

# 2023

# PRSA

Educators Academy

# Annual Report

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**Prepared by**  
Jensen Moore, Ph.D.  
Section Chair



# Table Of Contents

- **Mission & Vision**
  - **About Educators Academy**
  - **2023 Board & Committee Members**
  - **2023 SWOT**
  - **2023 Long-Term Goals**
  - **Statement from the Chair**
  - **Statement from Secretary**
  - **Statement from Newsletter Editor**
  - **Sponsorship/Fundraising Committee**
  - **Research Committee**
  - **Outreach/Membership Committee**
  - **DEI Committee**
  - **Communication Committee**
  - **At Large (EA Summit Planning) Committee**
  - **At Large (Programming) Committee**
  - **At Large (Ethics) Committee**
  - **At Large (Graduate Student) Committee**
  - **Statements from Liaisons (CPRE, Education, PR Journal, PRSSA, UAB)**
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# Mission & Vision



## **PRSA MISSION**

To make communications professionals smarter, better prepared and more connected through all stages of their career.



## **PRSA VISION**

PRSA provides an exceptional member experience that educates, inspires, guides and galvanizes a diverse community of ethical, strategic communications professionals.



## **EDUCATORS ACADEMY MISSION**

To advance the public relations profession and practice through education and research in the global arena.

# About Educators Academy

The purposes of the PRSA Educators Academy are:

- To build the future of public relations professionalism by helping public relations educators equip public relations students with the best possible education.
- To demonstrate a deep and meaningful commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) through the Educators Academy's partnerships, programming and all other efforts.
- To build and advance the body of knowledge in public relations by fostering public relations research.
- To maintain and build interactive relationships between the practice and the Academy globally for all types of public relations practices and academic endeavors.



# 2023 Board & Committee Members



## LEADERSHIP

Immediate Past Chair, Kelly Bruhn, Ph.D., APR  
Chair, Jensen Moore, Ph.D.  
Chair-Elect, LaShonda Eaddy, Ph.D., APR  
Secretary, Joseph Stabb, Ph.D., APR



## SPONSORSHIP/FUNDRAISING

Sponsorship/Fundraising Chair, Chris Yandle, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Zeifei Fay Chen, Ph.D.  
Sherry Kast, APR  
Kay M. Beckermann, Ph.D.  
Alisa Agozzino, Ph.D., APR



## RESEARCH

Research Chair, Leslie Rasmussen, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Adrienne Wallace, Ph.D.  
Rebecca Swenson, Ph.D.  
Flora Hung-Baesecke, Ph.D.

# 2023 Board & Committee Members cont.

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## **OUTREACH/MEMBERSHIP**

Outreach/Membership Chair, Kim Marks Malone, APR  
Vice-Chair, Victoria Brodie, Ed.D.  
Kay Colley, Ph.D., APR  
Shelley Wigley, Ph.D.



## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSIVITY**

DEI Chair, Irene Maslowski, APR  
Vice-Chair, Nandini Bhalla, Ph.D.  
Yung-I Liu, Ph.D.



## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication Chair, Shana Meganck, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Heather Hether, Ph.D.  
Carla Holmes, APR  
Kate Stewart, MA  
Jen Bennett, Ed.D.  
Carolyn Smith Casertano, APR  
Angela Levins

# 2023 Board & Committee Members cont.

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## EA SUMMIT PLANNING

Summit Planning Chair, Mathew P. Taylor, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Lisa Du Bois Low, MBA, APR  
Eric M. Wilson



## PROGRAMMING

Programming, Mary Ann Pearson, Ed.D., APR  
Vice-Chair, Brian Sowa, Ph.D.  
Matt Charles, DPA, APR  
Christa Bell



## ETHICS

Ethics Chair, Tricia Farwell, Ph.D.  
Vice-Chair, Juan Meng, Ph.D.  
Kristine Nicolini, Ph.D., APR

# 2023 Board & Committee Members cont.

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## NEWSLETTER

Newsletter Editor, Margaret Ritsch, Ed.D., APR  
KiYong Kim, DSC, APR



## LIAISONS

CPRE Liaison, Melody Fisher, APR  
Education Liaison, Bonita Neff, Ph.D. APR  
PR Journal Liaison, Hilary Fussell Sisco, Ph.D., APR  
PRSSA Liaison, Kenneth Hagihara, APR  
UAB Liaison, Kelly Bruhn, Ph.D., APR



## GRADUATE COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Cox, M.A.  
Vishala Persuad, M.A.  
Curry Wilson, M.A.,



# 2023 SWOT

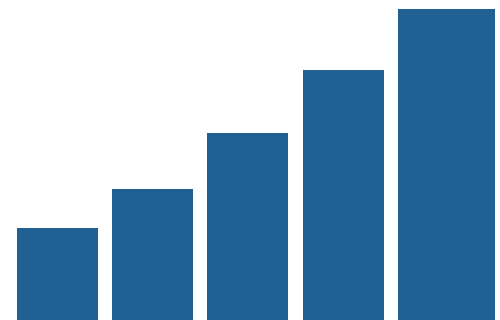
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## S

- 1.Unique among PR organizations in being pedagogically-focused
- 2.Strong mission and history
- 3.Positive relationships with other PR organizations
- 4.Talented, diverse, engaged section leadership and committee members
- 5.Positive relationships with previous Summit sponsors
- 6.Improvements in fundraising processes which then enhances section opportunities
- 7.Programming has begun focusing on continuity of content from year-to-year
- 8.Diversity efforts have improved events, provided consistent content, and recruiting for leadership
- 9.Incorporation of ethical focus has helped advance this important PR skill
- 10.Improvements in membership/outreach to adjuncts and graduate students
- 11.Creation of graduate student committee to identify opportunities to provide resources/mentorship

## W

- 1.Need to develop identity of Educators Academy Summit (rebranded from “Super Saturday”)
- 2.Limited external visibility and understanding of purpose, events/activities, and resources available
- 3.Changing make-up of committees from year-to-year makes continuity of some programs/events difficult
- 4.Lack of long-term and permanent external sponsorship funding (universities, companies, foundations, etc.)
- 5.Lack of consistency year-to-year in various protocols, and some protocols that need updated/included in the EA Handbook
- 6.Limited membership activities and programs outside of EA Summit
- 7.Need to collect important documents for the section in the PRSA EA Library, not just on a Google Drive inaccessible to most leadership/committee members
- 8.Limited use of website to disseminate content to members, website set-up and content needs updated



# 2023 SWOT

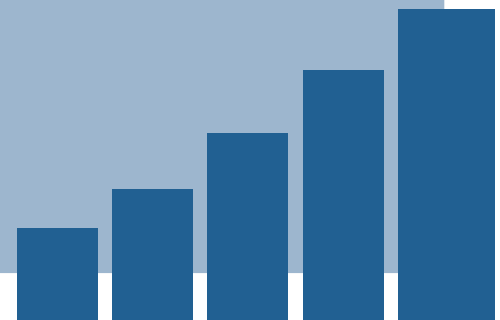
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## O

1. Work with IPR to rebrand of “Race in the PR Classroom” to “DEI in the PR Classroom”
2. 2023 is 75th Anniversary year for PRSA
3. Voices for Everyone program initiated by PRSA
4. Use communication assets provided by PRSA regularly on EA social media channels
5. Incorporate LinkedIn and blog posts to provide ROI to members
6. Continue outreach to legacy sponsors and identify new sponsors for EA Summit and events/activities
7. Identify and implement value-added opportunities such as webinars and teaching resources to keep members engaged, year-over-year, enhancing the section’s reputation
8. Integrate formal measurement and evaluation program into events/activities to demonstrate success (or lack thereof) year-over-year
9. Broaden exposure of Educators beyond PRSA in order to build membership and EA Summit profile through sharing our teaching, research, panel and Ferguson Award calls with other related education associations and events such as AEJMC PR Division and the IPRRC annual conference
10. Linking of events and resources to other Sections within PRSA
11. Identifying and connecting to other PR organizations (e.g., EA as a “hub” to other organizations)
12. Promotion of APR to Educators Academy members as a means for professional advantage, while establishing with Deans/Chairs/Colleges & Universities the importance of the APR designation

## T

1. Members have limited funding and resources - educators and graduate students must make strategic decisions about which events/activities and professional associations with which to engage
2. Limited internal resources for the section
3. Limited opportunities for graduate students that leads them to pursue membership in other PR organizations
4. Public relations conferences that focus on traditional research, but also include pedagogical research sessions, have more prestigious reputations among academics
5. Ability to fund opportunities depends on broader economic climate, especially higher education financial challenges
6. Previously used Twitter for promotion of events and for live-chat functions - may need to look for new platform





# Long Term Goals

## Goal #1

Position PRSA as the leading source of professional development for communications professionals

### Objective

- Create regular and varied public relations education and professional development opportunities based on internal and external research findings with the intent of garnering a minimum 90 percent satisfaction rate on participant surveys per calendar year

## Goal #2

Redesign the membership model to maximize engagement with communications professionals

### Objective

- Expand visibility of Educators Academy, increase understanding of member backgrounds and needs, and improve member ROI to increase new membership by four percent per calendar year



# Long Term Goals cont.

## Goal #3

Continue to invest in technologies required to remain relevant and enhance the user experience

### Objectives

- Improve ease use and functionality of website
- Fully utilize the Scholastica platform in gathering information that can be shared with members
- Create LinkedIn page for Educators Academy Section

## Goal #4

Strengthen PRSA's role as the voice of the communications profession

### Objectives

- Advocate for greater understanding of public relations education, accreditation and certification programs, and build respect and credibility for the profession
- Enhance relationships with the Institute for Public Relations (IPR) and other PR organizations/groups through dynamic programming and awards
- Social Media Professors (Facebook Group) relationship for "teaching social media"



# Long Term Goals cont.

## Goal #5

Increase organizational excellence

### Objectives

- Focus on ways to improve and publicize the newly rebranded Educators Academy Summit
- Establish and maintain Section policies and procedures that advance its success

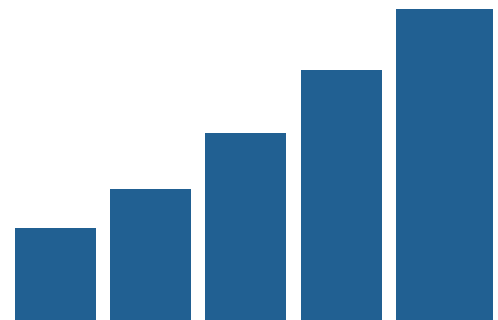


# Statement from the Chair

It's been a busy 2023 for the Educators Academy, and we've managed to complete a lot of items from our operating plan. One thing that we did not plan for was the flood of states actively attacking diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) programs, cutting funding, preventing DEI discourse, and purposely directing anti-DEI efforts toward universities. This led the EA Leadership to seek a course of action that included a position statement condemning state bills designed to eliminate DEI programs and activities at public higher education institutions and blog post from myself, as EA chair, providing an argument supporting the position. Items regarding the importance of DEI from the 2017 and 2023 Commission on Public Relations Education reports were added to strengthen our stance. And so, we thank our CPRE colleagues for providing us with well-versed and timely statements supporting DEI in the classroom, the workplace, and the PR profession.

To improve the diversity of the PR Educators Academy Leadership and committees, we strategically identified public relations educators who would more fully represent the demographics of our membership and asked them to consider taking on these roles. Their new perspectives allowed us to take giant steps forward in our programming, resources, and relationships with Educators Academy members.

We also continued requiring diversity in panel members for all of our Summit speakers thereby providing audience members with several different viewpoints and experiences from which to learn from. In addition to improving events, we improved the representation shown on the Educators Academy webpage and in visuals. Previous images had shown white males in our promotional materials, which were replaced with images of women and minorities. We felt this did a better job of reflecting our membership.



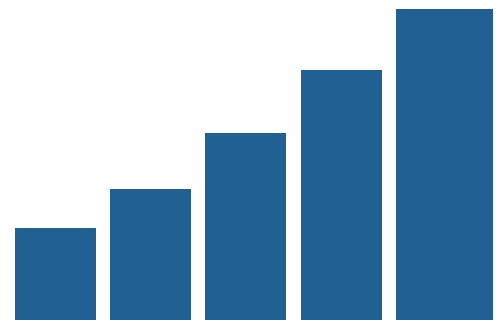


# Statement from the Chair cont.

To further support DEI efforts and connect to minority students in ways that help them advance their careers, the EA Leadership created a Mentor Program DEI Graduate Travel Award that will be introduced in December 2023. The award “provides up to three (3) DEI-based graduate student awards per year with \$500 toward travel expenses to the annual Educators Academy Summit. Funds are intended to help graduate students from historically disadvantaged or demographically underrepresented minority groups attend the day-long teaching and research event and meet in-person with their faculty mentor.” This is designed to not only help overcome an obstacle many minorities graduate students face in attending conferences, but also work in conjunction with our newly launched Mentorship Program.

Helping the next generation of public relations educators was at the forefront of our new At-Large committee comprised solely of graduate students. The graduate student committee was tasked with finding ways to provide value to graduate students, identify resources available to them, and create networking opportunities that will help them in the future.

We strengthened relationships with our brothers/sister organizations such as the Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication, the Institute for Public Relations, PRSA College of Fellows, the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, PRSA Counselors to Higher Education, Commission on Public Relations Education, the PRSA Universal Accreditation Board, the Public relations Journal, PRSSA and PRSSA faculty advisors, and Journal of PR Education.



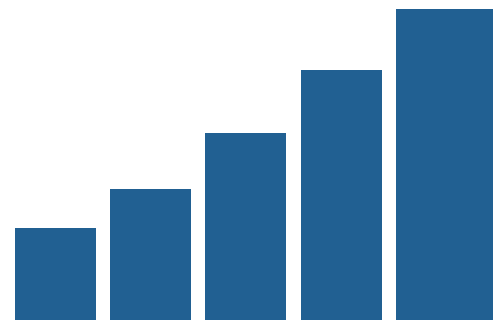


# Statement from the Chair cont.

We worked to address the limited visibility of the Educators Academy Summit by actively communicating our rebrand, increasing our communication about the Summit, and creating graphics for each aspect of this Summit to use on social media. We created two videos for before the Summit. The first was frequently asked questions for submitting, and the second was a “know before you go” for members who maybe attending the Summit for the first time. We increased the use of the website to disseminate content to members and updated several portions of the website. Syllabi, exercises, and previous GIFT award submissions were uploaded to the Educators Academy library with the intent of adding value to our members. Several of last year's GIFT submissions were also posted on the website as blogs. Finally, the Educators Academy library was restructured so that new resources being provided could be easily found.

In order to help support fundraising activities, one of the things I did this year was individually reached out to Deans or department chairs for every member of the Educators Academy Leadership and committees. I asked them to consider supporting the work that their faculty member was doing with Educators Academy by sponsoring the Summit. With new levels of fundraising built into our sponsorship package, we were able to get several universities to purchase lower-level sponsorships. We also strategized reaching out to past Ferguson award winners, many of whom currently adjunct, and asked for their sponsorship.

We kicked off this year's Summit with a panel of professionals who could provide us with information regarding skills and abilities they expect our undergraduate students to possess before they enter the workforce. This was a great way for us to integrate academia and the profession, and as one of our most attended sessions, seemed well-received by attendees.



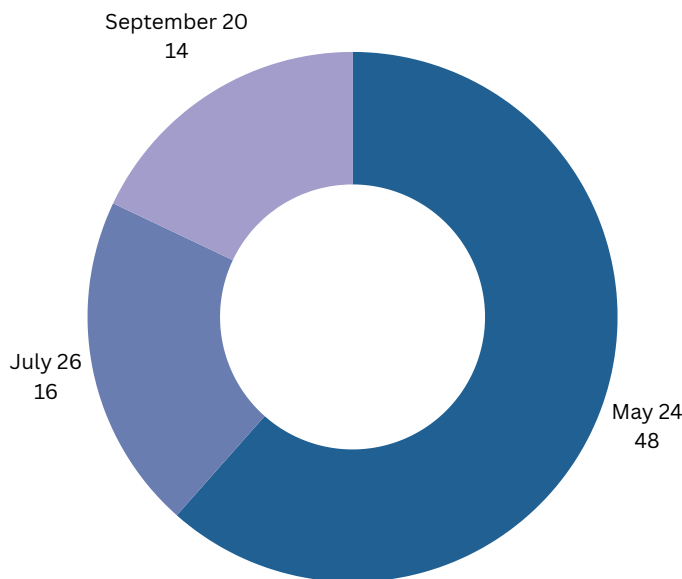


# Statement from the Chair cont.

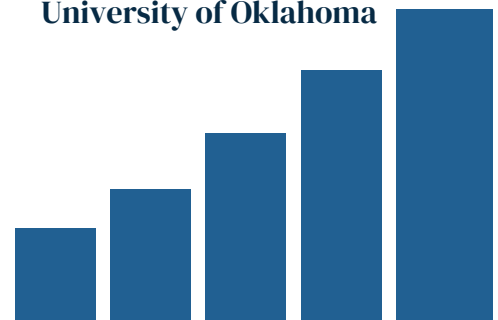
Finally, in order to connect with our members, we instituted three virtual happy hours throughout the year. This allowed our Educators Academy Leadership and committee members the opportunity to network with our members. These virtual hangouts were a great way for us to find out what everyone was doing in their classes, share successes and failures, and get ideas for new activities in the classroom. It also allowed us to discuss hot topics such as AI, combating anti-DEI efforts, and improving classroom strategies for students with disabilities.

I can't possibly touch on everything we accomplished in 2023 in this overview. So please take the time to review the reports from all the committees and liaisons. I think you'll agree that we've had an outstanding year and accomplished a lot of activities which added value to our members and strengthened our identity as a pedagogically-focused public relations organization.

## Educators Academy Virtual Happy Hour Registrations By Date



Submitted by Jensen Moore, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
University of Oklahoma





# Statement from the Secretary

As secretary, I worked on keeping the Educator's Academy organized. Board meetings were run efficiently with agendas and meeting minutes. I also worked to organize the files in the PRSA Communities including migration of all files from the storage in Google Drive to the storage in the PRSA Communities.

**Submitted by Joseph Stabb, Ph.D., APR**  
**Assistant Professor of Practice**  
**University of Tennessee, Knoxville**





# Statement from the Newsletter Editor

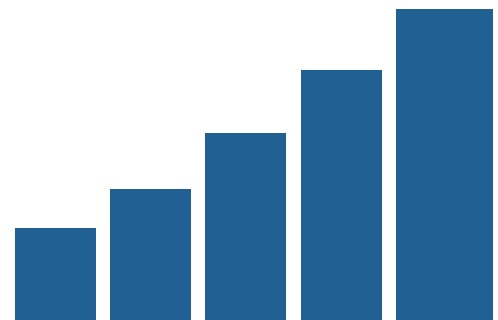
The newsletter committee had a transition in early 2023 when the editor, KiYong Kim, resigned due to leaving his university teaching position for a job in the nonprofit sector.

The assistant editor, Margaret Ritsch, stepped in to be the editor for the remainder of the year. She produced a summer and fall edition. The summer edition was delivered to 319 recipients and 179 opened it; 182 recipients opened the fall newsletter.

The summer newsletter featured articles about the Academy's new mentorship program, the new graduate student committee and a free program for educators at MuckRack, a software platform for news media and influencer outreach. The newsletter also promoted both the Educator Academy Summit and its sponsorship opportunities, and discussed the ICA's Public Relations division.

The fall issue gave readers the full Summit schedule and reported important news from the UAB about the status of the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations and APR accreditation programs. We promoted the fall programs in the "Diversity in the PR Classroom" series offered jointly by Educators Academy and the Institute for Public Relations. In both issues, EA Chair Jensen Moore provided an informative message to the membership.

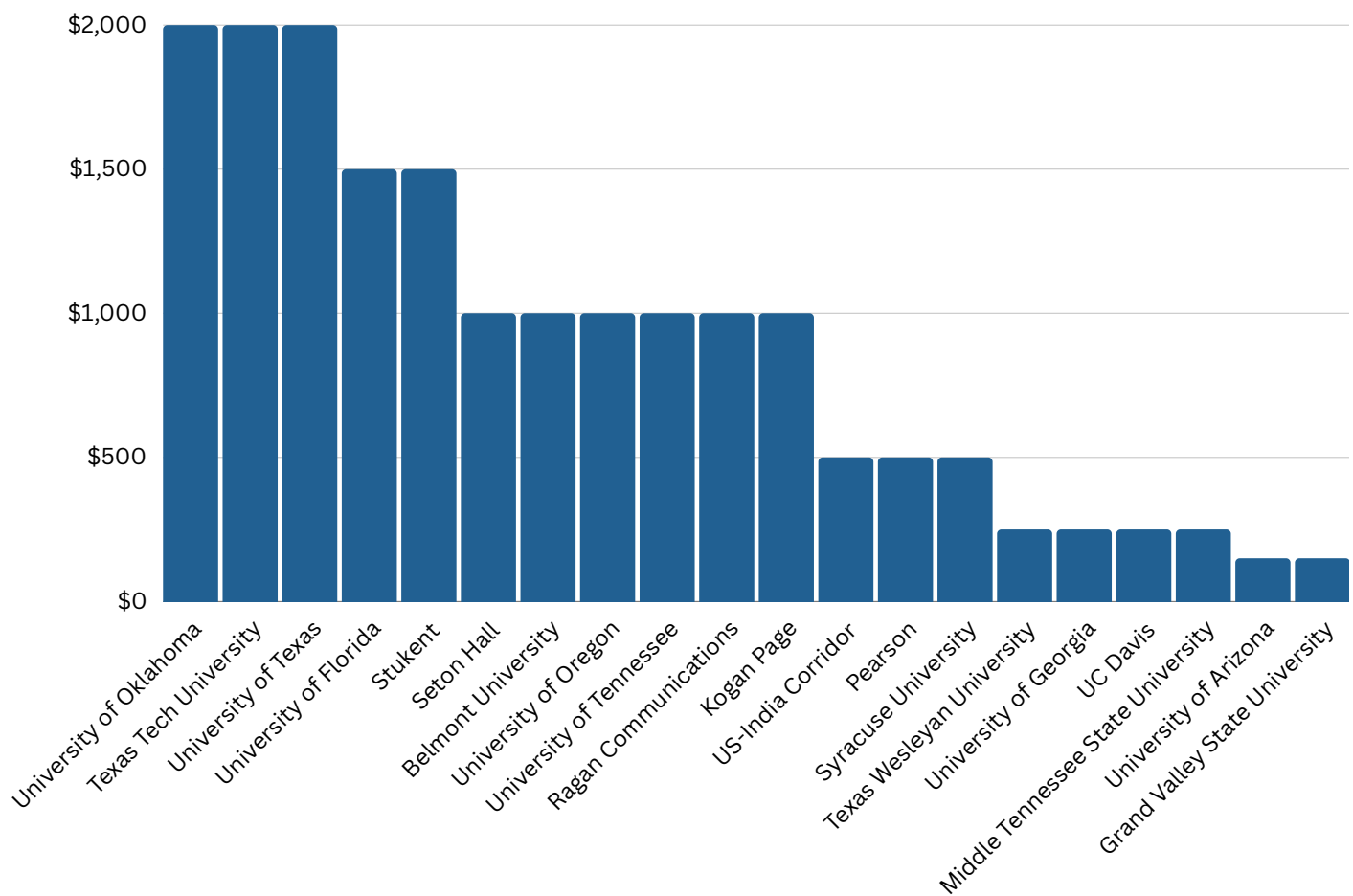
**Submitted by Margaret Ritsch, Ed.D., APR  
Lecturer  
Elon University**



# Sponsorship/ Fundraising Committee



## Sponsorship Amounts (Includes In-Kind Donations)



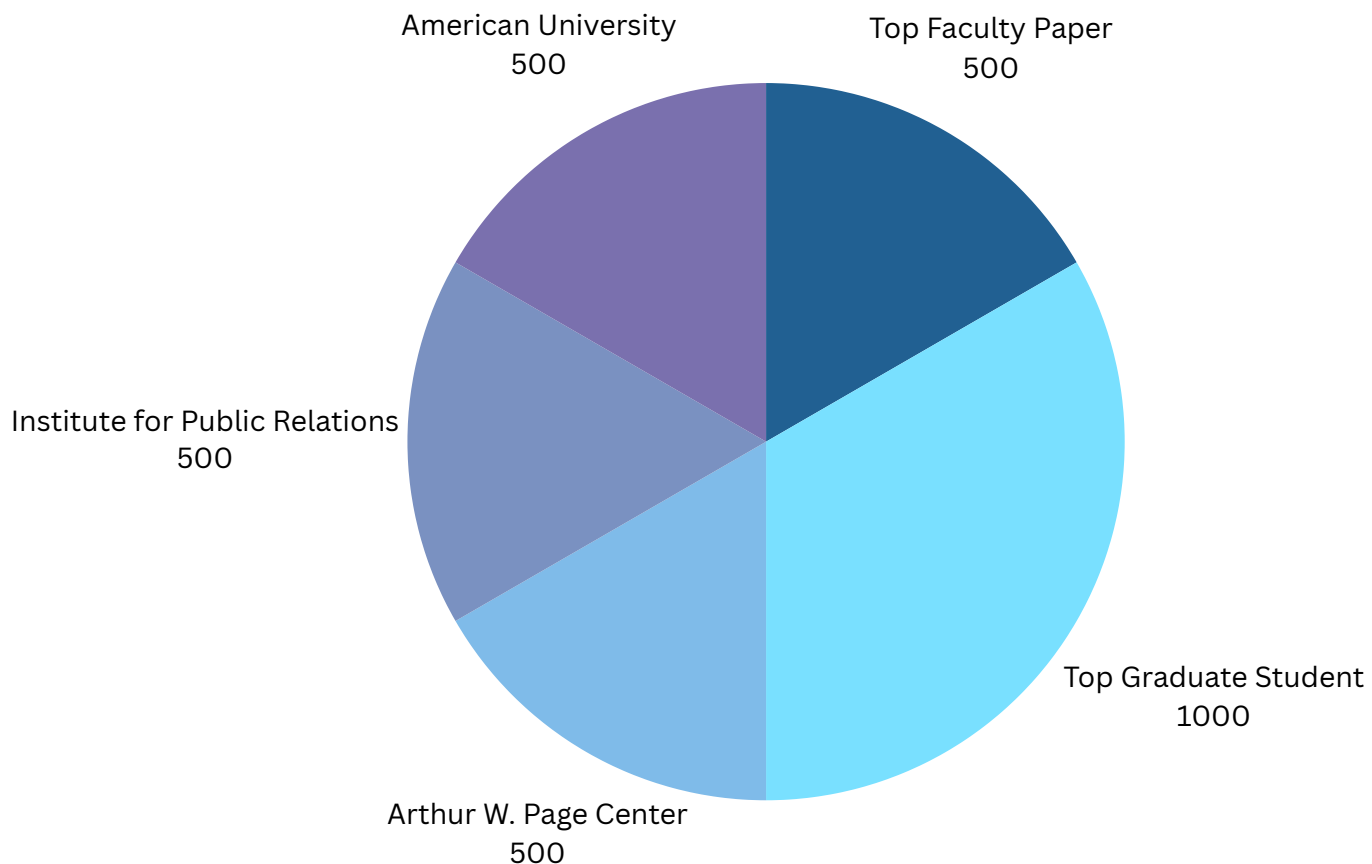
Challenged with establishing stronger and longer-lasting sponsorship relationships moving forward, the PRSA Educators Academy's Sponsorship and Fundraising Committee enjoyed one of the best fundraising years since the Academy's creation. On the back of multiple Summits affected by the pandemic, the Committee's main goal for 2023 was to modestly increase the 2022 sponsorship total (\$13,500) by less than 10%.

Thanks to outreach efforts by the Committee as well as other Executive Leadership members, the Sponsorship Committee was able to raise an outstanding \$20,800 in cash sponsorships and gift-in-kind donations - crushing its fundraising goal by nearly \$6,000. The Committee landed three title sponsorships and general sponsorships from 20 different institutions and organizations - most of which were first-time sponsors.

# Sponsorship/ Fundraising Committee cont.



## Award Sponsorships



- Educators Academy - Ferguson Award (no monetary award)
- Educators Academy - Top Faculty Paper Award (\$500)
- The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations, Betsy Plank Top Graduate Student Paper Award (\$1,000)
- The Arthur W. Page Center, Award for Integrity in Public Communications Ethics (\$500)
- Institute for Public Relations, GIFT award (\$500)
- American University School of Communication, Diversity and Inclusion Award (\$500)

**Submitted by Chris Yandle, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Commissioner for Public Affairs**  
**Louisiana Board of Regents**

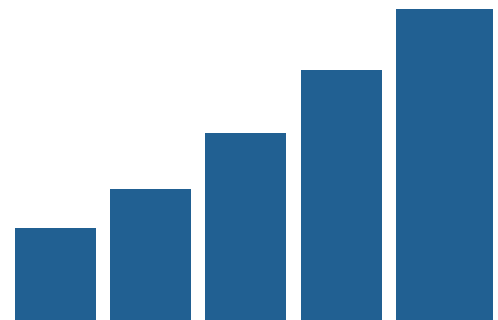


# Research Committee

This year, the research committee worked with the Educators Academy Chair to develop the call for papers, teaching posters, and panels for the 2023 Educators Summit in October. The team and executive board distributed the CFP across various channels and networks. We used Scholastica to collect submissions for review. Of note, this year we asked people to submit their headshots and bio with their proposals. It allowed us to avoid chasing people down to collect that information later. It was a bit of a job to download everyone's headshots and bios to compile in one document; however, it was much more efficient than asking for the information later.

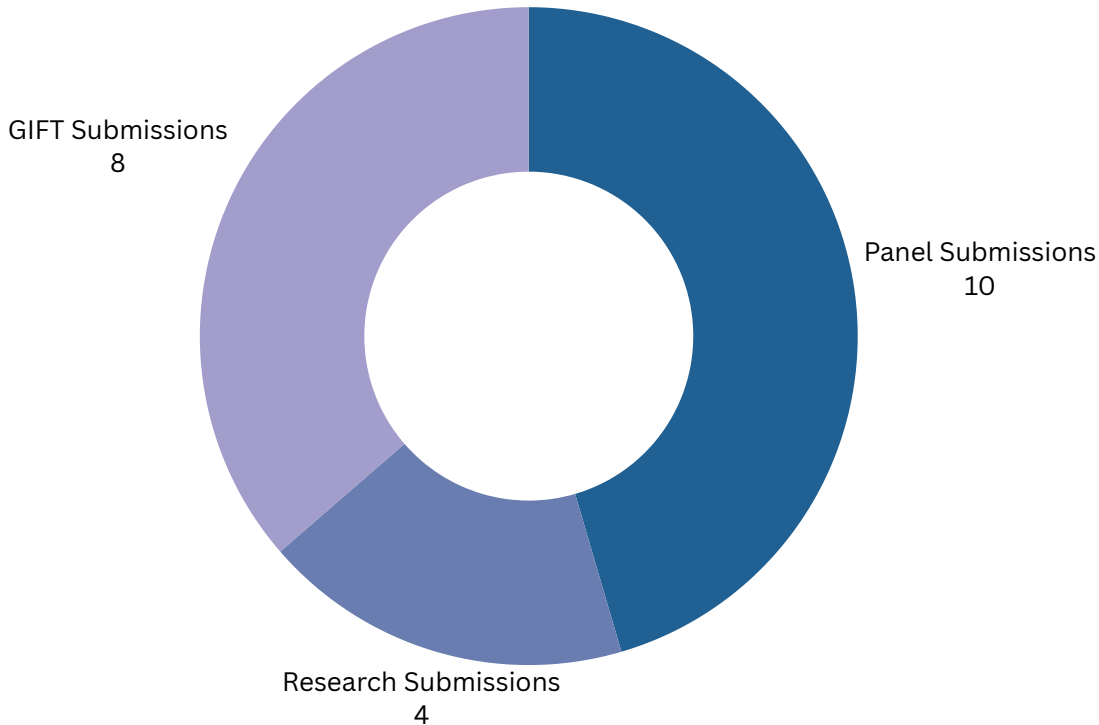
The committee encountered a few challenges. For example, we did have a low submission rate and decided to extend the deadline by about two weeks. There was a disconnect with National because they requested the final program by the end of June. However, the original closing date for submissions has historically been on or about June 25. This did not and still does not make sense. There is no way to collect all submissions on June 25 and have reviewer decisions five days later by June 30. That does not include the time to create the schedule for the day. At the conference, I spoke with former EA chair, Hilary Fussel Sisco, about the situation. She informed me that EA typically sent national a blank schedule because they did not have reviewer decisions for a few weeks post-closing date. This is something that needs to be clear for 2024.

The program shell can likely be compiled as it had in the past, but it is not possible to close the submission date by June 25, send and receive reviewer decisions, and make the final program within five days.



# Research Committee cont.

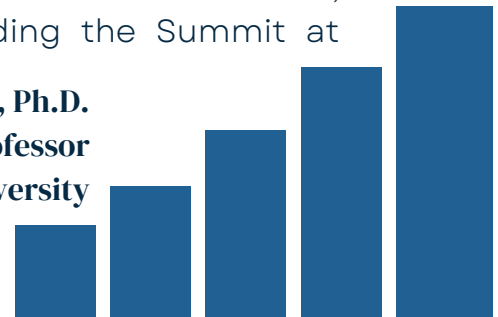
## Total Submissions



Overall, we opened the day with one panel of invited industry guests. It was incredibly well-received. The panel was compiled by Joe Stabb of the University of Tennessee. We later had six different panels present on various topics. There was also an additional panel for our top research paper submissions. In total, there were eight teaching posters presented.

Challenges for next year include communicating our deadlines, needs, etc. with National to avoid any confusion. Submission entries were also down and the committee along with the executive board need to address ways to improve. Potential ideas include bumping up the submission deadline so that it is soon after the AEJMC deadline decisions are out, offering virtual session options, or returning to holding the Summit at universities.

**Submitted by Leslie Rasmussen, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Xavier University**





# Outreach/Membership Committee

The outreach committee shifted leadership early in the year when the Chair stepped into a role on another committee and the Vice Chair moved up. The committee welcomed new members and reached out to dropped members, soliciting feedback on reasons why they left the section.

The outreach committee worked with the Graduate Student Committee to develop a mentorship program with a goal of launching it in time for mentors and mentees to gather at Educator's Academy Summit. The call went out via the newsletter and emails but, unfortunately, only two responses were received - both from potential mentors versus mentees.

With the abundance of mentoring programs available through organizations such as AEJMC PRD, PRSA/PRSA and academic programs indicates that a formal mentoring program might not be the best option for our members.

Challenges for next year include ongoing communication with grace-period members and recently lapsed members to encourage their ongoing membership in the section.



**Submitted by Kim Marks Malone, APR  
Assistant Professor of Practice  
The University of Memphis**



**MEMBERSHIP  
APPLICATION**

Personal Information

Last Name:

Mobile





# DEI Committee

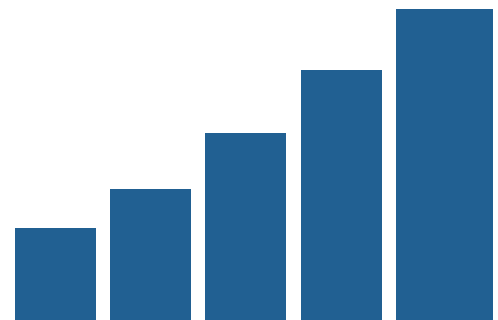
In 2023, we addressed several contemporary issues and challenges being faced by PR educators within our Diversity in the PR Classroom series, co-sponsored with the Institute for Public Relations. Subjects discussed included:

- A discussion on LGBTQIA plus: voices in PR and communications
- The rich history of the divine nine in PR and communications
- The impact of women on social awareness and change
- Pedagogy and mindfulness in the classroom
- The business case for addressing mental health
- Diversity in the PR classroom: Legislating the classroom
- Diverse perspectives and the future of artificial intelligence

While we have developed programming that is both relevant and timely for PR educators, and have secured top-level speakers, our numbers of live participants have dropped. For example, in one of our recent programs 43 people were registered, however, only 10 joined the live event. The rest signed up to access the recording post-event. While these numbers seem adequate, having live participants in the chat makes for a more meaningful discussion for both attendees and panelists.

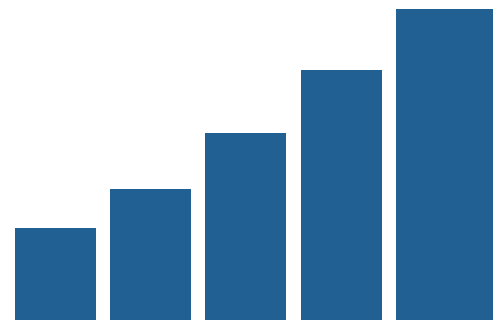
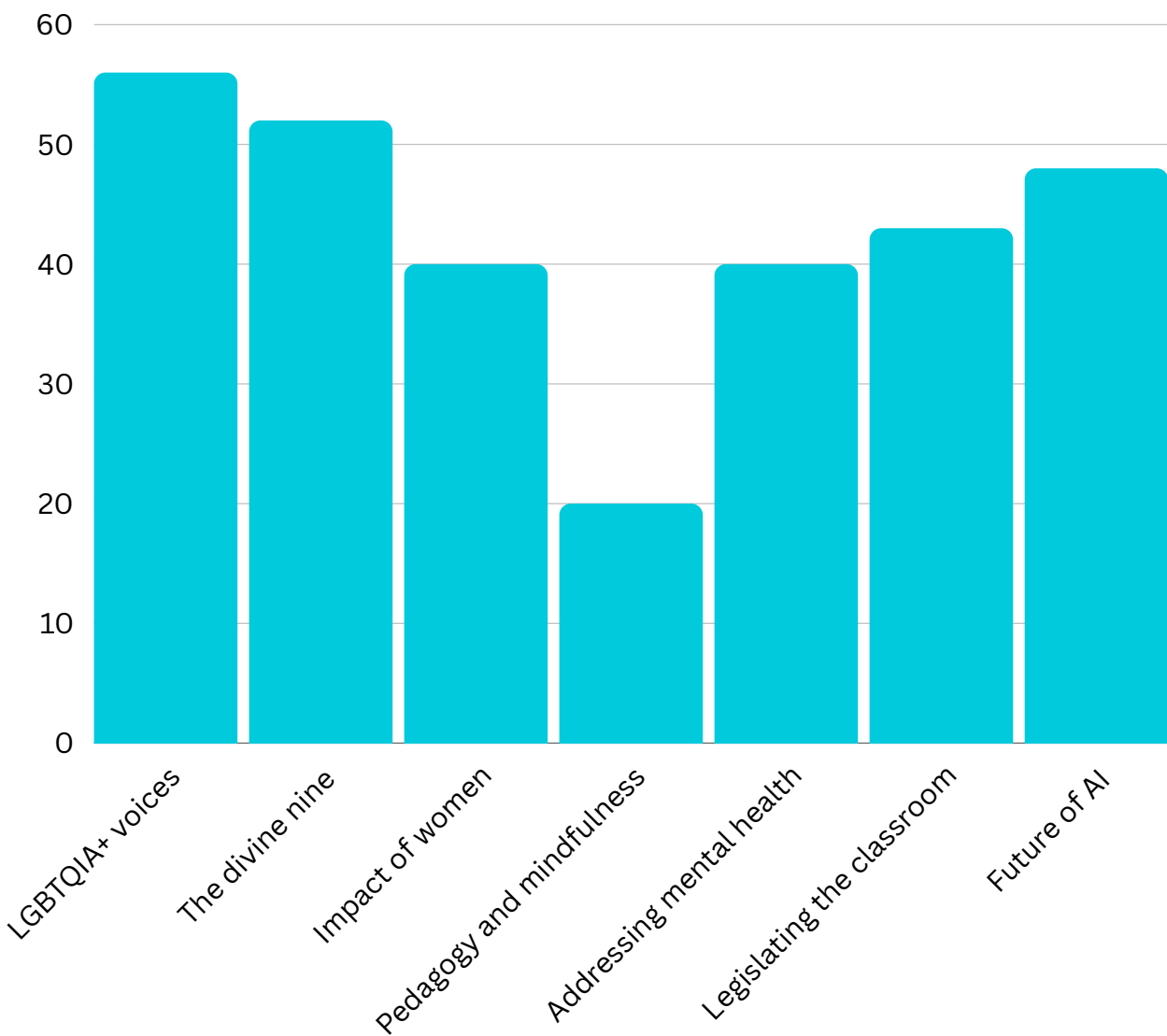
We have expanded our marketing efforts to reach a wider audience in addition to social media platforms, including the EA newsletter, and PRSA's communications channels, along with outreach from IPR. For 2024, this will likely continue to be a challenge for both the success and continuation of the program.

**Submitted by Irene Maslowski, APR  
Adjunct Professor  
New York University, New Jersey City University**



# DEI Committee cont.

## Registrations for the IPR & Educators Academy DEI in the PR Classroom Series





# Communication Committee

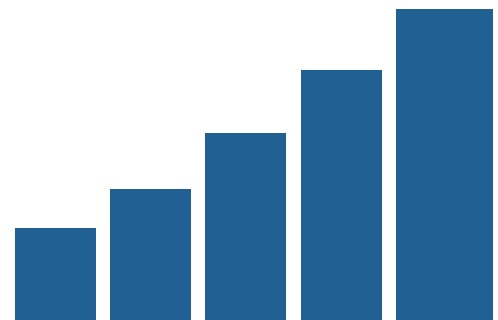
This year, the social media worked to implement our social media editorial calendar throughout the year. Our editorial calendar was strategically organized to prioritize specific goals:

- Increase membership engagement
- Serve members with educational tools and resources
- Increase awareness among non-members, adjuncts and graduate students
- Support EA Summit promotion and growth

We did this by creating unique content focused on ROI for members, identifying and posting content that requests and inspires engagement (likes, comments, shares), collaborating with other relevant groups (e.g., AEJMC PRD, PRSA Divisions), using conversational tone that conveys “we’re all in this together,” sharing content that inspires camaraderie and community, and identifying and promoting a variety of educational resources (e.g., events, programs, guides, innovative work, PRSA National content), amongst other things.

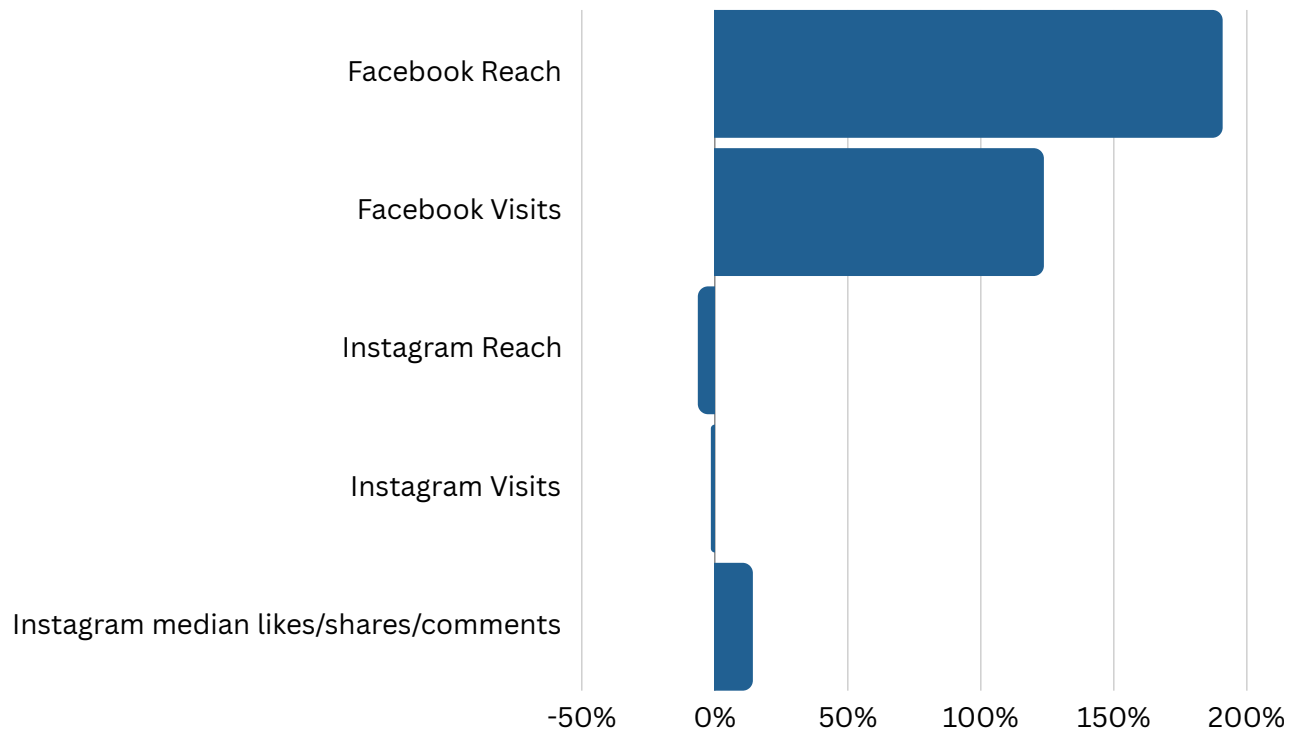
Our committee also had a strong campaign for the Summit this year. We implemented a number of tactics to help promote the event – including posting information about registration, presentations, award winners, and Nashville tips. We also had a team of students, professionals, and faculty live posting during the event.

Moving forward, there is still a need to increase engagement. One way that we suggest doing this is focusing on LinkedIn next year. As a longer-form platform, there is a lot that we can do to add value to our organization by using it.



# Communication Committee cont.

## Social Media Analytics



Facebook reach: Increased 190.9%

Facebook visits: Increased 123.7%

Instagram reach: Decreased 6.4%

Instagram visits: Decreased 1.5%

Instagram median post likes/shares/comments: Increased 14.3%

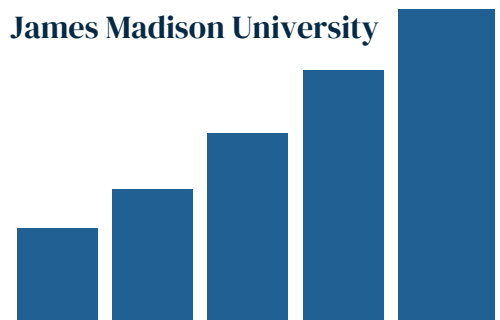
New Facebook followers: 52

New Instagram followers: 65

Submitted by Shana Meganck, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

James Madison University



# Summit Planning Committee

The At-Large (EA Summit) Committee worked with our PRSA liaison, Dorcas Jegede, to plan for the October Summit in Nashville. The Educators Academy section has partnered with PRSA the past two years to hold its Summit on-site in coordination with PRSA ICON. This represents a departure from past practice when the event was held off-site, often at a nearby university. The change reduces the planning required by Educators Academy board members with room reservations and menus now handled by PRSA. However, the change has contributed to a price increase for conference attendees and less involvement for the section in planning decisions.

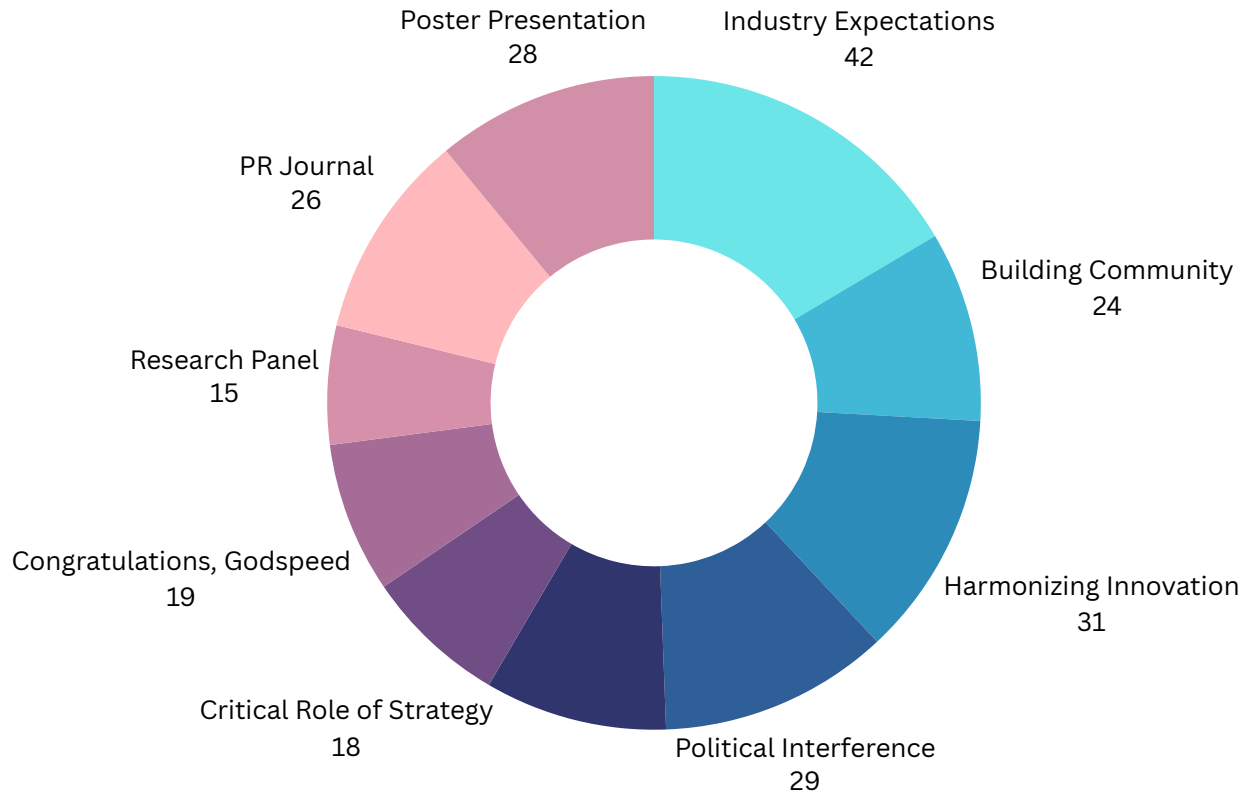
One of the key responsibilities of the At-Large committee in years past was to identify a location for the Summit and to coordinate logistics such as food and beverage selections and transportation between sites. With PRSA now handling these details, the At-Large (EA Summit) Committee focused on communicating with other board members and PRSA throughout the year leading up to the Summit. The committee also created a print program for the event to complement PRSA's Whova app and served in a "helping hands" role during the Summit.

**Submitted by Mathew P. Taylor, Ph.D.**  
**Assistant Professor**  
**Middle Tennessee State University**

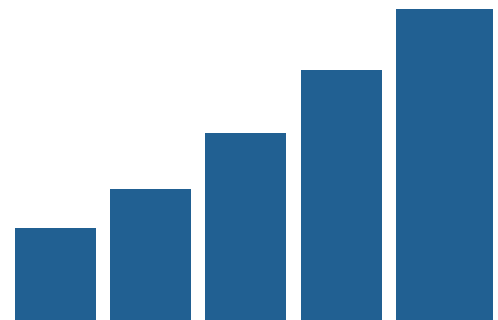


# Summit Numbers at a Glance

## Attendees at Summit Sessions

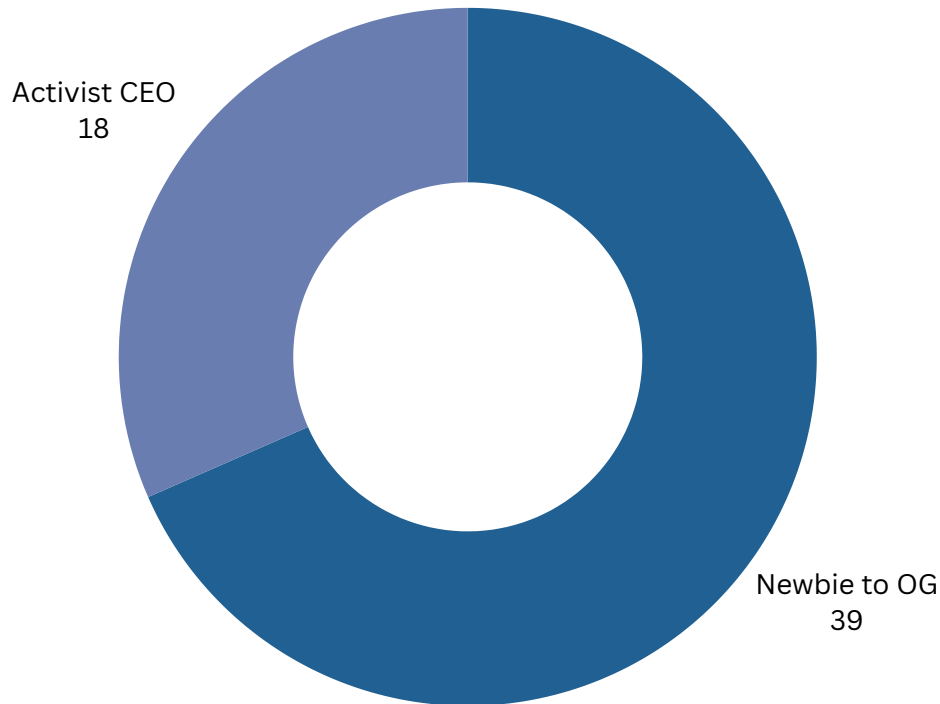


There were a total of 85 registrants for the 2023 Summit. We had 8 panels, with a total of 30 panelists presenting. There was one research session with 4 papers and 6 authors. Finally, there was one GIFT session with 8 posters and 12 authors. The numbers shown above are the attendees at each session.



# Programming Committee

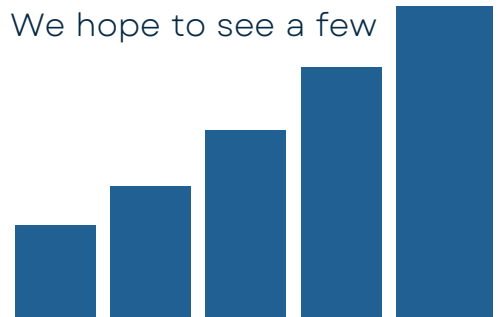
## Registrations for Webinars



The programming for educator's academy this year was a collaborative effort. Thanks to Jensen, Kelly, and the board, we had a substantial list of possible speakers and topics. Educator's Academy brought two webinars to the PRSA national webinar offerings. Eric Adae spoke on Corporate Activism. Another webinar generated from board members who proposed a panel discussion on student run firms. These webinars were in addition to the Diversity and Inclusion events.

As we approach the 2024 year, we have a list of potential speakers and topics for next year. Social media professor groups are filled with professors who discuss areas on interest and possible topics. We have contacted many about joining the Educator's Academy and participating in future webinars. At a PRSA Western District level, I serve on the board, promotions for the Educator's Academy events and membership continue. We hope to see a few members join the EA from the Western District.

**Submitted by Mary Ann Pearson, Ed.D., APR  
Professor of Communication  
California Baptist University**



# Ethics Committee

The ethics committee focused on building a repository of ethics resources for faculty to use in their courses. Their efforts resulted in a section in the MyPRSA EA designated to house the materials so members will be able to find them easily and so that the resources will be a perk of membership. Resources found in that section include materials such as case studies, classroom activities, and online trainings (both free and small fee). We sent out a call for submissions for the resources repository through the EA newsletter.

**Submitted by Tricia Farwell, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Middle Tennessee State University**





# Graduate Student Committee

The Graduate Student Committee is newly created this year and primarily focused on defining the committee's purpose and goals, raising awareness for the committee through outreach and newsletters, and developing relationships with other committee groups for student-focused programming and materials. As a new committee this year, it:

- Developed a cohesive committee description and title.
- Worked with the newsletter editors to publish an article introducing the Graduate Student Committee in the EA newsletter.
- Created a list of panel programming ideas geared toward PR graduate students and shared with the Programming Committee.
- Worked with the Outreach/Membership committee to help draft and finalize the PRSA Educators Academy Mentorship Program survey.
- Is currently compiling a list of PR graduate programs to reach out to for the mentorship program.



**Submitted by:**  
**Elizabeth Cox, M.A., University of**  
**Oklahoma**

**Vishala Persuad, M.A.,**  
**University of Oklahoma**

**Curry Wilson, M.A.,**  
**University of Tennessee-Knoxville**



# Statements from Liaisons

## CPRE

The CPRE held its 50th Anniversary Celebration and Conversation about the future of the Public Relations workforce Friday, November. During the event, Research Co-Chairs Elizabeth Toth and Pam Bourland-Davis presented the findings and recommendations of the Commission's 2023 Signature Report: Navigating Change: Recommendations for Advancing Undergraduate Public Relations Education. The report can be found on the CPRE website <http://www.commissionpred.org/cpre-resources/>. All activities held this year were in preparation for the report and anniversary celebration.

**Submitted by Melody Fisher, APR  
Associate Professor  
Mississippi State University**

## Education

As Education liaison, my attendance with key planners of 2023 Public Relations Divisions (PRD) for the International Communication Association (ICA) and Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) resulted in coverage of each conference for the Educators' Academy newsletter. The reviews included key suggestions about how the associations' PR divisions enhanced the conference experience.

Those who were interested in presenting at the Educators conference on the topic of activism, participated in collaborating on this theme (accepted for presentation) for the Educators Academy conference .

**Submitted by Bonita Neff, Ph.D. APR  
Professor and Chair of the Department of Communication  
Indiana University Northwest**



# Statements from Liaisons cont.

## PR Journal

This year Public Relations Journal hosted a very successful panel at The Educators Academy Summit in Nashville. In addition, through our collaboration with IPR we hosted the Diversity in the Classroom series, I presented the IPR Award at the annual reception and of course the quarterly publication of the Public Relations Journal. As a liaison I was regularly in attendance at monthly meetings to provide updates.

**Submitted by Hilary Fussell Sisco, Ph.D., APR**  
**Professor and Chair, Dept. of Strategic Communication**  
**Quinnipiac University**

## UAB

The UAB is working to update the Certificate in Principles of Public Relations study guide, which will include expanded DEI and PESO content and resources. In the coming months, UAB committees will begin outreach to educators to increase awareness of the Principles exam.

**Submitted by Kelly Bruhn, Ph.D., APR**  
**Associate Dean, School of Journalism and Mass Communication**  
**Drake University**



# Statements from Liaisons cont.

## PRSSA

As PRSSA National Faculty Adviser, I conducted quarterly informal discussion sessions with PRSSA faculty advisers to provide updates on PRSSA programs, discuss challenges within student chapters, and share best practices for addressing issues such as member recruitment, improving member engagement, and board management. As a member of the PRSSA Faculty Adviser Council, I am providing direct support to the faculty advisers of 50 chapters in the western U.S., Puerto Rico, and Argentina and am actively working with several universities across the country to help them launch or revive the PRSSA chapters on their campuses. To address the challenge of declining membership in many of our chapters, I have continued to push the need for faculty advisers and chapter leaders to emphasize the national benefits provided through membership in PRSSA, and to position PRSSA membership as the first step in the career track from college, to professionals in PRSA, to accreditation. The perception by many PRSSA members and communications students that PRSSA is a college “club” diminishes the value of PRSSA and PRSA and negatively impacts membership and member engagement.

I’ve continued to showcase the “SoCal Coalition” that the California State University, Fullerton, chapter leads as an effective way for chapters and their members to realize the fellowship of being a member of an international organization. Hosted the PRSSA Professional and Faculty Advisers session at the 2023 PRSSA ICON where we discussed and shared best practices in the areas of member recruitment, chapter programming, PRSA/PRSSA relationship, fundraising/sponsorships, and student-run firms.

**Submitted by Kenneth Hagihara, APR  
Lecturer, Department of Communications  
California State University, Fullerton**

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