepared with a question or two, in the event that a Q & A will follow. View

shareholder meetings or executive forums on line.

At the end of the day when we refine—or re-define—what public relations is and does, let’s be sure that realistically understanding the world of business is not overlooked. ■

AEJMC 2014

August 6-9
Le Centre Sheraton
Montréal

For more information about the conference, the hotel and registration, see <http://aejmc.org/events/montreal2014/>

Helpful sites about tourist attractions in Montréal:

<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g155032-Montreal-Quebec-Vacations.html>

<http://www.montreal.com/tourism/general/index.html>

<http://www.bonjourquebec.com/qc-en/montreal0.html>

http://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/infos/eng/info_toura.htm

AEJMC PRD Paper Call 2014

Submitters should carefully review the specific details and directions for the Public Relations Division as well as the general requirements contained in the AEJMC Uniform Paper Call.

Submission Categories: A paper may be submitted in one of the three PRD categories: (1) open, (2) student or (3) teaching.

Submission Limitations: No more than **two** papers may be submitted by any one author or co-author across the three PRD categories. If it is found that one person is author and/or co-author of more than two submissions across the three PRD categories, **all** of the submissions will be automatically disqualified.

A paper may NOT be under review: (1) simultaneously with more than one of the three PRD categories, (2) simultaneously with more than one division within AEJMC, (3) simultaneously with the AEJMC conference and any other conference, or (4) simultaneously with the AEJMC conference and any potential publication, including refereed journals, book chapters, online, etc.

Authorship: When submitting co-authored papers, permission to submit the paper should be sought and obtained from all authors on the paper. Paper authorship cannot be added, deleted, or changed subsequent to submission of the paper.

Author Identification: All authors and co-authors, their institutional affiliations and contact information must be included **WHEN REGISTERING** on the online system. If there are three co-authors, for example, information

about all three must be included in the registration. Student papers must be authored or co-authored by students **ONLY** (no faculty co-authors), and all student papers must have the word "STUDENT" on the title page and in the running head.

Author-identifying information **MUST NOT** appear anywhere in the attached paper file. Identifying information includes (1) listing of authors' names and/or affiliations, (2) references to authors' previous work in a way that reveals authorship of the current work, and (3) links to authors' websites, e-mail addresses, or social media accounts. **Inclusion of identifying information will result in automatic disqualification of the paper. It is the responsibility of the paper author(s) to verify that no identifying information is contained in the paper text or in the document file properties.** Please follow the directions for removing your identifying information from the properties. This will need to be done **EACH** time you submit your paper to AllAcademic.

Paper Content: Any recognized research method and citation style may be used. Papers should include appropriate literature reviews, methodology, findings and discussion. Papers should test, refine or expand public relations theory or practice; critically review issues relevant to public relations theory and research; or explore methods of effective public relations practice. Teaching papers should test, refine

or expand principles or practices associated with public relations pedagogy. All submissions should represent research completed by the conference submission deadline, not research proposals or reports on research in progress.

Paper Formatting: A paper cannot exceed 30 (thirty) pages, period. The 30 pages of the submitted paper shall **INCLUDE** the title page, abstract, appendices (including figures and tables), and references/citations; no exceptions. Papers must be typed in a 12-point font, using Times New Roman, Times, or Arial font. Paper text must be formatted with double line spacing with 1-inch margins on all sides of the document; references may be single spaced, with a double space between citation entries. All papers must contain continuous page numbers; if multiple files are merged for the paper, then the author must ensure that the page numbers are continuous and do not repeat or start over from page 1.

Because of past conversion issues with the AllAcademic system that resulted in papers being longer than the established requirement, **all papers must be submitted in PDF format.** For those using the newest version of Microsoft Word, you can save your paper as a PDF file using the "Save As" function. For those not using this version, you may use a free web service, such as www.freepdfconvert.com. **Failure to follow these formatting guidelines will result in an automatic disqualification of the paper.**

Presentation Requirement: At least one author of an accepted ▶

faculty paper must attend the conference to present the paper. If student authors cannot be present, they must make arrangements for the paper to be presented by someone else. Failure to be present or provide a presenter for any paper will result in a one-year ban on the review of papers for all of the authors involved. Authors of accepted papers are required to forward papers to discussants and moderators prior to the conference. Presentations at AEJMC conference may be disseminated via social media; presenters may opt out of social media dissemination by requesting so at the time of presentation.

Questions? Please contact research co-chairs, Suman Lee, Iowa State University, smlee@iastate.edu or Eyun Jung Ki, University of Alabama, ki@apr.ua.edu. ■

WANTED: Reviewers for AEJMC PRD Paper Competition 2014

Dear PRD members,

It's time again to serve as reviewers for the upcoming AEJMC PRD paper competition 2014.

To participate as a reviewer, you must be a faculty member. Graduate students are **NOT** eligible to serve as reviewers.

You will not be assigned to review in categories in which you have submitted papers for competition.

For assigning papers to best match your expertise, please click the following link of reviewer interest survey:

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8eqksTZpwLpq6Md

Also, you should sign up at the AllAcademic 2014 website: <http://convention2.allacademic.com/one/aejmc/aejmc14/>

Even though you may have done this service last year, the AllAcademic website is unique each year and you should sign up for this year to serve as reviewers.

Please contact Suman Lee (smlee@iastate.edu or 515-294-0496) and co-chairs for further inquiries. Thank you very much for your dedicated service in advance and see you all in Montreal, Canada.

Best wishes,
Suman Lee, Research Chair
Eyun-Jung Ki, Research Co-Chair (ki@apr.ua.edu)
Emily Kinsky, Teaching Co-Chair (ekinsky@mail.wtamu.edu)
Hongmei Shen, Teaching Co-Chair (hshen@mail.sdsu.edu) ■

Membership Committee Seeks Input

The Membership Committee is hard at work on a 'start up guide' for members new to the division and for potential members. To that end, we could use your help. Please take a minute to consider the following questions and if you think of something a new or potential member would like to know, send the committee chair, Giselle Auger, an email at augerg@duq.edu.

- What would you have liked to know when joining the PRD?
- What information could the PRD provide that would be useful to new members?
- What information could the PRD provide that would be useful to existing members?
- What information about the PRD is most important for those new to or thinking about joining the division?
- What information would make membership in the PRD compelling to potential members?
- Anything else you think would be useful to include in a 'start up guide' to membership in the PRD.

Mentor Program Information

Last year the PRD had the most mentor/mentee matches of any division. Let's try to keep it up! As you write your papers, think about whether you might be interested in providing mentoring and also whether yourself or someone you know could benefit from a mentor relationship. More information to come! ■

Graduate Student Member Up Close:

Natalie Brown

Affiliate Institution:
University of Alabama

Degree sought/Anticipated Graduation: Ph.D. in Mass Communication/May 2014

Dissertation Topic: The Convergence of Situational Crisis Communication Theory and Social Media: Empirically Testing the Effectiveness of Sports Fan-Enacted Crisis Communication

Hometown:
Sylacauga, Alabama

Major Adviser:
Dr. Andrew C. Billings

Research Interests:
Crisis Communication, Sports Communication, and Social Media

Teaching Interests:
Research Methods & Public Relations Courses

Courses taught:
Mass Communication Research Methods & Advertising and Public Relations Design Applications

Most recent conference paper:
Brown, N., & Brown, K. A. (August 2013). When crises change the game: Establishing



Natalie Brown

a Theory of Sports Crisis Communication. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D.C.

Most recent publication:
Brown, N., Brown, K., & Billings, A. C. (in press, 2014). "May no act of ours bring shame:" Fan-enacted crisis communication surrounding the Penn State sex abuse scandal. *Communication & Sport*.

Favorite part of being a PRD member:
The presentations and panels that the Public Relations Division sponsors are always fantastic!

Best AEJMC Conference memory:
I always have a wonderful time at AEJMC. The presentations and panels are always really enlightening and filled with tremendous work by some of the best scholars in our field. My favorite part of the conferences, though, is seeing friends from universities that are located all over the country. AEJMC always provides a fun reunion for friends that you only get to see a few times a year.

Describe yourself to a future employer:

I am very passionate about my work, whether it is in the classroom or my research agenda. I have published 12 articles in peer-reviewed journals and have presented over 30 papers to a variety of national and international associations within our discipline. I believe my commitment to teamwork, solid presentation ability, design background, research skills, outlandish sense of humor, and a promise to never stop learning make me a great job candidate.

Hobbies/ Interests outside of being a graduate student:
I love watching sports (college football, basketball, hockey, and the UFC), reading, traveling, and spending time with friends and family. I also never miss an episode of *Scandal* or *The Big Bang Theory*. ■

Faculty Member in Focus:

Matt Ragas

PRD member since:
2008

Affiliate Institution:
DePaul University

Degree/Institution/Year:
Ph.D., University of Florida, 2010

Research Interests:
Corporate and political public relations, investor relations, business news/journalism

Teaching Interests:
In addition to core public relations classes, I teach a mix of courses at the intersection of business and communication

Courses taught:
Representative courses include Corporate Communication, (Chicago) Business & Society, Public Relations & Advertising Entrepreneurs, Media Relations

Professional Experience:
A decade working in business publishing, investment research and corporate strategic communication roles, starting with a venture capital-financed Web 1.0 start-up in the late nineties.

Most recent conference paper:
Kiousis, S., Ragas, M. W., Kim, J. Y., Schweickart, T. L., Neil, J. M., & Kochar, S. (2014, May). Exploring presidential agenda building and policymaking: Examining linkages across three levels. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Seattle, WA.



Matt Ragas

Most recent publication:
Ragas, M. W. (2014). Intermedia agenda setting in business news coverage. In R. Hart (Ed.), *Communication and language analysis in the public sphere* (pp. 332-354). Hershey, PA: IGI-Global

Favorite part of being a PRD member:
The relationships and friendships built through PRD are invaluable. I also like being part of a division that makes a real impact on our field. I was very excited when the Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Award committee that I serve on learned that our grant proposal was funded by the PRSA Foundation.

Best AEJMC conference memory:
I have had many great memories, but my best would have to be receiving the Nafziger-White-Salwen award and having my

mentor Spiro Kiousis there with me to receive it together. I was pretty nervous.

Favorite part of being a faculty member:

I get great satisfaction from seeing my students progress in their careers. Starting to see some of them come back into my classes as guest speakers, class clients and/or offer internships or jobs is great.

Hobbies/ interests outside of work:

I'm a bit of a business and political news junkie. I enjoy following politics, public affairs and the stock market. I also like traveling and exploring new places, cultures and meeting new people.

What is one thing your students don't know about you?

That I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up until I was older than they are now!

Anything else you'd like to share?

I'm a big advocate for infusing more "Business 101" knowledge into public relations curriculum so our field is best prepared to fully contribute at a strategic level. With this in mind, I'm co-author with colleague and industry leader Ron Culp of the forthcoming book: *Business Essentials for Strategic Communicators* with Palgrave Macmillan / St. Martin's Press. It's due out in December. ■

Publishing Corner

By Karen Russell,

Editor of the *Journal of Public Relations Research*

Mean journal reviewers: The view from an editor's desk

When Natalie Tindall posted a link to Eric Schneiderhan's Chronicle article on mean journal reviewers, I immediately knew I had to blog about it. As a grad student, I thought all reviewers were mean, just for pointing out flaws in my work. Today I know better, and in my own work and as editor of the *Journal of Public Relations Research* I've now seen reviews that run the gamut from too nice to too mean.

First of all, I have to ask what constitutes "mean." Schneiderhan points to several mean comments on one of his own papers as an example:

My prose was "passable." I bordered on being "uninformed." The reviewer, in response to the question of "significance of content," checked "low" (the worst one).

Is he suggesting reviewers should never check "low" because it's "the worst one"? If a reviewer thinks a paper's contribution is not highly significant, an editor needs to know that -- we don't need journal-reviewing grade inflation. The whole reason we use multiple reviewers is so that the editor gets multiple perspectives, and one "low" rating alone wouldn't be enough to reject a paper. I'm not convinced that "passable" is mean, either.

At any rate, we all know that there

ARE mean reviewers who insult, name-call, or trivialize another scholar's work instead of offering genuinely constructive criticism that can help improve the body of knowledge. I've had only a few instances of this type of review out of the hundreds of manuscripts each reviewed by 2-3 scholars since 2009. The vast, vast majority of JPRR reviewers make a genuine effort to offer honest feedback and to provide advice on revisions even for a manuscript that they believe has little to offer. And the reviewers are cognizant of authors' feelings, sometimes even telling me in the "comments to the editor" box to edit their remarks if they seem too harsh. Typically these reviews are quite negative, but I don't see that as inherently mean.

Schneiderhan suggests that reviewers are mean because it's payback time, anonymity breeds trolls, or editors are too timid. Perhaps there is an element of payback, but I can't know that as editor. As for anonymity, Schneiderhan forgets that there is one person who knows who wrote a review: the editor. If anyone submits truly mean reviews, not just negative ones, with no redeeming qualities, I won't invite them to review again. Maybe not all fields are this way, but I think most people in public relations see it as an honor to serve on the editorial board or review for JPRR (and if they don't, they won't accept the invitation to review). As for



Karen Russell

his suggestion of revealing the names of reviewers after the final decision, there are some journals experimenting with getting rid of blind review... that's a whole other kettle of fish. Let me just say that revealing the names of tenured faculty but not untenured faculty, as he recommends, would be a nightmare.

As for the "timidity" charge, it's more complicated than Schneiderhan realizes. As he recommends, I have on occasion edited a review to remove a flippant remark or an insulting word, particularly if I think the reviewer may not realize how mean they sound or if they're just frustrated by the quality of the submission. In other instances, though, I choose to leave a mean word intact. For example, once a JPRR reviewer called an author's work "shotty." Of course they meant "shoddy" -- not just mean but incorrect -- and I left it in the review because I thought it would reveal something of the reviewer's state of mind and would allow the author to judge the reviewer's work when deciding how to revise the work for resubmission or submission elsewhere. (Note: that reviewer isn't usually mean.) I generally try to err on the side of NOT editing a review too much ►

because I'd rather have the author see what I saw when making the editorial decision and because I think editing reviews is a slippery slope.

Far more troubling than words like "bordering on uninformed" or "passable" is Schneiderhan's other remark about his mean reviewer:

None of the reviewer's comments were helpful in guiding me on how to make the article better.

This does happen occasionally at JPRR. A reviewer is rushed, frustrated, or just doesn't care for the paper, and doesn't spend enough time explaining what they didn't like and how it could be fixed. But again, this is why we use multiple reviewers: one person's bad day doesn't determine the fate of a manuscript. And let's not forget those reviewers who are too nice. On two occasions I received single-sentence reviews along the lines of "this is good, you should publish it." You can bet that both of those reviews were rescinded just like a too-mean review. In neither instance is the author or the journal served.

I've heard horror stories about mean reviews, and I've seen unfair reviews and just plain bad reviews, but the view from my desk reveals many smart, thoughtful and generous reviewers who should be commended for their service to the field.

See more at: http://www.teachingpr.org/teaching_pr/2013/07/mean-journal-reviewers-a-view-from-an-editors-desk.html ■

AEJMC News

Presidential Initiatives

From President Paula Poindexter:

I'm writing to tell you about two exciting presidential initiatives:

- 1) "National News Engagement Day" on Tues., Oct. 7, 2014
- 2) "News Audience Research Paper Award," which has an April 1, 2014 deadline and a top cash prize of \$500.

National News Engagement Day was created to encourage people of any age to read, watch, like, tweet, post, text, email, listen to, or comment on news. As you can see from the January 2014 AEJMC Newsletter, there will be different news engagement activities to involve Council of Division groups, journalism and communication departments, college and university campuses, and cities and communities around the country.

The **News Audience Research Paper Award** was designed to complement National News Engagement Day and encourage innovative research that provides insight into the relationship between news and its audience. The top three award recipients will be announced at the AEJMC business meeting, Fri., Aug. 8.

Details about the new research paper award can be found on the AEJMC website at <http://bit.ly/1fYoHE7>. ■

Elections

It's AEJMC election time! Here is the list of candidates and their platforms: <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2014/03/election-2014/>

Members will receive an invitation to vote on March 10 via email; voting must be done by April 10.

Several PRD members are running:

- Pat Curtin** -- Publications Committee -- <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2014/03/curtin-profile/>
Karen Miller Russell -- Publications Committee -- <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2014/03/miller-russell-profile/>
Natalie Tindall -- Committee on Teaching -- <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2014/03/tindall-profile/> ■

AEJMC PRD Schedule

August 2014

Tuesday, August 5

1:00 - 5:00 p.m. -

Preconference: Promoting Our Scholarship and Ourselves: Increasing Public Visibility of Communication Research

Wednesday, August 6

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. - Whistleblowing in Government as Free Expression: Are Government Whistleblowers Traitors, Heroes, or Loyal Employees Trying to Do the Right Thing? (MCS/PRD)

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. -

Applicable to the Real World? Teaching Theories and Methods in Strategic Communication (PRD/ADV)

3:15 - 4:45 p.m. -

Smokescreen, 'Colorful Washing', or Just Good Business? Ethical Dilemmas of Corporate Social Responsibility (PRD/ME)

3:15 - 4:45 p.m. -

Research-Based Insights for Teaching Millennial Students in Advertising and Public Relations (GRAD/MCS/PRD)

Thursday, August 7

7:00 - 8:00 a.m. -

Outgoing executive meeting

8:15 - 9:45 a.m. -

Understanding the Reviewing Process: Conversations with AEJMC Journal Editors for Early Career Academics and Doctoral Students (PRD/GRAD)

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. -

Past heads lunch

5:00 - 6:30 p.m. -

Open Access: The Future of Publishing? (CTM/PRD)

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. - PRD social



Friday, August 8

7:00 - 8:00 a.m. -

Incoming executive meeting

12:15 - 1:30 p.m. -

Bill Adams/Edelman Luncheon

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. -

Combining Theory and Practice with Mobile Tools in Your Classroom (PRD/CTD)

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. -

Member meeting

Saturday, August 9

11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. -

I'll Show You Mine If You Show Me Yours: Internship Advisors Share Internship Program Assessment, Protocol, and Issues (PRD/Intern)

Montréal, here we come!