

# PR UPDATE

The newsletter for AEJMC's Public Relations Division

Volume 54, No. 3 | November 2019



## Post-Conference Issue

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# PR UPDATE

Vol. 54, No. 3; November 2019

## Division Leadership

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Boston University

*Vice Head*

**Katie R. Place**

Quinnipiac University

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## A Time to be Thankful

There is a meme making the rounds on social media that says, "November is stressful like it's suddenly freezing and you have 35 different deadlines due within three weeks and everyone is panicking and it's dark all the time." As the kids say, I feel seen.

As academics, this time of year is not only busy with the usual holiday festivities, but we are also winding down our classes and powering through late night grading sessions. It's easy to lose sight of the what makes this time of year great - taking time out to share what we are most thankful for.

With that being said, I want to take a minute to give a big shout out and thank you to the members of the PR Update team - **Lois, Debbie, Laura, and Chelsea**. They do a fantastic job of tracking down stories and proofreading the newsletter before it goes out to the members of the Division. It's a team effort to get a newsletter out three times a year and I'm thankful for all of their hard work.

This is our post-conference newsletter, and we will share some of the highlights of the 2019 conference. It takes a lot of work to put together a conference program, so thank you to all those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make our time in Toronto a success.

And finally, a big thanks to everyone who has taken time to volunteer and serve in the PRD in some capacity - leading committees, reviewing papers, organizing socials, securing sponsors and so much more. It's the commitment of the PRD members that make it such a robust community to be part of - so thank you and here's to another great year!

PR UPDATE is published three times a year.  
You can find past issues [here](#).

Please send all inquiries and contributions to  
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## A message from the Division Head

### Dustin Supa

Boston University

## New Year, New Goals for the PR Division

On October 1, the AEJMC calendar converted into the new – and current - year. I’ve never really understood it – although I have always assumed that when the organization started more than a hundred years ago, the founders wanted to create a mechanism that would allow them to ensure their semester was settled and in full swing before concentrating on the ‘extras’ that go into faculty and graduate student life. But whatever the actual reason for the delay in the implementation of the new year – many of our members have already been hard at work planning next year’s conference, updating our communication channels, planning our virtual conferences, the list goes on. I want to thank all of our volunteers for all the work they’re already doing to make San Francisco, and our division, successful.

And though we have turned over the AEJMC calendar to a new year, as this is our first newsletter since the conference, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our volunteers, panelists, paper presenters and organizers of all of our programs for the excellent conference in Toronto. By all accounts, the conference was a great success for both our division and the organization as a whole. I want to again thank Giselle Auger for her outstanding leadership last year and for all of past division leaders for the continued insight they provide on the past heads committee.

I also want to thank all of the sponsors who helped to make the excellent programming at the conference a reality. Many of you have contributed to assist with many aspects of the conference (entirely plausible that

‘someone’ will be asking you again this year, if they haven’t already). Quite frankly, our division doesn’t have the same financial strength as other divisions, which brings me to our goals for the coming year.

As the largest collection of public relations scholar-educators in the world, our division has more three hundred members, we have a responsibility to not only our division and AEJMC, but also to the field of public relations to lend our expertise thought leadership. We cannot, however, do this alone. One of our goals this year will be to continue to bridge our division with other organizations of public relations scholar-educators and thought leaders. More details on this initiative will be forthcoming, and I would like to ask anyone interested in this initiative to please contact me so that we might put together a working group (I know, I’m sorry, it’s the administrator coming out).

The second major initiative must be addressing the financial health of the division. I will be working the AEJMC national office to better understand our current reserves, our restricted accounts, and will work with several members in putting together a plan of action for addressing how we might better position ourselves for the future. Again – more details will be coming.

The third point of emphasis this year will be addressing the challenges we have faced in our diversity initiatives. At the business meeting this year, this topic was raised, and is a vital concern. We’ve done well in some areas, but in others we have failed to move the needle. This is

## New Year, New Goals

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unacceptable. I have asked a small group of volunteers to put together a plan for making meaningful and impactful strides toward acting as leaders in diversifying public relations education, research and practice. I know they are already hard at work, and I am confident the end result will be progress we can be proud of.

As you might have surmised, these three initiatives are not mutually exclusive – and I am hopeful that the steps we begin to take this year will contribute to the long-term success of PRD. Our division’s strength has been, and will continue to be the strength of our individual members – which is why I am so confident that we will achieve our goals. Cheers to a great second half of your semester! •

## PR Division Welcomes New Executive Leadership

The PR Division welcomes incoming head, **Dr. Dustin Supa**. Supa serves as the Associate Dean of Boston University’s College of Communication, where he also holds an appointment as associate professor of public relations. He earned his Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Miami and previously served as an assistant professor at B.U., and as an assistant professor and program coordinator for public relations at Ball State University. Prior to academia, he worked in agency, nonprofit and corporate public relations – primarily in media relations and stakeholder engagement.

Supa’s research investigates media relations as a strategic and tactical function of public relations, the modern practices of integration in public relations, advertising and marketing, and the impact of corporate advocacy on audiences. He has worked with PRD for more than a decade, working on various committees including membership, newsletter, and the pre-conference committee.

The PR Division also welcomes **Dr. Katie, R. Place**, as vice head. Place (M.A. Virginia Tech, 2003 & Ph.D. University of Maryland, 2010) is an associate professor in the Department of Strategic Communication at Quinnipiac University where she teaches courses in public relations, strategic planning, and public relations campaigns.

Place’s research examines the nexus of gender, power and ethics in public relations. She has authored more than 50 conference papers or publications -- including peer-reviewed articles in *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Public Relations Review*, *PRism*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *Public Relations Inquiry*, and *Journal of Communication Management*. She serves as Vice Head of the Public Relations Division of Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), is past Chair of AEJMC’s Commission on the Status of Women, and resides on the editorial boards of *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Journal of Public Interest Communications*. Prior to returning to academia,

Place was a public affairs account manager and a not-for-profit communications manager in the Washington, D.C. area. •



**Head**  
**Dustin Supa**



**Vice Head**  
**Katie. R. Place**



# committee updates

[Photo by Dan Freeman on Unsplash](#)

## 2020 Virtual Conference Panels Announced

PRD will kick-off 2020 with its third virtual conference, featuring panels on teaching, research, and professional freedom and responsibility. Panels will be scheduled for late January and early February.

This exciting array of sessions will allow academics and practitioners to connect remotely and discuss a variety of timely, thought provoking topics that reflect the challenges, advances and best practices of our field.

2020 Virtual Conference Panels (organized by last name of submitting panel member):

*Job Ready: Using Student-Run Agencies and Campaign Courses to Teach Soft Skills*  
Submitted by Debbie Davis, Texas Tech University

*Strategic Sport Communication: A Teaching Panel*  
Submitted by Jennifer Harker, West Virginia University

*Making the Most of a #PRProfs Sabbatical*  
Submitted by Emily Kinsky, West Texas A&M University

*Telling Her Story: The Pluses and Perils of Authenticity for Female Political Candidates*  
Submitted by Stephanie Madden, Penn State University

*Teaching Visual Communication in Public Relations Classes*  
Submitted by Geah Pressgrove, West Virginia University

*Incorporating Analytics into the Public Relations Classroom*  
Submitted by Kathleen Stansberry, Elon University

*Diversity and Inclusion in the Classroom: Leading with Effective Communication Strategies*  
Submitted by Tia C. M. Tyree, Howard University

*Become an Academic #Influencer: Faculty Strategies and Successes in Brand Building and Personal Marketing*  
Submitted by Amanda Weed, Kennesaw State University

*Rethinking Communication in Asia: Top Trends and Challenges in Leading Change Responsibly*  
Submitted by Wong Pei Wen, Nanyang Technological University

*Navigating Teaching for Graduate Students*  
Submitted by Cen April Yue and Tugce Ertem-Eray, PRD Graduate Student Committee

PRD introduced the virtual conference in 2017 as an innovative solution to the challenges of tightening travel budgets and accelerated changes in our field. This year, the committee was able to accept nine of the 16 submitted panels (56.25% acceptance rate).

Registration is required to participate in each session and/or view the recording after the session. Be sure to keep an eye out for updates -- details on how to register will be announced in December. •

## #NewsEngagementDay 2019

By Stephanie Mahin, UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School

News. Fake news. Misinformation. Disinformation. Trying to sort through a day of tangled news stories is exhausting. We are inundated with information produced from reliable and unreliable sources alike. That said, it's no surprise that today, there are a lot of ongoing discussions in newsrooms and classrooms around the country about the state – and the future – of news. Take a look at these statistics:

According to Cision's 2019 State of the Media report:

- 69% of U.S. journalists believe the public has lost trust in the media
- 57% of U.S. journalists see a deterioration of the freedom of the press
- 40% of U.S. journalists believe freedom of the press will deteriorate in the next three years

Additionally, Edelman's Trust Barometer found:

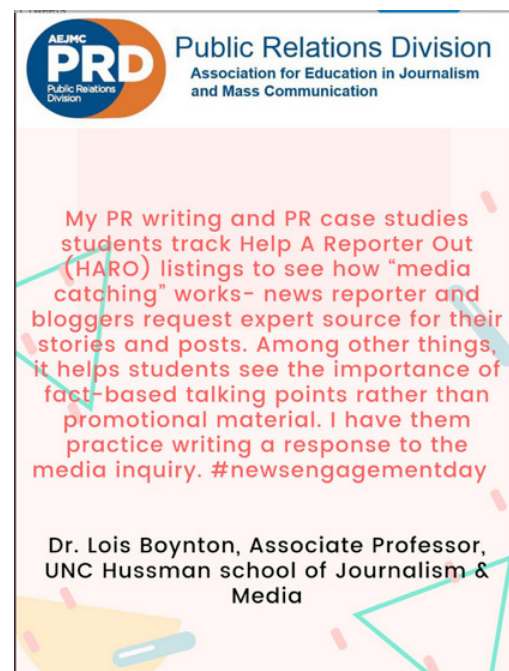
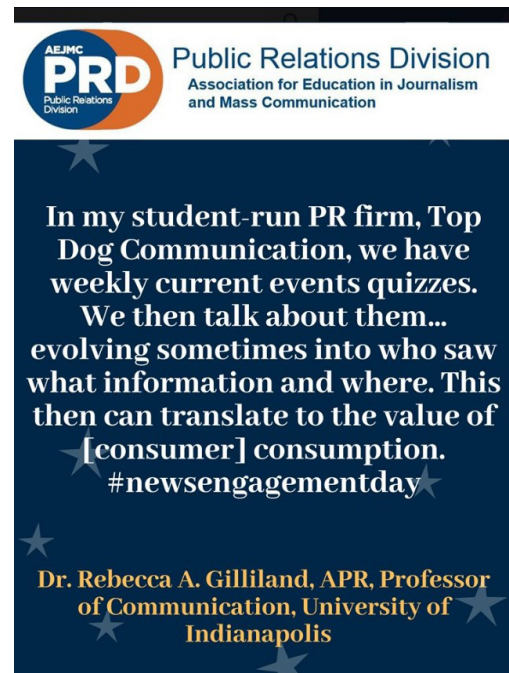
- 59% percent of people are unsure what they see in the media is true and what isn't
- Nearly 7 in 10 people worry about fake news being used as "a weapon"
- Almost 63% of people does not know how to tell good journalism from rumor or falsehoods

October 1 marked the fifth year of News Engagement Day, sponsored by AEJMC. The day, always the first Tuesday of October, was created to address the current state of news – "to reverse the public's declining attention to news, lack of understanding about journalism, and waning trust in the news media." The Public Relations Division joined others to encourage members to share ways they're helping their students understand today's news environment, using the hashtag #NewsEngagementDay.

**"In the age of fake news, media relations still matters."**  
(Jade Faugno, Forbes, 2017)

A core function of public relations is to build relationships between our brand, our organization, and our internal

and external stakeholders. Through relationship-building, practitioners have a responsibility to communicate



#NewsEngagementDay posts from PRD Members

## #NewsEngagementDay 2019

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effectively and truthfully with these audiences, including the news media.

As such, media relations in the age of fake news, is still meaningful. The symbiotic relationship between practitioners and reporters is even more important as practitioners have an opportunity to support credible sources for news stories and ensure reporters have accurate information. As public relations scholars, we have a duty to ensure our students are trained to understand this core, and yet responsible, function.

Admittedly, social media has changed the way many of

us obtain our news. But it's also changed how news is delivered. Practitioners now produce needed content for clients and organizations and use social media as a form of dialogic engagement to build relationships. And the demand on reporters to produce is also intense. According to Edelman's 2019 Trust Barometer, 42% of journalists plan for future stories no more than a day in advance, and 35% publish seven or more articles a week.

At the end of the day, it's important for us to realize how we can make journalists' lives easier, by building more targeted, impactful pitches that keep the end stakeholder in mind. •

## Journal of Public Relations Research

The Journal of Public Relations Research (JPRR) continues to expand its reach in more ways than one.

In 2018, JPRR received more international submissions as its impact factor increased. From January 2018 to July 2019, researchers from 40 countries - Albania to Zimbabwe - submitted manuscripts.

Additionally, the journal's Impact Factor (IF) increased from .556 (2014) to 2.125 (2018). The five-year IF increased from 1.312 (2014) to 3.442 (2018) and JPRR's rank among communication journals also rose to 13 of 88

(five-year IF).

The acceptance ratio as of July 31, 2019 for the prior 12 months, including all manuscript types, was 8.7 percent. At the same time, the average number of days from submission to final decision decreased to 87.9 days.

In 2018, JPRR received 113 original manuscripts (including special issue submissions) and 31 revised manuscripts. In 2019 (January-July), the journal received 47 new manuscripts. •

## Journal of Public Relations Education

The Journal of Public Relations Education (JPRE) is pleased to share two announcements. First, the journal is proud to announce the publication of its first special issue. JPRE is partnering with the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) to bring you two exciting articles. The first is a monograph written by Marcia DiStaso (University of Florida) that dives into the contents of the 2017 CPRE report. The second is a related teaching brief by CPRE member Denise Bortree (Penn State) that discusses ethics education. The special issue will be available in November on our [website](#). Join us

in celebrating the work of these authors and our special issue.

JPRE is partnering with Scholastica to facilitate submissions and reviews for the journal. We want to thank Page Center for sponsoring this service. Now our review process will be handled through our Scholastica page. To submit a manuscript for review, please visit this [link](#). Also, if you are interested in becoming a reviewer for JPRE, you may sign up through [Scholastica's website](#). •





# conference recap

Photo by Dan Freeman on Unsplash

## Congratulations to Paper Award Winners

By Lois Boynton, UNC-Chapel Hill

It was another banner year for the Public Relations Division at the AEJMC national conference. Fifty-six papers were accepted and presented across all competitions – teaching, research, student papers, as well as for the Doug Newsom Award for Global Ethics and Diversity, and the PR History Award.

“Overall our acceptance rate across all competitions was 50%, which meets AEJMC’s preferred guideline,” according to Lucinda Austin, research chair. “We had slightly more than a 50% acceptance rate for the faculty papers (54%), as the reviews indicated that this year’s pool of papers was exceptionally strong. However, we dipped slightly lower on the acceptance rate for the student papers, based on the reviews for these submissions. In 2018, we had a 40% acceptance rate for students, compared to a 35% acceptance rate this year.”

Many thanks to the 114 judges who reviewed about three papers apiece. There were 79 judges for the open category, 36 for the student category, 22 for teaching, and six for the Newsom and History award papers.

### Top Open Papers

Top paper: *How CEO Disclosure and Gender Affect Perceived CEO Attributes, Relationship Investment, and Engagement Intention*, by **April Yue, Yoo Jin Chung, Amanda Bradshaw, Tom Kelleher, Mary Ann Ferguson**, University of Florida

Second place: *Social Media Research in Public Relations, 2008 - 2018: Status and Future Directions*, by **Ran Ju**,

**Sandra Braun, Dat Huynh, Sarah McCaffrey**, Mount Royal University

Third place: *Resilient Aging: Examining how AARP Constructs Public Resilience Through its #DisruptAging Campaign*, by **Lindsey Anderson, Sylvia (Jiankun) Guo**, University of Maryland

### Top Student Papers

Top paper: *ICTs Intrusion: The Effects of Using Communication Technology after Hours on Employees’ Counterproductive Work Behaviors*, by **Katie Kim**, Seoul National University

Second place: *Relative Efficacy of Differentiation and Bolstering in Mitigating the Negative Spillover Effect from a Rival Brand’s Product-Harm Crisis: A Study of Market Leader and Market Challenger*, by **Jun Zhang**, Syracuse University

Third place: *Examining the Influence of Personal Discussion Network on Consumer Engagement Behavior: An Egocentric Network Study*, by **Yan Qu**, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

### Newsom Award

*An Appeal to Shared Values: Faith, Advocacy, and Persuasion in the Council on American-Islamic Relations’ Public Relations*, by **Brian J. Bowe and Derek Moscato**, Western Washington University; and **Mariam Alkazemi**, Virginia Commonwealth University

## Paper Award Winners

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### PR History Award

*Hill & Knowlton's Smoke Machine: Campaigning for Labor Law Reform*, by **Patricia Curtin** and **John Russial**, University of Oregon

Virginia Commonwealth University

You may find abstracts for all Public Relations Division's accepted papers at <http://www.aejmc.org/home/2019/05/prdv-2019-abstracts/> •

### Top Great Ideas For Teaching Students (GIFTS) Award

*"Think Differently": How to Incite Creativity with a Two-word Campaign Challenge*, by **Nicole O'Donnell**,

## Plank Center PRD Mentorship Coffee Break Kickstarts Program's 5th Year

By Melissa Adams, Appalachian State University

During AEJMC this past August, The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations once again sponsored a Coffee Break for the Public Relations Division participants in the mentorship program. This is the third year that the Plank Center has sponsored this event and they have agreed to continue to support this annual event, which brings mentor/mentee pairs together to meet in person for the first time or to reconnect for continuing pairs.

Entering its fifth year, the mentorship program has grown from 13 mentor-mentee pairs to 36 for the 2019-2020

academic year. Mentors and mentees work on their own preferred schedule during the academic year to discuss topics of mutual interest such as preparation for the job market and the tenure process.

The program is administered through the PRD Membership Committee who will send a call for new participants prior to next year's conference. Anyone interested in participating prior to the call may contact Membership Committee President, Melissa Adams ([adamsmb2@appstate.edu](mailto:adamsmb2@appstate.edu)). •



*From this year's Coffee Hour Mentoring Session*

## Top Teaching Papers Reflect Best in Access and Application in Public Relations

By Christopher J. McCollough, Columbus State University

The 2019 AEJMC Teaching Paper Competition in the Public Relations division illustrated the division's emphasis on increasing submissions and rigor in scholarship on teaching and learning in the discipline. In addition to seeing a 67% increase in total number of papers submitted, the top papers offer some valuable insights on emerging resources and innovative approaches to making content more accessible and engaging for our students. The following offer a brief on each of the top three papers:

**First Place:** *Cut Me Some Slack: Simulation, Experiential Learning, and Slack Bots to Teach Crisis Communication* by **Julia Daisy Fraustino**, West Virginia University and **Amanda Kennedy**, St. Mary's University

Fraustino and Kennedy presented an analysis of the application of an innovative software platform in their respective crisis communication courses. They leveraged Slack to develop crisis scenario simulations for their students that enabled them to engage in issue management, crisis management, and crisis communication over the life cycle of the simulations. The study demonstrated value of the platform to students for both class engagement and knowledge development in crisis communication. It also provided an engaging discussion for those in attendance to consider a new potential research in their own crisis, management, and case studies courses.

**Second Place:** *Demystifying Data: A Constructivist Approach to Teaching Statistical Concepts Using SPSS* by **Lauren Bayliss**, Georgia Southern University

Bayliss presented her study as part of the Public Relations Division's annual high-density session that includes second and third place teaching papers, as well as our top five Great Ideas For Teaching Students (GIFTS) session, which is a great session for enabling educators in our discipline to build skills and network with other educators. Bayliss's work demonstrated a net positive impact for students in learning and personal investment in public relations research classes and skill building in using SPSS statistical software by inviting them to engage in developing the questions and activities in the class. The discussion left those in attendance with something new to consider in their own research courses.

**Third Place:** *Curriculum Rebuilding in Public Relations: A Multi Managerial-Level Analysis of PR Practitioners' Expectations of Graduates* by **Arunima Krishna**, **Donald Wright** and **Raymond Kotcher**, Boston University

Krishna, Wright, and Kotcher put forward a study that offers public relations educators a resource for considering how to engage in curriculum development or refinement in light of the discussion around the state of public relations education following the 2018 Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) report. The study offered insights that inform the ongoing discussion around disparities in employer expectations of entry-level hires and educators' evaluation of recent graduates from public relations programs that we see in the 2015 and 2018 CPRE reports. It's a resource for anyone focused on maintaining a program of study that is industry relevant and positions graduates for professional success in the discipline. •

## Graduate Student Committee AEJMC Update

By April Yue & Tugce Ertem-Eray, Co-chairs, Graduate Student Committee

The Public Relations Division Graduate Student Committee continues to support professional and scholarly development of public relations graduate students across the country. Thanks to outgoing co-chairs Virginia Harrison, Luke Capizzo, and Rosalynn Vasquez and faculty advisor Tyler Page, the committee had successful events in Toronto and is gearing up for continued success in San Francisco in 2020.


During the AEJMC Conference in Toronto, the fourth annual Graduate Student Luncheon was hosted with the generous support of the Department of Public Relations at Texas Tech University's College of Media & Communication. The theme for this year's luncheon was "Finding Your Niche." Sixteen public relations graduate students attended the luncheon at Batch and gleaned invaluable insights and advice from leading scholars: Sherice Gearhart (Texas Tech University), Yan Jin (University of Georgia), Holly Overton (University of South Carolina), Brian Smith (Brigham Young University), and Weiwu Zhang (Texas Tech University).

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Department

of Public Relations and College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida, and the Bellisario College of Communications, Penn State University, the 2019 conference also hosted a graduate student social event at Quinn's Steakhouse & Irish Bar, which brought 20 students together for networking. Public relations graduate students had a wonderful time enjoying their food and communicating with other students.

The committee also organized a successful Grad Student Research Showcase for the first time, which was designed to give graduate students on or approaching the job market the opportunity to share their work with faculty and build new relationships within the Public Relations Division. Nine students presented their research and networked with scholars.

As incoming co-chairs for the Graduate Student Committee, we plan for all programs to reflect the needs of PRD graduate students at the 2020 conference in San Francisco and are excited to continue our service to help connect and build relationships between fellow graduate students and faculty members. •



Make plans now to join us in San Francisco for  
AEJMC 2020 • Aug. 6-9