

# **Annual Report of the Public Relations Division (PRD) of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)**

Submitted by Colleen Connolly-Ahern, PRD Head, July 2011

## **(1) Officers**

- 2010-2011 Division Head: Colleen Connolly-Ahern, Pennsylvania State University
- Vice Head and Programming Chair: Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Florida Institute of Technology
- Vice Head-Elect: Brooke Fisher Liu: University of Maryland – College Park
- Secretary: Susan Grantham, University of Hartford
- Immediate Past Head Pat Swann, Utica College
- Communications Director/Newsletter Editor: Susan Gonders, Southeast Missouri State University
- Nominations Committee: Ken Plowman (Head, 2002), Brigham Young University; Susan Gonders (Head, 2009), Southeast Missouri State University; Chuck Lubbers (Head, 2006), University of South Dakota
- Webmaster: Chris Perry, University of North Carolina
- Listserv Manager: Alan Freitag, University of North Carolina – Charlotte
- Journal of Public Relations Research Editor: Karen Miller Russell, University of Georgia
- Research Co-Chair: Denise Bortree, University of Pennsylvania
- Research Co-Chair: Richard Waters, North Carolina State University
- Teaching Co-Chair: Carol Ames, California State University -- Fullerton
- Teaching Co-Chair: Brad Rawlins, Brigham Young University
- Professional Freedom & Responsibility Co-Chair: Natalie Tindall, Georgia State University
- Professional Freedom & Responsibility Co-Chair: Mandy Hall Gallagher, Elon University
- Past Heads Council Chair and 2006 Division Head: Ken Plowman (Head, 2002), Brigham Young University
- Elected Delegate/Membership Co-Chair: Seth Oyer, Bowling Green State University
- Membership Co-Chair: Trent Seltzer, Texas Tech University – Lubbock
- Susanne A. Roschwalb Co-Chair: Robert Wakefield, Brigham Young University
- Susanne A. Roschwalb Co-Chair: Weiwu Zhang, Texas Tech University – Lubbock
- Graduate Student Liaison: Hua Jiang, Towson University
- Graduate Student Liaison: Yi Luo, Montclair State University
- Professional/Conference Liaisons: Jennifer Vardemann-Winter, University of Houston
- Professional/Conference Liaisons: Katie Place, St. Louis University
- Liaison to the Public Relations Society of America: Fernando Figueredo, Florida International University

## (2) Diversity

### Diversity Counts

	White	Black	Hispanic	M- Eastern	Asian	Totals	% Minority
Officers	21	1	1	0	3	26	19
Moderators/discussants	23	2	0	1		26	11
Panelists	29	0	0	1	0	30	3
Paper Authors	63	1	5	0	41	112	41
Paper Reviewers	86	5	2	0	16	107	21
<b>Totals</b>	222	9	8	2	60	302	26
<b>Distribution</b>	73%	3%	3%	0%	20%	--	26%

## (3) Initiatives

Units of conference programming:

### Conference Initiatives

	Research	Teaching	PF&R
Pre-Conference (co-sponsored Entertainment Division)		1	1
Co-sponsored Panels		1	5
Paper Presentations*	4	2	1
Off-site luncheon			1
Totals	4	4	7
% Distribution	47%	12%	41%

\*For poster sessions and HD sessions, the focus of the sub-section is noted. Since this year's programming consisted of 2 traditional panel sessions, 1 HD session and 2 poster sessions, the Research number appears low, but actually accounts for a significant proportion of the division's programming.

\*\*54 accepted papers include: 7 with a clear teaching focus and 11 with a clear PF&R focus.

The 2010 conference papers represent a moderate teaching presence and an increasing PF&R presence, due largely to our offsite initiative. However, a large quantity (58) of paper submissions unavoidably tips the balance toward the research leg of the three initiatives.

The major PF&R initiative of this year's conference is what we hope will be an inaugural off-site visit to the offices of a public relations leader, Fleishman-Hillard. The first half of our Pre-conference and all five co-sponsored panels address PF&R issues. Additionally, our Edelman Luncheon speaker will address global diversity issues.

Even though we had only 10 papers submitted in the teaching category, we are spotlighting the four top refereed teaching papers accepted with a panel presentation. One of our co-sponsored panels addresses teaching as well as PF&R issues. The second portion of our Pre-conference addresses teaching. PRD has also co-sponsored one teaching panel.

## **(4) Goals**

### **Research Goals Accomplished:**

- Secured funding for new Wilcox Awards, for top three faculty/open conference papers. Dennis Wilcox (PRD Division Head 1981) is currently making provisions to fund the awards in perpetuity. However, the awards will be funded beginning with the 2011 convention. Funding levels are \$300 for Top Paper, \$200 for Second Place Paper, \$100 for Third Place Paper.
- Continued poster awards for best visual presentation to enhance the professionalism and underscore prestige of these presentations.

### **Research Goals for the Future:**

- Pursue increase of issues of *Journal of Public Relations Research*, in order to accommodate one “Special Topic” issue per year.
- Increase awareness of the new Wilcox Awards and Plank Awards.
- Increase applications for Roschwalb Scholarship (a \$250 award for a student wishing to complete an international public relations research project).

### **Teaching Goals Accomplished:**

- Secured funding for new Wilcox Awards, for top three teaching conference papers. Dennis Wilcox (PRD Division Head 1981) is currently making provisions to fund the awards in perpetuity. However, the awards will be funded beginning with the 2011 convention. Funding levels are \$300 for Top Paper, \$200 for Second Place Paper, \$100 for Third Place Paper.
- PRD continued its strong leadership presence in the PRSA Learning to Teach initiative.
- PRD continued its strong leadership presence in the PRSA Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) program.
- PRD has expanded its syllabus exchange program and its content is available on its redesigned Website.

### **Teaching Goals for the Future:**

- Continue to enhance the PRD’s SuPRstar program to document non-convention teaching activities.
- Explore ways to revitalize the Faculty-Student Buddy Program.
- Increase submissions of teaching papers to the paper
- Increase participation in syllabus exchange.

### **Other Goals Accomplished**

- The PRD Website was successfully transferred to the AEJMC site and has been expanding its content offerings.

- PRD has increased visibility on Twitter and Facebook. @AEJMC\_PRD now has 271 followers. The AEJMC Public Relations Division group has 33 members.
- All PRD members (as of Sept. 1, 2010) were added to the PRD Listserv, to facilitate communications and increase readership of our quarterly newsletter, *PR Update*, which is now available exclusively online.
- The Roschwalb Scholarship fund stands at \$6,247. However, because of lower interest rates, the scholarship is still not self-sustaining. Taylor & Francis continues to fund the student awards, so that all interest accrued is reinvested.
- The PRD has increased its visibility on AEJMC’s standing committees. Our Past Heads group actively recruited nominations from the division this year.

**Other Goals for Future**

- A second membership survey is planned for August 2011.
- Continue to increase use and subscriptions of Twitter account.
- Continue to increase use and members of Facebook group – moving to the new groups format in 2011 should facilitate this.
- Expand Website offerings, and enhance user-friendliness of the site.
- Complete PRD bio-sketches on all of the PRD heads/editors.
- Re-institute the Inez Kaiser Awards in a competitive format to increase prestige and visibility.

## (5-12) Research

	Open	Student	Teaching	Total
Paper Submissions	67	27	10	104
Paper Acceptances	35	13	6	54
% Acceptance	52%	48%	60%	52%

**(5-8) Paper Submissions and Paper Judging**

Research activities account for 47% of 2010 PRD conference programming (this does not include the one Top Refereed Teaching Papers research session). With the traditionally number of conference paper submissions, PRD has labored with 1) the inadequate pool of judges and 2) enough conference presentation slots.

**Pool of judges:** This year our Research Chairs actively recruited reviewers through our expanded Listserv, Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as lists of past reviewers, through an online survey. Reviewers were asked in December and January to complete a questionnaire that asked them to provide the topics and methodologies that they were interested in reviewing as well as indicate those topics and methodologies that they would not review. This list was sent out to the list of reviewers from the 2010 conference, the AEJMC-PRD listserv, and then the research co-chairs sent personal requests to others who were notably absent from the 2010 list. This produced a total number of 118 reviewers, of which 5 had to be removed because they were

students who were subscribed to the listserv. Ultimately 18 full professors, 33 associate professors, 55 assistant professors, and 7 visiting professors/instructors/adjuncts responded to the call to review. Of the 113 reviewer volunteers, 6 who were adjuncts/instructors were not used. 107 reviewers evaluated papers.

When assigning the 67 open papers and 27 student papers to reviewers, the preferences of the reviewers were taken into account first and foremost with regard to topic in hopes of producing meaningful feedback for the paper authors. In dividing the workload, papers were assigned three reviewers each. The reviewers were divided into the following groupings: one senior public relations professor (full professor and noted scholar), upcoming public relations scholars (associates/assistants with substantial research presence), and beginning scholars (assistants who are new to the field and to public relations research/journals). By dividing the reviews in this manner, the process was fairly distributed so that no paper was judged too harshly by advanced scholars or too lightly by junior scholars. All papers were evaluated using the following form provided by AllAcademic.com:

**Quantity of Presentation Slots:** This year PRD had enough program slots for its accepted research, due to a decrease in submissions. This may have been due to the inclusion of two new interest groups, Sports and Political Communications, which represent research areas that have ties to Public Relations, and have been a source of submissions in the past. Additionally, the increased programming capabilities of the newly minted CommSHER Division may have had implications for Public Relations as well. We hope this year's improved acceptance rate will encourage more submissions in 2012.

#### **(9) Other Referred Competitions**

The PRD has two competitions for students – Roschwalb and Plank.

**Suzanne A. Roschwalb Grant for International Study and Research** – This year's recipient is Victoria Bravo, from University of Florida. She will use her \$250 grant to study how Central American governments maintain relationships with their diaspora in the United States. She was one of one of only two applicants this year; up from one application last year. Applications are vetted annually by the Roschwalb chairs. In addition to an annual contribution from the publisher of JPRR, members also support the Roschwalb program. The Roschwalb account currently has a balance of \$6,427. However, considering declining interest rates, that principal does not generate the annual interest to sustain the awards and maintain principal.

**Plank Center Student Paper Awards** – The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, housed at the University of Alabama, is sponsoring cash awards for the top three student papers – \$300 for first place, \$200 for second place, and \$100 for third place. Of the 27 papers submitted in the student category, 13 (47%) were accepted through All Academic review.

#### **(10) In-Convention Research Activities**

PRD has seven convention forums focused on research.

- Top Research Papers is a panel with four papers, including this year's 3 Wilcox Award winners and the Top Student Paper.

- High Density Roundtables 1 includes 10 papers and focuses on social responsibility, social media, theory and practice.
- Refereed Poster Session 1 has 19 papers and focuses on:
  - Political Communication/Public Diplomacy (4)
  - Social Media/New Media (6)
  - Organization-Public Relationship/Relationship Management (4)
  - Media (2)
  - Crisis/Risk Communication (3)
- Refereed Poster Session 2 has 17 papers and focuses on:
  - Ethics (3)
  - Corporate Social Responsibility (4)
  - Professional Issues (4)
  - Credibility and Persuasion (3)
  - Teaching Public Relations (3)
- Top Refereed Teaching Papers is a paper with four papers

### **(11) Out-of-Convention Research Activities**

PRD has two refereed publications. Manuscripts are vetted by electronic review through editor, Karen Miller Russell of the University of Georgia. Under the editorship Chuck Lubbers, University of South Dakota, PRD published 3 *Teaching Public Relations* (TPR) monographs since Summer 2010: (see pdf attachments) on “Team Teaching to Teach Teaming,” “Fulfilling Psychologica vs. Financial Needs: The effect of extrinsic rewards on motivation and attachment to internship opportunities,” and “Communicating with millennials: Exploring the impact of new media on out-of-class communication in public relations education.”

PRD members also regularly publish articles in the journals of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), National Communications Association (NCA), International Communications Association (ICA) and other organizations.

### **(12) Research Goals**

PRD achieved two major goals this year and is focusing on three more for next year.

- Secured funding for new Wilcox Awards, for top three faculty/open conference papers. Dennis Wilcox (PRD Division Head 1981) is currently making provisions to fund the awards in perpetuity. However, the awards will be funded beginning with the 2011 convention. Funding levels are \$300 for Top Paper, \$200 for Second Place Paper, \$100 for Third Place Paper.
- Continued poster awards for best visual presentation to enhance the professionalism and underscore prestige of these presentations.

### **Research Goals for the Future:**

- Pursue increase of issues of *Journal of Public Relations Research*, in order to accommodate one “Special Topic” issue per year.
- Increase awareness of the new Wilcox Awards and Plank Awards.
- Increase applications for Roschwalb Scholarship (a \$250 award for a student wishing to complete an international public relations research project).

## (13-15) Teaching

### (13) In-Convention Teaching Activities

Teaching activities account for 12% of 2010 PRD conference programming.

One half of our Pre-conference program, “The Image of Public Relations in Popular Culture,” will focus on teaching issues.

In the Top Refereed Teaching Research Papers Session, four papers were honored. The top 3 papers were Wilcox Award winners, and received cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third:

- 1st-place teaching paper: U.S. Student-Run Communication Agencies: Enhancing Students' Understanding of Business Protocols and Professionalism.
- 2nd-place teaching paper: Service-Learning for Branding Success: A Case of Student-Client Engagement in Oklahoma State University's \$1 Billion Capital Campaign.
- 3rd-place teaching paper: Missing citations, bulking biographies and unethical collaboration: Types of cheating among public relations' majors.
- 4th-place teaching paper: Are we teaching them to be CSR managers? Examining students' expectations of practitioner roles in CSR.

Three teaching papers were included in one of our Poster sessions (one of which was entered into the Open category):

PRD co-sponsored one teaching panel:

- “Anticipating Professional Needs: Feedback from the Field”

### (14) Out-of-Convention Teaching Activities

**Teaching Public Relations:** PRD's TPR monographs emphasize the importance of teaching. *TPR* is an online, peer-reviewed, open-access journal

**SuPRStar Awards:** The Public Relations Division seeks to honor out-of-convention activities of its members through the SuPRStar Awards program, for presentations, articles and other accomplishments in teaching in non-convention forums. The main goals of the teaching program are to help identify areas of teaching expertise in the division, thereby assisting members to increase their effectiveness in teaching.

### (15) Teaching Goals

PRD has accomplished one major goal this year and is continuing with two others.

- Secured funding for new Wilcox Awards, for top three teaching conference papers. Dennis Wilcox (PRD Division Head 1981) is currently making provisions to fund the awards in perpetuity. However, the awards will be funded beginning with the 2011 convention. Funding levels are \$300 for Top Paper, \$200 for Second Place Paper, \$100 for Third Place Paper.
- PRD continued its strong leadership presence in the PRSA Learning to Teach initiative.

- PRD continued its strong leadership presence in the PRSA Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) program.

### **Teaching Goals for the Future:**

- Continue to enhance the PRD's SuPRstar program to document non-convention teaching activities.
- Explore ways to revitalize the Faculty-Student Buddy Program.
- Increase submissions of teaching papers to the paper
- Increase participation in syllabus exchange, through direct solicitation and highlighting on PRD website.

### **(16-18) PF&R**

Professional Freedom & Responsibility (PF&R) includes free expression; ethics; media criticism and accountability; racial, gender and cultural inclusiveness; and public service. PRD has a record of strength in ethics, accountability, inclusiveness and public service.

### **(16) In-Convention PF&R Activities**

PF&R activities account for 41% of 2011 PRD conference programming.

One half of our Pre-conference program, "The Image of Public Relations in Popular Culture," will focus on PF&R issues.

All five of the division's co-sponsored panels address PF&R issues:

- Anticipating Professional Needs: Feedback from the Field (co-sponsored with Internships and Careers)
- Let's Talk About Vaccines: Expert Thoughts on Reframing the Debate (co-sponsored with Communicating Science, Health, Environment & Risk)
- Lion When Blogging, Mouse When Confronted: Sports Bloggers, Their Place in Sport Media, and Their Fight for Credibility (co-sponsored with Sports Communication)
- Military Ethics and Media Ethics: Conflicts for Practitioners (co-sponsored with Media Ethics)
- Analyzing Journalism, Public Relations and Content Creation in the Arab World (co-sponsored with International Communications)

Eleven of the 54 papers accepted in the paper competitions had a clear PF&R focus.

The PRD off-site luncheon has a PF&R focus with guest speaker Alan VanderMolen, President and CEO, Global Practices and Diversified Insights Businesses, Edelman Worldwide.

A new PF&R initiative is represented by the inclusion of our first offsite visit, to global public relations leader Fleishman-Hillard's corporate offices, where we will discuss issues of ethics and social media.

### **(17) Out-of-Convention PF&R Activities**



**SuPRStar Awards:** The Public Relations Division seeks to honor out-of-convention activities of its members through the SuPRStar Awards program, for presentations, articles and other accomplishments in PF&R in non-convention forums. The main goal of the PF&R program is to recognize the leadership of PRD members in activities involving the five PF&R (professional freedom and responsibility) emphases: (1) free expression; (2) ethics; (3) media criticism and accountability; (4) racial, gender and cultural exclusiveness; and (5) public service. These awards typically emphasize PF&R issues related to internships and pro bono work.

### **(18) PF&R Goals**

PRD has started on accomplishment of two PF&R goals.

- Continue to provide offsite opportunities to interact with professionals as part of our convention programming.
- Increase applications to the SuPRStar Awards.

### **Teaching Goals for the Future:**

- Increase submissions of PF&R oriented papers to the open paper competition.
- The possible creation of a database of pro-bono projects completed by PRD members and their classes, to foster ideas for public service work.

## **(19) Communications**

PRD has a useful listserv managed for more than a decade by Alan Freitag, University of North Carolina-Charlotte. As of this year, all members of the PRD with valid email addresses have been added to the Listserv. New members will be added each September.

PRD has a website hosted on the AEJMC website. Chris Perry of University of North Carolina, our new Webmaster, is in the process of increasing the user-friendliness of the site. New content will be added during the 2011-2012 academic year.

The PRD is working to increase its presence in social media. Our Twitter feed, @AEJMC\_PRD, now has 271 followers. Our Facebook group has seen slower growth, but we hope to increase membership in the group this year.

PRD has a newsletter that has been edited for more than a decade by Past Head/Communications Director Susan Gonders. It is now totally online. See pdf attachments for the current issue, posted in June 2011.