

## Letter from the Special Issue Editor

December 14, 2020

In October 2019, the Commission on Public Relations Education issued its *Ethics Education Report* with suggestions for creating a required ethics course as recommended in the Commission's earlier report *Fast Forward: Foundations and Future State: Educators and Practitioners*. The *Ethics Education Report* offered a new course proposal, student learning outcomes, course content, essential skills/knowledge/abilities, online resources, and sample syllabi. What it lacked were practical assignments and real-world application that might be useful for faculty who wish to build a new ethics course. This special issue of the *Journal of Public Relations Education* was created to help fill the gap and strengthen the arguments for the need for public relations ethics education internationally. The issue includes research articles examining the current state of ethics education and teaching briefs sharing practical ideas that can be adopted into curriculum, as well as a book review of a recently published ethics textbook. I hope you find the material here useful as you consider how you might develop a new course or strengthen the current ethics curriculum in your program.

The issue opens with an article "Accreditation, Curriculum, and Ethics: Exploring the Public Relations Education Landscape" by Del Rosso, Hought, and Marks Malone that examines programs certified by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) for the Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) and also accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). Not surprisingly, it finds that few were requiring ethics courses at the time of data collection, and

this benchmarking study will help us see how the addition of a new requirement for an ethics course will change the curriculum of these programs and others.

The second article, “Public Relations Education in Singapore: Educating the Next Generation of Practitioners on Ethics” by Woon and Pang, examines the current state of ethics education in an international setting, comparing foreign and local programs in Singapore. It offers insights into the ways that programs are preparing future practitioners in the region.

The three teaching briefs in this issue offer ethics assignments that can be easily adopted into the public relations classroom. In their article “PR Ethics Literacy: Identifying Moral and Ethical Values Through Purposeful Ethical Education,” authors Ward, Luttrell, and Wallace detail the application of a case study to teach ethical decision-making. They offer a model for decision-making and a step-by-step process to help students think through the issues and reflect on their decisions.

Along a similar line, Kim shares assignments and rubrics for three activities used in a graduate program in Australia to strengthen students’ ethical decision-making skills. In the article “Finding a Linkage Between Becoming an Ethical Practitioner and Making an Organization Socially Responsible,” the author discusses the benefits and challenges of the assignments in helping students improve their ethics abilities.

The special issue teaching briefs wrap up with a recommendation for a fun activity in Rozelle’s “PR Ethics: Choose Your Own Adventure” adopting the concept from children’s books that allow readers to choose their next steps and see the resulting consequences.

Thank you to current (and outgoing) editor Emily Kinsky who worked patiently with me over the summer and through the fall as I, and a number of the article authors, battled COVID-19 related challenges. A special thank you to the reviewers who quickly accepted my invitations

to review and offered useful feedback for authors to help improve the relevance of the work here. It has been an unusual year, and I am pleased that we were able to keep the conversation about ethics education moving forward despite the many global challenges we faced this year. I hope you enjoy the special issue.

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Bortree, D.S., Bowen, S. A., Gower, K., Larsen, N. Neill, M., Silverman, D., & Sriramesh, K. (2019). *Ethics education report*. Commission on Public Relations Education. <http://www.commissionpred.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Ethics-Education-Report-to-Toth-Phair-10-14-19.pdf>

Commission on Public Relations Education. (2018). *Fast forward: Foundations and future state. Educators and practitioners. The Commission on Public Relations Education 2017 report on undergraduate education*. [www.commissionpred.org/commission-reports/fast-forward-foundations-future-state-educators-practitioners/](http://www.commissionpred.org/commission-reports/fast-forward-foundations-future-state-educators-practitioners/)