

Chapter Name

Minnesota PRSA

Contact Name

Leah Kondes, Minnesota PRSA DEI Officer

Chapter Size

201–300

How does your Chapter define diversity, equity and inclusion?

The Minnesota Chapter is dedicated to providing a welcoming environment to all PR and communications professionals. We work with members to increase visibility of DEI standards, resources, and best practices for the following dimensions of diversity at all levels of the organization – race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, culture, skills, and mindset.

Does your Chapter include diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in your strategic plan?

Yes

Using the RPIE model, describe your Chapter's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and achievements during the past year. -- RESEARCH: What research did you conduct to identify opportunities to address or promote DEI by and within the Chapter?

In the period of July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024, Minnesota PRSA focused on three areas of DEI education and engagement for its membership: - Hosting our fourth DEI Forum in October 2023 (the first return to an in-person DEI Forum since the pandemic). The title of the event was Diversity, Equity, Inclusion: From Awareness to (Affirmative?) Action. - Expanding Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) training for new Minnesota PRSA Board members, continuing individualized DEI learning and discussions for Board members, and planning to grow the IDI knowledge base with volunteers. - Launching new virtual DEI Chats as an opportunity to network and discuss DEI topics in small groups. Two DEI Chats have been held so far (February 2024 and May 2024), with a third planned to occur at the Chapter's annual DEI Forum in October 2024. As research for the October 2023 DEI Forum, the DEI Committee worked with the DEI Officer on the Minnesota PRSA Board of directors to review the Minnesota PRSA strategic plan for 2023 and identify opportunities for the DEI Committee to provide expertise, guidance, and programming. Leadership expressed a desire to return to an in-person, half-day event, so we reached out to our Board President and President-Elect to hear their ideas and leverage their networks for topic, speaker, and location ideas. We also scanned the landscape of current events to which helped to

develop the topic of the event. We used attendee survey results from past DEI forums and similar events to inform our planning and expectations for the event. While planning the event, we researched BIPOC-owned venues, catering companies, photographers, speakers, and moderators. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) research for 2024 consisted of informal feedback from the 2023 Minnesota PRSA Board of Directors to gauge what was working and what could work better for the process. 2023 was the first year of implementing IDI within the Chapter and carrying the knowledge forward to new Board members in 2024 and beyond was the goal from the start. In January 2024, the DEI Committee welcomed several new members. As a committee, we reviewed the 2024 Minnesota PRSA strategic plan and identified opportunities for the DEI Committee to get involved. Building on the success of the Chapter's Career Coffee series, the positive feedback received about the small group discussions offered at the 2023 DEI Forum, positive feedback from monthly small group DEI discussions among the Board as part of their IDI work, and anecdotal observations about our membership's desire to explore and discuss various DEI topics, the DEI Committee decided to pursue regular virtual small group discussion opportunities called DEI Chats.

PLANNING -- Goals: What did your Chapter seek to accomplish with your 2023–2024 DEI initiatives?

The goals of both the DEI Forum and DEI Chats is to educate PR and communications professionals on DEI principles, foster more inclusive communication within our profession, and create a supportive community of communication professionals dedicated to integrating DEI in their personal and professional lives. The goal of the continued IDI work (in its second year) by the Board of Directors was to further expand DEI knowledge within the current Board membership to broaden DEI understanding and start to instill DEI considerations throughout the Chapter.

PLANNING -- Who was/were the target audience(s)?

The target audience for the 2023 DEI Forum was the Chapter membership located in and around the Twin Cities. The secondary audience was all public relations and communications practitioners as the event was open to the public. The target audience for the IDI work is the 2024 Minnesota PRSA Board of directors, particularly new Board members who had not taken part in the 2023 IDI training. Secondary audiences were Chapter committees and members as the IDI knowledge was included in the formatting of the new DEI Chats to cascade key areas. The target audience for the DEI Chats was the Chapter membership. The events were also open to the public, so our secondary audience was all public relations and communications practitioners in the market.

PLANNING -- What were your measurable objectives?

The objectives for the 2023 DEI Forum included: - Attract 60 registrants, including 10 nonmembers and five students. - Stretch the comfort zone of attendees by holding the event in north Minneapolis, an area with a large BIPOC population. - Support Black-owned businesses by hiring diverse vendors for catering and photography. - Cover the catering costs through paid registrations so we could offer our moderator, panelists and photographer an honorarium to compensate them for their time. - Achieve 80% or higher satisfaction on post-event survey scores to measure overall attendee engagement with the event. The objectives for the IDI work included: - Bring six new Board members up to speed on the IDI in 2024 - Continue intercultural competence education with monthly homework for Chapter Board members with small group discussions during monthly Board meetings to share cultural differences and commonalities. - Continue to expand intercultural competence for new Board members, Chapter committees and Chapter members. The objectives of the DEI Chats included: - Engage at least 20 participants in the first DEI Chat in February 2024 to create a baseline to grow from. - Provide actionable DEI resources (links to books, podcasts, websites, etc.) for participants to use after the event.

PLANNING -- Budget: What were the monetary, time and human capital investments?

The budget for the 2023 DEI Forum was \$1,500. The DEI Committee and Minnesota PRSA leadership invested 30 hours in planning and hosting the event. IDI work was not budgeted in 2024, but the human capital investment is approximately one hour per month for each Board member to do the homework and attend the monthly meeting to discuss. There is no budget for the virtual DEI Chats. Each DEI Chat takes about 10 hours of labor for planning and hosting each one.

IMPLEMENTATION -- Describe the strategies and tactics used.

The strategies for the 2023 DEI Forum were: - Acknowledge and address recent current events, such as the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, and provide insight from expert panelists into the current moment and what individuals could do to move forward in a positive way. - Provide attendees information, connections, and resources for continuing to explore DEI topics in their personal and professional lives. - Differentiate our events from other similar events by carving out time for attendees to process what they were learning in real time through small group discussions The tactics for the DEI Forum included: - Creating inclusive communications and offering accommodations, including sign language interpretation. - Recruiting ethnically diverse and knowledgeable panelists and an engaging moderator. - Working with BIPOC-owned companies on venue, food, and photography. - Organizing small group sessions within the Forum for attendees to connect and discuss

how they can apply key learnings from the event. The strategies for the IDI work were: - Deepening conversations of intercultural competencies to broaden understanding for diversity, equity and inclusion, and how all Chapter Board members play a role in driving our ongoing DEI journey. - Expand the knowledge of intercultural competencies to new Board members. - Continue conversations of intercultural competencies among the entire Board. The tactics for the IDI included: - Completion by each new Chapter Board member of the online IDI assessment. - Training sessions led by Dr. Ramon Pastrano for new Board members to demonstrate the importance of intercultural competence. - Monthly homework for each Board member assigned by the Chapter DEI Officer. - Monthly discussions during each Board meeting. The strategies for the DEI Chats were: - Use virtual breakout sessions and incorporate one or two questions for discussion per breakout to encourage active participation and engagement. - Reach Minnesota PRSA members through member emails and targeted social media. - Reach non-members through targeted social media from the Chapter. - Personally invite Board members, committee members and Past Presidents to attend. --- Board members: Strongly encourage Board members to participate as an extension of their commitment to IDI and DEI learning. --- Members of all Chapter committees: An initial introduction to IDI and extension of DEI learning. Strongly encourage members of all our committees to participate in order to grow our Chapter's DEI knowledge. --- Past Presidents: An initial introduction to IDI, extension of DEI learning and a commitment to advancing the profession and the professional. - Involve three Board members and/or Past Presidents to help facilitate small-group discussions. - Share questions for discussion in advance so participants can be prepared to discuss. - Share DEI resources from National PRSA and/or local/regional/national DEI organizations after the event to keep learning momentum. These resources could be books, podcasts, websites, trainings, articles, videos and more. The tactics for the DEI Chats were: - Prepare interactive sessions with 1-2 questions for each breakout session and facilitate group discussion. - Gather feedback to measure the impact and identify expansion of the program and areas for improvement. - Promote the DEI Chats weekly via email marketing and on social media for at least six weeks before the event. Use hashtags - #DiverseVoices #DEIinPR #InclusiveComms - Identify opportunities for collaboration with Minnesota PRSA partner organizations and industry groups. - Provide attendees with a resource list post-event such as 1) link to IDI, 2) link to National PRSA DEI Toolkit, 3) 1-3 reputable links for further reading on DEI for communication and PR professionals.

IMPLEMENTATION -- Summary: Explain your Chapter's DEI initiatives for July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.*

After DEI Committee discussions earlier in the year, planning for the 2023 DEI Forum got underway in earnest in August 2023. This included picking a date, securing a venue,

contracting with a catering company, recruiting speakers and a moderator, and contracting with a photographer and ASL interpreter. In early September, promotion for the event began and registrations opened. Registration was open until the end of September, and we then held the event in early October. Because no registrants requested ASL interpretation, we canceled the ASL interpreter we had scheduled. A post-event survey was sent to participants after the event to collect feedback. DEI initiatives for the second year of the Chapter's IDI work began in fall 2023 planning sessions for 2024 implementation. New members of the Chapter Board completed online IDI assessments and participated in trainings led by Dr. Ramon Pastrano to demonstrate the importance of intercultural competence and set the stage for further learning based on personal IDI scores. Monthly homework was assigned for each Board member by the Chapter DEI Officer and monthly IDI discussions were held during each Board meeting throughout the year. The DEI Committee's first discussion about the DEI Chat began in December 2023. We quickly aligned on hosting them quarterly starting with quarter one of 2024, drafted a strategic plan, picked a first topic and moderator, started promoting the event in January 2024 and opened registration, and then hosted the first event in February 2024. A post-event survey was sent to participants after the event to collect feedback.

IMPLEMENTATION -- Describe the elements or components, the techniques used, and the strategies and tactics undertaken, how objectives were met, and how you addressed the audience(s) you targeted.

Techniques, strategies and tactics are described above. How the programs met objectives (results) is answered in the Evaluation section. For the DEI Forum and DEI Chats, email communications and social media posts were shared with Chapter membership to encourage registration and participation. We also highlighted the DEI Forum panelists on our Chapter social media channels to highlight the diversity of expertise being shared at the event.

EVALUATION -- What were your results? Explain how the program met or exceeded its original measurement methods when available or appropriate. What worked? What was accomplished? What would you do differently?

Results of the 2023 DEI Forum included: - Met our goal of 60 registrants (25 were PRSA members; 10 were students or job seekers and the remainder were non-members) - Post-event surveys noted that attendees appreciated the accessibility of price and the location. Comments noted that attendees found the panelists knowledgeable and interesting, and people left feeling inspired. - Most post-survey respondents indicated that the time of day, length and price of the event were just right. - Location received an average score of 4.8 out of 5. - Day of week received an average score of 4.4 out of 5. Results for the IDI work

included: - Six new Board members received a one-hour presentation (free of charge) from the IDI facilitator we used the previous year. - IDI knowledge from Board members began to be cascaded to committees, starting with the DEI Committee through updates by the DEI Officer on the work being undertaken. Two Chapter Board members who completed their terms in 2023 joined the Chapter DEI Committee in 2024 to continue to broaden their DEI and IDI knowledge. - In its second year, monthly IDI discussions among the Board continue to be a favorite part of the Board meetings. Results of the virtual DEI Chats included: - 25 participants (9 were nonmembers) registered for the February 2024 DEI Chat and 24 registered (9 were nonmembers) for the May DEI Chat. - Both events received 4.6 satisfaction scores (out of 5.0). Post-event surveys noted individuals were eager for more opportunities for DEI connections and discussions and appreciated the opportunity to talk with their peers in a more informal setting. - We learned a great deal with the first DEI Chat in February, such as having fewer questions and not switching breakout rooms as often. We made those changes for the second DEI Chat in May and also made administrative changes to make the execution of the events smoother. - Feedback from attendees also provided insights on questions/areas of focus for future DEI Chats. - We're excited to host our first in-person DEI Chat in Q4 as part of our 2024 DEI Forum.

EVALUATION -- How have your Chapter's DEI initiatives impacted attitudes, beliefs or behaviors?

Minnesota PRSA's DEI initiatives prior to this year had a significant impact on the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors making it easier for DEI initiatives to be approved and embraced by the Chapter Board and implemented by committees who understand the overall importance of DEI. The DEI Forum and DEI Chats have provided Chapter members the opportunity to learn more about relevant DEI topics and apply those learnings to their personal and professional lives. This has been immensely useful for members who work in organizations who don't provide DEI-specific programming or learning opportunities. Minnesota PRSA and its DEI leaders have frequently been sought after for local, regional and national PRSA guidance related to DEI efforts. The Chapter's 2024 President, Marsha Pitts-Phillips, APR, is the Immediate Past Co-Chair of the national PRSA DEI Committee and Candee Wolf, APR, Fellow PRSA, serves as the Chair of Awards & Scholarship Committee for the national PRSA DEI Committee. Marsha and Leah Kondes, Minnesota PRSA DEI Officer, shared their insights on Minnesota PRSA's first-place entry in the 2023 PRSA Chapter Diversity Awards with PR professionals from across the country during webinar sessions and the Public Relations Review Podcast.

EVALUATION -- How have your Chapter's DEI initiatives led the communications industry in your market?

Based on our research, no other member organization in the communications industry in Minnesota has undertaken as many DEI initiatives as Minnesota PRSA. Based on the success of the Chapter's 2023 DEI initiatives, two members of the 2023 Board (one was a Chapter Past President) joined the Chapter DEI Committee, one also joined the national DEI Committee. Another Chapter Past President also joined the Chapter DEI Committee and has actively engaged the prominent PR agency she works for in the Chapter's DEI efforts.

EVALUATION -- How have your Chapter's DEI initiatives influenced membership?

DEI does not live with one person or even one committee. The leadership established the belief that DEI must be baked into the fabric of our chapter. Thanks to the work of the DEI Committee and Chapter DEI initiatives, we continue to see more intentional inclusivity in other Chapter events including the PR North event for college students, our annual Classics awards event, and our regular Career Coffees. Based on the success of the Chapter's 2023 DEI initiatives, two members of the 2023 Board (one was a Chapter Past President) joined the Chapter DEI Committee, one also joined the national DEI Committee. Another Chapter Past President also joined the Chapter DEI Committee and has actively engaged the prominent PR agency she works for in the Chapter's DEI efforts.

EVALUATION -- How has your Chapter established sound relationships with diverse publics and/or organizations to gain consensus or help PRSA advance diversity in the profession?

Building relationships is a gradual process. Minnesota PRSA has successfully partnered with DEI experts from various sectors across the region, enhancing the Chapter's growth. These collaborations have resulted in more robust and diverse panels, enabling the Chapter to present a wider array of professional development topics. As a result, the Chapter's website now better reflects the diversity of its programming and leadership. The 2024 Minnesota PRSA Board is the most diverse it has ever been, featuring its first Black Chapter President, two additional Black Board members and one member of the LGBTQ+ community in addition to other factors of diversity such as age and gender.

EVALUATION -- Next Steps: What are your future plans for DEI initiatives?

Minnesota PRSA is currently planning our fifth annual DEI forum on October 9, 2024, which will also include our third DEI Chat of the year and will continue both the DEI Forum and DEI Chats into 2025. The Chapter also plans to continue its IDI work within the Board and identify ways to broaden intercultural competence learning to Chapter committees and members. The Chapter is also beginning to undertake updates to its website to improve accessibility for all.