The Leading Edge
An Update for Chapter Leaders on NSPRA Business and Board Actions
Issue: March 2016

The Leading Edge is an update for NSPRA Chapter officers sent out following NSPRA Executive Board meetings during the year. Executive Board meetings are held in July, November and March. In it we will update you on important chapter information and deadlines and provide a summary of Board actions impacting the Association. We encourage you to read through this news update and to forward it to your chapter members as well.

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NSPRA Executive Board March Meeting

The NSPRA Executive Board met March 10-12, 2016 at the Marriot Residence Inn in Gaithersburg, Md.

Strategic Learning
On March 10, the Board participated in a Strategic Learning session under the guidance of an outside facilitator. This process is conducted every 3-4 years and is designed to assist the Board in planning for the future of NSPRA. In preparation for the session, SWOT surveys were sent to identified member leaders, including current Chapter officers, former Board members, past and current Front-Runners, and 35 Under 35 honorees. The Board also reviewed the most recent and NSPRA Member Surveys, a technology vision report prepared by a sub-committee of the Board, and the current Operational Plan.

The Board identified several strategic areas of focus that must be researched, vetted and evaluated for feasibility of implementation based on resources, personnel and budget. As work on our strategic long-range planning proceeds, we will keep chapter leaders apprised of our progress.

The regular Board Meeting was held March 11 & 12. Some business of interest to chapters includes:

- **2016 Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Award Recipient Selected**
  The Board approved the selection of Tim Hensley, APR, assistant to the superintendent for Floyd County Schools in Rome, Ga., and a past NSPRA President, as the 2016 Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Award recipient. He will be featured in the April issue of eNetwork and be recognized at the Chicago Seminar during the July 19 General Session for his support and mentoring of colleagues in the school PR profession.

- **2016 NSPRA Scholarship Recipients Named**
  The Board named the following members to receive scholarships to the Nashville Seminar:
• **Joelle Doye**, communications director, Mineral Point (WI) Unified School District – NSPRA Foundation scholarship with $250 stipend

• **Hillary Wright**, coordinator of communications/public relations & assistant to superintendent, Washington County Schools, Springfield, KY – NSPRA Foundation scholarship with $250 stipend

• **Wesley Drey**, communications specialist, Edina (MN) Public Schools – Dawn K. McDowell Memorial Scholarship

• **Tove Tupper**, web & social media manager, Highline Public Schools, Burien, WA – Don Bagin Memorial Scholarship

• **Gina Nielsen**, communications specialist, Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District, Roseville, CA – Pat Jackson Seminar Scholarship

• **Patricia Burgio, APR**, director of communications, Lancaster (NY Central School District – Executive Board’s Chicago Seminar Scholarship

• **Sapna Kollali**, public information office, Madison-Oneida BOCES, Verona, NY – ClickTime Seminar Scholarship

In addition, **Joey Austin**, director of communications, St. Joseph (MO) School District was selected to receive the 2016 Barry Gaskins Mentor Legacy Scholarship by last year’s Gaskins Award recipient David Luther.

All scholarships are provided through the NSPRA Foundation for the Advancement of Education, with the exception of the Executive Board’s Chicago Seminar Scholarship, which is a personal donation of the Executive Director Rich Bagin, APR, given as a gift to the NSPRA Executive Board.

**Board Approves Continuation of Vice President at-Large Focus Area of Communication Technology & Innovation**

Current Vice President at-Large for Communication Technology & Innovation Evelyn McCormack will retire from the Board in September after serving three years. The Board approved a recommendation to continue this area of focus for another two-year term. Executive Director Rich Bagin, APR, will identify and recommend a candidate to the Board for approval to continue the work Evelyn has done in this area.

**Board Revises NSPRA Goals and Beliefs**

Based on a review and recommendations by a sub-committee of the Executive Board, the Board approved revisions to the Goals and Beliefs statements, which have not been revised since 2008 and 2006 respectively. In addition, the Board will be seeking feedback from members at the Leaders’ Meeting in Chicago this summer on developing a set of Core Values for the Association.

**Current Project Team Updates**

**Employee Engagement** – the Employee Engagement Project Team is in the process of completing work on compiling best practices and strategies for a new resource kit designed to improve morale and internal relationships and engage employees more effectively in
leadership development and creating positive work environments. They plan to roll out the new kit at the Chicago Seminar in July and will be presenting a session on the topic.

**Diversity and Communication Equity Task Force** – the Task Force is continuing to expand and build on the work accomplished by the Diversity Engagement Project Team. They have assisted in coordinating a Diversity and Equity Communication session track for the Chicago Seminar and contributed “Connecting Communities” columns for *enNetwork* this year. This task force will continue its work in 2016-17 and members interested in becoming involved should contact VP of Diversity Engagement Stephen Nichols, APR, at kyle.stephen@gmail.com or Associate Director Karen Kleinz, APR at kkleinznspra.org.

**School Communication Benchmarking** – this team has reconvened this year to develop a fifth critical function area on Crisis Communication and Management for *NSPRA’s Rubrics of Practice and Suggested Measures*. They hope to complete their work sometime this fall.

- **NSPRA Receives Grant from Learning First Alliance**
  NSPRA has received a $15,000 from the Learning First Alliance (LFA), as part of a larger grant LFA received from the Gates Foundation. The funds will be used to provide content and resources for implementing strategic messaging about student assessment results.

- **NSPRA Partners on Two New Services**
  NSPRA is now a partner with SCoPE (School Communications Performance Evaluations) survey service and with Voss & Associates MediaTalk online training service. NSPRA members receive a 5% discount on these services.

**Chicago Seminar Updates**

There’s still time to save if you [register](#) and pay to attend the NSPRA Seminar by May 20, 2016. The [2016 Chicago Seminar](#) will be held from July 17-20 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown. [Access information about additional hotels here](#).

Members and non-members from NSPRA’s North Central Region (Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Manitoba, and Northwestern Ontario) receive an additional $100 discount when you register.

**Check Out Our Program Changes**

Based on feedback from participants at last year’s Seminar in Nashville, we have made a number of significant changes to the [Seminar program schedule](#) for Chicago. These include:

**Networking Sessions** – Eight Job Alike/Special Topic (i.e., one-person PR office, web/digital/video management, under age 35 PR pros, social media, etc.) targeted networking opportunities have been added as well as a multi-table Open Dialogue session where participants name and lead conversations and a Seminar Learning Debrief session.

**Choice Options for Two-Hour Blocks** – Along with two additional Action Lab/Special Sessions participants can opt to attend one-hour skill sessions during those time blocks instead.
Diversity and Equity Communication Track – This year we are offering a session track focused on topics around cultural competence, tolerance, inclusiveness, diversity and equity communication issues.

- **NSPRA Annual Meeting & Celebration of Achievement/Leaders’ Meeting Sunday July 17**
  Please plan to attend the Annual Meeting & Celebration of Achievement and Leaders’ Meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 17. This year’s Mark of Distinction Award-winning chapters will be honored and members will hear from candidates for NSPRA President-elect.

  The Leaders’ Meeting is an important meeting for new and continuing chapter officers to learn about responsibilities for the year and connect with other leaders. It will be held following the Annual Meeting. Officers will receive an invitation this spring, but please advise current and incoming officers of the date so they can mark their calendars now.

- **Regional Colleague Connections Meetings**
  Following the annual Leaders’ Meeting, please plan to attend (and encourage your chapter members to attend) the Regional Colleague Connections meetings from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, July 17. This is another opportunity for you to meet with your NSPRA Regional VP and network with members from chapters in your region to talk about issues and concerns. The Northeast, Mideast and Southwest Regions will also have a chance to hear from their candidates for the NSPRA Executive Board.

- **Join the Chapter Chat Caffeinated Connections dialogue on Wednesday morning at the Seminar**
  In addition to our Leaders’ Meeting conversations, President-elect Julie Thannum, APR, will be hosting a “Chapter Chat” table on Wednesday morning at the Caffeinated Connections session from 9:00 – 10:15 a.m., so you’ll have an additional opportunity to talk about chapter issues and challenges with colleagues.

**Approaching Chapter Deadlines**

- **May 15, 2016**
  Chapter “Mark of Distinction” entries due in to NSPRA
- **May 30, 2016**
  Chapter officer election results (for 2016-17) due to NSPRA
- **June 1, 2016**
  NSPRA Learning & Liberty Legacy Leader nominations due
- **June 27, 2016**
  Chapter report updates due in the Regional Vice Presidents

**Don’t Forget to Check…**

- The latest Regional Chapter Reports to stay updated on what other chapters are doing and gather good ideas for your own chapter activities.
- Upcoming Chapter Conferences and Events around the country and post your own.
Chapter Reminders to Note

“Mark of Distinction” Chapter Recognition Program
Applications Due May 15!

The “Mark of Distinction” Chapter Recognition Program offers expanded recognition opportunities for chapters of all sizes. There are two entry sections – Membership Building and Special Focus Areas, as well as two categories within them based on current membership percentages. Chapters can enter one or all of the Special Focus Areas as well as Membership Building, and have an opportunity to receive numerous recognition incentives, from discounts on Seminar registrations, to PR Power Hours, professional memberships, and other offerings. Recognized chapters will be able to use the special “Mark of Distinction” (shown above) on their websites and chapter newsletters and stationery. Access the Entry Form here.

Entry Process – All entries should be submitted electronically in a single PDF per entry, so please read the entry instructions carefully. Our goal is to capture successful chapter ideas and best practices to share as resources and to simplify the entry process for you.

We hope you will take the time to review the categories and enter your chapter this year in one or more categories and earn incentives that benefit chapter members. Chapters who earn the “Mark of Distinction” will be recognized at the Annual Meeting held on July 17 at the Chicago Seminar. Deadline for entries is May 15.

Chapter Officer Election Results Due in to NSPRA by May 30

Please be sure to send us the complete contact information on your newly elected chapter officers for 2016-17 as soon as your election is complete. It is also important to remember that in order to serve as chapter president, president-elect, treasurer, and VP of membership/programs (or other designated position), your officers also are required to hold a professional membership in NSPRA, as stated in NSPRA and chapter bylaws. If elected officers are unable to join NSPRA themselves and the chapter is not in a position to pay for their membership, you will have to hold another election with eligible candidates, so we encourage you to notify candidates in advance of this requirement.

The annual NSPRA Leaders’ Meeting for new and continuing chapter officers will be held at the Chicago Seminar on Sunday, July 17 at 1:00 p.m. Officers will receive an invitation this spring, but please advise current and incoming officers of the date so they can mark their calendars.

Access Important Chapter Information and Resources at www.nspra.org

You can find all the important information you need as a chapter leader on our website. Go to the Chapters tab under NSPRA Info and follow the menu to Updates for Chapter Leaders to access
the list of **deadlines, Cash Flow report form, the “Mark of Distinction” chapter recognition program application, scholarship and recognition nomination forms**, and other chapter resource items. You can also post your conferences and events under NSPRA Info/Chapters/Chapter Conferences and Events.

If you have questions or need additional information or assistance, contact Associate Director Karen Kleinz, APR, at kkleinz@nspra.org. We have put all of this information on the NSPRA website for your easy access and use.

**Continued Support Needed for Seminar Scholarship Opportunities**

The [Foundation for the Advancement of Education](https://www.nspra.org) supports and administers scholarships to the NSPRA Seminar each year. However, in recent years, the Foundation’s scholarship funds have been depleted and fundraising efforts initiated. Thanks to some recent fundraising efforts spearheaded by the NSPRA Council of Past Presidents, we have temporarily replenished some of the Foundation’s scholarship funds, allowing us to provide scholarships to the Baltimore Seminar. (Designated Memorial Scholarships, i.e., McDowell, Bagin, and Jackson, are funded through specific donations and must carry a minimum balance of $2,000). However, without continued support we will once again be facing the possibility of not being able to offer Seminar scholarships. Donations are tax deductible and you can make a [contribution online](https://www.nspra.org). We hope you or your chapter will consider supporting these valuable scholarship opportunities by making a [contribution](https://www.nspra.org) this year.

**Thank a Chapter Leader or Colleague with Recognition as a Learning & Liberty Legacy Leader**

Every one of us has a special place in our hearts for NSPRA colleagues and leaders who have helped us to grow and advance professionally and personally in our careers. Most often, these unsung heroes generously share their knowledge, skills, expertise, advice and time unselfishly, for the simple reward of seeing a colleague succeed.

Now your chapter can recognize the many contributions of those NSPRA members who have had a positive impact on their colleagues’ careers and who work tirelessly behind the scenes on behalf of education and improved communication. This also is a great way to recognize retiring colleagues.

By honoring a mentor or colleague as an [NSPRA Learning & Liberty Legacy Leader](https://www.nspra.org), you will also be supporting the NSPRA Foundation for the Advancement of Education in its Communication Accountability Program research and in providing scholarships to the NSPRA Seminar each year.

For a minimum tax-exempt gift of $75 to the Foundation for the Advancement of Education, you can nominate your mentor or colleague for recognition as a Learning & Liberty Legacy Leader. Those honored as Learning and Liberty Legacy Leaders will receive a special certificate, have their name permanently listed on our website, and be recognized at the NSPRA National Seminar. [Nominate a colleague](https://www.nspra.org) today!
Announcing NSPRA’s NEW Communication Technology Award for Superintendents Program

NSPRA is pleased to announce its newest award partnership with Blackboard, the Communication Technology Award for Superintendents.

The Communication Technology Award for Superintendents recognizes a superintendent of a K-12 school system, intermediate unit, BOCES, or County Education Office for leadership in redefining, upgrading, and integrating cutting-edge communication technology to improve and expand outreach and engagement with education stakeholders – both internal and external.

The deadline for nominations is April 29, 2016. See the award brochure to nominate your superintendent today!