Strategic Communications
Navigating a World Disrupted
DISINFORMATION. PANDEMIC. SOCIAL INJUSTICE.
Oct. 26-29
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Lend Me Your Ears, Leap to Your Feet: A Speechwriter’s Secrets for Inspiring Audiences
Eric Schnure, principal, Eric Schnure Executive Communications

We all obsess about reaching audiences, but do we become so focused on processes that we forget to ask: What matters? What has meaning? What moves people? Eric Schnure, former White House speechwriter and co-author of “The Political Speechwriter's Companion,” 2nd Edition (Aug 2019), encourages public relations professionals to be not only champions of their organizations but also advocates for the audiences they're trying to reach, because that's how we reach them!

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Discern the difference between “What does it mean?” and “Does it have meaning?” as well as how only content with context persuades, inspires and compels people to act.
• Define the Monroe’s Motivated Sequence — a can’t-miss structure for persuasive communications — and how to apply it for their varied audiences.
• Describe the Reverse Nesting Doll effect of good stories, how to turn good stories into leadership stories and the importance of establishing a common vocabulary and understanding around storytelling.
• Recognize what makes stats stick and how to bring dry data to life.
• Formulate the importance of why they must affiliate to differentiate, and why communications needs “howdahell” moments.

Learning Topic: Tools & Techniques

The 2020 Census Communications Campaign: An Integrated, Research-Based Approach
Maria Olmedo-Malagon, program manager, 2020 Census Communications Campaign, U.S. Census Bureau

The 2020 Census Integrated Partnerships and Communications Program is a massive research endeavor including surveys, focus groups and ethnographic interviews to develop a cutting-edge campaign reaching U.S. audiences in 13 languages through public relations, paid advertising, digital and social media, national and local partnerships, and the Statistics in Schools program.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Summarize how the Census Bureau used strategic communications to develop the 2020 Census Communications Campaign.
• Describe the use of in-depth research methodology to develop a campaign.
• Define how to reach the hardest target audiences through creative tactics.
• Demonstrate how to manage a campaign in 13 languages when they only speak two of them.

Learning Topic: Marketing Communication
The Lie of Paid Social: Why Your Facebook Ad Budget Might Be Better Spent on a PR Director

Sam Ellis, associate content director, Osborn Barr Paramore

Paid social has plateaued as a means to gain competitive advantage; virtually all brands are now paying obscene amounts of money to essentially leverage the same strategy. And since organic flatlined years ago, the most strategic adjustment brands can make to their social strategy in 2020 is to invest in more earned media efforts.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Describe the new limitations on social channels’ paid capabilities and long-term brand detriments.
• Recognize that because paid social is becoming less cost-effective, brands ought to adjust their social strategy to include more earned media efforts.
• Determine that because of the necessary reemphasis on earned media, brands ought to invest more in content, creative and talent.
• Understand that over-investing in social efforts designed to generate short-term ROI will result in a long-term decrease in brand relevance.
• Demonstrate the quantifiable aspects of paid social.

Learning Topic: Digital Communication

The Future Is Now: Recruiting, Retaining and Developing Future PR Leaders From Millennials and Generation Z

Eric Wilson, associate educator, Wichita State University Elliott School of Communication
Landis Tindell, communications coordinator, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education

Gen Z is changing and disrupting the workforce for the better. In this career development and management session, learn how to recruit, engage, retain and develop new PR talent including young professionals, rising stars and interns.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Examine the latest data, news coverage and trends to gain a clearer understanding of the characteristics, patterns and practices of Gen Z communication professionals.
• Identify best practices for communicating with, recruiting, retaining and serving Gen Z employees and interns.
• Evaluate programs, experiences and corporate cultures that create a sustainable PR talent pipeline to attract top-notch interns and young professionals.
• Discover if they really need a pingpong table or free food to solidify their company culture in the eyes of millennials and Gen Zs.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management
Monday, Oct. 26, 12:30–1:30 p.m. EDT

Your Society at Work

Accreditation in Public Relations: The What, the Why and the How
Timothy Penning, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, professor, Grand Valley State University
Elyse Hammett, APR, vice president, marketing and communications, Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

Hear from the national co-chairs of the PRSA Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) committee what Accreditation is, why you should get it and how to do so.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Review the process of obtaining the Accreditation in Public Relations designation.
• Define the various knowledge, skills and abilities tested by the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations.
• Learn about the study guides and resources available to prepare for the Examination.
• Develop a plan to prepare for and earn the APR.
• Recognize the personal benefits of earning the APR.

Learning Topic: Special Interests

College of Fellows: Preparing To Apply #AspireHigher
Rose McKinney, APR, Fellow PRSA, principal, Pineapple RM
Janet Oppenheimer, APR, Fellow PRSA, principal, Oppenheimer PR
Greg Bailey, APR, Fellow PRSA, principal, Greg Bailey PR

This session will provide insights into the application process to help senior-level, Accredited PRSA members determine if they are ready to apply for Fellows membership.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Review criteria to become a Fellow by understanding the College of Fellows requirements as well as the application/selection processes.
• Underline required examples needed for each criterion and what makes a good letter of support. Presenters will discuss the six criteria that an applicant must address in regard to professional experience and qualifications.
• Find out about the GoodFellows coaching program. Participants will be shown the benefits of having a trained GoodFellow coach (a member of the College of Fellows) while working through the application process.
• Pick up tips on how to prepare the application and avoid common mistakes.

Learning Topic: Special Interests
CEPR: Shaping the Future of the Profession Globally
Susan Gonders, professor, Southeast Missouri State University
Mickey Nall, APR, Fellow PRSA, 2013 PRSA CEO and professional-in-residence, University of Florida
Judith Phair, APR, Fellow PRSA, 2005 PRSA CEO and president, PhairAdvantage Communications LLC

Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) provides PRSA quality assurance endorsement for academic programs at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. PRSA members interested in becoming reviewers and academic programs seeking review should bring to this session all questions about the process that has set “the global standard in public relations education” on five continents.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Outline the criteria and standards for Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR).
• Outline the CEPR review process and provide tips for academic programs seeking certification.
• Outline the CEPR review process and provide tips for educators and practicing professionals interested in becoming site visit reviewers.
• Determine how to outline the value of CEPR to academic programs, reviewers, PRSA and the profession in terms of continuous improvement in the preparation of the next generation of public relations professionals.

Learning Topic: Special Interests

Twenty Years and Still Relevant: How the PRSA Code of Ethics Impacts Practice
Marlene Neill, APR, Fellow PRSA, associate professor, Baylor University
Cayce Myers, Ph.D., LL.M., J.D., APR, associate professor and director of graduate studies, Virginia Tech University
Kathy Fitzpatrick, APR, professor, American University

This interactive session will share recent research findings on practitioner perspectives on the PRSA Member Code of Ethics in recognition of the 20th anniversary of its revision, and facilitate discussion among participants on best practices for applying the Code in addressing new ethical challenges.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Demonstrate how the PRSA Code of Ethics can be applied to contemporary public relations practice.
• Highlight new ethical issues public relations practitioners are facing in contemporary practice, with a particular focus on fake news and digital content, and share best practices for addressing these issues.
• Analyze the PRSA Member Code of Ethics and discuss whether code updates are needed to address new ethical challenges.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management
Monday, Oct. 26, 12:30–1:30 p.m. EDT

**Your Society at Work**

**America Abroad: International Perceptions of the American Brand**
Quentin Langley, adjunct instructor, Fashion Institute of Technology, SUNY
Dean Kruckeberg, APR, Fellow PRSA, professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Shanita Akintonde, immediate past national chair, PRSA Diversity & Inclusion Committee, associate professor, Columbia College Chicago

The Global Affairs Committee presents its research into international perceptions of the United States, its government, media and business, and how this impacts practitioners working on international brands or campaigns.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Determine how perceptions of the United States impact the way American brands and professionals are seen in global markets.
- Identify how individuals including politicians, celebrities, business leaders and media figures influence those perceptions.
- Define how public policy in issues as wide-ranging as climate change, trade, immigration and responses to health issues impact those perceptions.

**D&I Under Construction — Building and Expanding Your Chapter’s D&I Initiative**
Shanita Akintonde, immediate past national chair, PRSA Diversity & Inclusion Committee, associate professor, Columbia College Chicago
Felicia Blow, APR, associate vice president of development and campaign director, Hampton University
Andrea Gils-Monzon, marketing and communications manager, University of Kentucky International Center

This “Your Society at Work” session will provide Chapter leaders, Chapter liaisons, committee chairs and others with tools and tips to enhance diversity and inclusion initiatives. Learn how to positively impact the Society’s strategic initiative for inclusion of underrepresented practitioners by employing tried-and-true methods to attract, engage and fully and equitably include everyone in Chapter activities at all levels.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Initiate a D&I program and how to build upon existing programs.
- Determine tools and action steps they can use to advance D&I at the Chapter level.
- Establish research-based, results-oriented best practices for D&I solutions as well as mini-case studies from tried-and-true Chapter-level success stories.

**Top Academic and Professional Papers From the International Public Relations Research Conference**
Don Stacks, Ph.D., professor emeritus, University of Miami

Presentations of top papers from the 23rd International Public Relations Research Conference. Papers were chosen by the IPRRC board of directors to represent top ideas and research that public relations professionals need to be up-to-date strategic communicators. Seven papers are presented panel format where presentations are made for seven minutes, followed by Q&A.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Acquire the newest research in public relations.
- Find out how to meet top public relations researchers.
- Learn what IPRRC has to offer at its international conference.

**Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management**

**Learning Topic: Tools & Techniques**

#PRSAICON2020
Monday, Oct. 26, 1:30–2:20 p.m. EDT

Exploring Advocacy, Activism and Related Trends (And What They Might Mean for Your Organization)
Brooke McKeever, associate professor and associate dean of research, University of South Carolina, College of Information and Communications
Robert McKeever, associate professor, University of South Carolina, School of Journalism and Mass Communications

As multiple generations have become more engaged in advocacy and activism worldwide, it is important for us to understand these behaviors and the social science that helps explain them. Drawing on their professional experience in nonprofit and other industries, and using survey data collected in 2020, the panelists will explain the steps in a new scale they developed related to advocacy and activism and what it all means for communication practitioners.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Develop an understanding of the factors that make up a newly developed advocacy-activism scale based on survey data (N=1,300) collected in 2020.
• Discuss predictors of advocacy and activism behaviors as well as how organizations might be able to move publics along this scale or continuum.
• Identify examples of advocacy and activism in action, along with other trends based on the survey data and the models developed from the data.

Using Data To Improve Media and Communications Campaigns Results
Lisa Kiefer, president and CEO, Sightline Strategy

It can be challenging to generate media or external stakeholder interest about an organization’s services, products and thought leaders — particularly if there is nothing new or compelling to talk about. This session features case studies and an interactive discussion on how to use data to change your communications game plan from an expert whose research for clients — both big and small — has appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes and hundreds of other top news outlets.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Increase chances of securing more and better quality media coverage.
• Enhance lead-generation and marketing content.
• Foster stronger relationships with customers, members and/or donors.

Learning Topic: Big Data & Measurement
### The Corrosion of Civility: How Communications Professionals Can Put the Civil Back in Civil Discourse

Jon Goldberg, co-chair, PRSA Civility Task Force and chief reputation architect, Reputation Architects Inc.

Michelle Olson, APR, PRSA chair-elect and general manager, Lambert Communications

Anthony D’Angelo, APR, Fellow PRSA, PRSA past-chair and professor of practice, S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

Learn what PRSA is doing to address the civility crisis in American society and foster more constructive, inclusive and effective civil discourse, and hear how communications professionals at all levels can get involved and help lead the charge in their own organizations, industries and communities.

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- Recognize opportunities for PRSA members to take meaningful action to address the erosion of civility and civil discourse across all areas of their work.
- Formulate and promote strategies for achieving more effective civil discourse in their day-to-day work and lives as part of a “civility corps” movement that grows within and beyond the PR industry.
- Encourage PRSA Chapters and Sections to incorporate activities that advance and promote inclusive and constructive civil discourse into their plans and programming.

**Learning Topic: Leadership & Management**

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### The ROI of CSA: How To Measure the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Advocacy, CSR and Purpose-Driven Programs

Katie Paine, CEO, Paine Publishing LLC

As more and more organizations embrace corporate social advocacy, “purpose-driven” strategies and corporate social responsibility (CSR) as part of their communications practices, communications professionals have been challenged to measure their success. While in theory these feel-good programs make sense, sooner or later they will require metrics that prove their value to the organization. This session will provide attendees with strategies, tools and techniques to determine the impact of these new outreach strategies.

**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- Construct an accurate CSA/CSR/purpose measurement program that reflects their contributions to corporate goals.
- Set up a customized index to assess the effectiveness of their CSR/CSA/purpose program.
- Determine how to define measurable objectives for their CSA/CSR/purpose program.
- Measure the essential elements of corporate social success: authenticity, trust and empathy.
- Translate the fuzzier aspects of public relations into quantifiable measures of success.

**Learning Topic: Tools & Techniques**
How To Become a Trusted Adviser in 30 Days or Less – Part II
Cheryl Procter-Rogers, APR, Fellow PRSA, PCC, senior consultant and executive coach, A Step Ahead PR Consulting and Coaching

To become a trusted adviser, one must have a variety of goal-setting tools, communication skills and a process to build trust and credibility quickly! Learn how through an engaging and interactive workshop led by one of our industry’s most dynamic public relations consultants and seasoned executive coaches.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Describe proven models to build trust and credibility in key relationships.
- Apply their strengths to begin to transition their role to a trusted leadership adviser.
- Create a safe and supportive environment through presence and observations.
- Transform their role in their organization or with their clients.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management

Mind. Blown. The Eye-Opening Science Behind High-Conversion Engagement
Elizabeth Edwards, founder and president, The Engagement Science Lab & Volume PR

Science holds the key to high-conversion communication. If you think that the rational, intellectual part of our brains are calling the shots, guess again. Paradoxically, our emotional centers are the ones that drive decisions. In today’s environment of message overload and white noise, our brains quickly determine what messages are skipped and what messages stick. It’s time to listen to what science tells us and start speaking to the emotional, heart-centered process to reach our audiences with messages that are engineered to light up a positive response.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Identify what engagement really means to truly connect with their audience on an emotional level that has been proven to affect decision making.
- Determine what tools are available to map responses to messages.
- Describe five ways to build content that engages their audience both intellectually and emotionally.

Learning Topic: Marketing Communication

Navigating Through Crisis With Confidence: Lessons in Crisis Management From COVID-19
James Wright, global CEO of Red Havas, global chairman of Havas PR Collective, Red Havas

The COVID-19 outbreak has rocked global markets and left the world scrambling to contain the life-threatening pandemic. In the midst of the outbreak, businesses and companies were tested on the effectiveness of their crisis management response plans. James Wright, global CEO of Red Havas and recognized expert in crisis management, shares valuable lessons learned in communications from the pandemic and best practices for clients and key stakeholders in preparing for the next crisis. Wright will take lessons from both his experience in Asia-Pacific (APAC) and from advising his offices based there, and how he used that intelligence and knowledge to better counsel clients in Europe and the U.S.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Identify lessons learned on navigating clients through a pandemic that creates a ripple of misinformation and panic.
- Create an integrated communication strategy for clients that effectively guides its employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders through turbulent times.
- Implement processes that leave organizations truly prepared to handle a pandemic, no matter the scale.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

Latinx Trends in 2020
Juan Alanis, managing partner, Big Oak Tree Media
Sandra Fernandez, communications director, Big Oak Tree Media

Big Oak Tree Media presents “Latinx Trends in 2020,” a workshop on the latest U.S. Latino consumer tendencies.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Analyze an in-depth look at the latest Latinx consumer trends and tendencies.
- Explain practical knowledge and information that can inform a multicultural strategy.
- Identify tangible best practices and techniques to engage Latinx consumers.

Learning Topic: Marketing Communication
Monday, Oct. 26, 3:30–4:20 p.m. EDT

From Stonewall to the Stars: How Grassroots Social Media Created a Movement
Jaron Terry, APR, Fellow PRSA, president, Jaron Terry Communications Ltd.
Sara Cunningham, founder, Free Mom Hugs LLC
Katrina Kalb, executive director, Free Mom Hugs LLC

This session puts the power of social media in the spotlight, detailing how a vision of acceptance and affirmation for all LGBTQ+ persons morphed into the nationwide Free Mom Hugs movement. Participants will learn how audience targeting and message amplification led to The Washington Post and other publications, along with Jamie Lee Curtis, taking notice, resulting in a Lifetime Movie Network production that furthers the march toward equal rights.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Learn how social media techniques can be used to strategically promote a message to drive amplification through cross-platform sharing.
• Discern the importance of creating on-the-ground documented events to garner traditional media attention that can be translated into influencer attention and more than thousands of social media clicks.
• Understand the importance of target audience identification in generating followers who will accelerate growth of the movement by extending to connected audiences and influenced audiences.
• Recognize how diversity and inclusion is advanced for the LGBTQ+ community as one affirming voice takes her message of acceptance and affirmation from the written page to open highway and from thousands of laptops and hand-held screens to traditional media and the LMN.

Learning Topic: Marketing Communication

Still Sizzling: How Brands Don’t Simply Survive, but Thrive Through Difficult Times
Shanita Akintonde, immediate past national chair, PRSA Diversity & Inclusion Committee, associate professor, Columbia College Chicago

This highly interactive workshop received rave reviews at the PRSA 2019 International Conference (ICON) and as a result, Shanita Akintonde is prepared to provide another offering at ICON 2020. “Still Sizzling” offers an “insider’s view” on what the best brands do to remain on top and how you can do the same.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify their niche and determine target market needs.
• Demonstrate how to manage consumer perceptions about their brand.
• Employ how to put branding tactics to use in order to elevate/build their career.

Learning Topic: Tools & Techniques
CCO Therapy: Tips, Tricks and Advice for New (and Aspiring) Communications Leaders
Lisa Kiefer, founder and CEO, Sightline Strategy
B.J. Talley, founder and principal, Gladius
Rocky Krivijanski, founder, Trine Strategies

The position of communications leader can be a lonely one, especially when a crisis occurs or when one is new to the role or organization — and outside insight or just someone to say “you aren’t alone,” can be a game changer. Our panelists are an Arthur W. Page Society member who led communications at a $14B global public technology hardware company; a former communications executive who has worked with nearly half of the Fortune 100; and a former White House communications staffer who oversaw multiple corporate transformations as the chief communications officer of a publicly traded consumer products company (all now independent advisers and coaches). They will offer their perspectives and take audience Q&A on overcoming challenges and maximizing strategic influence for new and aspiring communications leaders.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Determine how to move their influence as a communications leader in an organization from tactician to strategic adviser.
• Develop relationships and open lines of communications with peer functional leaders in an organization.
• Focus on outcomes vs. outputs to connect strategic communications more directly to overall organization strategy and operations/finance results.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management

Minding the PR Talent Gap From Both Sides of the Aisle
Dan Farkas, lecturer, strategic communication, The Ohio State University

Too many strategic communicators aren’t happy with the quality of new hires, and too many new hires don’t trust employers to grow their skills. We need to fix this. This session will provide ways to make it happen.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Explain why the skills gap is growing.
• Identify hiring strategies and tactics that better attract and retain young talent.
• Describe core competencies that are a must in this field, and how to obtain them while getting paid or earning course credit.

Learning Topic: Special Interests
Unleash the Power of Storytelling: Win Hearts, Change Minds, Get Results
Rob Biesenbach, owner, Rob Biesenbach LLC

This fast-paced session will help you tap into the power of storytelling to better position you and those you counsel as influential experts and leaders. You'll come away with practical, actionable tips that will super-charge your own communication, from formal presentations to everyday interactions.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Discover and learn to use a simple structure and process for creating any story long after the workshop has ended.
• Support their clients, leaders and teams in their efforts to engage more meaningfully with their target audiences, from employees to customers to the media to the general public.
• Gain insights into their storytelling abilities.

Learning Topic: Tools & Techniques

Diversity in the Workplace: Why Is the PR Industry Still 83% White?
Jamie Hampton, CEO and social enterprise founder, Mixte Communications & Tracks Public Relations

Ever find yourself wishing you could locate more diverse candidates? And do you find yourself relying on the excuse that “you welcome diverse people, but they just don’t apply.” Let’s skip the charades and get to action — it’s on you to change, to alter your approach and to step out of your comfort zone if you want to attract the right talent. This session will show you how.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify three immediate changes to make to recruit a more diverse talent pool.
• Outline the strategies to ensure their newly diverse workforce welcomes new perspectives.
• Determine out why the PR industry is a part of the problem and how they can change that.
• Identify three benefits a diverse workforce will bring to their PR business.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management
A Matter of Life and Death: Crisis Communications During a Worldwide Pandemic (College of Fellows Master Class)

Rhoda Weiss, Ph.D., APR, Fellow PRSA, president and founder, Rhoda Weiss & Associates Inc.
Barbara Kerr, APR, Fellow PRSA, 2020 chair, PRSA College of Fellows

Just weeks after completing her yearlong role as chair of the PRSA 2019 International Conference, Dr. Rhoda Weiss, APR, Fellow PRSA, was called upon to lead again. Working nearly 24/7 month after month, she led exhaustive marketing and communications efforts on behalf of 74 nationally renowned health systems and medical centers across the United States as they navigated the urgency and uncertainty of the worldwide coronavirus pandemic.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify the stages of a crisis and how they evolve in an era of social media.
• Prepare for, manage and communicate during a crisis while identifying and sharing best practices and solutions.
• Identify and address ethical issues presented by the crisis.
• Develop a post-crisis plan including lessons learned.
• Demonstrate how issues management can be a preemptive public relations strategy during uncertain times.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

Building Partnerships To Fight Misinformation and Disinformation

Ellyn Pollack, APR, Fellow PRSA, program analyst, 2020 Census Integrated Communication Campaign, U.S. Census Bureau
Stephen Buckner, director, communications directorate, U.S. Census Bureau
Danah Boyd, founder and president, Data & Society Research Institute; principal researcher, Microsoft

In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau conducted an unprecedented campaign to motivate public response to the decennial census in a communications landscape significantly defined by online conversations. Fake news intentionally and unintentionally disseminated across social media channels and websites threatened to misinform the public. Learn tips from the Census Bureau’s experience of engaging partners from civil rights and consumer groups, the corporate technology platforms and other federal agencies to fight online misinformation and disinformation.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Describe tools and techniques for monitoring negative or harmful social conversation.
• Determine thresholds for action and evaluating options for combating disinformation.
• Formulate insights on communicating effectively with the public around rumors, misinformation and disinformation.
• Define effective strategies for working with technology platforms to fight disinformation.

Learning Topic: Digital Communication
Tuesday, Oct. 27, 3:30–4:20 p.m. EDT

**Humanizing Communications: How To Create Thoughtful and Inclusive Narratives**

Natalia Flores, APR, president, Inspire PR  
Nathalie Santa Maria, APR, CEO, Sunnyside Communications  
Loán Lake, communications director, Leading on Opportunity  
Matthew French, assistant director for employer relations and partnerships, University of North Carolina: Charlotte

The session focuses on how to incorporate appropriate language and imagery with a human lens in public relations campaigns. Strategy and tactical inclusion tips covered during the session are centered on person-first, multicultural, LGBTQ+ and economically disenfranchised communities.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Incorporate diverse voices in stories and recognize how unconscious biases toward underrepresented residents affect our work as communicators.
- Illustrate commonly accepted terminology to ensure that their communications are inclusive and learn best practices for effectively incorporating inclusive imagery into their communications efforts.
- Identify how communicators can help reduce bias in media coverage of key underrepresented communities and prevent perpetuating old stereotypes.

Learning Topic: Special Interests

**Integrated Analytics: Connecting Communications and PR Activities to Business Impact**

Pragya Dubey, senior director, global services, Agility PR Solutions

Based on her years of experience with global support services, Pragya Dubey will introduce the concept of integrated analytics and how to approach impact-based PR measurement. She will showcase ready-to-use metrics that are cost effective and scalable to apply across various programs and clients for PR agencies.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
- Define what an integrated measurement framework is.
- Determine why they should implement a measurement framework and what purpose it serves.
- Measure the impact of communications on business objectives using a three-step process.
- Implement metrics that anyone can get started with right away.
- Reference practical examples of how other clients have implemented an integrated measurement framework.

Learning Topic: Big Data & Measurement
Are We Really Communicating?
Practicing International Public Relations in Non-Western Countries

Katerina Tsetsura, Gaylord Family Professor of Strategic Communication / Public Relations, University of Oklahoma
Dean Kruckeberg, Ph.D., APR, PRSA Fellow, professor of communication, University of North Carolina Charlotte
David Waterman, retired Navy captain, Ph.D. student, University of Oklahoma

Do you wonder why your public relations or public information program is continually ineffective or has no impact in the international arena? Are you interested in exploring opportunities to work outside the United States? In this session, we will discuss what you need to consider to help your clients to succeed in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Analyze how public relations is practiced and is being taught in a country and region with which most American public relations practitioners are unfamiliar, and thereby are forgotten, if not feared.
• Compare and reconcile American best practices with those of American practitioners’ professional counterparts in countries that are viewed with suspicion by Americans.
• Monitor and adopt/adapt best public relations practices in these countries.

Learning Topic: Special Interests

Protecting Clients’ Reputations, and Yours, When They Are Their Own Worst Enemy

Jo Ann LeSage Nelson, APR, Fellow PRSA, vice president, client services, Pierce Communications
Ronele M. Dotson, APR, Fellow PRSA, president, RAD Strategies Inc.

Two longtime agency executives will have a frank discussion (without naming names) about situations they’ve experienced with clients who, despite their counselors’ best advice, made a tough situation worse with bad behavior. They’ll share what went wrong, what could have been done to prevent things from going poorly and how they helped repair client reputations while protecting their own reputations.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Discern warning signs and know when to walk away from a project when it might harm their reputation or when it violates PRSA’s Code of Ethics.
• Leverage their relationships to repair a situation gone wrong.
• Employ best fixes for a bad situation and become a “superhero” to their client as a result.
• Trust their instincts when something seems “off.”

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management
Wednesday, Oct. 28, 12:30–1:20 p.m. EDT

Brandstanding: Navigating Contentious Issues While Maintaining an Authentic Brand Voice
Luke Capizzo, Ph.D., APR, assistant professor, School of Communication Studies, James Madison University

Using case studies and original research, Dr. Capizzo will illustrate how PR practitioners can help organizations to manage contentious, polarizing social issues in the marketplace. Practitioners can help organizations guide thoughtful engagement with consumers and stakeholders, inform decision makers, mitigate risk and understand both brand loyalists and moral decoupling — where consumers may choose to purchase a brand even if they disagree with its stance on a particular issue.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Define “brandstanding” as a core part of public relations and issues management and how it applies to communication today.
• Develop a framework to map organizational, stakeholder and community values to guide social issue strategy for their own organization.
• Determine tools to evaluate how consumers may react to certain organizational stances, from active supporting to passive supporting to boycotts and disagreement.
• Formulate a “general public” approach to calibrate engagement and define new audiences.

Creating a Future That Works: Trends and Best Practices in Employee Engagement
Travis Bullard, senior director, APCO
Kimberly Gardiner, director, APCO

Technology is redefining where and how we work. New trends related to demographics, cultural shifts and systemic societal changes are reshaping why we work and what work means to people. Companies must adapt with new talent and organization strategies. In this session, you’ll get insights from new research conducted by APCO and recommended strategies on how to incorporate these findings to improve internal communication and employee engagement strategies.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Describe new research that uncovers insights into American employee perceptions and expectations of the workplace.
• Discern what employees are looking for from their employers and what organizations can do to recruit and retain top talent.
• Apply new insights into new strategies to maximize internal communications, improve employee engagement and deliver business results.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management

Performance PR: How To Think Differently About Influencers To Help Drive Your Brand Story
Jerry Thompson, executive vice president, public relations director, MARC USA

In this era of digital news and entertainment, there are seemingly endless channels and sources of content, and new ones arriving frequently. Learn how PR professionals can manage a system of content development and distribution that includes a myriad third parties, plus how to expand your thinking about key performance indicators (KPIs) to meet the needs of chief marketing officers.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Categorize different thinking about PR, social and content marketing.
• Discern how to think more openly about who to consider when identifying influencers in the age of “everyone’s a publisher.”
• Amplify authentic non-advertising content to drive strong results..
• Interpret critical measuring methods to demonstrate ROI to executive leadership.

Learning Topic: Marketing Communication

What Every PR Pro Needs To Know About SEO
Justin Seibert, president, Direct Online Marketing

PR and communications professionals are being asked to do more work and show more value. Learn practical ways you can leverage search engine optimization to help you … and your company or clients!

By the end of this session, you will be able to:
• Explain SEO basics as they relate to communications.
• Learn ways as a PR pro you can boost search rankings through credible content.
• Understand how to best leverage press releases for search engine visibility.
• Determine how to work with SEO teams to align communications efforts for greater success.
• Identify how to leverage Google for crisis response.

Learning Topic: Digital Communication

#PRSAICON2020
Grace Under Pressure: Balancing Human Dignity With the Media Frenzy Around the Coronavirus
Ann Knabe, Ph.D., APR+M, emergency preparedness liaison officer, U.S. Air Force
Major Perry Covington, public affairs chief, March Air Reserve Base, Riverside, California, Air Force Reserve
Colonel Beth Horine, director of public affairs, Air Force Reserve, U.S. Air Force

Imagine getting several hours notice before a plane of 200 Americans lands at your base facing a 14-day quarantine in the midst of the coronavirus outbreak. As the media frenzy ensued without a lot of answers, public affairs officers endured threats from a hostile community while squelching social media rumors. Learn how the team used a risk communication model to successfully build community trust and positive PR during a global health emergency.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify proven media relations strategies for unanticipated crisis communications.
• Explain how to neutralize hostile audiences in the heat of the moment, ensuring positive messages are heard.
• Identify key elements of a risk communication model that work with local communities consumed with fear.
• Balance the human element, privacy rights and a hungry media during times of uncertainty and stress.
• Translate ways to counter social media and “fake news” in the heat of crisis.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

COVID-19: How To Handle It, What We’ve Learned and What We Should Do Going Forward
Gerard Braud, founder, SituationHub.com and president of Braud Communications

Many organizations were ill-prepared for a global pandemic and the effect it would have on their organizations. While some had plans in place for contingencies and communications, far more appear to have adopted the policy of “just trying to figure it out if it ever happens.” We’ll examine who did it right, who did it wrong and how we can all be prepared in the future for whatever situation arises.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Examine who did it right.
• Examine who did it wrong.
• Determine how their leadership affected their response.
• Outline the steps they should take to be prepared for their next situation.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

AI, Technology and Sophisticated Media Analytics. How They Work and What Should You Use?
Eric Koefoot, president and CEO, PublicRelay Inc.

Big data and AI are all around us. How can communicators know what technology to use? How far has AI and other technology come in the communications space, and where is it headed? And what are some of the most forward-thinking organizations doing with data to focus their efforts, measure their impact and have more influence in the C-suite?

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Review the latest thinking on artificial intelligence and its application to media analytics.
• Determine what AI does well and where it struggles.
• Assess where big data and AI fit into your communications strategy.
• Translate the various technology approaches to media monitoring and analytics, and understand the tradeoffs that are made in selecting the approach that is right for them.

Learning Topic: Big Data & Measurement
Unlocking Diversity and Inclusion: Cracking the Authenticity Code 2.0
Aerial Ellis, Ed.D., consultant, Advisory 83
Y’Anad Burrell, CEO, Glass House Public Relations & Communications
Cedric Brown, APR, digital campaigns strategist, Advancement Project

Practitioners are progressively looking for ways to get “real” about diversity and inclusion. We asked more than 150 PRSA members to tell us what authentic diversity/inclusion actually looks like from employee, leadership and organizational perspectives.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Utilize the Authenticity Code to recognize how inclusive they feel in their organization’s workplace culture.
• Determine the factors that make for an inclusive workplace environment.
• Access the ideal frameworks applied to strategic planning for diversity and inclusion.
• Analyze industry insights and best practices on diversity and inclusion from peers based on real-time data and insights.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management

Access Your Inner Storyteller: Work Smarter and Carve Out Time and Space To Create
Michael Smart, CEO, MichaelSMARTPR

Business moves ever faster, and yet demand for creative storytelling is soaring. How can you carve out time and space from your frenetic work environment to peacefully tap your inner storyteller and conjure the campaigns that will grab and hold your audiences? This session shows you how.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Summarize how to change others’ expectations of them from “responsive” to “effective.”
• Identify phrasing for conversations that set boundaries in a way that builds respect, not annoyance.
• Define specific ways to create space to engage the creative side of their brain, which is why they got into PR in the first place!
• Find out about free or inexpensive software tools that shield them from incessant digital distraction.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management

Wednesday, Oct. 28, 4:15–5:05 p.m. EDT
The DISinformation Disaster: PR Unites to Fight the Threats to Lives and Democracy
Kathleen Lewton, APR, Fellow PRSA, partner, Lewton, Seekins & Trester
Nance Larsen, APR, Fellow PRSA, chair, PRSA Advocacy Committee
Michael Cherenson, APR, Fellow PRSA, executive vice president, SCG Advertising and Public Relations

When U.S. physicians say a pandemic of disinformation is taking lives and putting millions at risk . . . and Facebook is compelled to create a “kill switch” for potential political advertising aimed at invalidating the U.S. elections, PRSA and the public relations industry must fight back. Leaders of the PRSA Advocacy effort will update the current threats that disinformation is causing to health around the globe, and to democracy in the U.S. — and debut a new partnership with global experts from the University of Cambridge’s Social Decision-Making Lab as well as consumer organizations such as AARP. This partnership will provide members, students, educators, chapters and others in the PR industry with the newest research and communications techniques such as “pre-bunking” to combat the tidal wave of mis, dis and mal-information that are impacting way we practice our profession to serve humanity.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Define and describe the impact of mis, dis and malinformation.
• Trace the impact of these kinds of information on the effectiveness and reputation of public relations practitioners.
• Identify key steps that the PR profession and PRSA must take to rebuild trust and truth.

Comms 2.0 for Business 4.0: Shifting From Firefighting to Futuring
Ray Day, vice chair, Stagwell

Put down the fire hose and pick up your crystal ball. Change how we approach comms today, lest we die tomorrow.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Define strategic communications modeling and planning.
• Evaluate organization design and people development.
• Determine the art of story creation versus storytelling — and the balance between the two.
• Apply vision over execution — especially over firefighting.

Learning Topic: Leadership & Management
Thursday, Oct. 29, 12:30-1:20 p.m. EDT

The Upside of Downturn: Unlocking the Hidden Benefits of Crisis
Michael McDougall, APR, Fellow PRSA, president, McDougall Communications

Generations of communications professionals have been taught to tackle the downside risks of crisis, but few understand how to reconfigure and harness ever-growing challenges for short- and long-term gain. Known for his disruptive and pace-setting public relations practices, Mike McDougall, APR, Fellow PRSA, will help PRSA International Conference participants see the hidden organizational upside that crises unlock while employing tips to avoid individual and team burnout.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Determine why and how upside opportunity can coexist with downside risk during times of crisis, and build such into comprehensive response planning.
• Recognize the seven most common upside opportunities for an organization during a crisis, and be better prepared to incorporate them into new and existing plans.
• Navigate how to align the thinking of executives and peers around a dual threat-opportunity construct for crisis response using a series of inspired strategies and proof points.
• Employ a series of new tools and techniques to convert the upside theory into action — in most cases, almost immediately.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

Dancing With the Bots: The Future of AI, PR and Social Media
Martin Waxman, MCM, APR, president, Martin Waxman Communications
Alex Sévigny, Ph.D., associate professor, McMaster University

If you’re expecting AI to arrive with fanfare, you’re looking at it the wrong way, because it’s already here. In a lively and informative session, Dr. Alex Sévigny and Martin Waxman will explore artificial intelligence, deep learning and the rise of the smart machine, and how they might affect public relations, communications and trust.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify and define key terms and concepts related to narrow artificial intelligence, and how it is being applied in the workplace.
• Explain how the application of artificial intelligence in the workplace might affect the role of a public relations professional.
• Articulate the difference between narrow artificial intelligence, general artificial intelligence and superintelligence, and illustrate the risks and ethical questions that must be considered as AI becomes a bigger part of people’s work and lives.
• Prioritize professional challenges and opportunities for communications professionals in an AI-dominated workplace.

Learning Topic: Digital Communication

Beyond Vanity Metrics
Aurora Meyer, APR, director of communication and marketing, University of Missouri School of Law

We all know measuring likes, shares, views, impressions, comments and reach is a great place to start, but what’s next? In this session you’ll learn actionable tips and tricks to connect with your audience and go beyond the basics to help you reach your organization’s broader goals.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Change their business goals into measurable activities.
• Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) that are relevant to them.
• Apply those KPIs to their social channels.
• Determine how and what to measure.
• Establish action steps they can implement quickly with minimal time and budget.

Learning Topic: Big Data & Measurement

PR FOMO“: The Fear of Measuring Outcomes in Media Relations
Nikkia Adolphe, PR director, Media Frenzy Global

PR measurement has been a sore spot in the PR industry for decades, reason being much of what is accomplished in PR is intangible, meaning it doesn’t fit into a common financial mold when it comes to metrics. But the tide is changing. Learn how to remove the fear of measuring outcomes from your strategy and prove why PR will always be worth it … with the right metrics!

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Define effective ways of measuring PR efforts that correlate to marketing/business objectives.
• Determine how to set up a measurement framework that benchmarks media relation’s activities year over year.
• Understand why PR must embrace ROI, not shy away from true measurement.

Learning Topic: Big Data & Measurement
Thursday, Oct. 29, 1:30-2:20 p.m. EDT

The Role of PR in Protecting Public Health: A History of Pandemic Communications From the 1918 Flu to the 2020 Coronavirus
Shelley Spector, founder/director, The Museum of Public Relations

Public relations has played an instrumental role over the past century in educating communities about prevention and management of pandemics. A historical review of past pandemics, from the 1918 “Spanish” flu to the polio epidemic to AIDS, can reveal some best practices that could well be applied to COVID-19 communications today.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Recognize that the effectiveness of crisis management — especially in cases of life and death — depends on the credibility of leaders.
• Understand that messaging depends as much or even more on the delivery than on the words themselves.
• Recognize that leaders must model the behaviors they need the public to follow. Inconsistency between action and words will lead to distrust.
• Determine that with all the communications channels available today, PR professionals must work to assure that all carry a consistent message.

Learning Topic: Reputation & Crisis Management

Insights on Inclusion: Addressing Covering and Imposter Syndrome in the Workplace
Brandi Boatner, social and influencer communications lead, Global Markets, IBM

Inclusion is part of the employee experience as our industry continues to tackle the lack of diversity among our organizations and teams. This session addresses the topic of covering and why inclusion is about bringing your whole authentic self to the workplace.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Summarize the data and dynamics around the term “covering” and how it is affecting the employee experience.
• Develop a framework to infuse inclusion in business objectives and drive engagement.
• Establish tips on how to disrupt diversity by defeating imposter syndrome.

Learning Topic: Special Interests

From TV to Twitter: Virtual Media Training
Brad Ritter, APR, president, Ritter Communications

COVID-19 dramatically altered how the media gather and report the news. This fast-paced, interactive session will explore how the media work today, providing you with techniques to effectively serve as a front-line, virtual spokesperson.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Explain the disrupted media environment and the spokespersons’ changing role.
• Perform as a “virtual spokesperson,” including on video and in podcasts.
• Serve more effectively as a spokesperson during controversies and crises.

Learning Topic: Tools & Technique

Inclusion Across Borders: Culturally Competent Engagement and Communication
Anita Ford Saunders, APR, principal, AFS Communication
Andrea Gils Monzon, international marketing and communications manager, University of Kentucky
Jaron Terry, APR, Fellow PRSA, president, Jaron Terry Communications Ltd.

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) are critical as our population and environments change, particularly during these highly volatile times. During this session, participants will learn about communicating with awareness and knowledge of inclusion and equity issues that affect minority populations, and also learn about the PRSA national survey results related to the ranking of D&I dimensions.

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify D&I key terms and concepts related to race, gender identity, diverse perspectives and age — across cultures and generations.
• Construct strategies to communicate with awareness and knowledge of issues affecting minority populations.
• Define ways to educate their staff on culturally competent and inclusive communication.

Learning Topic: Special Interests