

Membership Guide

Welcome to PRSSA

As a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), you have access to a wide range of benefits that will enhance your knowledge of the public relations profession and increase your marketability. By taking advantage of your membership, you will have opportunities to attend national events; network with professionals and colleagues; obtain internships and jobs around the country; and gain leadership experience on local, regional and national levels.

Background

In 1968, 20 years after its own establishment, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) founded PRSSA, with a goal to foster mutually advantageous relationships between students and professional public relations practitioners. The student society actively promotes the following:

- Understanding of current theories and procedures of the profession
- Appreciation of the highest ethical ideals and principles
- Awareness of an appropriate professional attitude
- Appreciation of associate and eventually accredited membership in PRSA

PRSSA has approximately 10,000 members and nearly 300 Chapters at colleges and universities in 43 states, the District of Columbia and Argentina.

Mission

- To serve our members by enhancing their knowledge of public relations and providing access to professional development opportunities.
- To serve the public relations profession by helping to develop highly qualified, well-prepared professionals.

Vision

The PRSSA vision, known as G.E.A.R.S., is a set of long-term goals for the advancement of the Society and helps members understand how they fit into the mission of PRSSA.

G.E.A.R.S. stands for:

Growth: To become the largest, most respected and widely recognized organization for pre-professionals with an interest in public relations.

Education: To enhance the future professional through leadership, classroom preparation and experience.

Advancement: To move the public relations profession forward through public awareness, ethics and diverse representation.

Relationships: To align with PRSA and form a free interchange of ideas through professional relations, practical training and mentoring.

Students: To provide members with national, regional and local opportunities to network, share ideas and grow professionally.

PRSSA Code of Ethics

I pledge: To conduct myself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness and responsibility to the public, fellow members and to the Society; to improve my individual competence and advance the knowledge and proficiency of the field of public relations; and to adhere to the articles of the Member Code of Ethics/Conduct by the PRSSA National Committee.

I understand and accept that there are consequences for member misconduct, up to and including membership revocation. I understand that members in violation of the PRSSA Code of Ethics/Conduct may be further barred from PRSA membership.

Society Structure

PRSSA members are the backbone of the Society.

Members support and participation are essential to PRSSA's growth and advancement, paving the way for future generations of highly qualified, well-prepared professionals.

Chapters

The Society is composed of nearly 300 Chapters across the United States and one in Argentina. Each Chapter has its own officers; a faculty advisor who is a member or associate member of PRSA; a professional advisor who is a PRSA member with at least five years of public relations experience; Chapter members; and a sponsoring PRSA Chapter.

Schools offering courses in introduction to public relations, writing and production, research, strategy and application and a supervised internship are eligible to start a Chapter.

National Committee

The National Committee is a resource for members and Chapters and guides the initiatives and programs of the Society.

The National Committee is made up of the national president; immediate past president; vice president of chapter development; vice president of member services; vice president of professional development; vice president of public relations; vice president of internships/job services; vice president of Regional Activities; vice president of advocacy; and *FORUM* editor-in-chief.

PRSSA Advisors

PRSSA's national advisors serve as members of the National Committee and include the national faculty advisor, national professional advisor and PRSA board liaison. The PRSA director of education acts as the head administrator of PRSSA and also serves as an advisor to the National Committee.

These individuals guide student leaders and mentor members and Chapters.

Professional Development & Networking Events

Each year, PRSSA hosts three national events and at least 10 Regional Activities across the country.

National Conference is the largest annual gathering of public relations students. Each fall, attendees spend five days forging relationships with colleagues and professionals while attending workshops, résumé enhancement sessions, networking and social events, a career development exhibition and more. PRSSA holds its Conference concurrently with PRSA's International Conference to facilitate networking between students and professionals.

National Assembly allows one delegate from each Chapter to vote on proposed changes to the PRSSA National Bylaws and elect the next year's National Committee. Any members interested in leadership training may attend this event and participate in the Day of Competition.

The Leadership Rally gathers Chapter Presidents in Scottsdale, Ariz., in early June for two days of workshops and activities designed to help them guide their Chapter in the upcoming year. Attendees network with members from like-sized Chapters and brainstorm solutions to challenges, ideas for successful programs and how to be a knowledgeable, dependable resource for their members.

Regional Activities are traditionally scheduled over a weekend in the spring and consist of one to three days of workshops and social events. In addition to providing attendees an avenue for professional development, Regional Activities offer host Chapters the opportunity to plan a nationally sanctioned event. Chapters interested in hosting a regional activity should review the Regional Activity Handbook found on PRSSA's Web site and submit a bid form by the October deadline.

Affiliation with PRSA

Find a mentor. Find a job. The key is PRSA.

PRSA has more than 20,000 members organized into Chapters, Professional Interest Sections and Affinity Groups across the country. The PRSA/PRSSA partnership offers students networking opportunities and professional mentors.

PRSA Relationship Building

Each PRSSA Chapter has a sponsoring PRSA Chapter. PRSSA members have the opportunity to attend PRSA events, including monthly luncheons and meetings. During PRSSA/PRSA Relationship Month in October, Chapters plan meetings and social events to develop professional relationships, discuss issues within both Societies and share ideas.

Champions for PRSSA

Champions for PRSSA was formed for current or retired professionals who seek to better students' education in public relations. Members contribute funds yearly to support PRSSA scholarship and award programs for members and volunteer as mentors.

PRSA Publications

PRSSA members receive PR Issues and Trends, a daily e-mail reporting news, advocacy and other issues impacting the profession and the professional, as well as *Public Relations Tactics*, the national newspaper of PRSA.

PRSA Associate Membership

PRSSA members can jump start their careers by becoming associate members of PRSA for \$60; regular PRSA dues are \$225 per year. Associates must be PRSSA members at their time of graduation. They can join up to five months prior to graduation and renew membership at the discounted rate for up to two years. Associate membership only applies to national dues; Chapters, Professional Interest Sections and Affinity Groups may charge full dues.

PRSA Chapters and Professional Interest Sections

PRSA has more than 100 Chapters and 19 Professional Interest Sections, which provide networks and skill development for professionals by location and specialty.

PRSA New Professionals Section

PRSA New Professionals Section helps members transition from PRSSA to PRSA by providing exclusive services to new public relations professionals. PRSA members join for \$20 per year, and can participate in their first three years of professional work. Benefits include mentoring, national networking, and access to electronic newsletters and teleseminars.

PRSSA Publications

FORUM, PRSSA's national newspaper, is produced three times per academic year and is distributed to every PRSSA member. *FORUM* contains news about the Society, guides for student involvement, tips on job hunting and an overview of the state of the profession. *FORUM* is also a way for contributors to enhance their writing portfolios on a national level.

Bi-weekly updates are distributed every two weeks to all members and include information about national events and regional activities, PRSSA news highlights and Chapters' best practices.

Chapter News provides an opportunity for Chapters to get national attention for their upcoming events, accomplishments, leadership and viewpoints through www.prssa.org.

PRSSA's annual report provides highlights from the past school year, including newly chartered Chapters, scholarship and award winners and initiatives implemented.

The Situation Analysis gives detailed descriptions of National Committee members' responsibilities, challenges faced in programming and insight into the future of the Society from the National President's perspective.

Scholarships, Awards & Competitions

Let PRSSA put money in your pocket.

Each year, PRSSA, PRSA and sponsors give away more than \$20,000 to winners of national scholarships, awards and competitions. Details and application forms are available at www.prssa.org/resources/memberawards.asp.

Individual PRSSA Scholarships and Awards are given to members for exceptional achievement in internships, ethics, advocacy of the profession, leadership in the Society and demonstrated interest in the field. Entries generally require essays, recommendation letters, résumés and completed application forms.

Teahan Chapter Awards, named for PRSSA founder Chris Teahan, recognize the outstanding achievements of PRSSA members, alumni and faculty advisors. Sponsored by the Champions for PRSSA, these monetary awards are offered in the following categories:

- Outstanding Chapter
- Chapter Firm
- Chapter Development
- PRSA/PRSSA Relationship
- Faculty Advisor
- Professional Advisor
- Chapter Newsletter
- Chapter Web Site
- Community Service
- University Service
- Regional Activity
- Diversity

The Star Chapter Award is an annual honor encouraging and recognizing Chapters which meet PRSSA's standards for vitality and success. All qualifying Chapters will be named "Star Chapters."

The Bateman Case Study Competition is a hands-on annual competition that gives students an opportunity to exercise the analytical skills and mature judgment required for public relations problem-solving.

The Day of Competition, held at National Assembly, challenges students in a hands-on public relations competition with other PRSSA members. Participants develop a communications plan for a sponsoring company.

The National FUNdraising Bowl takes place January through April. Chapters submit best practices, and winners are drawn randomly from each month's entries. Fund raisers and the application form are available at www.prssa.org/fundraising.

Web Resources

The PRSSA National Web site www.prssa.org is the one-stop information link between the National Committee and local Chapters. In addition to highlighting the most up-to-date Society news and member benefits, the site provides professional development resources such as links to additional public relations information and contact information for PRSSA Chapters.

The PRSSA Blog is accessible via the PRSSA Web site. Postings relating to public relations trends are added several times each month.

JobCenter allows companies, agencies and nonprofits seeking interns and employees to send PRSSA job and internship postings, which are immediately approved and uploaded to the site. Students need their Chapter login and password to create a résumé profile and browse available positions.