
Chapter Name	Orange County, Calif. Chapter (OCPRSA)	09/13/2019
	by Ted Nguyen in PRSA Chapter Diversity and Inclusion Award 2019	id. 13918927
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Chapter Size	201–300
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How does your Chapter define diversity and inclusion?	<p>The Orange County Chapter of the Public Relations of America (OCPRSA) believes that more significant and meaningful action needs to be undertaken to advance diversity and inclusion. Diversity and inclusion are no longer an option -- it's a needed business practice in order to remain relevant in the market. Long gone are days of feel-good plans and checklist to go through the motions.</p> <p>The existential threat that both the public relations profession and that society faces is grave in light of the seismic demographic changes underway. PRSA leadership risks the loss of membership due to diverse PR professionals not feeling they have a home within the profession. In addition, current diverse members may not be as active and eventually not renew their membership. And for those who aren't compelled to join in the first place will instead join the growing network of ethnic-based PR organizations not officially affiliated with PRSA.</p> <p>Though many cannot even agree on what diversity and inclusion means, OCPRSA takes an open-minded and open-hearted approach in our approach and in our engagement with both members and nonmembers alike. Quite simply, OCPRSA defines diversity as the human traits and characteristics that make all of us unique</p>
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individuals while inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure all feel welcome, embraced and celebrated. The definition applies specifically to racial, ethnicity, faith traditions, age, sexual orientation and/or gender difference along with diversity in approaches and skill sets.

OCPRSA believes this quote fully captures the meaning and spirit of diversity and inclusion:

“I believe that often people think of obvious characteristics as diversity such as ethnic background. To me, diversity is more than just how one looks and identifies,” said Incoming President of OCPRSA Charla Jeannine Batey with Cox Communications. “In our field, diversity can be anything from educational and career background, to challenges faced in the workplace, to gender identity. We all have something to give, or rather to challenge, with regards to diversity of experience and thought.”

Batey, who also was OCPRSA diversity chair in 2015, added: “Diversity in this context is beyond vital for our field as practitioners in public relations. We're fortunate every day to serve our ever-changing publics, and with this, comes responsibility to be open-minded and receptive to challenges in our management styles, strategic planning and implementation tactics.”

Perhaps the ultimate definition of diversity and inclusion is the personalization of their progress as represented by Batey herself reaching the highest level of local PRSA leadership by becoming incoming president of OCPRSA, the first African-American professional in Orange County's history.

Tell us about your Chapter's diversity and inclusion initiatives and achievements.

In today's world of skepticism and cynicism, OCPRSA cannot merely talk about diversity and inclusion. Instead, the chapter opted to impact real change. Under the leadership of former OCPRSA President Brenda Springer, the chapter instituted an informal ambassador program where members of the OCPRSA leadership would personally welcome new members and nonmembers at the start of different events and/or sit at different tables to help all feel welcomed. Since OCPRSA board members themselves represent diversity, this warm and genuine approach helped diverse professionals feel welcomed. Many members shared anecdotally that after working weeks upon end with people “not like them” that “it's nice to come to events and feel like I belong.”

Another initiative is to ensure that diversity and inclusion are integrated into all OCPRSA's events and activities throughout the year. From keynote speakers to panelists, diversity was reflected in the stories represented in our speakers and in the facts presented at all of the 14 OCPRSA 's events below:

-- Hike with the Pros on Aug. 18, 2018 led by the former diversity chair who provided a community-building opportunity among diverse senior PRSA members and PRSSA members representing diversity.

-- 2018 PROTOS Awards Gala on Sept. 27, 2018 headlined by PRSA National Chair Anthony D'Angelo who highlighted diversity and other PR trends in his keynote speech. The event also featured ABC 7 News' Greg Lee, a prominent reporter who is Asian American. The event was at the Yost Theater, a refurbished historical building in the heart of Orange County's Spanish-speaking community of more than 80 percent Latinx.

-- Digital Success Summit on Nov. 9, 2018 with a nearly all-women's panel that, in part, featured the power of diversity in today's dynamic digital world.

Building Your Personal Brand on Nov. 15, 2018 featured ways to utilize diversity and other PR trends as a competitive advantage.

-- Mingle and Jingle on Dec. 6, 2018 was an opportunity for diverse PR, marketing and advertising professionals to celebrate the holidays.

-- Get to Know the APR on Feb. 18, 2019 with accredited PR professionals who are instructors for the APR program. They represent diversity in PR practice fields and demographics, and attendees represent ethnic, gender and age diversity.

-- Meet the Influencers on March 28, 2019 with an all-women's panel with African American and Latinx representation. Like other events, this panel attracted the wide range of diversity from participants with helpful information about how to target and engage with different demographics.

-- Morning Coffee with the Media on April 11, 2019 with Todd Harmonson, senior editor of the Orange County Register / Southern California News Group, who talked about the changing face of content and better news representation to reflect Orange County's new demographic audiences. This informal chat attracted diverse PRSA members for this special members-only event.

-- Meet and Greet with Team Mead at an Angels Baseball Game on May 17, 2019 with vice president of communications talking about targeting diverse demographics to generate interest in the game as well as highlight players representing diversity to connect with the region's fast-changing demographics.

-- YoPro Meet the Agencies on May 30, 2019 attracted a mostly diverse audience of young professionals interested in agency life along with its challenges and opportunities in a new Orange County.

-- How to Create PR Campaigns That Win on June 11, 2019 with multiple-award-winning presenters representing ethnic and gender diversity. The majority of the audience members also were diverse.

-- PR Gives Back on June 27, 2019 paired diverse OCPRSA seasoned professionals with a nonprofit that serves the needs of Orange

County's diverse communities.

-- 7th Annual Summer Mixer on July 25, 2019 again featured both traditional and digital media with representation from African Americans, Asian Americans-Pacific Islanders, Latinx and LGBT communities. OCPRSA's highest-attended event was represented by a diverse group of PRSA members and nonmembers.

In addition to integrating diversity in the chapter events' subjects and skillsets, OCPRSA executed its signature diversity and inclusion luncheon. On Aug. 29, 2018, to align with national PRSA's recognition of diversity and inclusion, OCPRSA held a diversity luncheon titled, "Diversity Matters: Developing Strategic Cultural Competence."

In an increasingly diverse society and a national climate that is polarizing the diversity conversation, it's critical to develop a PR team that can navigate the culture tides. Research has shown that companies committed to diversity and inclusion are at an advantage to be innovative and drive performance. Diversity fosters an environment with many viewpoints that ultimately enriches your PR campaigns and the outcomes they produce. Building a culture of diversity from the inside out is necessary for effective public relations strategies.

We invited OCPRSA members, PRSSA students and members of the community to join the conversation and hear about roadblocks that exist which will prevent the development of a culturally competent team and hear from PR professionals who have led diversity and inclusion initiatives for their organizations.

The speaker line up included:

- Marcie Perez, Marketing Communications & Public Relations Consultant**
- Sandy Nunez, Coordinating Producer, ESPN Sportscenter**
- Carmen Lawrence, Executive Vice President of Client Experience**
- Bill Imada, Chief Executive Officer at IW Group, Inc.**
- Greg Lee, Reporter for KABC**

Approximately 40 attendees contributed to the conversation of how to create strategic cultural competencies and campaigns to serve the diverse communities in Orange County.

Goals: What did your Chapter seek to accomplish with your 2018–2019 diversity and inclusion initiatives?

For the past 15 years, OCPRSA prides itself on an active Diversity Committee. This past year’s committee was committed to weaving diversity and inclusion into the fabric of OCPRSA, ensuring that diversity is reflected through the organization’s business, leadership and communications structure.

Additionally, the Diversity Committee continued to promote the value of diversity throughout the public relations industry. The focus for 2018-2019 was to focus on:

- 1. Recruitment of future leaders from diverse backgrounds**
- 2. Developing events that promote diversity**
- 3. Infusing messages of diversity throughout OCPRSA’s communications**

Summary: Explain your Chapter’s diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The chapter has three initiatives.

First, to educate and train the board members on diversity and inclusion in order to serve the diverse OCPRSA chapter members. OCPRSA understands the importance of having leadership embody the traits and practices that we hope to communicate to our members. The board leadership reflects the intent of our diversity and inclusion efforts through who is represented on the board and through our actions in connecting and engaging with diverse communities. Diversity and inclusion starts with the leadership of any organization, so this first initiative is foundational to growth of the chapter in this area.

Second, OCPRSA strives to provide programming throughout the year to promote diversity by having different perspectives and voices presenting at the event.

Third, to raise awareness of diversity and inclusion best practices, pitfalls, challenges, trends by equipping our members with the tools to be effective communication professionals in this culturally diverse environment.

Budget: What was the monetary, time and human capital investment?

The modest budget was \$1,500. There were two co-chairs leading the Diversity Committee in the 2018-2019 year. The hours spent on the diversity initiatives were nearly 50 hours total.

Why It Worked: What was accomplished?

The diversity and inclusion programming accomplished moving the needle in members’ understanding of the need for diversity initiatives in their organizations and the value proposition for the profession.

We surveyed the event attendees and responses to the question, “what did you enjoy most about the event?” included “insightful”, “speaker content”, “variety speaker experiences and backgrounds.” Qualitative data showed that attendees left the event understanding the demographic shifts and some best practices on how to incorporate diversity efforts in their current and future campaigns.

Next Steps: What are your future plans for diversity and inclusion programming?

The plans for the next year are to continue to integrate diversity and inclusion in programming throughout the year in addition to the annual Diversity and Inclusion Luncheon.

A new effort next year will be to have the board go through unconscious-bias training. Also, we hope to post meaningful and engaging content from board members and chapter members about their experience during ethnic celebration months.

How has your Chapter's diversity and inclusion initiatives impacted attitudes, beliefs and behaviors?

Since the execution of the OCPRSA Diversity Committee in 2004, the chapter continues to be well known for its diversity and inclusion efforts particularly with actionable results such as the integration of diversity and inclusion in its programs and most importantly, in growing the most-diverse leadership team ever assembled.

The committee and the chapter have boosted awareness of the importance and value of diversity and inclusion in its content messaging and most importantly, by example.

How has your Chapter's diversity and inclusion initiatives lead the communications industry in your market?

The proof is in the richness of the chapter's programming with its integrated diversity and inclusion among content and presenters. In comparing area programs of the local IABC and the Ad Fed chapters, OCPRSA's both program content and presenters represent diversity and inclusion far above and beyond in our communications industry in Orange County.

Through OCPRSA board leadership and members, they have deep personal and professional connections with diverse business, faith, social and nonprofit groups as well.

Some of the key groups include: the Asian Business Association of Orange County, the Black Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, O.C. Human Relations Commission, Vietnamese American Chamber of Commerce, Chua Dieu Ngu Buddhist Temple and many other diverse groups and organizations. In fact, there are few diverse organizations in Orange County that are not aware of the vital role OCPRSA in advocating for diversity and inclusion.

How has your Chapter's diversity and inclusion initiatives influenced membership?

OCPRSA's diversity and inclusion initiatives have definitely influenced membership. The outreach efforts with local PRSSA chapters are cementing a strong foundation and establishing a membership funnel for the rich diversity of young students to become PR professionals and boosting the diversity of the chapter's diverse demographics.

OCPRSA's chapter membership is highly diverse. OCPRSA's membership is 52.6 percent is white while PRSA's membership is 71 percent white. Furthermore, OCPRSA's membership of Asian Americans is 12 percent compared to the general PRSA Asian American membership at 1 percent. Also, the percentage of Latinos at 16 percent in PRSA has more than doubled in the past several years.

However, the most-gratifying example are the non-tangible impacts such as PRSSA members, who are Asian, Latino and/or LGBTQ, tell chapter leaders that they feel that they are welcomed and embraced – and some even say challenged to become a leader in the chapter one day because they see somebody like them at the highest levels of leadership at OCPRSA. One of dozens of diverse PRSSA members is Andrew Vo and Tonjanae Watson of Cal State Fullerton:

See their PRSA diversity stories below:

<https://www.ocprsa.org/long-shadows-scandal-andrew-vos-drive-passion-unlock-national-prssa-golden-key-win/>

<https://www.ocprsa.org/acknowledging-diversity-one-students-mission-to-move-up-forward/>

Does your Chapter have diversity and inclusion initiatives included in your strategic plan?

Yes

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

Organizations that represent diversity in business, community, faith and nonprofit organizations rely on OCPRSA's diverse leadership team.

OCPRSA leaders contribute to the Asian Business Association of Orange County, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Orange County Human Relations Commission, Buddhist temples and United Way and other nonprofits. They help these diverse organizations with their annual strategic planning and contribute to boosting awareness of numerous campaigns to achieve objectives such as corporate and community partnerships on for many issues such as homelessness, anti-human trafficking and many anti-discrimination efforts.

These efforts have significantly contributed to the role of PRSA in enriching the community and have led to members of these organizations to join PRSA.

Best Practices/Supporting Details

[_OCPRSA_Leadership_and_Diversity_Event.pdf](#)

[Final_OCPRSA_V_PRSA_stats.pdf](#)

[Podcast_OCPRSA_on_Diversity.pdf](#)

[OCPRSA_Diversity_Event_Demographics.png](#)
