

Public Relations update

News journal of the Public Relations Division of AEJMC

•Oct.-Nov. 1993•

PR AGENDA FOR 1993-1994



by **Maria P. Russell**
Public Relations Division Head
Fellow, Public Relations Society of America

Greetings from Sunny Syracuse!

No, it has not snowed here, yet, but there is definitely a chill in the air — enough to remind me that 1992-93 is well over, that Dean Kruckeberg is no longer the head of our Division, and that I'd better move with speed and deliberation.

I'll risk sounding trite, but it's true: Dean is a tough act to follow. Our Division had an outstanding year because of

his leadership and motivational abilities. We excelled in every area: research, teaching, our journal, convention programming, membership growth and membership communications, diversification, and outreach to scholarly and professional associations because very busy, but very committed people swung into action. I'm here to ask you to do it again.

The Year Ahead

This time, though, my hope is that we not only continue to produce excellent programming and services for our members, but that we spend some time assessing the future directions of our Division, and the future of public relations education.

First, let's practice what we preach. I hope you will join me in the conviction that time spent on a review of our mission and the development of a strategic plan is time well invested. Are we on target? Are we efficiently using our division resources? Are we best serving the "customer," our members?

Secondly, looking ahead to the needs of another "customer," our students, we will note that 1993 marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education. Important strides were made in 1985, and again in 1987. I would like to suggest that during the upcoming year, we begin examining how we can continue to make undergraduate public relations education the best it can be.

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CALL FOR PAPERS

MEDIA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

April 7-9, 1994
Reno, Nevada

You are invited to join in a conference on Media and the Environment, which will explore the relationship between mass media and the environment and bring together educators, journalists and scientists to discuss issues related to the conference theme.

Possible research paper topics include media roles and responsibilities and portrayal of environmental issues as well as media effects on knowledge and attitude formation. Environmental issues may include, but are not limited to: global warming, endangered species and species diversity, ozone depletion, deforestation, sustainable development, environmental racism, and environmental groups and their opponents. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome.

The conference is sponsored by the Mass Communication and Society Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and co-sponsored by AEJMC's Advertising, Communication Technology and Policy, Communication Theory and Methodology, History, International Communication, Law, Magazine, Media Management and Economics,

PR update

A news journal published by the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Public Relations Division members examine and analyze scholarly, pedagogical and other issues relating to public relations practice and education. We serve educators, practitioners and others who recognize the important contributions made by public relations to an informed society.

Edited at The American University by:

Editor-in-Chief.....Susanne Roschwalb
Editor.....Michelle Bares Tober
Associate Editor.....Valerie Otten
Printer.....Kinko's

We seek short, provocative articles and commentary; book, video, software and database reviews; photographs, and other news of interest.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS, COLUMNS, VISUALS TO:

Susanne Roschwalb *PR update*
Assistant Professor
School of Communication
The American University
Washington, D.C. 20016-8017
Phone: (202) 885-1890
Fax: (202) 885-2099

• *Submissions on Macintosh:*
3-1/2" floppy disks using Microsoft Word
and/or MacWrite II software are encouraged.
Copy deadline for mid-winter issue is Dec. 15, 1993.

• **PR update/Oct.-Nov. 1993/2**

continued

Minorities and Communication, Newspaper, Public Relations, Qualitative Studies, Radio-Television Journalism, Scholastic Journalism, and Visual Communication divisions, and Graduate Education and Science Communication interest groups.

Host for the conference is the Donald W. Reynolds School of Journalism, University of Nevada, Reno. The Reynolds School recently moved into a spacious, new state-of-the-art building. Reno is a community of 250,000 at the foot of the Sierra Nevada, 35 miles from Lake Tahoe.

Volunteer judges are needed to serve as reviewers between mid-January and February. Contact Sharon L. Yoder at address below.

Paper submissions **MUST BE POSTMARKED** on or before January 3, 1994. Send four copies of completed papers, not to exceed 20 pages of text, to:

Sharon L. Yoder
Department of Journalism
California State University,
Chico Chico, CA 95929-0600
(916) 898-4781

Please enclose a self-addressed postcard so that receipt of the paper can be acknowledged.

For further information on the conference, please contact either of the program co-chairs listed below.

David Coulson
Donald W. Reynolds School of
Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557-0040
Tel: (702) 784-6898

William F. Griswold
Henry W. Grady School of Journalism and
Mass Communication
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
Tel: (706) 542-5051

CHAPTER PROPOSALS IN INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

Those working or researching in the international public relations field are invited to submit paper proposals for a book on theory and practice of international public relations.

Please forward submissions to:

Barbara Diggs-Brown/Rhonda Zaharna
The American University
School of Communication
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016-8073

PR

And, if we want to be really ambitious, we may want to review the 1985 recommended curriculum for graduate public relations education. At the very least, I hope our Division will begin to list the questions that must be asked, make suggestions for getting one or more studies underway, and find the necessary resources.

These are the major issues I will discuss with the officers and Steering Committee members. Your ideas, too, are most welcome, Committee members: send me a note at The Newhouse School, or call me (315) 443-3368.

Opportunity in Orlando

Are you going to the PRSA convention in Orlando? If so, please let me know: I'd like to invite all Division members to sit in on a brainstorming session as we begin planning the 1994 AEJMC convention scheduled for Atlanta. As you may know, most of the programming is set at the Mid-Winter Meeting (this year, December 1-3), so if you have ideas for panels, professional freedom and responsibility programs, workshops, pre-convention events, format changes, etc., contact me or Richard Alan Nelson our vice head and convention program chair. All ideas will be considered!

Wanted: A Few Good Men and Women

While the elected officers are in place, not all committee assignments are made yet. There's a method to this madness, and that is to openly invite all members who are interested to volunteer their time and talents. In some cases, Richard Nelson and I are making appointments to assistant chairmanships, with the idea that a person can learn the ropes this year

by working with the chairman, and then move up next year, in a seamless approach. We distributed preference sheets at the business meeting in Kansas City, but, frankly, not many people returned them. If you're interested, don't be shy or modest: call me!

Finally, on a Personal Note

I want to thank everyone for their notes and phone calls and good wishes during my father's illness. He's much better, and hopefully he is on the road to recovery. I was very disappointed to miss the Kansas City convention. After working with Dean for nearly a year, it was a bit depressing to miss seeing the results. But the important thing is that our programming went off without a hitch, with excellent reviews, thanks to good friends and great professionals like Dean Kruckeberg, Elizabeth Toth, Susanne Roschwalb, Carolyn Cline, Don Stacks and others. AEJMC conventions are always exhausting, and these folks did their jobs, plus mine! I am very grateful.

Maria P. Russell
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
215 University Place
Syracuse, NY 13244-2100
(315) 443-3368
FAX (315) 443-3946



NEWS YOU CAN USE

AEJMC Midwinter Meeting
December 3-5, 1993
Hyatt Regency
Atlanta, GA

AEJMC Convention
August 10-13, 1994
Hyatt Regency
Atlanta, GA

AEJMC Paper Submission
April 1, 1994

Survey Reveals Dichotomies in Practitioner Perceptions of Public Relations Education and Research

by William C. Adams, Fellow PRSA
Florida International University

A large majority of practitioners responding to a mailed questionnaire prior to the annual AEJMC meeting in Kansas City claim to use research for their public relations programs and think research should be an integral part of any public relations program. But those same practitioners say public relations educators should spend less time on theory and research methods and more on practical issues.

And, almost half the survey respondents are either neutral to or agree with the statement that "doing research takes too much time, effort and money."

These seemingly dichotomous responses make perfect sense if, for example, one accepts the premise that education does not drive the public relations profession, as in law and medicine, for example.

The subject of research and its role in the public relations process was just one of the topics discussed during an AEJMC pre-convention workshop I moderated, "Improving Public Relations Through Research and Practitioner Partnerships," featuring two panels of educators and practitioners.

The program featured educators Jim Grunig, Larissa Grunig and practitioners Walter Lindenmann, Dan Harrison (GPM Gas Corp.), Richard K. Long (Weyerhaeuser Co.) and Mary Ann Pires (The Pires Group).



To help kick off the discussion, I conducted a small, purposive survey of 25 Arthur W. Page Society members earlier this summer. [NOTE: seven members had moved on or retired; four gave no response.] One reason for the "quick and dirty" sampling of a little more than ten per cent of the Society's membership was to get a feel for how high-level corporate or agency professionals perceived the research function and the role of educators in helping those practitioners assimilate scholarly research into their work.

While panelists refrained from mutual bashing, spirited discussion resulted when practitioners took turns giving their views on the realities of assimilating and applying research into professional practice and on public relations education in general.

For example, one of the liveliest points of discussion centered around how educational institutions and practitioners can better share public relations curriculum ideas and help shape our profession from the ground up—not just leaving that guidance to our professional associations. In this light, the Page survey echoed panelists' sentiments, indicating an almost-unanimous willingness by practitioners to share ideas and experiences with public relations students and educators through campus visits and speaking to classes and PRSSA members.

One of the workshop's main tasks was to explore how the public relations practitioner can find, assimilate, and use to practical advantage the vast array of current research in the field. A second question was in what innovative ventures can educators and practitioners collaborate to make the practice of public relations come alive for our students. A related goal was to seek concrete avenues and collaborative efforts between the two groups.

(Only one survey respondent disagreed with the statement that "linkages between educators and practitioners are important for our profession.")

Practitioners serving on university and college public relations advisory boards was another way mentioned by panelists to help shape curriculum and discuss the needs of students, educators and professionals alike. (However, the Page survey indicated this may be a decidedly one-way effort, as noted below.)

More practitioner-educator interaction would appear to be crucial to understanding the needs of both sides, especially if responses to some Page survey questions are any indication. For example, most respondents either agreed with or were neutral to the statement, "In general, I've found educators don't understand what professionals want or need from a public relations graduate."

And yet, larger, more definitive studies—such as the 1992 Cornell survey reported in *Public Relations Journal*—practitioners admittedly don't have a "good grasp" of what's being taught in today's public relations programs, even though they profess to have a generally "positive attitude" about public relations education.

Therefore, perhaps one solution to the problems and dichotomies indicated both by the preliminary Page survey and the AEJMC workshop rests simply with continued efforts at practitioner-educator liaison activities geared toward mutual understanding of needs and expectations.

NOTE: A broadened questionnaire asking practitioners their thoughts on public relations theory and research and education in general will be sent to a larger sampling of Arthur W. Page Society members this Fall, with the assistance of Hernando Gonzalez, Ph.D., also of Florida International University. We hope to produce a paper on our findings early in 1994.

Both the workshop and the initial survey were covered in *PR News*, September 20, 1993. *PR News* conducted its own survey of executive recruiters that revealed more than half considered a PR degree "not important" for mid- or high-level job placements.

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THE PRIZE: left to right: Dr. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, APR, Associate Professor Texas A & M University, 1993 Chair: People of Color Committee; Inez Kaiser, Award Recipient, President, Inez Kaiser & Associates, Kansas City; Dr. Dean Kruckeberg, PR Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, 1993 Head PR Division.

PEOPLE OF COLOR AWARD WINNERS

Ten graduate students of color, pursuing degrees in public relations or conducting research were awarded membership in AEJMC and the PR Division at the annual meeting. The recipients this year: Aynoka Bender (The University of Tennessee-Knoxville), Elizabeth Buchanan (Florida International University, Miami, FL), Wesley A. Mallette (University of Maryland, College Park, MD), Angela Haigler (Iowa State University, Ames, IA), Wanda Robinson Young (Jackson State University, Jackson, MS), Teresa Mastin (California State University, Fullerton, CA), Sandra Raspberry (American University, Washington, D.C.), Yu Xinglu (Ohio University, Athens, OH), Alfredo Richard, Adriana Delgado, Komal Sabherwal. The awards were sponsored by: Jack Detweiler, Glen Broom, David Dozier, Todd Hunt, Dennis Jeffers, Doug Newsom, Maggie Thomas, Dean Kruckeberg. Also: Kansas State University, University of Maryland, University of Miami, University of South Carolina, and Memphis State University.

The award was named in honor of Inez Yeargan Kaiser, the first African-American female to establish a public relations firm with national accounts. Kaiser, now 75 years old, has spent her life making the world more inclusive and along the way became a pathfinder, a pioneer, and a trail blazer. She was the first black woman to: become a member of the Public Relations Society of America; to become a member of the American Marketing Association of Kansas City; to attend New York, California, and Paris Fashion Shows for the working press; to make it possible for black models to work on Seventh Avenue, to sight just a few of her achievements.

The search is on for donors and nominees for next years' awards in Atlanta. The program is part of an effort to increase multi-racial membership in the division and increase emphasis on research and public relations achievements of people of color.

PR



Letter from Washington, D.C.

by Susanne Roschwalb,
American University

This column is intended for anyone who wants to know how to have a role in the August 1994 AEJMC Conference in Atlanta, GA. It explains how things are done. If you are a long-time member of the PR Division of AEJMC, this may be familiar. If not, read on.

I. The System

December 3-5, at the AEJMC Mid-winter Meeting in Atlanta, Division chairs and Vice chairs will spend a full day bidding for time slots at the August convention. The typical five-day conference offers several hundred session opportunities, including plenary sessions, poster and paper sessions, business meetings, luncheons and cocktail parties. There are never enough rooms or hours to satisfy every idea of every division. Joint sessions in which two or more divisions share resources, topics and time are encouraged.

II. The Call

Between now and Thanksgiving, you are invited to submit a proposal for a session to Professor Richard Nelson at Kansas State University. This proposal is not just the title for an idea. It is a document that lists:

- *The title for the session
- *Suggested people from academia and from the private sector who might be asked to participate - as well as their expertise and their location
- *Reasons why the topic is of interest
- *Possible other divisions that might share the session
- *Estimated budget - whether travel and hotel accommodations are involved

III. The Context

At the Division Business Meeting in Kansas City, some key points were made. It is helpful, wise and economical to make use of the city and region in which the conference is held. Next summer the conference will be in Atlanta, August 10-13. PR Professionals at major industries like Pepsi Cola, CNN or the Center for Disease Control could offer a distinctive look at their industries and at the profession. In addition, it has proven helpful to work with the local professional associations. Consider leading lights or pioneers who live in the area.

IV. Practical Advice

If your proposal is accepted, be realistic about the amount of time and details necessary to produce a session. Requests for funding for speakers are due in January. Commitments from speakers should be made in the first quarter of the year. Consider back-up speakers as part of your planning. Keep in touch with speakers by phone and in writing. Send background material about AEJMC. Request photos and bios of speakers to transmit to AEJMC by May for inclusion in the program book. Help your speakers make travel plans, if necessary. Do not incur any expenses without clearing these with division head.

V. Conclusion

So now you know. The summer conference presentation is the end of a year of hard work, a roller coaster ride of acceptance and rejection, sudden changes, and constant concern. New ideas and energy are welcome. Only the faint-hearted need not apply.

PR

A Lesson in International PR From the Gaza Strip

By Dr. R.S. Zaharna
The American University

"Why do Western audiences always distort our messages?" This is the number one question I hear over and over when I work with international clients.

This summer the question became a central theme in my work on a pilot project in the Gaza Strip.

The project, sponsored by the American-based AMIDEAST, was an intensive public relations training program for local institutions in the Gaza Strip. We dealt with issues from media training, to community interaction, to fund-raising. After working closely with four institutions for six weeks, I conducted a 2-day workshop for 20 top institutions.

I was clear about what I wanted to present in the workshop. The trick was how to present it. The first hurdle was language. My Arabic is good enough to understand the language, but too poor to speak fluently. My audience had the opposite problem. All could understand English, but many felt more comfortable expressing themselves in Arabic. Translation was not a viable option for what I wanted to achieve in the workshop. However, 8 hours of English would mean losing my audience to language fatigue. How could I com-

municate concepts without having language as an issue? Go visual.

What I came up with was a series of visual exercises using pictures and objects that participants could describe in either English or Arabic.

The first exercise addressed the number one question -- Why do they always distort our message?

Although there are real political reasons in Gaza why distortions could be deliberate, I knew from my work in intercultural communication theory that culture, not conspiracy, was responsible for the distortions. The distortions were too pervasive, predictable, and systematic to be part of any conspiracy.

Given the language hurdle, how do you visually demonstrate that culture is the culprit? And, how do you respond so that the answer seems spontaneous? Spontaneity was the second presentation hurdle. In the Gaza setting, where the audience is more active than passive, simply working the answer into the lecture is too artificial. A trainer gains credibility if she can adeptly anticipate and respond to challenges from the audience.

I racked my brains out trying to come up with an answer that had a strong visual component, was compelling -- and yet, appeared spontaneous. It was the night before the workshop, when the answer came.

Because of the heat and possibility of dehydration, I always keep a glass of water with me.

That night, while staring at the glass of water sitting on my desk, I remembered 5th grade science with Mr. Hillard. Refraction! Whenever you put a perfectly straight rod in water, the rod looks bent. It doesn't matter what angle, person, or time you view the rod, so long as it is in water, it appears bent. No matter what a person may say about the rod being straight, to the observer, the rod is bent.

Culture has the same effect on messages that water has on rods. No matter how straight, clear, or well-intentioned a person may think his message is, culture will bend it. Differences in verbal and nonverbal communication styles will act to distort words and actions.

Instead of being part of some Western conspiracy, distortion is a simple by-product of cross-cultural communication. The issue then is not debating over whether the rod is straight or not, but understanding and accounting for cultural differences when developing and delivering messages.

The next day, I took a clear glass filled with water and placed it on the lectern. I laid a wooden pencil beside it. Sure enough, immediately following the introductions the questions came up -- "I know that PR is important, but why do they always distort our message?"

This time, with a bent pencil in a glass of water, I had the answer.

PR

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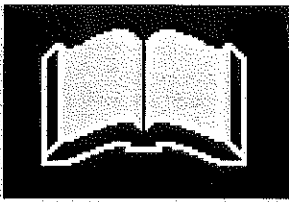
Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, Texas A&M

Positions To Be Announced:

*Research Chair/Research Paper
Competition Chair

*By-Laws Chair

*Scholarly Association Liaison



Book Reviews

by Richard Alan Nelson, Kansas State University

Making it in Public Relations: An Insiders Guide to Career Opportunities

by Leonard Mogel

(New York: Collier Books/Macmillan, 1993), 191 pp., pbk., \$10.

This is a handy, inexpensive guide aimed at seniors and recent graduates entering the job market, who have not yet found their niche. Part I of the book provides a short history of public relations and defines what it is and what it does.

Part II looks at public relations in action, outlines the components of such work, presents an overview of the structure and functions of a counseling firm (with added examples from the largest agencies), and discusses working for various sized organizations.

Part III describes media relations/placement, employee relations, speech writing, issues management and public affairs, public interest "image building," strategic planning/integrated communications, corporate advertising, and crisis communications/management work areas.

Part IV gives solid tips on maximizing educational opportunities, internships and job searches. It concludes with a discussion of how trends such as globalization, new technologies, and multilingualism will affect the future.

The Public Relations Writer's Handbook

by Merry Aronson and Don Spetner

(New York: Lexington Books/Macmillan, 1993), 210 pp., hb., \$19.95.

A how-to-do-it for novices and experienced professionals, the book has received endorsements from leaders in the field including Ron Rhody of Bank America, Margaritis, President of Ogilvy & Mather; John Scanlon of Abernethy, Legor & Scanlon; Richard Edelman, President of Edelman Public Relations.

The authors emphasize a journalistic approach to public relations writing and include detailed information on media kits, photo captions, feature writing, fact sheets, and backgrounders. A particularly strong section concerns speech making. Author Aronson conducts media training courses and teaches at UCLA. Author Spetner worked for three public relations firms prior to his current job as Director of Corporate Communications for Nissan North America.

The book is strong on substance, but weak on graphics (no photos or charts). It does not include student exercises, assignments or supplemental teaching add-ons. Despite these caveats, faculty teaching writing courses in public communication at both the graduate and undergraduate level may well want to check it out.

Global Glasnost: Toward a New International Information/Communication Order?

by J. Galtung and Richard C. Vincent

(Hampton Press, 23 Broadway, Suite 208, Dept. B, Cresskill, NJ, 07526, 1992), tel: 201-894-1686, \$19.95 paper, \$45.00 cloth, plus \$3.50 postage and handling.

It was I.F. Stone who described the function of government as that of covering its activities and the function of journalism as penetrating that cover-up. Where does that leave the function of public relations?

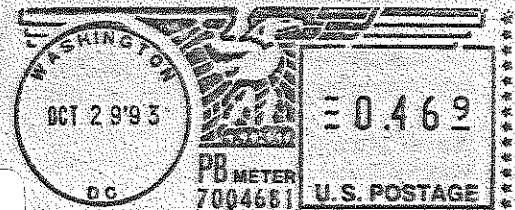
The authors offer compelling evidence that international public relations is wound into the new management practices of contemporary public diplomacy. One case in point is the U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO. The final actions resulted from a campaign of "selective misrepresentations" in the U.S. Department of State led by Gregory Newell. He is credited with leading an effort to manipulate the news in support of withdrawal with such tactics as a letter-writing campaign to major newspapers.

Washington Post op ed editor, Meg Greenfield is quoted as saying "...this is not a surprise. It's standard operating procedure for government these days." The actions cited seem to have been heavily influenced by the politically conservative Heritage Foundation, a group that served as a "key intellectual resource" for the Reagan Administration.

PR update, PR Division of AEJMC
The American University School of
Communication
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20016-8017

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FIRST CLASS



Jennifer H McGill 30000
AEJMC
1621 College St
Univ of South Carolina
Columbia SC 29208-0251