

PR UPDATE

The newsletter for AEJMC's Public Relations Division

Volume 59, No. 2 | April 2025



Spring Issue

Photo by ioarctic | Unsplash

PR UPDATE

Vol. 59, No. 2; April 2025

Division Leadership

Head

Christopher McCollough

Jacksonville State

Vice-Head

Ioana Coman

Texas Tech

Vice-Head Elect

Virginia Harrison

Clemson

Immediate Past Head

Christopher Wilson

Brigham Young

PR UPDATE Staff

Editor

Jeffrey Ranta

Coastal Carolina

Associate Editors

Lois Boynton

UNC-Chapel Hill

Laura Lemon

Alabama

Chelsea Woods

Virginia Tech

PR UPDATE is published
three times a year.
You can find past issues [here](#).

Please send all inquiries
and contributions
to jranta@coastal.edu

editor's note:

Jeffrey Ranta

Coastal Carolina



A message from the editor

Greetings fellow PRD members.

It is my pleasure to present to you the April 2025 newsletter.

It has been a busy Spring already with the activities and energy related to preparing for our August conference.

Good luck to everyone in your excellent research submissions. It is both a privilege and an honor to present research to our fellow PRD academics. I always leave our conference inspired and motivated to do great things as I see and hear what my colleagues have been doing.

In addition to conference prep, the PRD has been busy as always perpetuating excellence in education in our rapidly changing field. In this newsletter we preview efforts in teaching and new opportunities for job seekers.

For those planners in the readership, the preliminary schedule for the PRD sequence at the conference includes the following key dates and times:

- **August 7** Scholar to Scholar posters—1:45 – 3 p.m.
- **August 9** Top Paper Presentation—4:45 – 6 p.m.
- **August 9** Member's Meeting—6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

More dates and times are being established as we go to press. Look for more details in the pre-conference edition scheduled for June 15.

Jeff Ranta

Share your achievements!

- Publications or books you have published
- New or innovative teaching/instruction you have piloted
- Examples of unique or exceptional service
- Presentations or other prestigious achievements

Please email Jeffrey Ranta (jranta@coastal.edu) the following information:

1. Name, position/title, and organization
2. What you did (include title(s) in APA style; relevant dates; other information
3. Your contact information
4. A photo or examples of your work if you wish



Photo by Jan Huber | Unsplash

contents

From the Division Head	4	Other News & Notes	13
Committee Notes	6	Register now for the Public Interest Communications Summer Institute	13
Teaching tip: Fostering creativity in public relations campaign classes	6	What's on my coffee table?	14
Supporting adjunct faculty: A teaching tip and workshop announcement	8	The 2025 Lionel C. Barrow Jr. Award for Distinguished Achievement in Diversity Research and Education Call	15
Edelman Luncheon update: The Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel	9	Gene Burd Urban Journalism Award 2025	16
2025 Susanne A. Roschwalb Grant for International Study and Research	10	Member Shout-Outs	17
2025 Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Awards	10	On The Job Market Update	18
Journal Updates	11		
<i>Journal of Public Relations Education</i> updates	11		
JPRE special issue call for papers: "Elevating PR: Insights and Trends in Graduate Education"	12		



A message from the Division Head

Time flies as we look back on spring and forward to AEJMC 2025

Christopher J. McCollough

Jacksonville State University

As March is rapidly approaching April, it is a busy time for most of us for a variety of reasons. We welcomed our colleague Sung-Un Yang (Boston University) back for a second term as Editor of the *Journal of Public Relations Research*. Patrick Merle (Florida State) led a strong Virtual Conference for the division as we bridged from February to March. Both Sung-Un and Patrick have demonstrated exceptional skill and service in supporting the division in its efforts to advance scholarship in the field of public relations.

March and April are months for us to branch out in our discipline, even as we look to the end of our respective academic years. Many of our members had strong showings at both AEJMC Midwinter Conference and at AEJMC's Southeast Colloquium. Administrators in the division joined me for the annual meeting of ASJMC in Chicago. Those of us playing essential roles in disciplinary accreditation may have stayed a bit longer to observe the annual meeting of ACEJMC's accreditation committee on March 21 as it performed its annual responsibilities in providing recommendations to ACEJMC's council, which will meet on May 1. Many of us were also workshopping research in sunny Florida at IPRRC. Others still have regional conferences to end March or to look forward to in April.

Our deep bench of committee chairs have been as active as ever to support our year-round offerings in the division, which we can see around us and on social channels. We see some excellent member spotlights and Semester of Service posts showcasing some exceptional colleagues at work. Our social media

committee under the leadership of Erika Schneider (Syracuse University) continues to provide an active, vibrant posting schedule on our platforms, keeping us informed and aware of divisional business and member opportunities, and our awards committees are hard at work as we head towards award review season, which I will comment on below.

As April 1 continued to be the foremost deadline and focal point for many of us, we were pleased to see 155 unique submissions to our open competitions.

Our hard work in March becomes April's challenge for our Research Committee members, led by April Yue (Boston University) and Jenny Tsai (University of Northern Arizona) as they will jump into action assigning qualified reviewers to each paper, and then reviewing results towards the end of April. The division has been proactive in soliciting volunteers for reviewing through social channel and appeals but can use more. If you have not already signed up, please consider signing up to review. We have seen a strong rebound in submissions to the division since the pandemic, so we will likely need every able member to participate in the review process.

The results of this labor will help round out a great program being put together by our Vice Head, Ioana Coman (Texas Tech), who has submitted our preliminary draft of presentational panels, and we will compile the final revision of the program in June once open and special competition results are in. She has also taken point on developing our preconference program for Wednesday, August 6, as we will be

A message from the Division Head

continued from previous page

covering a full afternoon considering how we as educators and professionals can overcome a variety of barriers to exercise best practice in the classroom and in industry. We will be in contact with more details soon!

Our (and AEJMC's only) Vice Head-Elect, Virginia Harrison (Clemson University), is busy spearheading our annual tradition of working to bridge the gap between industry and the academy, even as we look to make changes to provide greater access to our entire membership. The annual Bill Adams and Dan Edelman luncheon will give way to the Bill Adams and Dan Edelman panel, which will showcase a blend of industry and research, while maintaining our ties to the Edelman family. The panel will be co-sponsored by our colleagues in the Media Ethics division and is a part of our annual program this year. Virginia will share more in this issue, and we will provide additional details in the months ahead.

We also want to encourage our student members to attend to our socials and consider applying for travel grant support application calls currently in progress for our Susan A. Roschwalb Grant for International Study and Research Award (May 2 deadline) and Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Awards (May 30 deadline), which both provide resources to deserving members of our division to engage with our annual program and to pursue their research programs. If you have graduate students who meet the criteria, please do not hesitate to encourage them to apply.

I also wanted to share that thanks to some strong, proactive work on the part of our colleague and social lead, Amanda Weed (Kennesaw State), we have entered into an agreement with a local venue for our annual AEJMC PR division networking social, which

will take place immediately following our annual business meeting and awards presentation on site at AEJMC this year. As is the case every year, we are looking for sponsors for the event, and those interested may contact me about contributing to support the event. We have various levels of sponsorship available and appreciate all support in helping put on the event.

Division business outside of AEJMC 2025 also continues to move forward. We have a new special call forthcoming from the Journal of Public Relations Education, focusing on Insights and Trends in Graduate PR Education. Long-time division members and contributors to JPPE Pamela Bourland-Davis (Georgia Southern University), Emily S. Kinsky (West Texas A&M University), Charles Lubbers (University of South Dakota), and Adrienne Wallace (Grand Valley State) lead on the call, and will be looking for submissions between now and August 7. You can review the call in a recent listserv email or access the link on our social media channels for additional information.

If it is not clear from this post, we are a large, complex division. We get to provide a singular program throughout the year, singular resource benefits, and diverse means of contributing the discipline to our membership. I want to thank each of you for your membership and continued support of what we do each year. The things we do all year long are not a possibility for divisions that do not enjoy the robust membership and engagement we have.

It is indeed a busy time, and we are all working hard, but the payoff for our efforts is evident when you can see how we stack up against our peer divisions. Thank you for all you do, and for being a part of this unique division.

Teaching tip: Fostering creativity in public relations campaign classes

By **Adrienne A. Wallace, Ph.D.**,
Grand Valley State University



Photo by Jason Goodman | Unsplash

I, for one, might scream if I have to grade another content calendar comprised chiefly of “Hallmark Holidays” and little or no original/creative content. Creativity is essential for successful public relations campaigns. However, when students default to “safe” or “stale” ideas, it signals a need for an instructional shift toward fostering innovation. Below are strategies to encourage students to think creatively and develop bold, original solutions in a PR campaign class. Before you begin, be sure you have created a safe space for students to fail forward to eliminate discomfort, hurt feelings, or embarrassment. Discuss how to give and receive constructive feedback to keep the good vibes intact.

1. Incorporate Divergent Thinking Activities

Begin each class with a brief exercise designed to break conventional thinking patterns. For instance, use a “What If?” exercise. Present an absurd scenario related to the client or campaign (e.g., “What if this campaign had to be communicated through interpretive dance?”). Challenge students to brainstorm how they might make it work. Such activities loosen mental constraints and normalize unconventional thinking, making students more likely to carry creativity into larger projects.

2. Set Constraints to Foster Innovation

Ironically, creativity thrives under constraints. Introduce specific, unconventional requirements to force students out of their comfort zones.

For example:

- Require all messaging to fit within a five-word tagline.
- Use only visual media to convey the campaign’s message.
- Design a campaign to resonate with an entirely unfamiliar audience segment.
- Use a tool like a [magnetic poetry kit](#), or even [table topics](#) and apply these to the client issue.

By working within limitations, students learn to explore innovative approaches instead of defaulting to typical strategies.

3. Use Reverse Engineering

Provide students with an award-winning PR campaign and analyze its creative elements. Then, ask students to reverse-engineer an alternative campaign version targeting a different demographic, using a different tone, or focusing on an unrelated medium. This

Teaching tip: Fostering creativity in public relations campaign classes

continued from previous page

process pushes students to understand the creative choices behind successful campaigns and explore how those choices could translate to fresh ideas.

4. Encourage “Bad Ideas” Sessions

Often, students shy away from bold ideas because they fear failure. Create a “bad ideas” brainstorming session where the goal is to come up with the worst possible campaign ideas. This humorous, low-stakes activity reduces fear of judgment and often yields kernels of genuinely innovative ideas when reworked. Emphasize that no idea is truly bad; it may just need reframing or tweaking to become viable. I love bringing in the game [Apples to Apples](#) or [Cards Against Humanity](#) to really get the “bad ideas” flowing.

5. Introduce a Role-Playing Element

Students can get stuck in their own perspectives, which limits creativity. Use role-playing to break this pattern. Assign each student a persona (e.g., a skeptical journalist, a hyper-digital Gen Z consumer, or a non-tech-savvy baby boomer). Have students pitch their campaign ideas to the class in character. By seeing their campaign through another lens, students are encouraged to reconsider and refine their approaches.

6. Leverage Technology and AI Tools

Introduce students to tools like brainstorming apps or AI platforms that suggest creative campaign elements. For example, students could use an AI

generator to develop unexpected tagline ideas or visual concepts. While AI should not replace human ingenuity, it can spark ideas and help students think beyond traditional frameworks. Use some of your professional development bucks to attend an online workshop like one from [IDEO U](#).

7. Create Feedback Loops

After students present their ideas, facilitate a class discussion focused on identifying both safe and bold elements within the campaign. Ask probing questions like, “What would make this stand out more?” or “What is a completely unexpected way to achieve the same result?” Encouraging peer critique helps students recognize patterns of “safe” thinking and pushes them to embrace risk.

8. Celebrate Boldness Over Perfection

Create a culture where boldness is rewarded. Incorporate a class award or recognition for the “Most Out-of-the-Box Idea(s)” each semester. By valuing creativity over polished perfection, students feel empowered to take risks.

Outcome

By integrating a few new methods into your campaign class, students will develop not only stronger creative muscles but also the confidence to propose innovative, impactful solutions. The resulting campaigns will reflect their growth and willingness to push boundaries, equipping them for real-world PR challenges. May you never have to suffer through a dull campaign or content calendar again. Good luck friends.

Supporting adjunct faculty: A teaching tip and workshop announcement

By **Carolyn Smith Casertano**, APR, Fellow PRSA, University of Arizona – PRD Teaching Committee

With the rapid growth of undergraduate degree programs in public relations, many institutions have hired adjunct faculty to complement their existing faculty roster and provide additional classes and support for students completing their degree programs.

As noted in the latest [CPRE Report \(2023\)](#), adjunct faculty often receive little mentoring and support and are typically searching for resources and teaching practices to assist them in teaching or developing class curriculum. Seasoned public relations faculty can help provide this support by sharing syllabi, best practices for teaching strategies, and advice about managing classrooms, addressing challenges, and advocating for adjunct faculty. The CPRE Report also highlighted the critical need for educators and practitioners to stay closely connected to the development of public relations curriculum, to ensure classes are relevant and prepare students for the rigors of a competitive industry.

By some estimates, adjunct faculty, including those in public relations, make up roughly one-third of all faculty positions, and part-time, nontenure-track faculty comprise 47% of the U.S. academic workforce. Many adjunct faculty do not have access to the resources, learning systems, and training provided to non-adjunct faculty, therefore relying on their own personal and professional networks to assist them. This support ranges from textbook adoption, to managing classroom expectations, and addressing employment contracts.

To help support these instructors, the AEJMC PRD Teaching Committee has developed an [‘All About Adjuncting – from PR Pro to PR Prof’ virtual workshop](#) on Wednesday, April 16, at 3 p.m. ET/noon PT time to address some of the challenges adjuncts face, and to help share best practices and resources. The committee is also compiling an adjunct resource guide, to further address the needs adjuncts have in starting their teaching journey.

Most adjunct faculty bring a wealth of industry and professional experience to their teaching practices, which enhances the students learning experience and connects them to external resources, opportunities, and professional networks. Students frequently express a high level of satisfaction with adjunct faculty, and value their rich backgrounds and professional acumen. There are also significant benefits for students to be able to connect with professionals, and create opportunities for job mentors, internships, and career paths.

Increased demand for adjunct faculty has created teaching opportunities for public relations professionals and affords them a way to give back to the profession and help inform the next generation of professionals. Job postings vary, and the onboarding process for adjuncts is often underdeveloped. Frequently, adjunct faculty are made aware of open positions through their professional network, and some professionals considering a career change to full-time academia begin with an adjunct position.

The April workshop, co-sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Educators Academy, is designed specifically for current aspiring public relations adjunct faculty.

Supporting adjunct faculty: A teaching tip and workshop announcement

continued from previous page

The panel of experienced adjuncts will highlight the following:

- The realities of adjunct teaching. What to expect and how to thrive
- Balancing industry expertise with academic expectations
- Navigating learning management systems and structuring syllabi
- Building connections within your institution and the PR education community

Please consider sharing this information with your networks. [Use this link to register](#) for the April 16 workshop, and there will be ample time for Q&A and resource sharing.

If you or someone you know is interested in contributing to the All About Adjuncts resource guide, please contact our [AEJMC PRD Teaching Committee](#).

Edelman Luncheon update: The Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel

By **Virginia Harrison**, Clemson University

As discussed with members since the fall, the executive team and division leadership have been working with Edelman representatives to open access and manage costs associated with the annual Edelman luncheon. The executive team has since submitted a proposal to Edelman to name the Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel at the 2025 AEJMC conference in San Francisco. We are currently waiting for word from Edelman's marketing team on acceptance of the proposal.

The Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel addresses two aspects of the mission of the Edelman-PRD relationship. First, moving the panel to regular conference programming will enable everyone from our division—and across AEJMC—who wishes to attend the opportunity to do so. In the past, many PRD members have expressed concern that they have tried to get a first-come, first-served spot at the luncheon to no avail. Some have never received a seat despite trying each year. As a division, we prioritize providing access to the conference, including Edelman's presentation, to whomever may want it. Opening the event to every PRD member helps to achieve this priority.

Second, restructuring the panel allows us to fulfill the original intentions of the Edelman-PRD relationship, as expressed by our liaison, John Edelman. He explained that the relationship was started to bridge the gap between academia and practice by formalizing an annual talk from an Edelman professional located near the conference. The Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel will still include at least one Edelman speaker as part of the session.

Additionally, eliminating the luncheon cost (which totaled over \$6,000 in Philadelphia) will help our division prioritize funding mission-focused initiatives more responsibly. Traditionally, Edelman provides a donation towards the luncheon cost. Our proposal under review at Edelman explains how we will better utilize their donation for our membership in absence of a luncheon cost.

If you have any ideas in support of the Dan Edelman and Bill Adams Panel at the 2025 conference, please email Vice Head-Elect, Virginia Harrison at vsharri@clemson.edu.

2025 Susanne A. Roschwalb Grant for International Study and Research

We're excited to announce the Susanne A. Roschwalb Grant, a \$1,000 award supporting undergraduate and graduate students in public relations or mass communication at four-year U.S. colleges and universities.



2024 Recipient:
Yezi He, North
Carolina State
University

The award was established in 1996 to honor the memory of Susanne A. Roschwalb, an Associate Professor at American University, public relations practitioner, and active member of the AEJMC Public Relations Division until her death in 1996 at age 56 from complications related to breast cancer.

This award is designed to fund study or research that explores public relations and its interaction with society in international contexts.

Eligibility:

- Full-time undergraduate or graduate students in PR or mass communication.
- Projects must focus on international research/study.

How to Apply:

- Submit a project summary (up to 500 words).
- Provide contact info for a faculty reference.
- Complete [the application form](#).

Deadline: May 2, 2025, 11:59 p.m. ET

For more information, contact Nur Uysal at nur.uysal@depaul.edu.

2025 Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Awards

Submit a nomination to the 2025 Inez Kaiser Graduate Student of Color Awards!

This prestigious award honors Inez Kaiser, a trailblazer in public relations as the first African-American woman to lead a PR agency with national clients.

There are two \$1,000 awards available, which cover AEJMC membership and conference fees. The awards also include mentorship opportunities with PRD and waive conference registration for AEJMC events.

Eligibility:

- Eligible students of color must be enrolled in a communication, mass communication, or PR graduate program and intend to pursue a career as a PR/mass communication educator.
- Students finishing degrees in 2025 are eligible.

How to Apply:

- Self-nominations or nominations by AEJMC members accepted
- [Online application form](#)

Deadline: May 30, 2025

For more information, contact Nur Uysal (nur.uysal@depaul.edu) or Juan Liu (juanliu@towson.edu).



2024 Recipient:
Michael Ofori,
University of
Minnesota –
Twin Cities



2024 Recipient:
Teresia Nzau,
University of
Missouri

Journal of Public Relations Education updates

By **Adrienne A. Wallace**, Ph.D.,
JPRE Editor-in-Chief

[The Journal of Public Relations Education \(JPRE\)](#) would like to thank our esteemed [Editorial Review Board](#) (ERB) for their time on task and high-quality reviews, which improve the state and prestige of public relations pedagogy research. The [ERB page](#) has been updated to reflect new and returning members. We are a journal that is 100% volunteer-powered and our needs fluctuate over time. As such, I'm pleased to welcome to the [JPRE editorial board of directors](#) Assistant Editor - Layout/Design & Web the formidable Chelsea Woods, Ph.D., Virginia Tech, who will aid the excellence of Amanda Weed, Ph.D. (Kennesaw State) with all things layout/design and publication to the web. In this update, we are also able to move "Swiss Army Knife," Haley Higgs, Ph.D. (Georgia Southern University) to assist layout and design when needed, but more so to bolster our social media needs alongside Kate Stewart, Ph.D. (Jacksonville State University).

2025 onward brings a laundry list of priorities for this JPRE team which includes:

- A special issue related to graduate education (Eds: Bourland-Davis, Lubbers, Kinsky, & Wallace) - call forthcoming for 2025 or early 2026 publish.
- A special issue related to leadership in undergraduate education (Eds: David Grossman (The Grossman Group), Tina McCorkindale (IPR), Karla Gower (The Plank Center) and additional guests to be announced) - call forthcoming for 2026 publish.
- A special issue led by our PRD graduate student committee - call forthcoming for 2026 publish.
- Secure an Adobe Cloud account for JPRE - approved by PRD and AEJMC leadership.
- Incorporating reviewer training for graduate students - we are in early planning stages.

- SCOPUS/CrossRef indexing - applied for in December 2024 - pending decision.
- DOI registry - pending SCOPUS review decision.
- Further diversification of ERB - continuously updating. Please forward any recommendations for high quality reviewers of PR pedagogy to jpre@gvsu.edu

Please extend a hearty thank you to the following good folks who keep the publication in sound working order for pedagogy researchers:

- Senior Associate Editor - Christopher McCollough, Ph.D., Jacksonville State University
- Associate Editor – Style - Luke Capizzo, Ph.D., APR., Michigan State University
- Associate Editor - Layout Design & Web - Amanda Weed, Ph.D., Kennesaw State University
- Associate Editor – Book/Resource Reviews - Jiun-Yi (Jenny) Tsai, Ph.D., Northern Arizona University
- Assistant Editor – Social Media - Kate Stewart., Jacksonville State University
- Assistant Editor – Layout Design & Social Media Support - Haley Higgs, Ph.D., Georgia Southern University
- Assistant Editor - Style - Drew Ashby-King, Ph.D., Eastern Carolina University
- Associate Editor - Layout Design & Web - Chelsea Woods, Ph.D., Virginia Tech

As per the usual, you're invited to submit your pedagogy-related manuscripts, teaching briefs/GIFTS, and/or book/technology reviews to the journal in 2025 and beyond. Please review [the guidelines](#) prior to submission. Look for our first issue of 2025 to drop end of March/beginning of April.

***JPRE* special issue call for papers: “Elevating PR: Insights and Trends in Graduate Education”**

- Manuscript Due Date: 08/07/2025
- Anticipated Publication: January 2026 *JPRE* 12(1)

Guest Editors:

- Pamela G. Bourland-Davis, Georgia Southern University
- Emily S. Kinsky, West Texas A&M University
- Charles Lubbers, University of South Dakota
- Adrienne A. Wallace, Grand Valley State University

Since 1975, the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) has studied undergraduate and graduate public relations education standards and practices, with the bulk of its effort being to lessen the gap between the profession and the academy at the undergraduate level. In 1999, the CPRE “Port of Entry” report addressed the university as the official “port of entry” for those who seek to make public relations a career, citing both undergraduate and graduate education as the tooling and retooling centers of the public relations profession. Then, the last official CPRE report on graduate education was released in 2012, “Standards for a Master’s Degree in Public Relations: Educating for Complexity.” With the growth of master’s-level public relations education in recent years and the splintering of methods, modes of delivery, theory, and practice, this special issue attempts to bridge the gap that exists in pedagogy related to PR graduate education with an issue solely dedicated to graduate education in public relations.

The purpose of this special issue call is to invite research articles, teaching briefs, scholarly and critical essays, and case studies, and we are especially interested in articles that explore BOTH the challenges

and opportunities for public relations pedagogy focusing on graduate-level education in the public relations classroom. Submissions that offer practical knowledge and guidance for **ONLY graduate** public relations education are encouraged. We invite original submissions, and areas of focus could include but are not limited to:

- How practitioner expectations align with graduate education
- Best practices for internships in applied master’s programs
- Applied theory at the graduate level
- International approaches to graduate education
- Developing research and data analytical abilities for practice
- How graduate programs connect with the demands of the profession
- Innovative approaches to graduate education (e.g., unique course offerings, new ideas for projects and assignments)
- CEPR graduate-level certifications (e.g., tips, benefits)

Submission Guidelines:

Submissions should follow the [Author Guidelines](#) on the *JPRE* website. Authors should include the **special call name (SIGradPR)** in parentheses after their manuscript title to indicate the submission is for this particular special call. Authors should submit their manuscript through [Scholastica](#), the online submission system for *JPRE*. All submissions will be anonymously reviewed, following the guidelines of *JPRE*. Authors must use APA style for citations, references, tables, figures, and captions, plus follow the [JPRE Styleguide](#). All identifying information

JPRE special issue call for papers

continued from previous page

must be deleted before full paper submissions.

Timeline with Key Dates:

- Deadline for full manuscript submission to JPRE's Scholastica submission portal: <https://jpre.scholasticahq.com/> - **08/07/2025**
- Notification of review results, including invitations for revision and resubmission (R&R): **August 2025**
- Deadline for R&R submission: **09/30/2025**
- Scheduled Publication: **January 2026 12(1)**

If you have any questions, please contact the guest editors for additional information.

- Dr. Pamela Bourland-Davis, Georgia Southern University, pamelagb@georgiasouthern.edu
- Dr. Emily S. Kinsky, West Texas A&M University, ekinsky@wtamu.edu
- Dr. Chuck Lubbers, University of South Dakota, chuck.lubbers@usd.edu

Register now for the Public Interest Communications Summer Institute

The Public Interest Communication Educators Network invites you to the 2025 Public Interest Communications Summer Institute, June 3-5 in Atlanta, Georgia at the Georgia State University campus.

The Public Interest Institute is three-day institute for university and college faculty, students, researchers, administrators and professionals who want to learn more and share knowledge about the growing academic discipline of public interest communications.

The theme for this year's institute is "Rekindling Progress in a Polarized World." This year's institute is co-sponsored by the Georgia State University Department of Communication.

Registration is \$120. Graduate students are invited to pay-what-you-can (suggested \$50), and registration for Undergraduate students is \$10. Register online at the [Public Interest Communications Summer Institute](#) website.

Public interest communication is strategic communications based in research to advanced sustained, positive social change in areas ranging from climate crisis and economic inequities to health care access. The growing academic discipline draws on public relations, journalism and other disciplines.

Programming for the institute includes sessions on communicating about public health crisis communication, aging and public health, civil rights and democracy, digital access, leadership, documentary filmmaking for social change.

Graduate students will have an opportunity to develop their research and presentation skills with peers and faculty from around the country. While undergraduate students can participate in a pitch competition and network with professional in public interest communications.

More information can be found on the [Public Interest Communications Summer Institute](#) website. Direct questions to Angela Bradbery, abradbery@jou.ufl.edu.

What's on my coffee table?

By **Jeff Ranta**, Coastal Carolina University

Public Relations Writing
Essential Tools for
Effective Storytelling by
Valerie "VK" Fields

Published by SAGE, 2025

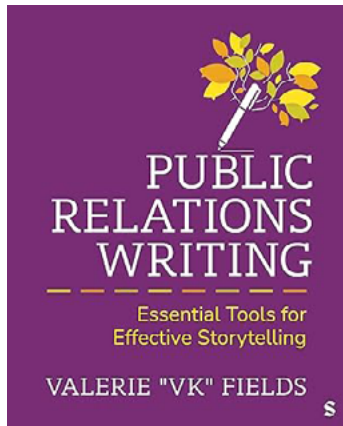
ISBN 9781071856468

So at the end of the day,
what is one of the top five
skills needed for someone
to be successful in the practice of public relations?

I think almost all of us will agree that the ability to write—communicate with the written word—is absolutely critical. In multiple decades of experience as a public affairs officer and c-suite leader of public relations agencies and departments as well as an academic, writing has been and still remains one of the critical talents needed for success in this applied field.

It is from this perspective I recommend *Public Relations Writing: Essential Tools for Effective Storytelling* by Valerie "VK" Fields. The 382-page book, published by SAGE in 2025 is a wonderful break down of the many areas of written communication where PR professionals must excel. The book is a wonderfully organized collection of topics more than suitable for courses dealing with advanced writing, introductory writing or as a supplement to any number of specialty courses.

Each chapter is concise and designed for one or two classes within a semester-long course. Each chapter also offers discussion questions and writing assignments for homework or in-class work.



As the author stated in the preface, the book is a “step-by-step instructional “how to” guide that provides basic and straightforward approaches to writing PR documents... The book is organized such that a PR student or professional student of the industry can simply turn to any chapter and learn how to complete specific writing tasks.”

Especially relevant chapters include Chapter 2 Public Relations Industry Standards and Ethics; Chapter 4 Creating Newsworthy Content that Gets Coverage; Chapter 7 Websites, Online and Social Media Content, and AI; Chapter 15 Creative Content; Chapter 16 Branding; and Chapters 10 and 11 Internal Communication Tools and External Communication Tools respectively.

The text is richly illustrated with full-color photos, tables, and examples. Also impressive is an informative glossary of terminology with excellent definitions.

All in all an excellent book useful as a primary text or supplemental readings for many of our writing-intensive public relations courses.

From the Editor:

If you have a book or other reading that you think would interest the members of the AEJMC PRD, please feel free to reach out with a review for our “On my coffee table” segment.

Email: jrant@coastal.edu

The 2025 Lionel C. Barrow Jr. Award for Distinguished Achievement in Diversity Research and Education Call

Nominations are due May 1, 2025

The Lionel C. Barrow Jr. Award for Distinguished Achievement in Diversity Research and Education recognizes outstanding individual accomplishment and leadership in diversity efforts for underrepresented groups by race and ethnicity in journalism and mass communication.

One of the prestigious honors within the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), the Barrow Award for Distinguished Achievement is jointly supported by the Commission on the Status of Minorities (CSMN) and the Minorities and Communication (MAC) Division.

The late Dr. Lionel (Lee) C. Barrow Jr. was a longtime AEJMC member who provided leadership and guidance during his many years of service. In 1968, Dr. Barrow founded the Ad Hoc Committee on Minority Education to recruit, train and place minorities in communications. In 1970, he founded and became the acting head of the Minorities and Communication Division. The Communication Theory and Methodology Division renamed its diversity scholarship for him in 1997, the same year he received the AEJMC Presidential Award for his contributions. In 2005, he was recognized with one of AEJMC's highest honors, the Distinguished Service Award, for his outstanding service in promoting diversity within the association and the discipline.

This award honors Dr. Barrow's lasting impact and recognizes others who are making their mark in diversifying journalism and mass communication

education. The Lionel C. Barrow Jr. Award will be presented during the 2025 AEJMC annual conference in San Francisco.

Judging Criteria

Barrow finalists are judged by their outstanding contributions in two of the three following areas: (1) a sustained record over time of publication on racial and ethnic minorities in journalism and mass communication; and/or (2) a sustained record over time of contribution to teaching and service of racial and ethnic minorities in journalism and mass communication; and/or (3) the publication of an influential book on racial and ethnic minorities in journalism and mass communication.

Applicants do NOT have to wait to be nominated by an AEJMC member to apply but must include two letters of support from AEJMC members in their packets.

Application Process

Application packets should contain the following:

1. Applicant's personal statement of no more than 350 words describing the "big picture" of their research or of their teaching/service, including personal philosophies and/or outcomes. A nomination based on an impactful book should briefly share the story behind the book and how it came to be.
2. A three-page CV outlining specific information pertinent to the application.

(continued on next page) 15

The 2025 Lionel C. Barrow Jr. Award for Distinguished Achievement in Diversity Research and Education Call

continued from previous page

3. Two letters of support from AEJMC members, with at least one explicitly naming the applicant's specific area of contributions.
4. Additional materials, which might include (but are not limited to) abstracts of research findings; professional papers and published articles (no more than five total); text of a speech delivered or prepared for delivery; course outlines, innovative teaching tools or teaching evaluations; or other recognition pertaining to the applicant.

The entire application packet should be combined into one .pdf file and be no longer than 15 .pdf pages (including additional materials). Applications exceeding this length will be disqualified.

Entries should be emailed to Dr. Danielle K. Brown, head of the Minorities in Communication Division, at dkbrown@msu.edu by 11:59 p.m. EDT by May 1, 2025. Please make sure to reference the Barrow Award in your subject line.

Gene Burd Urban Journalism Award 2025

Deadline for nominations is April 30, 2025

Do you know of a great urban journalist?

As it has for the last several years, AEJMC is partnering this year with the Urban Communication Foundation in the awarding of the Gene Burd Urban Journalism Award. This \$5,000 award recognizes high-quality urban reporting or critical analysis relevant to city problems, programs, policies, and public priorities in urban life and culture.

The award, for a journalist with a distinguished record of work in urban journalism, will be presented at AEJMC's annual conference in San Francisco in August.

Nominations must include a letter of nomination, a brief resume for the individual, and four supporting materials (e.g., links to articles or other media work, endorsements, or other appropriate information).

Electronic submissions only – in the form of email with attachments – should be sent to Lillian Coleman at Lillian@aejmc.org. The deadline for nominations is April 30.

This award is named after Gene Burd, retired professor of journalism at the University of Texas, who endowed the Urban Communication Foundation.

For further information, please contact Susan Keith (chair, Burd Awards Committee) at susank@comminfo.rutgers.edu.

Previous Recipients

- 2024 - No award
- 2023 - George Villanueva
- 2022 - E. James West and Hatim El-Hibr
- 2021 - Susan A. Phillips
- 2020 - Benjamin Stokes

member shout-outs

Valerie “VK” Fields *UNC-Chapel Hill*



Congratulations to Valerie “VK” Fields for her new book [Public Relations Writing Essential Tools for Storytelling](#)

by SAGE. Fields has a degree in journalism and mass communication, specializing in public relations, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She also earned a bachelor’s master’s and doctoral degree from New Covenant Bible Institute.

Fields has worked in PR for some of the world’s most well-known organizations including Walt Disney World Resort, McDonald’s Corporation, and the Ronald McDonald Children’s Charities of North Carolina. She is also founder and chief executive of PR PROS LLC, an award-winning public relations and content creation agency in Raleigh, NC.

“It’s exciting to know that my textbook is helping students develop the skills they need to succeed in the innovative and fast-paced world of Public Relations. The interest, enthusiasm, and engagement from students this semester have made this journey even more meaningful, and I’m grateful for their positive response,” said Fields.

Her book, “Public Relations Writing: Essential Tools for Storytelling” is profiled in this quarter’s newsletter in the What’s On My Coffee Table segment.



Kim Marks Malone *University of Memphis*

Kim was appointed as the PRSA representative to the to the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB).

Kim serves as the Associate Chair for Undergraduate Studies, Associate Professor of Practice in Public Relations, and Online Programs Coordinator in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Memphis. Additionally, she is the Faculty Adviser for Meeman 901 Strategies and the Memphis PRSSA chapter. Kim also holds the position of Immediate Past President of PRSA Memphis.

Wangari (Anne) Njathi *Pepperdine University*

Brandi Watkins *Virginia Tech*

Digital Marketing, PR and Communication Trends in Africa, edited by Wangari (Anne) Njathi (Pepperdine University) and Brandi Watkins (Virginia Tech), is now available. The book showcases digital public relations and marketing trends in Africa and features scholarship from authors who are either from or have close ties to Africa.

Despite the increase in usage and adoption of the Internet in Africa, there is limited information about digital marketing trends on the continent. This book is among the first to present an edited collection of chapters on digital and influencer marketing.

Chapters interrogate digital public relations and marketing trends including the status of digital marketing on the African continent, including case studies from Nigeria, Egypt, Uganda, and Kenya. Chapters also analyze the rise of influencer marketing in Nigeria and Uganda. The book explores factors driving the increase in digital media platforms in Africa as well as an analysis of the implications of the growth in digital marketing, using various theoretical and methodological approaches.

Digital Marketing, PR and Communication Trends in Africa is published by Routledge and is available [on the publisher’s website](#).

on the job market update

Postings submitted by **Lois Boynton**, UNC-Chapel Hill

Midwestern State University, Texas - Instructor or Assistant Professor, Public Relations/Advertising

The Department of Mass Communication at invites applications for a faculty position in public relations and advertising to begin August 2025. We have recently overhauled our curriculum, which now includes an on-campus advertising/PR agency, general advertising/PR courses and more specific courses such as event planning.

A master's degree in mass communication or a related field, and substantial professional experience with public relations or advertising, is required for the rank of instructor on non-tenure track. A doctorate or terminal degree in mass communication or a related field is required for the rank of assistant professor on tenure track.

Send a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, teaching philosophy statement, copies of unofficial transcripts, and contact information for three references to sara.conyers@msutexas.edu. General questions may be directed to department chair Dr. Jim Sernoe at jim.sernoe@msutexas.edu.

Review of applications begins immediately. Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo) – Assistant/Associate Professor of Communication

The School of Communication at Western Michigan University invites applications for a full-time, academic year, tenure-track position in digital media, interactive design, and user experience at the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor, to begin August 2026. Candidates with scholarship that demonstrates a commitment to social justice issues are especially encouraged to apply.

Ph.D. Communication, Mass Communication, or relevant discipline (ABDs are eligible for consideration but are required to complete their degree requirements by August 4, 2026). The ideal applicant is a scholar with the desire to teach foundational courses in digital media as well as interactive design, participatory content creation, and user-centered messaging. Preferred qualifications include experience teaching major non-linear editing software in the Macintosh environment (e.g., Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro), with the ability to adapt to rapid advances in digital video technology.

Applicants should visit <http://www.wmich.edu/hr/jobs> to apply. Submit - Curriculum vita, Letter of application that addresses fulfillment of qualifications and demonstrates skills, knowledge, and/or success in diversity, equity, and inclusion work; Three samples of teaching materials (e.g., syllabi, assignments, prepared materials for class); contact information for three references; unofficial copies of graduate transcripts. <https://community.aejmc.org/job-portal/western-michigan-university>

on the job market update

Samford University, Assistant Professor, Department of Communications and Media

Samford University's Howard College of Arts and Sciences invites individuals interested in serving in a Christian university environment to submit applications for a full-time, non-tenure-track Assistant Professor or Instructor position in the Department of Communication and Media, beginning August 2025. This is a 9-month appointment with a 3-year renewable term.

Qualified candidates will have relevant professional experience and ability to teach courses in at least one of these areas: journalism (photojournalism, visual storytelling), film or media production, broadcasting, public relations, or advertising. The position will carry a seven-course-per-year teaching load, either 4/3 or 3/4. At the Assistant Professor level, qualified candidates will hold a Ph.D. in mass communication, communication, or a closely related field from an accredited college or university. At the Instructor level, qualified candidates will hold a master's degree in mass communication, communication, or a closely related field.

<https://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/journalism-and-mass-communication/>

Review of applications will begin March 24, and applications will continue to be accepted until April 7, 2025.

Please submit an application letter, curriculum vitae with names and contact information of three references, description of teaching experience and interests, along with Application for Faculty Position, https://www.samford.edu/departments/files/Human_Resources/application-for-faculty-employment.pdf, and Faculty Applicant Christian Mission Statement: <https://www.samford.edu/departments/files/academic-affairs/Faculty-Applicant-Christian-Mission-Statement.docx> in PDF format to FACAPP@samford.edu Dr. Ignatius Fosu, Search Committee Chair. ATTN: Communications & Media - 3 year ifosu@samford.edu <https://www.aejmc.org/job-portal/samford-university>

University of Miami – Visiting Scholar in Communication

The University of Miami's School of Communication seeks applications for a one-year appointment at the Visiting Assistant Professor rank beginning Fall 2025. This position will begin August 15, 2025, and terminate May 15, 2026 (9-month). Ph.D. degree in communication or a related field, with expertise in research methods required.

The position entails teaching four courses and service on behalf of the School. Potential subjects of graduate and undergraduate courses might include quantitative research, computational approaches such as text mining, big data analytics, Python programming, and network analysis, as well as UX research methodologies to analyze audience behavior and media engagement. Interested and qualified candidates should apply online and submit a cover letter and a current CV. <https://community.aejmc.org/job-portal/university-of-miami3>

North Dakota State University (Fargo) – Tenure-Track Faculty - Multimedia, Broadcast, and/or Strategic Communication

The Department of Communication (<http://www.ndsu.edu/communication>) seeks a student-oriented colleague to teach undergraduate and graduate students in the areas of multimedia, broadcast, and/or strategic communication. Load is two classes a semester, plus research and service contributions.

Ph.D. in communication or related field required by date of appointment. Practical experience in one or more of the following: social media, digital storytelling, journalism, strategic communication, video production, or data analytics. Demonstrable teaching effectiveness in undergraduate courses in convergence media, data-driven journalism, strategic communication campaigns, or another specialty.

Applicants should submit a letter detailing their qualifications and reasons for interest in the position, a CV, statement of research interests, teaching philosophy, evidence of teaching effectiveness, and names and contact information of three to five professional references. Review of applications will begin April 1, 2025. The position will remain open until filled.

<https://community.aejmc.org/job-portal/north-dakota-state-university>

Coastal Carolina University (Conway, SC) – Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication

Coastal Carolina University invites applications for a Visiting Assistant Professor in Communication, or related fields, to begin in August 2025 with the possibility of renewal for up to two years. Candidates must have a Ph.D. in Communication, Journalism, Mass Communication, or a closely related discipline. ABD candidates with a clear plan for degree completion prior to May 31, 2026, may be considered.

The teaching load is three courses per academic semester and may include face-to-face, hybrid, or distance learning deliveries, to teach foundation courses, including communication theory and communication research. Preference will be given to those whose area of expertise is in Film Studies, Film Production, Social Media, or Intercultural Communication.

Interested candidates should submit electronically a letter of application indicating teaching experience or ability and research agenda; curriculum vitae; unofficial graduate transcripts; and names and contact information for three references to <https://www.schooljobs.com/careers/ccu/jobs/4804349/visiting-assistant-professor-in-communication>

Posting Number: PFAC202500496

Kansas Wesleyan University (Salina, KS) – Assistant Professor of Communication (tenure-track)

Kansas Wesleyan University is seeking applicants for a tenure-track position in the Department of Communications to teach Public Relations and Media Writing, along with two sections of Public Speaking per semester (12 credit hours per semester). The ideal candidate will teach both practical communication skills and theory.

Candidates should have an MA in communication or related field and college-level teaching experience. Submit cover letter, resume/curriculum vitae, three references, teaching philosophy, unofficial transcript Complete position description and submission requirements at <https://www.kwu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Assistant-Professor-of-Communications-TT-Feb-2025.pdf>

Chinese University of Hong Kong – Postdoctoral Fellow

The School of Journalism and Communication at The Chinese University of Hong Kong is seeking a postdoctoral fellow (2400035A). The position starts in August 2025 (with some flexibility) and is initially a one-year contract, with the possibility of renewal for up to two years.

Applicants should have a Ph.D. degree in Communication or a related discipline (e.g., Media Studies, Marketing). Particular interest in candidates with expertise in public relations and corporate social responsibility communication, who should have a solid background in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and preferably demonstrate proficiency in computational and big data analysis.

Applicants should submit a cover letter; a CV; and evidence of related experience. The University only accepts and considers applications submitted online for the post above via the CUHK career site. For more information and to apply online, please visit <http://career.cuhk.edu.hk>.

https://cuhk.taleo.net/careersection/cu_career_non_teach/jobdetail.ftl?job=2400035A&tz=GMT%2B08%3A00&tzname=Asia%2FHong_Kong

If you have positions you wish to share inviting new colleagues to join your institution, please feel free to forward them to jranta@coastal.edu for publication in our next newsletter.