

= Public Relations Society of America =

The Public Relations Society of America ( PRSA ) is a nonprofit trade association for public relations professionals headquartered in New York City . It was founded in 1947 by combining the American Council on Public Relations and the National Association of Public Relations Councils . That year it had its first annual conference and award ceremony . In the 1950s and 1960s , the society created its code of conduct , accreditation program and a student society called the Public Relations Student Society of America . In the 1970s and 1980s , its membership attained a stronger female demographic and the society had its first female Presidents . PRSA created a definition of public relations in 1982 , which was updated with a crowd @-@ sourced version in 2011 .

PRSA is governed by a Leadership Assembly that consists of delegates representing its membership , a board of directors and various committees and task forces . Positions are elected and served on a volunteer basis . PRSA hosts an accreditation program , industry awards , networking events and a code of conduct . PRSA also advocates on behalf of the public relations industry for changes in education and for the credibility of the profession .

= = History = =

The Public Relations Society of America was formed in 1947 by combining the American Council on Public Relations and the National Association of Public Relations Councils . The society had its first annual conference in Philadelphia , where Richard Falk was given PRSA 's first " annual citation " for advancing the field of public relations . Several ethical violations in the field led to discussions about ethics within the society . At the 1952 annual conference , a speaker used Adolf Hitler as an example of the potential abuse of communications . The society published its first code of conduct and its first Anvil awards two years later . The code of conduct was later ratified in 1959 and again in 1963 . PRSA merged with the American Public Relations Association in 1961 and started its accreditation program for public relations professionals the next year . The Public Relations Student Society of America ( PRSSA ) was created in 1967 based on suggestions by Professor Walter Seifer of Ohio State University .

In the 1970s to early 1980s , PRSA 's female membership base increased , coinciding with more women pursuing a career in the field . PRSA had its first female President in 1972 and a second female President in 1983 . In 1981 , 78 percent of PRSA 's student society were women , up from 38 percent in 1968 . The society grew to 9 @,@ 000 members by 1981 , up from 4 @,@ 500 members in 1960 . In 1977 , the Federal Trade Commission ( FTC ) said PRSA 's code of conduct inhibited fair competition by requiring members not to solicit clients from other members . It issued a consent order that required PRSA to remove content from its code of conduct that contained sexist language , discouraged soliciting clients from other members or encouraged price @-@ fixing activities . PRSA 's first definition of public relations was created in 1982 as " Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other . " In 1986 , PRSA 's then President Anthony Franco resigned from his post after it was revealed he was accused of insider trading by the Securities Exchange Commission . The PRSA 's philanthropy arm , the PRSA Foundation , was founded in 1990 .

In 1994 O 'Dwyer from the O 'Dwyer 's PR trade journal alleged that PRSA was violating copyright laws by lending articles from USA Today , The New York Times , O 'Dwyer 's and others to members . Although O 'Dwyer has been a critic of PRSA since the 1970s , this is often considered the beginning of a long @-@ term dispute between PRSA and O 'Dwyer that PR News described as a " never @-@ ending back @-@ and @-@ forth . " In 1996 and 2011 O 'Dwyer criticized PRSA on issues such as financial transparency , auditing and spending in the context of proposed increases in membership dues . PRSA said the increases were caused by an increase in services to members .

In 2000 , PRSA and the Institute of Public Relations signed a mutual declaration saying the two would work together in areas like ethics , education , accreditation , professional development and new media . The society started two efforts to revise its definition of public relations in 2003 and

2007 , but neither moved forward . In November 2011 , PRSA led an initiative called Public Relations Defined , in order to create a crowd @-@ sourced definition of public relations . 927 submissions were made on PRSA 's website filling in the blanks to the statement : " Public relations ( does what ) with or for ( whom ) to ( do what ) for ( what purpose ) . ? The winning definition was : " a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their bodies . " According to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations ( CIPR ) " reactions to the new PRSA definition were mixed and views vigorously debated . "

In 2011 PRSA publicized accusations that O 'Dwyer had been eavesdropping on PRSA 's conference calls . Later that year PRSA started refusing O 'Dwyer entrance to their events and sent a 23 @-@ page letter to O 'Dwyer describing his behavior as disruptive and unethical . The National Press Club tried to negotiate his entrance unsuccessfully .

= = Organization = =

PRSA is organized as a 501 ( c ) ( 6 ) not @-@ for @-@ profit organization and governed by a set of bylaws . A Chair is nominated each year and elected based on a vote of the Leadership Assembly . The Leadership Assembly consists of one delegate for every 100 members , as well as anyone that holds an elected office . Elected positions within PRSA are held on a volunteer @-@ basis . A Board of Directors can propose membership fee changes that must be approved by the assembly . The board has the authority to create or dissolve task forces and committees as well as revoke or reward membership status . PRSA 's Board of Ethics and Professional Standards and the Universal Accreditation Board make recommendations on the code of conduct and accreditation programs respectively . PRSA has more than 100 chapters in ten districts , 300 student chapters and 14 interest groups .

Since the 1970s , the PRSA had restricted the right to sit in the group 's national assembly or to seek election to the national board to those possessing an APR certification . The requirement for the assembly was dropped in 2004 , but was maintained for those seeking board membership . In 2010 a revolt led by Richard Edelman and a group calling itself " the Committee for a Democratic PRSA " called for the restriction to be scrapped . The attempt to overturn the rule was defeated in a vote during that year 's session of the assembly . In 2003 a proposal to amend the society 's bylaws to allow non @-@ accredited professionals to run for PRSA 's offices was defeated , but the motion passed the following year .

= = Services = =

PRSA hosts an accreditation program called APR ( accreditation in public relations ) that evaluates a PR professional in four categories : research , planning , implementation and evaluation . Accreditation is usually granted to candidates with five to seven years of experience upon completion of written and oral examinations . About 20 percent of PRSA 's members are accredited . PRSA hosts the Anvil awards , which are issued based on four components : research , planning , execution and evaluation . The Gold Anvil is awarded to individuals . The Silver Anvil is awarded for strategy and the Bronze for tactics . It also issues awards such as Grand Gold Pick , Rookie of the Year , Lifetime Achievement and PR person of the year .

PRSA 's Public Relations Journal was published from October 1945 to 1995 . Its original mission statement was " to carry articles that deal with fundamental public relations problems , as they currently press for solution . " The journal was comparable to a text @-@ heavy academic periodical . PRSA still publishes The Strategist and Tactics . The Strategist is a quarterly glossy magazine intended for executives , while Tactics is a monthly news tabloid .

The Public Relations Society of America publishes a code of ethics . Members that violate the code may have their membership revoked , usually under its mandate that members " not engage in any practice which tends to corrupt the integrity of channels of public communication " and that members act " in accord with public welfare . " The code also expects PRSA members to identify the source of their communications , avoid derogatory methods and avoid abusing insider information . According

to the code of conduct , members should " protect and advance the free flow of accurate and truthful information ; foster informed decision @-@ making through open communication ... and work to strengthen the public 's trust in the profession . " The code states that members " adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth . " A story in CBS criticized the code : " Show me a PR person who is ' accurate ' and ' truthful , ' and I 'll show you a PR person who is unemployed . " The code of ethics has been revised in 1954 , 1959 , 1963 , 1977 , 1983 , 1988 and 2000 .

= = Research and advocacy = =

The Public Relations Society of America and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication commissioned studies in 1975 and 1987 on the state of public relations in education . They found that too many classes were taught by educators with little or no experience in the field and that most didn 't have a post @-@ graduate degree . Several standards in education were established by the studies , including that 75 percent of coursework for PR professionals be outside the major . In 1991 , PRSA hosted a Task Force on the Structure and Role on Public Relations , which found that public relations teachers still lacked practical experience . In 1993 PRSA published a Professional Career Guide , which classified skills and knowledge that were needed at five different levels of someone 's career . PRSA also advocates that MBA programs include communications programs , so business executives will be more prepared for a crisis .

PRSA advocates for the trust , credibility and respect of public relations as a profession , believing that PR can facilitate open communication that allows for an informed public and supports the democratic process . In 1999 , a National Credibility Index from PRSA found that PR professionals were among the least credible of professions as a spokesperson . The PRSA objected to the actions of the Redner Group in 2011 , when the PR firm threatened to blacklist media that gave Duke Nukem negative reviews . In 2012 a Senate subcommittee investigated the communications and advertising spend of eleven government agencies . PRSA opposed the investigation , presenting that the effort dismissed the value of public relations in government .