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The University of San Francisco

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION
CONTRIBUTIONS TO WHAT THEY LEARN ABOUT LEADERSHIP WHILE
SERVING AS OFFICERS IN PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED CLUBS

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of Leadership Studies
Organization and Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by

Mitchell Friedman

San Francisco, California

May 2011

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Undergraduate Student Perceptions of Affiliate Organization
Contributions to What They Learn about Leadership While Serving as
Officers in Professionally Oriented Clubs

Organizations that sponsor professionally oriented undergraduate clubs claim to offer advantages to participants, yet the role they play in providing exposure to professional learning experiences and preparing students for working life has received scant attention. What remains unexplored are efforts to guide the professional and leadership development of undergraduates who assume positions as officers in university-affiliated chapters. The investigation of such efforts might consider the role of contextual factors given their importance in shaping student learning experiences (Rubin, Bommer, & Baldwin, 2002), especially whether a student group is affiliated with an organization outside the university. This affiliate relationship may provide access to resources often unavailable on university campuses (Peltier, Scovoti, & Pointer, 2008).

This study explored undergraduate student perceptions of the contributions of an affiliate relationship to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in a professionally oriented club. It focused on a Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter at a public state university in Northern California and its Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) affiliate. A case study framework was employed, using qualitative research data collection techniques (i.e., 12 interviews, observation of six events, and review of documents).

Study results indicated that PRSSA, through optional resources, advice, and counsel, aimed to help PRSSA chapter officers fulfill individual responsibilities and learn about leadership. Their intent was to foster a view of leadership that encouraged support of the organization; its parent, PRSA; and the public relations profession as a whole. In turn, PRSSA chapter officers pursued a leadership purpose to help members learn about the public relations profession and find positions in the field. These officers derived value from affiliate organization activities, and considered what they learned vital to individual career development and to fulfill their leadership purpose. Yet this learning did not extend to officer responsibilities or leadership; for those areas, students looked to each other and predecessors for direction on how to serve as PRSSA leaders. The study concluded that leadership development occurred among PRSSA students, a phenomenon unexplored in previous literature.

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This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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April 19, 2011
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April 19, 2011

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reflects her encouragement, unending love, and belief in my abilities even when I
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Chapter I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Students increase their leadership skills while in college, particularly through extracurricular experiences such as active membership in clubs and organizations and more specifically by holding positions of responsibility such as President or Treasurer. These experiences can be especially significant for their career, academic, and personal development (Astin, 1993; Logue, Hutchens, & Hector, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Undergraduate students with specific career goals often seek membership in professionally oriented extracurricular clubs that meet on campus. Participation in such groups enables students to bond with like-minded peers; cultivate skills related to a specific occupation; add experience to their resume; gain access to relevant speakers, information, and resources; and learn about internship and job opportunities. Leaving aside individual differences in students who seek these memberships, undergraduates generally consider such involvement an indispensable complement to their classroom education and necessary for furthering their ability to achieve long-term career objectives (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Andrews, 2007; Holzweiss, Rahn, & Wickline, 2007; McCannon & Bennett, 1996; Nadler, 1997).

Professional organizations that sponsor university-based groups in turn claim to offer undergraduate student participants an advantage over classmates who choose not to be involved yet who nonetheless also vie for access to limited entry-level job opportunities. Through training, mentoring, networking, publications, awards programs,

conferences, scholarships, and other activities, these national and international groups provide a range of services designed to develop the next generation of professionals (Collegiate Chapter Resources, 2009; Pohl & Butler, 1994; Pritchard, Filak, & Beach, 2006; “What is PRSSA?,” 2009).

Leadership development represents one carrot these organizations dangle in front of eager undergraduates who clamor to enter a particular occupation. Chapter, regional, and national student officers in theory benefit from these programs, through which organizations aim to produce young professionals equipped with the skills and mindset deemed critical for workplace success. Yet the role student organizations in general play in providing exposure to professional learning experiences and preparing undergraduates for working life after they earn their degrees has received scant attention in general business education literature (Peltier, Scovoti, & Pointer, 2008).

What specifically remains unexplored are professional organization efforts to guide the professional and leadership development of undergraduate students who assume positions as officers in university-affiliated chapters. The investigation of such efforts might consider the role of contextual factors given their importance in shaping student experiences in learning about the profession and leadership in general (Rubin, Bommer, & Baldwin, 2002), especially given the absence of empirical studies arguing to the contrary. To this end, this study explored student experiences in professionally oriented clubs. The intent was to understand what club officers learned about leadership. Research on these leadership experiences and an evolving leadership profile may be helpful to leaders in professional associations with chapters situated in university settings who are charged with developing future practitioners in their occupation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore undergraduate student perceptions of the contributions of an affiliate organization relationship to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in clubs or organizations that serve specific occupational interests. An affiliate organization was defined as a local, state, or national organization outside the university that maintains a formal relationship with a university-approved student group. A case study framework employing qualitative research techniques was used, incorporating observations of a professionally oriented student club at a public state university and a leadership training event at the same institution; interviews with club leaders, its faculty advisers, the club's professional advisers (who are members of a nearby chapter of the affiliate organization), and a representative of the national affiliate organization; and review of relevant documents produced by the club, its affiliate organization, and the host university. Using the public relations profession as a subject, the relationship between the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and its affiliate, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), was explored. Focusing on student leaders of a PRSSA chapter at a public state university in Northern California and its local PRSA affiliate, this study extended previous research on what students learn about leadership by holding positions as officers in extracurricular clubs.

Background and Need for the Study

Leadership development is an important outcome of undergraduate education in the U.S. and thus often is cited in mission statements of higher education institutions (Eich, 2008; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999a). Consistent with this emphasis, universities sponsor various academic and co-curricular programs to cultivate a range of

leadership capabilities in undergraduate students. These include leadership majors, minors, or certificates; alternate forms of programming that may be integrated into freshmen orientation or a first-year learning community; and classroom instruction (Albert & Vadla, 2009; Ashkanasy & Dasborough, 2003; Barbour, 2006; Brungardt, Greenleaf, Brungardt, & Arensdorf, 2006; Hess, 2007; Nahavandi, 2006; Pounder, 2008; Seemiller, 2006).

Extracurricular activities complement this education and training by offering leadership development experiences for undergraduate students who choose to assume positions that oversee different club functions. What and how individual students learn about leadership through serving in these capacities varies, with previous experience, belief in leadership potential, available training, gender, and positional roles among individual and organizational characteristics considered significant variables (Hall, Forrester, & Borsz, 2008; Walker, 2009).

Contextual factors also received attention in business literature for their potential influence on leadership (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Porter & McLaughlin, 2006), and more importantly for this study in research on student learning through holding club leadership positions. Kuh (1993, 1995) pointed to the importance of institutional context (defined as ethos and other cultural factors) although he argued that we know little about how such properties shape student decisions to participate in extracurricular activities, much less why they seek club officer positions. Subsequent studies on clubs and organizations maintained that context in terms of organization type (i.e., differences in organizational culture and structure) shaped student self-assessment of leadership roles. In other words, the peculiar rules, requirements, jargon, events, and activities associated with individual

groups informed student development of a personal identity gained through leadership experience (Hall et al., 2008; Logue et al., 2005).

Yet an appreciation of distinct contextual factors for different organizations and leadership experiences was absent from the literature. Existing studies thus appeared to offer a limited understanding of organizational context and how it shaped undergraduate student interpretation of leadership learning experiences in specific clubs and groups. Other previously unexplored contextual factors, such as whether a student group is affiliated with an organization outside the university or remains independent, also may inform student leadership efforts.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was based on Komives, Lucas, & McMahon's (2006) relational model of leadership, which described leadership as a relational and ethical process through which individuals work together to accomplish change or make a difference for the common good. A leader in this model is identified as any person who actively engages others in a collaborative effort to fulfill an organization's mission. Referred to as followers or constituents elsewhere in leadership literature, these others are called participants in this model given their active and intentional engagement with relational leaders and peers.

Komives et al. (2006) described relational leadership as purposeful, process-oriented, inclusive, empowering, and ethical. Purposefulness towards goals and activities informs a shared vision intentionally directed towards facilitating change that improves the human condition while not harming others. A process-oriented focus highlights the importance of decision-making, recruitment, and member involvement, with the latter

attribute especially critical when organizations are confronted by inevitable ethical dilemmas. An emphasis on inclusiveness illuminates the need for leaders to understand different perspectives, cultivate a desire to develop team member talents, and demonstrate the willingness to involve individuals outside the group in its deliberations. Consistent with these foci, relational leaders see conflict as an opportunity to promote inclusivity and empowerment rather than as a destructive force. In short, relational leaders claim ownership and foster an environment that promotes full involvement by supporting the right for every individual to be heard. As a result, participants and relational leaders work together in a true community oriented towards the achievement of common purposes that reflect the organization's core mission and vision.

Relational leaders influence others by setting an example and are driven by values, standards, and an ethical framework that they share with group members. Trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship are the six pillars of their character. In turn, honest, authentic self-awareness motivates relational leaders to concentrate on how they are viewed by others, pinpoint and correct personal weaknesses, and modify their behavior accordingly to ensure that they are able to encourage openness and connection while practicing relational empathy towards participants and other individuals (Komives et al., 2006).

This relational model of leadership reflects the focus on collaboration among individuals, groups, and communities that informs post-industrial approaches to leadership in a networked world. It also broadens traditional notions of who is a leader. For these reasons, many leadership educators believe this approach best meets undergraduate student needs; in turn, the relational leadership model has gained wide

acceptance among them. This support, along with the model's alignment with the leadership definition and philosophy of the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Leadership Programs, led to its use in this study (Eich, 2008; Higher Education Research Institute, 1996; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999b).

Student leaders vary in their comfort level and ability to practice the inclusive, collaborative, group-oriented processes central to relational leadership, as they inevitably assume different leadership identities at various points in their college experience whether in positional or non-positional roles. Concomitantly, students experience a changing view of themselves in relationship to other members of organizations in which they participate. To provide a framework for assessing this evolving student sense of self, related attitudes about the leadership changes they experience over time, and their ability to work with others towards shared purposes consistent with relational leadership practices, the leadership identity development (LID) grounded theory and related model were developed (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005).

The central category of this LID grounded theory and corresponding model is leadership identity, which develops in six stages. Relational leadership model elements particularly apply in the final three stages, when the view of self is interdependent with others (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, et al., 2006; Komives et al., 2005).

The first stage of the LID model is awareness, which involves the recognition that leaders exist. Students see these leaders as external to themselves, like the President of

the U.S. In this phase they do not personally identify as leaders or even differentiate group roles for themselves or others (Komives et al., 2005).

The second stage is exploration and engagement, when individuals seek intentional involvement through their participation in a wide range of group activities. During this process they assume responsibilities but not positional leadership roles. Students nonetheless make great strides towards the development of critical skills as they observe adult and peer models of leadership, albeit with the primary goals of such involvement to make friends and to learn to engage with others (Komives et al., 2009; Komives et al., 2005).

The third stage is leader identified, when individuals see groups as comprised of leaders and followers. Leadership is considered solely the action of a group's positional leader. If someone holds a leadership position, that person is the leader. Followers might be active and engaged, yet nonetheless continue to look to the leader for direction while concurrently becoming intentional about their specific group roles. In other words, group relationships remain hierarchically oriented. Students in this phase move in and out of member and leader roles in different organizations, in the process "trying on" different leadership styles (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, et al., 2006; Komives et al., 2005).

The fourth stage is leader differentiated, when individuals recognize that anyone in the group can practice leadership and in turn can assume roles as a facilitator, community builder, and molder of the group's culture. Leadership, moreover, is seen as non-positional and a shared group process that happens everywhere. This recognition about leadership and one's interdependence with others that occurs with the transition to

this stage from the third stage represents the key shift in the overall LID model (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, et al., 2006; Komives et al., 2005).

The fifth stage is generativity, when individuals demonstrate an ability to look beyond themselves by turning their energies to larger group purposes. In the process, they strive to articulate and display a passion for their efforts. They also seek to develop leadership in others by mentoring, among other endeavors, and desire to influence group activities after their membership ends when they graduate from school (Komives et al., 2009; Komives et al., 2005).

The sixth stage is integration/synthesis, which occurs when individuals consider leadership as part of their self-identify. In turn, they identify the capacity for leadership in diverse contexts and can see themselves as leaders even without positional roles. In the process, they are now able to grasp the essence of organizational complexity and demonstrate an ability to practice systemic thinking (Komives et al., 2009; Komives et al., 2005).

This LID model provides a means of assessing how students define leadership, how they understand their roles in groups, and their sense of independence from and/or interdependence with others. Yet student responses and behavior may reflect multiple stages concurrently, posing a challenge when assessing leadership identity development that seemingly is exacerbated by current limitations in assessment techniques developed for use with this model. Nonetheless, observational methods and interviews are considered excellent sources of data to glean insight on student leadership experiences relevant to the stages of the LID model and thus seemed to represent an appropriate

choice for techniques that were employed to answer research questions posed by this study (Komives et al., 2009).

Moreover, the relational model of leadership and the LID model—along with conceptions of leadership in public relations and the study's two research questions— informed the development of questions that were posed to PRSSA officers during semi-structured interviews completed as part of this study. After these interviews and others with professionals who worked with student leaders, related observations, and review of documents were completed and transcripts produced, these same sources served to guide the researcher towards relevant phrases and concepts that informed the development of a coding system. This system, modified and refined during multiple reviews of the data, was subsequently used to identify themes illustrated across these sources of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Patton, 2002), which in turn were used to answer the study's two research questions.

Research Questions

The following two research questions guided this study.

1. What do the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and its parent organization, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), provide leaders of student chapters in terms of leadership resources, training, and support?
2. What are undergraduate public relations students' perceptions of what they learn about leadership by participating as officers in PRSSA?

Limitations

This study was conducted at one public state university in Northern California. The students who attended this institution may differ from students who attended other

institutions. The sample for the study was limited to students who served as officers in the PRSSA chapter during the fall semester 2010. Students who served as officers in previous years or who will serve in subsequent years may have completely different experiences given structural changes in programs and services that take place from year to year. Non-positional leaders (i.e., individuals not holding an elected or appointed officer position) in the PRSSA chapter who were not included in the study also may have had completely different experiences, as might students serving as officers in other professionally oriented clubs geared towards students in different academic disciplines at the same university. Finally, the fall semester 2010 timeframe for the collection of data in this study might have produced different findings than if the study was completed primarily during the spring 2011 or over the entire 2010-2011 academic year.

The PRSSA student officer reflections in this study were focused specifically on the concerns raised through their experiences. It would not be appropriate to generalize these findings to student leaders in other professionally oriented clubs or to leaders at PRSSA chapters at other universities. Interviewees also might have inadvertently disclosed partial, misleading, or inaccurate information when responding to questions posed by the researcher that in turn could have adversely influenced the results of the study. In addition, individual experiences and characteristics beyond those addressed in this study (e.g., ethnicity, gender, year in school) might have influenced leadership perspectives and behaviors demonstrated by PRSSA officers included in this study. Finally, as the study focused on leadership among officers in a specific undergraduate club, it is difficult to draw conclusions about behaviors demonstrated by individuals in this sample here in other extracurricular, professional, or workplace situations.

In addition, the researcher had extensive personal experience in the field. This might have led to researcher bias in this study.

Significance

This study contributed to greater understanding of undergraduate student learning about leadership through holding positions as officers in a professionally oriented extracurricular clubs by probing their perceptions of affiliate organization contributions, the potential richness and variety of which have received little attention to date in scholarly literature. The goal was a refined understanding of the different approaches to learning about leadership taken by officers in professionally oriented student organizations, which in turn could facilitate further learning by their successors potentially within the context of curricula adapted to respond to the educational and training interests of corresponding professions.

More specifically, this study added to the body of knowledge on leadership development in undergraduate public relations students and entry-level practitioners, topics that received minimal attention in previous research. That such research has increasingly probed leadership and leadership development as vital constructs in public relations represents an important step forward; nonetheless, a dearth of information existed on how such skills are cultivated during an undergraduate education in the field. This study began to fill this void.

Moreover, belief in the value of student participation in PRSSA—and in particular the benefits associated with serving as officers in university-based chapters—remained supported at best by assertion and anecdotal evidence. In offering data collected through qualitative research methods, this study began to fill the need for

empirical data upon which subsequent assessments of the PRSSA experience could be based.

Finally, this study added to the understanding of how PRSA and PRSSA undertake leadership development efforts to meet the staffing needs of the industry. This study, therefore, could influence policies pursued by PRSA and PRSSA volunteers and staff charged with training and motivating future employees as well as PRSSA professional and faculty advisers, student affairs professionals, and others who participate in leadership learning experiences for undergraduate students with relevant occupational interests. Moreover, employers of public relations practitioners might utilize the findings of the study to revise their appreciation of the skills and abilities of entry-level employees once they recognize that some of these individuals come equipped with discernable leadership skills. Such awareness, in turn, could accelerate the short-term professional development of these new employees, not to mention their overall growth and ability to assume organizational and industry leadership roles over time.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were identified and operationalized for this study:

Affiliate: a local, state, or national organization with headquarters outside the university that maintains a formal relationship with a university-approved student group.

Leadership: the process through which a person actively engages others in a collaborative approach to fulfill an organization's mission (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2006).

Leadership development: almost every form of growth or stage of development that promotes, encourages, and assists in one's leadership potential. Leadership development

may be thought of as a strategy for helping people to understand how to relate to others, coordinate efforts, build commitments, and develop social networks by applying understanding of self to social and organizational needs (Brungardt, 1996; Day, 2000).

Leadership education: those learning activities and educational environments that are intended to enhance and foster leadership abilities (e.g., a formal college course on leadership or a professional seminar designed to teach a particular leadership skill). Leadership education, therefore, is one of the components of leadership development (Brungardt, 1996).

Leadership Identity Development (LID): the grounded theory and related model developed to provide a framework for assessing an evolving student sense of self, related attitudes about the leadership changes students experience over time, and their ability to work with others towards shared purposes consistent with practices outlined in the relational model of leadership (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, Mainella, & Osteen, 2006; Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005).

Public Relations: the management of communication between an organization and its publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Public Relations Society of America (PRSA): the world's largest and foremost organization of public relations professionals. PRSA provides professional development, sets standards of excellence, and upholds principles of ethics for its members and the global public relations profession ("About PRSA," 2010).

Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA): a nationwide undergraduate student organization that cultivates mutually beneficial relationships between its members and professional public relations practitioners. Through chapters based on

university campuses, the association fosters an understanding of current theories and professional procedures; recognition of the highest ethical ideals and principles; awareness of an appropriate professional attitude; and an appreciation of Associate Membership in PRSA and eventually accreditation (“Chapter Handbook 2010-2011,” 2010; “What is PRSSA?,” 2009).

Student leadership: holding an elected or appointed office in a student organization formally registered with the university (Logue et al., 2005).

Summary

This chapter introduced the subject of the study, student perceptions of the contributions of affiliate organizations to their experiences as officers in professionally oriented clubs, and its focus on student leaders of the PRSSA chapter at a state university in Northern California and its PRSA affiliate. With the relational model of leadership and LID grounded theory and related model as the theoretical framework, research questions considered the resources made available to PRSSA chapter leaders and their perceptions of what and how these resources contributed to what they learned about leadership. The limitations and significance of this study also were outlined. Subsequent chapters review related literature, present the methodology used to conduct the study, share findings, and explore related conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This study explored undergraduate student perceptions of affiliate organization contributions to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in professionally oriented clubs. It focused on a PRSSA chapter. In line with this focus, this literature review considered relevant and noteworthy contributions on five topics: one, undergraduate public relations education and related student leadership experiences, which encompassed a plethora of think pieces and empirical studies that provided a framework for understanding curricula albeit with only occasional references to leadership, related education or training, and PRSSA participation; two, leadership in public relations, where relatively recent scholarly interest concentrated on conceptual development rooted in the experiences and interests of senior-level practitioners; three, affiliate organization relationships as a factor shaping student leadership experiences, a topic that was virtually absent from existing literature exploring contextual factors and leadership development; four, the contributions of affiliate relationships to professionally oriented clubs, where fleeting references offered little insight into leadership development efforts; and five, PRSSA, the subject of limited empirical inquiry highlighting the organization's contribution to student development and virtually none in terms of leadership development.

Major themes in literature on these five topics were identified along with corresponding gaps in understanding. In turn, the potential of this study for contributing

to an understanding of affiliate organizations' role in cultivating leadership skills in undergraduate students became clearer.

Undergraduate Public Relations Education

The substance and purpose of public relations education has generated considerable interest since the 1970s. Industry professional and academic organizations collaborated to produce reports rich in curricular recommendations, proposed learning outcomes, and pronouncements on other matters related to educational programs at the undergraduate, master's degree, and doctoral levels, an indication of ongoing dialogue and discussion (Wright & VanSlyke Turk, 2003). These reports (Commission on Public Relations, 1975; Commission on Public Relations Education, 1999; Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006; International Public Relations Association Education and Research Committee and International Public Relations Association International Commission on Public Relations Education, 1990), together with related empirical studies that drew on their findings to elicit suggestions for strengthening public relations education to meet challenges posed by an ever-evolving business and cultural landscape, constituted the core of an extensive literature devoted to the topic.

Given the focus of this study on undergraduate student learning about leadership through participation in PRSSA, this portion of the literature review will focus primarily on observations in the aforementioned reports, related empirical works, and other think pieces treating curricular and pedagogical issues in undergraduate public relations education. References in the broader public relations education literature to leadership and leadership education also will be noted given the relevance of these topics to this study.

A study conducted for the 1998 NCA (National Communications Association) summer conference served as an excellent starting point for understanding the current state of undergraduate public relations education. Considered a significant, ecumenical effort given its success in attracting broad participation from professional organizations in the industry (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 1999), this educator/practitioner-led undertaking yielded models of course-specific curricula and an overall framework for undergraduate public relations education. This framework assumed students would receive a broad-based education equipping them with a good working knowledge of the liberal arts. Using this framework as a starting point, a group of educators proposed a curriculum model based on content students should learn to prepare for public relations careers. This model incorporated experiential components such as internships and participation in public relations clubs and student agencies, albeit with little detail provided on such activities much less related learning outcomes (Toth, 1999).

A separate study conducted in conjunction with the 1998 NCA summer conference identified outcomes (i.e., skills, abilities, and traits) for entry-level and advanced public relations practitioners and educators. Included among the public relations-specific “applied competencies” expected of students who complete a bachelor’s degree program was leadership in public relations-related activities. PRSSA, the Association for Women in Communications, and college media were mentioned as three options for demonstrating such skills, although no further information on these activities was provided. In contrast, recommendations for advanced-level practitioner outcomes were more explicit regarding formal leadership preparedness, suggesting that students in master’s degree programs should obtain a background in leadership theory

among other areas to demonstrate how it informed public relations practice. Graduate students also should be able to demonstrate leadership skills and other “interpersonal communication competencies,” and document professional contributions through holding leadership positions in professional organizations (Neff, Walker, Smith, & Creedon, 1999).

These NCA conference discussions proved pivotal as they guided the final recommendations of the 1999 Commission on Public Relations Education Report, “Public Relations Education for the 21st Century: A Port of Entry” (Commission on Public Relations Education, 1999). Inspired by the need “to determine the knowledge and skills needed by practitioners in a technological, multicultural and global society, and then to recommend learning outcomes—what students should know and be able to do” (p. 2), this report identified necessary knowledge, skills, and coursework indispensable in undergraduate education. Twelve assumptions guided its work, including that “graduates of public relations programs should be. . . ethical leaders appreciative of cultural diversity and the global society” and “public relations practitioners and educators should be leaders in building understanding that public relations has a fundamental responsibility to society and adds value” (p. 9). Moreover, “the purpose of an undergraduate degree in public relations is to prepare students for an entry-level position in public relations and to assume a leadership role over the course of their careers in advancing the profession” (p. 11). To this end, the report recommended greater support for PRSSA to benefit students. Public relations faculty assumed a central role here as advising PRSSA chapters was listed as one of their major responsibilities, along with teaching, research, and other service. The specific benefits gained by participation in PRSSA, including leadership

development, nonetheless were not explored in this report. Nor was there any other mention of other options for undergraduate students to cultivate leadership skills. Academic training in leadership, moreover, remained under the purview of master's degree programs, with graduate students taught in an environment "in which they learn to provide leadership" (p. 12).

The subsequent and most recent report from The Commission on Public Relations Education, "Public Relations for the 21st Century: The Professional Bond" (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006), built on the findings of this 1999 effort. This report highlighted the need for academic programs to prepare students for the evolution of public relations from a set of technical skills into an increasingly strategic, professional, and management-focused effort, a development encouraged by many educators and professionals (Wright, 2004). To this end, this report delineated relevant knowledge, skills, and personal traits critical for public relations graduates. These included flexibility, intellectual curiosity, the ability to think conceptually, demonstrate respect and empathy, and display "integrity as team participants and leaders" (p. 43).

In conjunction with classroom instruction, the 2006 report encouraged undergraduate students to join a professional or pre-professional organization before they graduate and to become active members so "they can begin to see how they might fit into the profession and, perhaps, form a link to an entry-level position" (p. 9). Such organizations (e.g., PRSSA, the International Association of Business Communicators [IABC], the Association for Women in Communications) through university-based chapters also "provide (students) with opportunities to experience leadership" (p. 75). Yet little indication of what leadership means in these contexts was provided. Finally, to

ensure such efforts flourish over the next decade, academic administrators were urged to support PRSSA activities by providing staff or graduate student assistance. Guidelines for what such advice to PRSSA and other professionally oriented student clubs should consist of remained absent from this report, however.

These aforementioned reports also collectively inspired new looks at pedagogy in undergraduate public relations curricula, with “active learning” assuming a more prominent role in the effort to bridge the gap between public relations student capabilities and expectations of these new professionals expressed by academics and employers. More specifically, the 1998 NCA study and 2006 Commission on Public Relations Education report pointed to a need for classroom instruction that went beyond the application of theoretical concepts to incorporate experiential learning that provided opportunities for students to cultivate a range of skills—including in leadership (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006; Toth, 1999).

To this end, Bush (2009) explored the public relations campaigns course, internships, and/or service learning and client work options that had been integrated into curricula at different universities. His study focused specifically on student public relations agencies as an additional option for acquiring requisite workplace information and abilities, and employed qualitative research methods to assess their effectiveness as vehicles for enabling students to learn the process of public relations and concomitant professional skills. Bush’s data analysis unearthed three main pedagogical benefits associated with this activity: the applied learning students acquired through structured agency protocols; the development of students’ professional identities, including the opportunity to cultivate what he refers to as leadership and management skills; and the

internship and job prospects generated while completing client work. He also noted the likelihood that student agencies would disintegrate relatively quickly without concrete structure, process, protocols, and/or strong student leadership. Therefore, the optimal format for success and maximizing student learning based on the results of Bush's study was a combination of concrete structure, committed faculty guidance, and consistently strong student leadership. In other words, this study identified the existence of leadership as an outcome of one form of experiential learning and highlighted its importance—albeit without defining the concept or considering how students cultivate skills throughout their period of participation.

Neff (2002) considered a different approach to experiential learning and leadership development, integrating a leadership process and service-learning component into the principles of public relations course—typically the first course offered to undergraduates who plan to study public relations. Arguing that internship or co-op opportunities tended to be task oriented, she outlined a course based on outcome variables that highlighted process and experiential standards that posed greater challenges for students. To this end, students were selected as co-leaders and assigned a range of tasks in conjunction with completing a class project. In the process, they participated in what Neff referred to as a leadership training opportunity. Two papers were required, the first of which focused on public relations theories and concepts, the second on the student's participation in the public relations project that included individual, confidential student assessment of fellow team members. In short, principles were covered in theory and by application to foster a more in-depth experience that contributed to increased confidence and greater potential for leadership—although Neff's purpose merely was to

outline this option, without offering empirical support for its purported effectiveness in achieving desired learning outcomes, much less grounding the course in a concept of leadership relevant to undergraduate public relations students seeking careers in the field.

In a subsequent article Neff (2008) suggested, “the greatest area of future development is in the leadership development of public relations professionals” (p. 85). In turn, an outcomes-based program as opposed to a course-based program would afford students’ expanded leadership opportunities through such activities as serving as a leader in a student public relations agency team; holding multiple internships with significant organizations; and receiving major awards and recognition. PRSSA officer experience was not included in this list; nonetheless, Neff’s consistent bullishness on opportunities for leadership development among undergraduate public relations students seemed to beg for subsequent empirical work to buttress her assertions.

In summary, the body of literature considered here illuminated a broad range of issues integral to undergraduate and graduate education. Leadership development nonetheless seemed all but relegated to the latter arena despite occasional brief references to leadership in discussions of undergraduate curricula and concomitant, albeit isolated attempts to include some study of the subject. PRSSA likewise received limited recognition, with any connection between participation in the organization and leadership development virtually absent in this literature. In short, it was unclear if public relations undergraduates were learning about leadership, much less what, where, and how. By exploring leadership development among PRSSA officers, this study attempted to fill this gap in the literature on public relations education.

Leadership in Public Relations

There has been very limited research on leadership in public relations (Aldoory & Toth, 2004; Berger, 2009; Berger, Meng, & Heyman, 2009; Weder & Holtzhausen, 2009). A flurry of empirical works developed during the last several years has begun to fill this void, drawing largely on the perspectives of seasoned public relations professionals. These contributions collectively illuminated the importance of applying leadership skills to cultivate professional success, more specifically in conjunction with enacting public relations' managerial role and as a result enhancing its place in organizational decision-making.

This body of work on leadership in public relations drew on the IABC Excellence Study (Grunig, 1992), a landmark research project incorporating a comprehensive literature review to produce the first general theory of public relations. The resulting model of excellent public relations emphasized two-way symmetrical communications that balanced organizational interests with those of key constituencies. In turn, excellent public relations was idealistic, critical, strategic, and managerial, and developed and cultivated high-quality relationships with key entities in an organization's institutional environment. Excellent public relations departments, equipped with a professional base of knowledge possessed by individual practitioners committed to ongoing reading, studying, and reflection on best practices, maximized their contribution to organizational effectiveness particularly through their participation in decision making by the senior managers who control an organization. This group of managers was known as the dominant coalition, with public relations leaders reporting directly to its leader, the CEO

or president of the organization (Dozier, Grunig, & Grunig, 1995; Grunig & Grunig, 2002; Grunig, Grunig, & Dozier, 2002).

Grunig (1992) included leadership as one of the 12 characteristics of excellent organizations, which in turn provided the basis for this portrayal of excellent public relations. Leaders in excellent organizations employed such techniques as networking and “walking around,” melding direction with empowerment rather than authoritarian systems to guide employees.

Subsequent research attempted to make explicit the concept of leadership in public relations that was implicit in the Excellence Study (Berger, Meng, & Heyman, 2009). To this end, key contributions expanded on the meaning of leadership in public relations by probing whether the function demanded a particular leadership style that seems best suited to fulfilling its particular constellation of roles and responsibilities; pointing to the leadership capabilities required of public relations professionals to succeed in fulfilling the mandate outlined in the Excellence Study; and striving to establish a theory of excellent leadership in public relations.

The nature of public relations demanded a leadership style uniquely attuned to the challenges practitioners face (Aldoory, 1998). More specifically, public relations professionals worked cross-functionally and aspired to influence decision-making, requiring organization-wide as opposed to within work-group leadership. Choi & Choi (2009) adopted a behavioral approach to investigate specific practices associated with these public relations functions. Drawing on leadership and management literature to develop a model that they subjected to confirmatory factor analysis, the researchers identified seven leadership behaviors distinct to public relations: upward influence,

coordinating, internal monitoring, networking, representing, providing vision, and acting as a change agent. Such leadership dimensions, they argued, can help practitioners and educators to improve professional skills and increase influence.

Other significant contributions to the literature on this topic related the emerging understanding of a distinct public relations leadership style to more traditional conceptions of leadership. For example, Aldoory and Toth (2004) examined perceptions of leadership style and the influence of gender in a mixed methods study. Overall, their focus group data supported survey results that indicated a strong preference for transformational over transactional leadership styles among public relations practitioners. This study also yielded strong evidence for a preference for situational leadership and support for shared decision-making and participative management.

Werder and Holtzhausen (2009) drew on Aldoory & Toth's (2004) work to investigate whether a unique inclusive leadership style exists in public relations. The analysis of their online survey results suggested that public relations practitioners perceive transformational and inclusive leadership styles in their departments or agencies, but not transactional leadership. In turn, perceived leadership department style influenced the public relations strategy employed and its perceived effectiveness in organizations. Werder and Holtzhausen's results also suggested that situational leadership exists in public relations, and that practitioner gender, position, and organization type influence perceptions of leadership style.

Leadership in public relations required access to the dominant coalition as well, according to the Excellence Study. Yet standards of professional practice in the field highlighted the absence of such access (Sallot, Cameron, & Weaver-Lariscy, 1998) and

concomitant limitations in capabilities or knowledge among practitioners, who nonetheless were challenged to perform effectively as leaders or managers within the network of power relations and structures in an organization (Berger, 2005).

To address these perceived shortcomings, another research stream in the public relations leadership literature explored how professionals might improve their ability to participate in organizational power dynamics and gain access to the dominant coalition. Berger and Reber (2006) maintained that public relations professionals can increase their influence and legitimacy with organizational decision makers by “becoming more politically astute, employing more diverse influence resources and tactics, and exerting greater political will in organizational arenas where decisions are shaped through power relations” (p. 2). Public relations professionals could achieve such ends, they argued, by engaging in resistance activities against forces that constrained them. These included employing dissent, professional activism, and other techniques to supplement traditional methods such as rational arguments, pressure, coalitions, past experience, consultation, strategic planning, and personal and emotional appeals. In presenting such approaches, Berger and Reber aimed to help public relations professionals become more active, effective, and ethical agents in organizations, thereby wielding more influence as they help their organizations to “do the right things.”

Regarding specific skills and competencies required of public relations leaders to gain access to the dominant coalition, Berger, Reber, & Heyman (2007) explored characteristics that enabled professionals to succeed while maintaining their standing as leaders within their respective organizations. While diverse pathways led to success, their interviews with 97 high-level U.S. communication managers identified ten patterns

or themes of critical competencies. These included a proactive nature; relationships and networking; communication, interpersonal, analytical, and leadership skills; experience; and curiosity. Jin (2010) introduced an emotional component into this mix, concluding from his survey of professionals that a relationship-and-task balanced leadership style and the strategic use of empathy were significant predictors of public relations leaders' competency in gaining employees' trust, managing frustration and optimism, and taking stances towards employees and top management in decision-making conflicts.

A final series of contributions on leadership in public relations attempted to bring these diverse streams together in the form of a general concept and theory. To this end, excellent leadership in public relations was defined in the literature as follows:

(It is a) dynamic process that encompasses public relations executives' personal attributes and efforts in leading the team to facilitate mutual relationships inside and outside of organizations, to participate in the organization's strategic decision making processes, and to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members (Meng, Berger, & Gower, 2009, p. 21).

Related research identified major dimensions of this concept. These included self-dynamics, team collaboration, ethical orientation, relationship building, strategic decision-making capability, communication knowledge, and expertise capability. Considered together, these dimensions constituted an initial assessment tool for public relations professionals interested in determining the existence of leadership capabilities in fellow practitioners (Meng, 2009; Meng, Berger, & Gower, 2009; Meng & Heyman, 2008).

While these studies collectively pointed to a bright future for the study of leadership in public relations, their failure to probe beyond the experience and needs of advanced practitioners illuminated a void in the body of literature. The relevance of this

emerging concept of leadership in public relations to the experiences of undergraduates, much less the contribution of the undergraduate educational experience to the initial formation of leadership-related attitudes and behaviors among individuals who will assume entry-level positions in the field, remained largely unexplored. Thus, this study began to fill the gap in this understanding of leadership in public relations by exploring the development of leadership skills among undergraduate public relations students who are PRSSA officers.

Affiliate Relationships as a Factor Shaping Leadership Development

Context in terms of organization type has been identified as a factor shaping student self-assessment of leadership roles. To better understand this phenomenon, two groups of researchers investigated specific areas of student involvement in attempts to illuminate further critical contextual factors related to organization type that influence how and what students learn while serving as leaders in clubs and organizations. The first, Hall et al. (2008), examined leadership roles in a college recreational sports department. While the choice of this setting filled a void in the literature and highlighted broad themes illustrative of student self-reported leadership learning outcomes, the search for such common ground seemed to have hindered the exploration and reporting of contextual influences that differentiated this organization from others. The second, Logue et al. (2005), approached a similar challenge related to exploring the influence of contextual factors by interviewing leaders in several organizations at one university. Their analysis highlighted the importance of organization as an integral influence shaping the student leadership learning experience. Yet like in Hall et al.'s study, an appreciation

of distinct contextual factors for different organizations and leadership experiences was absent.

The literature that considered instruments for measuring student leadership learning outcomes based on service as club officers likewise grappled with the influence of diverse factors, including context. In a doctoral dissertation considering the measurement of student-generated leadership learning outcomes, Walker (2009) attempted to address the shortcomings of existing tools (e.g., the Student Leadership Practices Inventory, Social Responsible Leadership Scale) by developing a new instrument, the Student Leadership Learning Outcomes Assessment. This instrument added student organization, officer roles within the organization, and demographic variables as criteria. Yet Walker's focus on generic organizational type limited consideration of possible contextual factors within each group, like the studies cited previously.

In short, existing studies offered a limited understanding of organizational context and how it informed undergraduate student interpretation of their leadership learning experiences in specific clubs and groups. Other previously unexplored contextual factors, such as whether a student group was affiliated with an organization outside the university or remained independent, also shaped student leadership efforts as the presence of an affiliate relationship provided access to skills, information, resources, and a general practical orientation typically unavailable within the confines of a university campus (Peltier et al., 2008).

In focusing on the contribution of an affiliate relationship to undergraduate student perceptions of what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in

professionally oriented clubs, this study introduced a new element into the subsequent study of undergraduate leadership development. Equally important, this study added to the existing body of knowledge on contextual influences in leadership development.

Affiliate Relationships and Professionally Oriented Clubs

Professionally oriented university-based clubs that maintained a relationship with an organization outside the university have long attracted attention from journals focused on the interests of their respective professions (Irish, Blum, & Ihrie, 1997; Montes & Collazo, 2003; O'Donnell, 1951; Stephens, 2007; Trout, 1964). The bulk of such contributions avidly described activities; celebrated achievements and illuminated specific skills and abilities cultivated by individual students who participated; and/or reviewed membership benefits from the perspective of working professionals. Yet these articles in general remained limited to reporting or opinion, devoid of empirical support and bereft of insight into student perceptions of their experiences much less the affiliate group's efforts to guide individual students in university chapters.

In contrast, Peltier et al. (2008) aimed specifically to understand experiential dimensions that contribute to satisfaction and professional development of student members in one such affiliate group—the American Marketing Association (AMA). Their intent was to fill a gap in the marketing and business literature on the role of such organizations in encouraging professional learning, albeit minus any consideration of leadership development. This study focused on four dimensions of the student experience: strategic and tactical activities; interpersonal and networking skills; entrepreneurial and venture experience; and professional contacts. In turn, these researchers highlighted the importance attached by undergraduate marketing students to

developing practical experiences needed in business, specifically by locating internships, gaining insights on interviewing, improving presentation skills, and visiting nearby firms to meet business professionals. Students also sought to gain entrepreneurial experience and practice in developing and implementing marketing tactics. Yet this study concluded that the AMA often failed to meet student expectations in this latter area as well as in providing opportunities for professional contacts.

A small offering of empirical articles exploring hospitality and private club management education for undergraduate students likewise considered the role of the professional student organization, its affiliations outside the university, and, most importantly for this study, the role of leadership skills development. In a study probing the relationship between the private club management industry and higher education, Barrows & Walsh (2002) cited the existence of Club Managers Association of America (CMAA)-sponsored management development programs and the presence of club managers as instructors or lecturers with the latter most often present where student CMAA chapters existed. Leadership skills, cultivated through holding officer positions in such chapters, were highly regarded by the small sample of private club managers in southern Ontario, Canada with whom they spoke. These employers confirmed they seek evidence of related experience on recent graduates' resumes. These and other researchers thus maintained that universities must provide leadership opportunities for students who needed to capitalize on them to advance in the hospitality industry (Arendt, 2004; Countryman & Horton, 2006).

The influence of affiliate organizations in shaping leadership experiences of students in professionally oriented clubs received more direct attention in an agriculture

industry study. By surveying positional leaders in student organizations at colleges of agriculture at land-grant universities across the U.S., Eick & Ball (2009) attempted to isolate characteristics of student organizations related to higher levels of leadership and personal development. Their conceptual framework included four influences that shape student organizations: structure; adviser role; programming; and organizational context and resources. The latter domain incorporated ways in which the student organization itself related to the department, college, and university as well as a national organization, community, or related industry. Results indicated that collegiate student organizations varied in terms of the four influences. The organization's level of engagement in its external environment, moreover, was not related to the extent to which its leaders were or were not involved in the organization itself—a conclusion deemed somewhat surprising. In response, the researchers recommended that student organizations adopt more structure to maximize positional leader involvement and foster greater connections to their environment.

In summary, the limited empirical literature considered here on affiliate organizations and their relationship with professionally oriented undergraduate student clubs began to explore the value of and optimal circumstances for leadership development. Nonetheless, insight into how students evolved as leaders and their perspectives on these experiences was absent. As this study focused on students' perception of affiliate organization contributions to leadership development, it added empirical data to this small body of knowledge on affiliate organization relationships with professionally oriented clubs.

The Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)

Empirical studies on PRSSA were scarce. Pohl and Butler's (1994) often-cited study epitomized this dearth, as it relied uncritically on publicly available PRSSA documents to illuminate the benefits of membership, national and chapter structures, and responsibilities of chapter officer positions, in the process asserting that student participation in the organization provided the opportunity to implement issues learned in the classroom through cooperative learning, focus group strategy, and critical thinking. A mere handful of subsequent empirical studies strived to look more critically at PRSSA, probing the motivation of student participants and the value they derived from membership. A second, smaller set of articles considered faculty adviser perspectives. Finally, a pair of student reflective papers, while not empirically based, nonetheless offered insight into individual experiences as PRSSA members and officers deemed relevant to this study.

Factors influencing student decisions to join PRSSA inspired the work of Pritchard, Filak, & Beach (2006), who investigated six high-performing PRSSA chapters to understand individual member motivation and its relationship to involvement. They used self-determination theory to assess the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness to positive student evaluations of their PRSSA experience. The study found no significant correlations between length of association with PRSSA and desire to remain an active member, assume a leadership role, or join PRSA after graduation. Nonetheless, the researchers concluded that intrinsic member motivation loomed large as a factor influencing desire to remain in the organization, level of involvement, and intention to seek leadership positions.

Other empirical studies on PRSSA attempted to pinpoint specific benefits of student participation. Andrews' (2007) survey of PRSSA members and non-members at universities throughout Ohio highlighted the value students attached to membership as it provided opportunities to network, practice essential skills, gain self-confidence, and become more comfortable in professional environments. In a smaller study conducted among University of Tennessee students, Louallen & Riechert (2005) confirmed student interest in networking opportunities as a factor encouraging PRSSA membership. In short, these two studies—albeit small in scope with narrow geographic foci—largely reinforced assertions and limited empirical data presented elsewhere regarding the value of PRSSA membership as a bridge between the classroom and professional practice, with many a reference to leadership development opportunities (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006; Nadler, 1997; Schoch, 1983; VanCamp, 2005).

PRSSA faculty advisers played a role in enabling students to reap such benefits and thus also garner attention. For example, Nadler (1997) highlighted institutional and individual obstacles that impeded their success. These included little university financial support and recognition, which nonetheless did not crimp adviser endorsement of PRSSA's value to students, the high regard they attached to professional relationships with chapter members outside the classroom, and the satisfaction from seeing students benefit through participation. Leadership experiences and related development were not included in this suite of adviser-endorsed benefits.

Finally, PRSSA members themselves commented on their experience and its contribution to their professional and personal development. Baker (2009) considered the entirety of her undergraduate public relations education at Valparaiso University and its

influence on the early stages of her career. Heeding her academic adviser's advice, she joined the university's PRSSA chapter and participated in activities that challenged her to explore ethical issues and expectations, reflect on post-graduation plans, and build a network of industry contacts. Boruvka (2005), a Ball State University graduate, considered PRSSA as the ideal venue to apply leadership skills she had gained through other classes. She subsequently created a mentoring program that paired experienced PRSSA members with newcomers, in the process providing a forum for the cultivation of leadership skills among her fellow students—who in some cases subsequently assumed leadership roles in the school's PRSSA chapter.

While the latter contribution to the literature highlighted the intersection of PRSSA officer experiences and leadership development in undergraduate students, its anecdotal nature underscored the virtual absence of empirical inquiry into this phenomenon—much less the broader role of PRSSA in undergraduate education as a whole. This study began to fill this gap in the understanding of leadership and leadership development in PRSSA, and more broadly contributed to further investigations of the value of the PRSSA experience within a vibrant undergraduate public relations curriculum.

Summary

This literature review considered contributions on five topics: one, public relations education, with a focus on the undergraduate years; two, leadership in public relations; three, affiliate organization relationships as a factor shaping student leadership experiences; four, affiliate organizations and professionally oriented clubs; and five, PRSSA. The understanding of major themes in these five areas, and in particular gaps in

treatment of key issues related to this study, was deemed most essential for its focus on a PRSSA chapter to explore undergraduate student perceptions of the contribution of affiliate organizations to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in professionally oriented clubs.

The literature on public relations education delivered a comprehensive look at major themes informing the thinking of educators and practitioners alike related to the content of curricula, desirable learning outcomes, and instruction, yet considered leadership and more specifically undergraduate leadership development in what might best be described as a cursory fashion. Leadership experience on the one hand seemed to be a desired activity in undergraduate public relations programs and cultivation of related skills an objective for practitioners who graduate with degrees in the field. On the other hand, apart from such references, other occasional mentions of leadership as a long-term professional goal, exhortations to join PRSSA, and pedagogical options outlined in the articles cited above, it was unclear how undergraduate public relations students were learning about leadership—much less what. Moreover, little guidance seemed to be offered to educators who wished to help students cultivate leadership skills. Learning outcomes for undergraduate leadership experiences in public relations curricula, much less a conception of leadership relevant to public relations students, were absent from the body of knowledge as well.

Much like this general body of work on public relations education, scholarship on leadership in the field was ongoing and vibrant. Looking to the Excellence Study for their intellectual motivation, the contributions considered on this topic collectively provided a critical framework for understanding the unique challenges of leadership in

the profession that appeared essential to practitioners, educators, and researchers alike. Yet the seemingly inevitable focus of this literature on the experience, interests, and objectives of more advanced practitioners left unexplored the standing of leadership-related competencies in undergraduate students and entry-level employees—much less if and how such capabilities were cultivated during these phases of careers in a manner that could fuel advancement to more senior level positions and the realization of the definition of excellent public relations, the components of which inspired recent research.

Looking to the broader topic of affiliate organizations, the body of knowledge on undergraduate leadership development has yet to explore their contribution as one of myriad contextual factors shaping student experiences as club leaders. More specifically, affiliate organizations that sponsor university-based chapters of professionally oriented clubs largely have yet to be subject to critical inquiry regarding how students perceived their contribution to learning and leadership development—although scattered studies on clubs for undergraduates interested in careers in hospitality and agriculture suggested that leadership development and leadership in particular was at least on the radar of some researchers.

Finally, the modest body of literature on PRSSA considered here drew in part on references scattered throughout public relations education research to highlight student benefits associated with involvement, especially as a vehicle for forging connections with the world of public relations practice. To a far lesser extent, students identified practical experience in leadership gained by participation in PRSSA. Yet the nature of these experiences and what students were learning about leadership remained largely unexplored in empirical studies.

In short, gaps in each of the five topics in the literature reviewed here pointed to the opportunities implicit in this study. More specifically, students who assume officer roles in PRSSA gain leadership experience, yet it remains unclear what they are learning from affiliate organizations, their public relations classes, and elsewhere that informs these experiences and shapes the leadership skills, attitudes, and styles they cultivate and bring with them into entry-level positions in the field. In turn, the considerable hand wringing among public relations educators and practitioners about the state of entry-level employees might be in some small way alleviated by a heightened understanding of the constellation of leadership competencies some entry-level employees acquired through their undergraduate education in public relations.

More broadly and perhaps more importantly, affiliate organizations that work with university-based student groups can gain clearer insight into their relationships with student leaders. Affiliate organization representatives have long considered these students as future beacons of their profession, albeit with little understanding into whether their formative years in higher education translate into skills and a commitment to become dedicated, accomplished professionals and industry leaders.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore student perceptions of contributions of an affiliate organization relationship to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in clubs or organizations that serve specific occupational interests of undergraduates. Focusing on student leaders of a PRSSA chapter at a public state university in Northern California and its local PRSA affiliate, this study extended previous research on factors contributing to what students learn about leadership by holding positions as officers in extracurricular clubs.

Research Design

To explore the relationship between leader behaviors, underlying beliefs, and related education and training provided to PRSSA chapter officers, a case study framework was employed. Yin (2009) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). In other words, contextual conditions were critical for understanding a phenomenon and their inclusion helped to distinguish case studies from other research methods. This form of inquiry also “relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (p. 19). The case study phenomenon itself, moreover, was an integrated system, a unit around which boundaries existed such as in a class, school, or community (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Creswell (2003) added that case studies could explore individuals, processes, actions, events, or programs in-depth. Merriam’s (1988)

description of qualitative case studies as particularistic and descriptive echoed this emphasis.

Case studies involved either single or multiple cases and numerous levels of analysis. This study involved a single case. In addition, it employed an embedded design. While the case was about a single organization, analysis might have included outcomes about different aspects that would then be referred to as the embedded units. In this case, three embedded units or levels of analysis were involved—the individual PRSSA student chapter officers; the PRSSA chapter executive board in which these officers participate; and the PRSSA chapter itself (Yin, 2009).

Case studies also can be described generally in terms of their overall intent, whether that is to provide description and/or to test or generate theory (Eisenhardt, 1989; Merriam, 1998). The former intent guided this study. To that end, Merriam (1988) commented that qualitative case studies are fundamentally heuristic, as they “illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomena under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (p. 13). Such studies also relied on inductive, as opposed to deductive reasoning, as they were characterized by the “discovery of new relationships, concepts, and understanding, rather than verification or predetermined hypotheses” (pg. 13).

Finally, case studies typically combined myriad data collection methods, with evidence being qualitative, quantitative, or both (Eisenhardt, 1989). In this study, qualitative research data collection techniques were employed. These included observations, interviews, and the gathering and analysis of written documents. The researcher chose these techniques because of the desire to understand student perceptions

of affiliate organization contributions to their leadership experiences, and in turn how they shaped related attitudes and behaviors.

Moreover, these techniques were integral to case study research. The natural setting of the case provided the opportunity for direct observations, the evidence from which often is useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied and more specifically may offer new insight into either the context or phenomenon being investigated. Interviews also were essential sources of case study information. Finally, documentation was relevant to every case study topic, with its most important use being to corroborate and augment evidence gained from other sources (Yin, 2009).

The researcher observed PRSSA chapter executive board and general membership meetings and a leadership training event for club officers sponsored by the host university. Interviews also were conducted with PRSSA chapter officers, the club's faculty advisers, its professional advisers, and the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs. Relevant documents produced by the PRSSA chapter, its national parent affiliate organization, and the host university's student affairs department were reviewed and analyzed as well.

Research Setting

Research was conducted at a state university located in Northern California. One of the 23 campuses in the California State University system, this metropolitan institution offered 69 bachelor's degrees with 81 concentrations and 65 master's degrees with 29 concentrations. Table 1 provides demographic information on the student population as of the fall 2007, the latest year for which figures were publicly available. Statistics are based on a total enrollment of 31,906 in one of the university's degree programs.

Table 1

Summary Table of Student Demographics at University Where Study was Conducted

Category	Student Information
Gender	54% women 46% men
Academic Standing	24,390 undergraduate 6,577 graduate
Age	16.97% 19 years old or younger 45.12% 20-24 years old 19.53% 25-29 years old 7.53% 30-34 years old 10.4% 35-39 years old .45% 60 years of age and older.
Ethnicity	American Indian 0.45% African American 4.86% Asian 23.36% Filipino 6.98% Pacific Islander 0.88% Hispanic 15.49% White 7.39% Foreign 8.47% Other/Not Stated 12.11%.
Residency	50% lived in same county 42% primary residence in another California county 8% primary residence outside of the state

The student participants in the study were completing requirements for Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degrees in Public Relations, a program housed in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at this state university. Founded more than 70 years ago, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications was the largest of its kind in Northern California with 650 undergraduate majors and 75 graduate students as of March 2010. The public relations degree program had about 150 majors at that same point in time, including students from around the world. The School of Journalism and

Mass Communication also offered undergraduate degrees in advertising and journalism, as well as specialized sequences in reporting and editing, photojournalism, magazine journalism and broadcast journalism. Its graduate program offered a Master of Science (M.S.) degree in Mass Communications.

Population and Sample

The sample consisted of 12 individuals: seven officers in the PRSSA chapter at the public state university in Northern California; two faculty advisers to the PRSSA chapter; two professional advisers to the same chapter, who are members of the PRSA chapter with which this chapter was affiliated; and one representative of the national PRSSA organization. Information on these individuals is presented in Table 2 below. Participant profiles and description are provided in the first section of Chapter Four.

Table 2

List of Study Participants

Name	Role
Felicia Martin	PRSSA Chapter President
Fred Franklin	PRSSA Chapter Immediate Past President
Tiffany Smith	PRSSA Chapter Director of Membership
Elizabeth Brooks	PRSSA Chapter Director of Public Relations
Jennifer Jones	PRSSA Chapter Director of Fundraising
Sally Strong	PRSSA Chapter Vice President of Professional Development
Alexandra Young	PRSSA Chapter Editor-in-Chief
Cassandra Schwartz	PRSSA Chapter Professional Adviser
Martin Miller	PRSSA Chapter Professional Adviser

Name	Role
Charles Matthews	PRSSA Chapter Faculty Adviser
Janet Sidarko	PRSSA Chapter Immediate Past Faculty Adviser
Cheryl Kardman	Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs

This PRSSA chapter was one of 284 groups located at public and private universities throughout the U.S. PRSSA was founded by PRSA in 1968 to build mutually beneficial relationships between students and public relations practitioners. PRSSA chapters work to encourage understanding of current theories and procedures of the profession; recognition of the highest ethical ideals and principles; awareness of an appropriate professional attitude; and appreciation of Associate Membership in PRSA and eventually accreditation (“What is PRSSA?,” 2009).

This particular PRSSA chapter was selected for inclusion in this study for four reasons. First, the researcher was familiar with its purpose; second, the researcher had previous contact with chapter faculty advisers during past participation in Northern California public relations industry events; third, the researcher understood that the club remained in good standing with the national affiliate organization and host university; and fourth, the researcher determined that the club’s executive board and general membership met regularly thus enabling the observation of a sufficient number of their proceedings during the study timeframe, the fall semester 2010.

The PRSSA chapter included in this study was affiliated with a PRSA chapter located in the same Northern California metropolitan area. This chapter consisted of more than 200 public relations practitioners who held a variety of positions with for-profit and non-profit organizations located throughout the area. These professionals

attended monthly educational programs and networking events held at different locations near the metropolitan campus of the host university.

This PRSA chapter was part of a nationwide organization. Founded in 1947, PRSA is the world's largest organization of public relations professionals. It consists of more than 21,000 public relations and communications professionals across the U.S., from recent college graduates to the leaders of the world's largest multinational firms. PRSA members represent nearly every practice area and professional and academic setting within public relations. Through meetings of 110 local chapters, national conferences, other programs, and publications, PRSA members benefit from professional development opportunities, set standards of excellence, and uphold principles of ethics for its members and the global public relations profession ("About PRSA," 2010).

An organizational chart depicting the structure of PRSA and PRSSA, and the relationship between the two organizations, is presented in Figure 1 below.

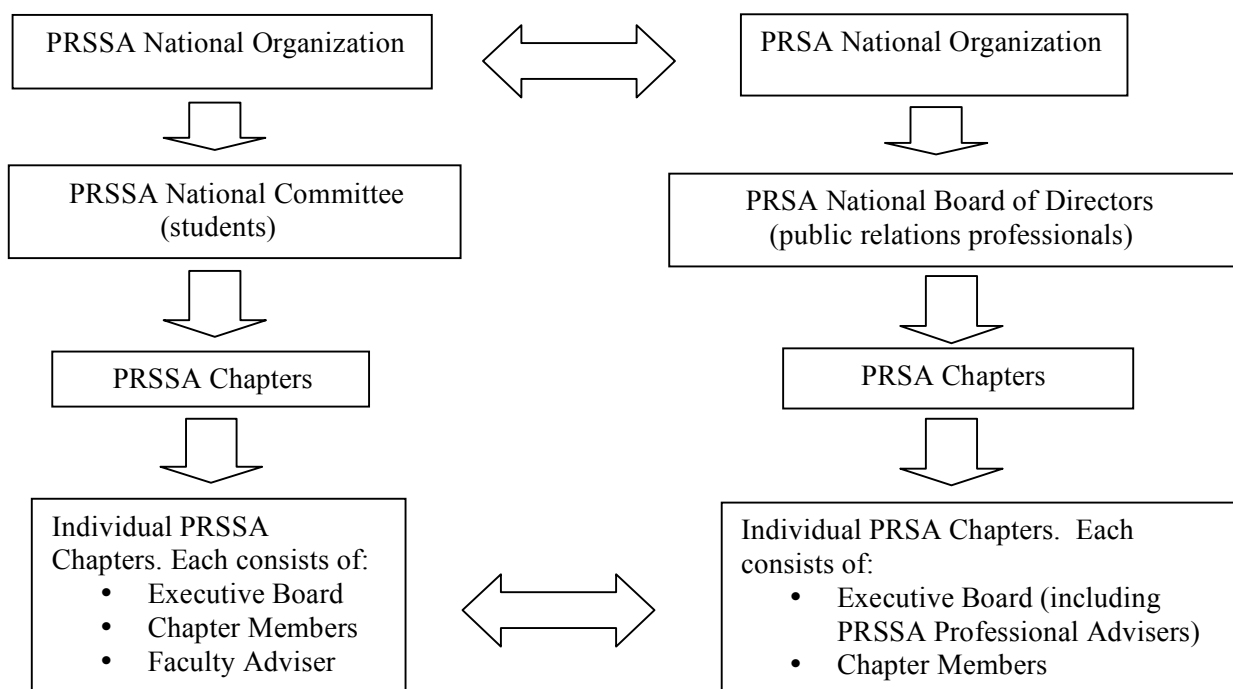


Figure 1: PRSA/PRSSA Organizational Chart

Instrumentation

A general interview guide approach was used to identify issues and related questions to be posed to the 12 research participants. By eliciting views and opinions from these participants, such interviews illuminated topics relevant for answering research questions (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002).

Different sets of questions were developed to pose to each of the four groups of interview participants: PRSSA chapter officers, PRSSA professional advisers, PRSSA faculty advisers, and the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs. The relational model of leadership, the LID model, conceptions of leadership in public relations presented in the scholarly literature, and the two research questions posed by the study informed question development.

The focus on leader skills, aptitudes, attitudes, values, and behaviors in the relational model of leadership inspired the development of questions for student participants, whose purpose was to pinpoint their perspectives relative to these aspects of the model. Language used in select questions, such as specific inquiries about leadership philosophy or purpose and principles and ethics that guided student leadership, were adapted from Komives et al. (2006)'s "Chapter Activities" (p. 113, 114). As each stage of the LID model involved student engagement of individual with group factors, additional interview questions attempted to probe student self-assessment of changes in skills, aptitudes, attitudes, values, behaviors, and in particular their relationship with the group and others during their experience as PRSSA chapter officers. Overt or implied identification with any or the six stages of leadership identity as embodied in the LID model also were a specific intent of such questions. Finally, the study's focus on the

PRSSA experience and the public relations profession in general merited questions designed to probe sources of learning and related insight specific to the former organization as well as to probe their assessment of the contribution of an affiliate organization to their experience as officers and leaders.

As the overall intent of questions posed to students was to glean their perspectives on leadership vis-à-vis the relational model of leadership, the LID model, and their relationship with an affiliate organization, questions posed to PRSSA professional advisers, PRSSA faculty advisers, and the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs aimed to probe their sense of individual tangible contributions to student experiences, their perceptions of these contributions, and their sense of subsequent leadership development relative to the theoretical framework. More specifically, interview questions sought these participants' perspectives on the subject of leadership; personal experience, training, or interests relevant to their role and the subject of leadership; the nature of their interactions with PRSSA chapter officers who participated in the study; and their overall assessment of student leadership experiences and development.

Finally, conceptions of leadership in public relations presented in the literature review in this study informed the development of questions probing how different participants defined leadership in the profession. The extent to which identifiable leadership concepts informed national affiliate organization efforts, as well as those of its representatives, needed to be determined if conclusions were to be drawn regarding the relationship between classroom efforts, PRSSA chapter officer experiences, and conceptions of leadership in the profession.

Semi-structured interviews based on these four sets of questions were conducted with the 12 research participants. These interviews were guided conversations, using the questions in an open-ended format that satisfied the needs of the researcher's line of inquiry while providing the flexibility to explore other ideas that arose in conjunction with participant responses to individual interview questions (Yin, 2009).

The following questions were used to interview the seven PRSSA student officers:

1. What year are you in school?
2. What is your major? What led you to choose this area of study?
3. What are your plans after you graduate from this university?
4. When did you join this PRSSA chapter? What led you to do so?
5. What led you to become an officer?
6. Describe what you do as an officer.
7. How do you define leadership?
8. What is your leadership philosophy or purpose? What principles or ethics guide your leadership?
9. How have your attitudes or beliefs about leadership changed since you've been serving as an officer in this chapter?
10. What existing skills or abilities do you feel you have improved by serving as an officer in this chapter?
11. What new skills or abilities do you believe you have developed by serving as an officer in this chapter?
12. What do you think you do well as an officer?

13. How do you think you can improve in your officer role?
14. How has your thinking about the club changed since you've been an officer?
15. What are the greatest joys or surprises you've had since you've been a club officer?
16. What are the greatest frustrations or disappointments you've had since you've been a chapter officer?
17. What resources, education, and/or training have you used to help you learn about your officer role and responsibilities? About leadership?
18. Did you attend the annual leadership conference held on campus on September 25, 2010? If you went, what sessions did you attend? What other activities did you participate in? How useful were they in terms of helping you fulfill your responsibilities as a chapter officer? In helping you to learn about leadership?
19. Did you attend the PRSSA National Conference held in Washington, DC from October 15 – 19, 2010? If you went, what sessions did you attend? What other activities did you participate in? How helpful were they in terms of helping you fulfill your responsibilities as a chapter officer? In helping you to learn about leadership?
20. Have you attended or participated in any other events sponsored by the PRSSA national organization, such as the National Assembly, the Leadership Rally, and Regional Activities? If so, which ones? How useful were they in terms of helping you fulfill your responsibilities as a chapter officer? In helping you to learn about leadership?

21. Have you read and/or used any publications or other materials produced by the PRSSA national organization such as biweekly updates, *The Forum*, PRSSA's national newspaper, and the PRSSA Presidents Talk listserv? If so, which ones? How useful were they in terms of helping you fulfill your responsibilities as a chapter officer? In helping you to learn about leadership?
22. Is there anything I haven't asked you about your experience as a PRSSA chapter officer that you want to share with me?

The following questions were used to interview the two PRSSA chapter faculty advisers:

1. How long have you worked at this university?
2. What do you teach?
3. Is leadership a topic you cover in any of these classes? If so, how?
4. On what topics have you published?
5. What are your current research interests?
6. Is leadership a topic you have addressed in any of the aforementioned research? If so, how?
7. Why did you choose to become the adviser to the PRSSA chapter?
8. What specifically do you do in this role?
9. What information and resources do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them?
10. How do you define leadership in public relations? To what extent have you seen PRSSA chapter officers cultivate skills or aptitudes consistent with this definition?

11. What other skills or aptitudes have you observed PRSSA chapter officers cultivate while serving as chapter adviser?
12. What training or guidance did you receive to help you in this role? How helpful was this training or guidance?
13. What are the greatest joys or surprises you've had since you've been the chapter's faculty adviser?
14. What are the greatest frustrations or disappointments you've had since you've been the chapter's faculty adviser?
15. Is there anything I haven't asked you about your experience as faculty adviser to this chapter that you want to share with me?

The following three questions also were asked of the past faculty adviser:

16. What classes on public relations or related subjects do PRSSA chapter officer typically complete?
17. What topics are covered in each of these classes?
18. Is leadership covered in these classes? If so, how?

The following questions were used to interview the two PRSA professional advisers to the PRSSA chapter being studied:

1. What is your current job?
2. What did you study in college? Why?
3. Were you a member of the PRSSA chapter where you attended college? If so, did you hold a position as an officer at any time during your membership? If so, please describe what you did in the position(s) you held.
4. Why did you choose to become a professional adviser to this PRSSA chapter?

5. What specifically do you do in this role?
6. What information and resources do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them?
7. How do you define leadership in public relations? To what extent have you seen PRSSA chapter officers cultivate skills or aptitudes consistent with this definition?
8. What other skills or aptitudes have you observed PRSSA chapter officers cultivate while serving as chapter adviser?
9. What training or guidance did you receive to help you in this role? How helpful was this training or guidance?
10. What are the greatest joys or surprises you've had since you've been the chapter's professional adviser?
11. What are the greatest frustrations or disappointments you've had since you've been the chapter's professional adviser?
12. Is there anything I haven't asked you about your experience as professional adviser to this chapter that you want to share with me?

The following questions were used to interview the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs:

1. What information, resources, activities, and/or events do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them address the challenges of their positions? Please describe each of them.

2. Which of these information, resources, activities, and/or events do PRSSA chapter officers use most often? Least often? Find most effective? Find least effective?
3. How does PRSSA define leadership in public relations? How do the resources you mentioned previously help PRSSA chapter officers cultivate skills and aptitudes consistent with this definition of leadership?
4. What are the greatest joys or surprises you've had in working with PRSSA chapter officers since you've been in your current position?
5. What are the greatest frustrations or disappointments you've had in working with PRSSA chapter officers since you've been in your current position?
6. Is there anything I haven't asked you about your experience in the position you currently hold that you want to share with me?

The researcher took the following steps to address validity and reliability of the study. First, multiple sources of evidence were used in reporting findings. These included relevant documents and observations of meetings and events in addition to the aforementioned interviews. Second, appropriate attention was devoted to each source; in particular, notes on observations of individual events were reviewed, edited, and finalized within 12 hours of the observation. Documents collected at these events likewise were reviewed, analyzed, and organized. The intent of the latter two efforts was to enable an external observer to trace the steps from findings back to initial research questions, or vice versa; in other words, the researcher strived to maintain a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009).

The researcher also checked with participants to determine the accuracy of interviews conducted with them. Each interview was listened to immediately after its conclusion and subsequently transcribed. After the researcher completed these transcriptions, each interview was listened to a second time to check on its accuracy and make necessary corrections before sending the transcripts to individual interviewees. These interviewees were given a month to review, revise, and/or approve as is the transcribed document. A reminder was sent ten days prior to the deadline, and a final e-mail requesting a response was sent on the deadline day. Notes taken during the one phone interview also were checked for accuracy and subsequently sent to the interviewee at the same time as the other interviews; the same schedule of communication was followed to solicit corrections and ultimately approval of this transcript.

These different sources of data also were triangulated, so more than a single source of evidence corroborated the same case study facts or phenomenon. Thick, rich description was used, including detail on people and places and quotations from individuals included in the study, to convey findings. Negative or discrepant information that contradicted key themes also was presented as part of the study's findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

Data Collection

Observations

Observations are a valuable source of information in a case study as they offer access to the natural setting of the "case." More specifically, purposefully selected sites can help to understand the problem and research question (Creswell, 2003; Yin, 2009). In this study, the researcher attended and took notes on the behavior and activities of

student participants who attended three types of events: one, those sponsored by the university hosting the PRSSA chapter included in this study; two, those either planned or hosted by the PRSSA chapter itself; and three, those in which PRSSA chapter officers and members participated but did not assume primary responsibility for planning. These observations represented one means of collecting data to answer research questions.

Regarding university-sponsored events, the Associate Director for Student Organization & Leadership at the host university invited the researcher to attend and observe the university's Student Organization Leadership Conference on September 25, 2010. This event consisted of a comprehensive skills development and networking program for officers of student groups officially recognized by the university, each of which must be represented by at least one officer and one member at the entire event in order to maintain recognition status with the university which in turn ensures the continuation of all benefits and privileges granted to student organizations, especially funding. The researcher attended the introductory general session that featured a presentation on alcohol awareness and select workshops at this event, with the latter focusing on teambuilding, leadership and group process and dynamics. Leadership sessions included a presentation and exercises on the relational model of leadership as well as an introduction to StrengthsQuest, a tool made available to students to help them assess their leadership skills. Documents disseminated at these workshops and published on the university's website as well as from other activities were collected, and club officers and university student affairs staff who attended were informally interviewed. Notes were taken at workshops and during informal interviews with students and staff to record what was observed and shared about issues related to leadership in clubs.

Second, the researcher observed four meetings attended by either the executive board and/or the general membership of the PRSSA chapter included in this study. One executive board meeting consisted solely of elected officers and three meetings were open to all PRSSA members. These three membership meetings consisted of a “Get to Know Your Chapter Night,” where students participated in a silent game of charades; student presentations and related discussion on their experiences at the PRSSA National Conference, held in Washington, DC on October 15-19, 2010; and a presentation by an alumna of this PRSSA chapter and a public relations major at the same university who was working at Facebook, the social network company headquartered in Palo Alto, California.

The two other meetings observed by the researcher were special events in which PRSSA officers and members participated but did not assume primary responsibility for either planning or hosting. The first of these special events was PR Day, a full-day on-campus program organized by an event planning class at the university where this study was conducted, which was designed to help students explore careers in public relations and to network with professionals in the field. This event included a keynote presentation on networking by a vice president at a Northern California public relations agency and panels on career opportunities in the sports and entertainment industries, working in public relations for an agency as opposed to a corporation, and how to build a personal brand and find a job. The second special event was Media Predicts, an annual dinner sponsored by the PRSA chapter with which this PRSSA chapter is affiliated. It featured a panel discussion during which reporters, analysts, and other high profile observers who report on technology industry developments in Northern California shared

their predictions for 2011. The audience consisted of over 380 local public relations professionals, who were in constant contact with the individual panelists during the remainder of the year to seek editorial coverage for their companies or, in the case of public relations agency staff, their clients to help generate awareness of products or services in conjunction with broader marketing and sales efforts.

These six meetings took place on September 29, 2010 (chapter executive board meeting); October 6, 2010 (“Get to Know Your Chapter Night”); November 10, 2010 (PRSSA National Conference student presentations and discussion); November 17, 2010 (PR Day); December 1, 2010 (presentation by chapter alumna from Facebook); and December 2, 2010 (Media Predicts). The researcher took detailed notes on these meetings. Subjects covered, events that occurred, individual behaviors and comments, and interactions between attendees were described. Based on this data along with what was collected through other qualitative research techniques, the researcher identified themes relevant to address research questions.

Interviews

Interviews are critical sources of information in case studies (Yin, 2009) and were included in this study. Formal interviews were conducted with 12 individuals who assumed four different roles. They were seven elected PRSSA chapter officers; two PRSSA chapter faculty advisers; two PRSA professional advisers; and the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs. These interviews were conducted on October 28, 2010; November 10, 2010; November 17, 2010; November 18, 2010; December 1, 2010; and December 10, 2010.

The following series of events enabled the researcher to schedule the aforementioned interviews. First, as an initial point of contact for PRSSA chapter officers, the group's faculty adviser researcher referred the researcher to the current PRSSA chapter president when contact was initiated in the spring 2010. The researcher spoke informally with the chapter president about the study at that time, and followed up with this individual in the fall 2010 to schedule an introductory meeting with current PRSSA chapter student officers and subsequently other chapter members to formally present the study and obtain signed informed consent forms.

Regarding the faculty adviser, each PRSSA chapter must have one individual in this role. The faculty adviser is a full-time teacher of at least one of the five public relations courses required for the group to obtain recognition from the national PRSSA organization as an official chapter. This individual also must be a member or Associate member of PRSA. Advisers in theory ensure well-organized student groups as they set a tone of professionalism; offer consistency; serve as a source of guidance, motivation, and inspiration; bring skills in planning and promoting activities; represent and advocate for PRSSA in their sponsoring academic department and elsewhere at the university; and in general adopt relevant leadership styles to meet student needs (Banks & Combs, 1989; "Chapter Handbook 2010-2011," 2010; "Establish a new chapter," 2009; Nadler, 1997).

Given these adviser functions, incorporating their perspectives into this research project was deemed appropriate. To this end, contact was made during the spring 2010 with the PRSSA chapter's current faculty adviser. The researcher did not know him previously, and obtained his name from the chapter's website. During an informal conversation with the researcher he commented on the relatively short duration of his

tenure as faculty adviser and acknowledged a limited understanding of degree requirements and content of academic courses likely to be completed by student officers in the PRSSA chapter. He thus suggested that a second faculty member, his immediate predecessor as adviser to this PRSSA chapter, be contacted for the purposes of gathering this information relevant to the study (C. Matthews, personal communication, March 16, 2010). The researcher knew this second faculty member personally through his past work in the public relations field, and contacted her in the fall 2010 to discuss the study and obtain her consent to participate.

In addition, students interested in forming a PRSSA chapter at their university must also elect one or two professional advisers. Each professional adviser must be a member of PRSA. One of these individuals must have at least five years experience in the practice of public relations. In theory, professional advisers demonstrate that public relations is an ethical profession and show the professional practitioner is interested in and concerned about events that affect the community. More specifically, their responsibilities include connecting PRSSA and PRSA members as deemed appropriate; arranging field trips; providing career-related counseling; conducting internship programs; and related activities (“Chapter Handbook 2010-2011,” 2010; “Establish a new chapter,” 2009).

The researcher therefore also contacted two public relations professionals who as board members of the PRSA chapter with which the PRSSA chapter in this study was affiliated served as professional advisers to chapter officers during the period covered by this study. One individual was a senior account executive at the San Francisco local office of a worldwide public relations agency; the other was a public relations specialist

for a provider of home entertainment products and services whose corporate headquarters are located in Northern California. The researcher did not know either of these individuals prior to contacting them about this study.

The researcher also contacted Cheryl Kardman, the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs, a full-time paid staff administrator located in PRSA's national headquarters in New York. PRSSA did not have paid staff; rather, PRSA staff oversaw PRSSA-related activities. The Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs thus worked directly with national and chapter PRSSA student leaders and chapter faculty advisers to assist with educational and operational challenges. More specifically, the individual in this role served as adviser to the PRSSA National Committee, the entity overseeing national PRSSA operations; maintained PRSSA's national records; conducted general correspondence; coordinated PRSSA membership services; and assumed other responsibilities as deemed appropriate by the National Committee or PRSA Board of Directors ("Chapter Handbook 2010-2011," 2010). Written permission was obtained from PRSA to allow Kardman to participate in the study (see Appendix A).

These interviews with chapter leaders and faculty advisers were conducted in person during the researcher's visits to the campus that hosts the PRSSA chapter included in this study. Interviews with PRSA professional advisers were conducted in person at their places of employment in the San Francisco Bay Area. The interview with the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs was conducted by phone. Individual interviews ranged in length from 16 to 49 minutes. In-person interviews were audiotaped and subsequently transcribed; notes were taken during the phone interview.

After completing these transcriptions, the researcher listened to each interview a second time to check on the accuracy of each document and make necessary corrections before sending the transcripts to individual interviewees for review and approval. These corrected transcripts were e-mailed to the 12 interviewees on December 27, 2010, with an invitation to review, revise, and/or approve the document as is by January 24, 2011. An e-mail reminding each interviewee about this deadline was sent on January 14, 2011. Four interviewees responded by e-mail by the deadline to communicate their approval of interview transcripts as is; one interviewee granted approval based on her edits of the interview transcript. Six interviewees did not respond to the researcher's request for approval or changes by the January 24, 2011 deadline. The notes taken during the phone interview with Cheryl Kardman also were checked for accuracy and subsequently sent to her for review on December 27, 2010. Kardman in turn reviewed and returned them with corrections by e-mail to the researcher on January 20, 2011.

In addition to these formal interviews, informal interviews were conducted with PRSSA members and officers who attended executive board and general membership meetings, as well as other activities attended by the researcher. Notes were taken to record what was shared during these informal interviews, and were incorporated into observation notes taken on those meetings.

Documents

Document information is likely relevant to every case study and is a particularly rich source of information about many programs and organizations. Its collection should be planned (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). To this end, several sources of information in documents were identified by the researcher as important for answering research

questions posed by this study. See Appendix B for a complete annotated list of these documents.

During the initial conversation with the PRSSA chapter president (F. Franklin, personal communication, April 9, 2010), the researcher inquired about communications tools used by the group to inform members about events. The chapter president mentioned a website, Twitter, and Facebook group, each of which the researcher monitored during the course of this study. Materials disseminated by means of these communications vehicles were considered official documents in this study and were reviewed, analyzed, and cited when appropriate in conjunction with answering research questions.

In addition, the researcher collected and analyzed all relevant documents disseminated at PRSSA executive board and general membership meetings, as well as at the two special events (PR Day and Media Predicts) in which PRSSA officers and members participated but did not plan. These materials included promotional materials, programs, and informational items made available by presenters.

The researcher also obtained from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the university hosting the PRSSA chapter included in this study general information about its academic programs in public relations (i.e., a Minor in Public Relations and B.S. degree in Public Relations). During the interview with Janet Sidarko, the PRSSA chapter's past faculty adviser and a professor at the university, the researcher requested syllabi for courses required of students enrolled in the B.S. degree program. She provided him with syllabi from four classes: Contemporary Public Relations, the introductory course for the public relations major designed to familiarize

students with basic concepts and principles of the discipline; Case Studies in Strategic Communication, which involved case studies focusing on problems and challenges faced by a variety of organizations; Campaign Planning and Management, a senior level seminar capstone course designed to integrate previous courses and internships to provide a comprehensive overview of how all elements of strategic public relations programming are done; and Advertising and Public Relations Student Agency, another senior capstone course requiring students to work in cross-functional teams to plan and execute advertising and public relations campaigns for actual clients. These syllabi were reviewed, analyzed, and cited when appropriate while answering research questions.

Finally, the researcher reviewed, analyzed, and cited materials produced by the national PRRSA organization for its chapter officers, which were obtained from its website (<http://www.prssa.org/>). These included handbooks and guides, manuals, newsletters, biweekly updates, press releases, and blog posts. PRSSA annual reports from 1998-2009 and situation analyses from 2006 to 2011 also were secured from the website. These documents, produced by the PRSSA National Committee, the undergraduate students elected from PRSSA chapters throughout the U.S. to lead the national organization and who work alongside Cheryl Kardman, the National Faculty Adviser, the National Professional Adviser, and the PRSA Board Liaison, were reviewed and analyzed for their potential relevance to answering research questions.

By gathering, reviewing, and analyzing the aforementioned documents, the researcher hoped to gain insight into leadership information and resources provided to PRSSA officers and specifically how these materials were reflected in their attitudes

and/or behaviors. Such insight in turn helped to address research questions posed by this study.

Data Analysis

The researcher triangulated data collected from documents, transcripts of 12 interviews, and observation notes used during this study, seeking regularities and patterns along with evidence of leader skills, aptitudes, attitudes, values, behaviors, leadership philosophy/purpose, and principles or ethics consistent with the relational model of leadership. Each of the six stages of leadership identity development embodied in the LID model also served as a framework for interpreting student remarks on their leadership experience, related participation in PRSSA, and comments by professionals who participated in the study. Finally, conceptions of leadership in public relations presented in the review of literature served as the basis for analyzing myriad thoughts on leadership proffered by each of the twelve individuals interviewed for the study.

Words and phrases used to represent these topics and patterns served as the basis of coding categories that collectively formed a coding system (see Appendix C). In turn, patterns or concepts that emerged from data organized by these codes became themes illuminated in data analysis and description (see Appendixes D and E) and subsequently were incorporated into responses to the study's research questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Patton, 2002) presented as findings in Chapter Four of this study.

Data were obtained and analyzed to answer each research question using the following techniques:

1. What do PRSSA and its parent organization, PRSA, provide leaders of student chapters in terms of leadership resources, training, and support?

The researcher interviewed the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs, the two faculty advisers to the PRSSA chapter, and the professional advisers from the affiliate PRSA chapter to identify products, services, and/or support provided to PRSSA club officers. He obtained and reviewed materials cited during these interviews, as well as relevant documents identified in Appendix B. The researcher reviewed interview transcripts and documents to identify themes.

The following interview question posed to the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs helped to answer this research question:

- a. What information, resources, activities, and/or events do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them address the challenges of their positions? Please describe each of them.
- b. How does PRSSA define leadership in public relations? How do the resources you mentioned previously help PRSSA chapter officers cultivate skills and aptitudes consistent with this definition of leadership?

The following interview questions posed to the chapter faculty advisers helped to answer this research question:

- a. What do you teach?
- b. Is leadership a topic you cover in any of these classes? If so, how?
- c. Why did you choose to become the adviser to the PRSSA chapter?
- d. What specifically do you do in this role?
- e. What information and resources do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them?

- f. What training or guidance did you receive to help you in this role? How helpful was this training or guidance?

The following interview questions posed to the two professional advisers from the affiliate PRSA chapter helped to answer this research question:

- a. Why did you choose to become a professional adviser to this PRSSA chapter?
 - b. What specifically do you do in this role?
 - c. What information and resources do you provide to PRSSA chapter officers to help them?
 - d. How do you define leadership in public relations? To what extent have you seen PRSSA chapter officers cultivate skills or aptitudes consistent with this definition?
 - e. What training or guidance did you receive to help you in this role? How helpful was this training or guidance?
2. What are undergraduate public relations students' perceptions of what they learn about leadership by participating as officers in PRSSA?

The researcher interviewed PRSSA chapter officers and observed their activities at executive board, general membership meetings, and other events to gather data to answer this question. Relevant documents also were reviewed. Interview transcripts, notes on observations, and analysis of documents subsequently were reviewed by the researcher to identify themes.

The following interview questions posed to PRSSA chapter officers helped to answer this research question:

- a. How do you define leadership?
- b. What is your leadership philosophy or purpose? What principles or ethics guide your leadership?
- c. How have your attitudes or beliefs about leadership changed since you've been serving as an officer in this chapter?
- d. What existing skills or abilities do you feel you have improved by serving as an officer in this chapter?
- e. What new skills or abilities do you believe you have developed by serving as an officer in this chapter?
- f. What do you think you do well as an officer?
- g. How do you think you can improve in your officer role?
- h. How has your thinking about the club changed since you've been an officer?
- i. What are the greatest joys or surprises you've had since you've been a chapter officer?
- j. What are the greatest frustrations or disappointments you've had since you've been a chapter officer?
- k. What resources, education, and/or training have you used to help you learn about your officer role and responsibilities? About leadership?
- l. Which of these resources, education, and/or training have been particularly helpful?

Human Subjects Approval

Human subjects were protected during the course of this research. Permission was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at the University of San Francisco (USF) (see Appendix F) as well as the university hosting the PRSSA chapter used in this study (see Appendix G) to ensure protection of students, faculty members, and staff who were observed and interviewed. All data were kept confidential. Pseudonyms have been used to identify all individuals interviewed, included in observation notes, or cited when reporting study results; at no time has any student, faculty member, or other individuals been identified by name. Results of interviews and observations will be available for inspection by the same university. The results will not be used for any other purpose than the stated one.

Written permissions also were obtained from individual student members and officers of the PRSSA chapter included in this study, as well as from each of the other professionals interviewed (see Appendixes H, I, J, and K). Data from instructors, students, university staff, industry professionals, and others who did not consent were not used as part of the study. To address concerns about deception, parties were informed that the study focused on leadership development in PRSSA chapters when written permission was sought for their participation.

Results of the study first will be shared with the university hosting the PRSSA chapter used in this study and discussed with appropriate faculty and PRSSA leaders and students. If the university desires, a workshop for the faculty members and student affairs program administrators highlighting the results of this study will be presented. Results

also may be shared with leaders and administrators at the affiliate PRSA chapter and the national PRSSA organization if they desire to view them.

Background of the Researcher

The researcher's experience spans twenty years of work in public relations, including stints at a public relations agency, as a public relations manager for an environmental claims testing organization, and as an independent consultant providing public relations services to organizations representing a range of industries. It also included past membership in PRSA, during which time the researcher earned the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) designation; held leadership positions in a PRSA chapter other than the one included in this study; made presentations at local and national PRSA-sponsored events; co-founded a PRSSA chapter at a university other than the one included in this study, and served as co-faculty adviser of that same chapter; delivered a presentation at a national PRSSA convention; and taught undergraduate and graduate classes on public relations at several Northern California educational institutions other than the one included in this study.

The researcher currently works as a faculty member and administrator at USF's School of Business and Professional Studies. The former role requires him to teach classes on communication, organizational behavior, and small group dynamics to graduate and undergraduate students whose major area of study is business. The latter role requires him to coach and advise individual MBA (Master of Business Administration) students on professional development matters, as well as to advise officers of MBA professionally oriented clubs on operational and leadership issues. The

researcher also has a formal role as faculty adviser to an MBA student Toastmasters club during the 2010-2011 academic year.

In addition, the researcher holds positions in two extracurricular organizations in conjunction with his graduate studies in education at USF: President of the university's Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) chapter and the Organization and Leadership Program representative to the USF School of Education's Graduate Student Association. The researcher also holds a volunteer position with the Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community in NASPA, a professional organization for student affairs professionals in higher education. This latter position coincides with the timeframe of this proposed study.

The researcher earned a B.A. degree in History from Brandeis University. He earned an M.A. degree in Modern European History from Stanford University.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

Overview

This study explored undergraduate student perceptions of the contributions of an affiliate organization relationship to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in clubs that serve specific occupational interests. Using the public relations profession as a subject, the relationship between the PRSSA and its affiliate, the PRSA, was investigated.

To answer the study's two research questions, data were collected through observations of six events which PRSSA chapter officers and members planned, volunteered at, and/or attended; one leadership training event for club officers sponsored by the university that hosted the PRSSA chapter; 12 interviews with PRSSA chapter officers, professional advisers, faculty advisers, and Cheryl Kardman, the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs; and a review of documents produced by the PRSSA chapter; PRSSA's national organization; the public relations academic degree program completed by PRSSA chapter officers; and the student affairs office at the host university.

These data sources were analyzed and coded using the system developed for this study (see Appendix C). Emerging patterns or concepts became themes reflected in responses to research questions. These responses are presented below.

Participant Profiles and Description

The following 12 professionals, faculty members, and students were interviewed for the study. A pseudonym was assigned to each individual by the researcher. These

pseudonyms are provided below along with a brief description of that participant's background as deemed relevant to the presentation of study results. Participants are profiled below in the order in which they are introduced in the subsequent section that presents findings related to the study's two research questions.

Cheryl Kardman (Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs)

Kardman served as Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs during the period covered by this study. She joined PRSA in 1991 after earning a bachelor's degree in psychology from New York University. Kardman assumed the position of Director of Education, which included oversight of PRSSA, in 2001, having been promoted from the Assistant Program Director of The Counselors Academy and Technology Section at PRSSA. An African American, Kardman was promoted to her current position in August 2010.

Cassandra Schwartz (PRSA Professional Adviser)

Schwartz served as one of two professional advisers to the PRSSA chapter during the period covered by this study. She assumed this role in January 2010. A public relations specialist for a consumer electronics company headquartered in Northern California, Schwartz, a Caucasian, graduated with a degree in public relations from the university where this study was conducted and also served there as an officer in its PRSSA chapter and in student government.

Martin Miller (PRSA Professional Adviser)

Miller, an Asian American, assumed this position in September 2010 and held it during the period covered by this study. A political science major at a University of California institution where no PRSSA chapter existed, Miller entered the profession

within two years after graduating. He subsequently held positions at three public relations agencies including his stint at the San Francisco office of an international firm that coincided with the study timeframe.

Charles Matthews (Current PRSSA Chapter Faculty Adviser)

Matthews served as faculty adviser to the PRSSA chapter during the timeframe covered by this study. In his first year in this role and third year at the university after an eight-year stint at another institution in the California State University system, he was in the process of applying for tenure and seeking promotion to full professor. A Caucasian, Matthews taught two courses required of public relations majors (Contemporary Public Relations and Case Studies in Communication) among others in the discipline. His research explored ethics in public relations and in particular how students worked through ethical dilemmas in the field.

Janet Sidarko (Past PRSSA Chapter Faculty Adviser)

Sidarko, a Caucasian and twenty-year employee of the university where the study was conducted, served as faculty adviser to the PRSSA chapter for over a decade prior to Matthews. She also served a term as president of the PRSA chapter with which this PRSSA chapter is affiliated. Sidarko taught the Case Studies in Strategic Communication and Campaign Planning and Management courses, as well as courses on writing skills. Her research focused on crisis communications and political communication.

Fred Franklin (Immediate Past PRSSA Chapter President)

Franklin served as Immediate Past PRSSA Chapter President during the period covered by the study. He served as president of this chapter during the spring semester

2010, having been elected when the then-president resigned unexpectedly. At that time Franklin was serving as the chapter's social chair, an unelected position on its executive board. A Caucasian, he majored in public relations and graduated in December 2010. Franklin worked part-time at an event production company located near the university during the study timeframe.

Felicia Martin (PRSSA Chapter President)

Martin served as PRSSA Chapter President during the study period. A Latina, she returned to the university during the spring semester 2008 after a ten-year hiatus to complete her degree. Martin joined the PRSSA chapter that semester and served as an officer during the 2009-2010 academic year. She majored in public relations and planned to graduate in May 2011.

Tiffany Smith (PRSSA Chapter Director of Membership)

Smith served as PRSSA Chapter Director of Membership during the period covered by this study. A Caucasian, she planned to graduate in May 2011 after completing the requirements for a major in public relations and minor in business. Smith became a member of the chapter in the fall semester 2008. She worked as a public relations intern for a Northern California-based professional football team during the study timeframe.

Elizabeth Brooks (PRSSA Chapter Director of Public Relations)

Brooks served as PRSSA Chapter Director of Public Relations during the period covered by this study. A journalism student while attending a community college in the San Francisco Bay Area, she decided to major in public relations after transferring to this university for the fall semester 2009. A Caucasian, Brooks secured a part-time job at a

public relations agency located near the university during the study timeframe and planned to graduate in May 2011.

Jennifer Jones (PRSSA Director of Fundraising)

Jones served as PRSSA Chapter of Director of Fundraising during the period covered by this study. An Asian American, she started at the university as a business major and decided to switch to public relations after realizing the field represented a better fit for her strengths and interests. The semester when the study was conducted was Jones' first as a member of the PRSSA chapter. She intended to graduate with a B.S. in Public Relations in May 2012.

Sally Strong (PRSSA Chapter Vice President of Professional Development)

Strong, an Asian American, served as PRSSA Chapter Vice President of Professional Development during the period covered by this study. She became a member of the chapter during the fall semester 2009, and during the spring semester 2010 assumed an unofficial, unelected position on the chapter's executive board to help plan events. Strong completed a public relations internship at a television station located near the university during the study timeframe, and planned to graduate with a B.S. in Public Relations in May 2011.

Alexandra Young (PRSSA Chapter Editor-in-Chief)

Young served as PRSSA Editor-in-Chief during the period covered by this study, and joined the chapter as a member in the fall semester 2010. A Caucasian who planned to graduate in May 2013, she started at the university as a business marketing major and switched to public relations after determining the field offered a better match for her experience and interests.

Research Questions and Findings

The following section presents data culled from interviews, observations, and review of documents that were deemed relevant for answering each of the two research questions posed by this study. Relevant themes emerging from analysis of this data have been highlighted, with each supported by multiple sources of data. Details on programs, activities, people, and places have been provided, along with quotations from participants interviewed for the study, to convey findings. Where appropriate, information that contradicted key themes has been presented.

Research Question One

What do the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and its parent organization, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), provide leaders of student chapters in terms of leadership resources, training, and support?

This research question explored the information and resources made available to PRSSA chapter leaders by the national affiliate organization, its representatives, and their university to probe how each aimed to help them fulfill officer responsibilities and learn about leadership. Results are presented below in terms of the provider of information. Specific documents and other forms of assistance delivered are identified, drawing on the perspective of relevant affiliate organization representatives to describe them in detail, as well as to assess their use and relative value for the PRSSA chapter officers with whom they worked and isolate to the extent possible their relationship to student leadership development. Such information and analysis was deemed critical in the face of subsequent student perceptions shared below in response to research question two, as it

highlighted a distinction between affiliate organization provision of resources and information and how PRSSA chapter leaders learned about their roles and leadership.

PRSSA

As the affiliate organization sponsoring the student group on which this case study was based, PRSSA's resources, training, and support for chapter officers had a potentially significant role in shaping their experiences. Thus, the following section is devoted to discussing and assessing their relevance for leadership development. To begin, activities administered by the national organization are considered.

The national PRSSA organization offered chapter officers a Leadership Rally; the National Assembly; a National Conference; advice and counsel provided by the ten elected student members of its National Committee, the organization's governing body; a website; and a chapter handbook. Through these resources, among others, PRSSA aimed to "to cultivate a favorable and mutually advantageous relationship between students and professional public relations practitioners" ("Chapter Handbook, 2010-2011," 2010, p. 1).

The Leadership Rally, held during the last three years in early June, consisted of a two-day program of activities for PRSSA chapter presidents whose terms span the following academic year. The event's intent, according to Kardman, was "a starting point" in terms of helping presidents identify responsibilities, discover available resources (e.g., the website, chapter handbook, a Presidents-Talk listserv), and meet and network with peers. To these ends, sessions held at the 2010 Leadership Rally, which was attended by about one-third of chapter presidents, included "Leading and Managing Your Board," "How to Stay in Touch," "What Your Members Need to Know," and workshops on the 2010 National Conference and PRSSA website redesign. Presidents

also were organized into groups based on chapter size, according to Kardman, “to discuss member recruitment, and chapter and professional development” with results aired in a final session. Notes on key topics (e.g., meetings and events, executive board management, fundraising, recruiting, retention) were published on the PRSSA website so chapter leaders could access them throughout the year (“PRSSA 2010 leadership rally agenda,” 2010; “PRSSA 2010 leadership rally best practice sharing,” 2010).

Regarding specific resources discussed at this event, the PRSSA Presidents-Talk listserv was “very active” according to Kardman as chapter president subscribers posted questions, identified the ways they addressed specific concerns, sought help from the National Committee, and obtained direction from peers. The website, she added, “is a great way for presidents to go in and access the tools useful to them during their time in office and for their chapters to be well-informed.” National Committee members, moreover, remained in contact with chapter presidents to help them address challenges in member recruitment, fundraising, and other matters. These national student leaders served as the primary organizational contact for PRSSA chapter presidents, as Kardman’s main relationships were with individual National Committee members.

Another event, the National Assembly, was held every spring and attracted student delegates representing individual PRSSA chapters located at universities across the U.S. They convened to vote on proposed changes to PRSSA Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures and to elect incoming National Committee members. One voting delegate from each PRSSA chapter can attend this event, preferably a sophomore or junior who was an incoming officer. Other interested chapter leaders also may participate. Attendees learned about national PRSSA programs and opportunities, leadership strategies and

tactics, and chapter programs, especially through roundtable discussions with their peers from other chapters (“Chapter Handbook, 2010-2011,” 2010; C. Kardman, personal communication, Dec. 10, 2010).

The annual National Conference also provided opportunities for individual club offers to meet with counterparts at other chapters, as well as to attend educational programs covering public relations tactics and on specific practices in sectors such as healthcare and entertainment. These roundtable discussions allowed students to “brainstorm” and learn about “key messages” for their position and/or to consider best practices for specific chapter activities (e.g., public relations student-run firms operated by PRSSA chapters). The emphasis here, according to Kardman, was on peer-to-peer interaction and learning: “We find that students/officers learn so much from each other with respect to hearing how other chapters handle certain challenges or the various types of programs they have in place.” Notes were taken on these discussions and subsequently made available to chapter presidents and other officers who were interested but unable to attend the National Conference in-person.

Kardman also mentioned the PRSSA chapter handbook as a resource, a hard copy of which was sent to the faculty adviser who in turn was expected to give it to the chapter president. This handbook included a PRSSA overview and benefits of membership in the organization; names and contact information for National Committee members; chapter standards; national events; resources provided by the national organization; chapter programming; professional development; and other ideas for chapters and individual members. Its “Benefits of PRSSA” section included a list of competitions, scholarships, and awards, including three in the latter category that specifically recognized leadership

in the organization and public relations as a profession. These were one, the Lawrence G. Foster Award for Excellence in Public Relations, which solicited applicants to “list leadership qualities they believe are most important in public relations and why;” two, the National Gold Key Award, which “recognizes students who demonstrate excellence in public relations and PRSSA leadership;” and three, the National President’s Citation, which “celebrates members who possess professional skills, a strong understanding of PRSSA, and Chapter or National leadership experience” (“Chapter Handbook 2010-2011,” 2010, p. 17, 18).

This package of advice, counsel, events, activities, resources, and recognition aimed to produce chapter officers whom Kardman described as possessing the following attributes:

(They) have a clear understanding of the vision and mission of PRSSA and are willing to be held accountable for the continuing advancement of these two elements. This person is knowledgeable about the benefits provided by Society as well as its supporters. A leader in PRSSA is someone who will diligently and tirelessly work with students and professionals to achieve the goals set forth by either the local Chapter or the Society.

More specifically, she added, the substance of leadership training at the aforementioned events “always incorporates PRSA’s strategic pillars as interpreted by the PRSSA National Committee. . . and key principles such as advocacy, ethics, diversity, advancement in public relations via life-long learning, and communities. . . This is the content that PRSSA feels its officers need to know to be effective leaders now and as they become practicing professionals.” Kardman added that individual chapters were encouraged to incorporate these content areas into leadership programming to address their particular concerns.

By extension, Kardman offered a definition of leadership in public relations. She consulted the 2010-2011 PRSSA National President Billy Harding, who described the concept as follows:

Leadership in public relations is about being a good citizen of the profession. Good citizenship is based on continued learning and education, mentorship of future professionals, and engaging fellow practitioners to share in establishing best practices and ethical principles. When many public relations professionals strive to be good citizens, we can advance the profession and better serve our clients and organizations.

In addition to this support for student officers, PRSSA also offered training and resources to help faculty and professional advisers to chapters (“Tools for Advisers,” 2011). A training session for faculty advisers was held for those individuals who choose to attend the annual National Conference. The National Faculty and Professional Adviser members of the National Committee hosted this training session. Other tools available to faculty advisers included publications on topics such as building a relationship with the affiliate PRSA chapter, managing student-run firms, and facilitating leadership transition. Both faculty and professional advisers also may choose to subscribe to optional listservs specifically designated for their roles, and could refer to their national counterparts if they have other questions.

In summary, the PRSSA national organization offered a range of resources, in terms of events, materials, and access to other student leaders, designed to help chapters and specifically their individual officers to fulfill their responsibilities and learn about leadership. While PRSSA strived to involve chapter presidents and/or other officers in its activities and make them aware of all such offerings, attendance at events and use of resources was entirely optional. Chapter officers, particularly the president, had to take the initiative to find and use them. The PRSSA national organization likewise provided

faculty and professional advisers resources to help them in their roles, and like their students they seemingly had to seek them out and use them.

In addition, the PRSSA national organization viewed leadership as necessarily supportive of public relations as a profession, the organization itself, and its affiliate PRSA as well. This advocacy, in addition to diversity, ethics, mentoring of future professionals, and lifelong learning were key components of the leadership concept shared by the two organizations and incorporated into chapter officer training provided by the national organization. Indeed, the PRSSA national organization apparently saw leadership development as one outcome of the advice, counsel, events, activities, and resources offered to student leaders; to this end, the organization established criteria for three awards to recognize leadership experience and achievement.

Professional Advisers

As noted above, the PRSSA national organization considered professional advisers as members of the team charged with working with PRSSA chapter officers. Therefore, the two professional advisers to the PRSSA chapter included in this study were interviewed. The following section presents highlights from their responses to interview questions deemed relevant to answering the first research question.

As working public relations professionals and members of the Board of Directors of the PRSA chapter with which the PRSSA chapter in this study was affiliated, the two professional advisers served as liaisons between the two organizations, providing advice and counsel to PRSSA officers and members and linking the world of the university student with the workplace. The two individuals in these roles shared similarities and differences in how they handled these responsibilities, both of which merit consideration

as they shed light on this research question and with that the topic of leadership development in PRSSA.

Schwartz's experience as a PRSSA and student government leader fueled her desire to seek a professional adviser position as a vehicle for advising students and facilitating their transition from membership in PRSSA to PRSA—and with that their evolution into public relations professionals. She worked most closely with the PRSSA chapter president particularly through biweekly conference calls, offering what she described as “candid advice” on fundraising, handling personal issues between officers, and providing insight on how to plan and/or participate in events such as Agency Day, when PRSSA chapter members toured San Francisco-based public relations agencies; the Regional Activity, a student-planned event featuring varied programming on different aspects of public relations, which was promoted to PRSSA chapters throughout a geographic region; and Media Predicts. Schwartz highlighted the advisory nature of this role in the following way:

We definitely don't go in and communicate for them or try to mediate anything but provide advice for they could've taken it this way. I give counsel on how to help manage the officers especially being a student and leading a group of your peers can be pretty difficult and so giving them an open ear as to potentially provide advice on how to interact with one another as well.

Schwartz identified her ability to connect PRSSA chapter leaders with public relations professionals as fundamental. Whether that occurred when she introduced students to prospective speakers or through invitations to PRSSA members to attend PRSA chapter meetings, her aim was clear and explicit: to make it a “seamless experience” in moving from membership in PRSSA to PRSA. The two organizations, in fact, had a symbiotic relationship. Schwartz commented, “I think that PRSA and PRSSA

act as support for one another because just as PRSA helps PRSSA PRSA also acknowledges the fact that these are the people that are going to come into the professional world. We learn from the students as well.”

Schwartz’s insight into the PRSA/PRSSA dynamic and focus on the organizations themselves tied in with her perspectives on PRSSA officer skill cultivation and concomitant emergent leadership skills. Nascent time management and delegation skills, accompanied by a growing confidence in advising their peers, represented for her “leadership development” that occurred as a by-product of student interaction with public relations professionals: “And they hear a lot. . . and (attend) a lot of these meetings. . . and they’re in Agency Day. . . they’ve taken in a lot from professionals and you can see that start to be relayed to the other members as well.”

Schwartz went one step further in this arena, making explicit the connection between leadership in PRSSA—and subsequently in public relations—with advocacy for the organization and profession. In the latter sense, she echoed the aforementioned perspectives on leadership in public relations proffered by Kardman and PRSSA National President Harding. “Leadership is progressing the profession and supporting its development,” Schwartz stated, adding that leaders, specifically chapter officers in PRSSA, “(Need to) have passion for PR. . . they want to see both themselves as well as their peers succeed in that profession that they’re trying to be a part of. . . I see (the officers) aiding and encouraging people to be a part of PRSSA. . . so I think overall their leadership comes across as a way to not only help them progress in the field but to help others.”

Miller, the second professional adviser to the PRSSA chapter included in this study, brought with him a decidedly different educational and professional background than Schwartz that contributed both to similar and markedly different views on this role and leadership in public relations. His professional experience, fueled by a commitment to work with students stemming from his undergraduate years, informed the focus of his efforts as a professional adviser. He described this focus as follows:

There's a lot of students out there I should say young professionals who are interested in the public relations field and I think a lot of times many of them don't realize what it takes to be successful. . . They all want to really thrive in the business so I felt it was a good opportunity to share my own experience with them. I've gone through it myself and kind of help shape them. . . how to approach agencies how to interview what are the key skills that they should develop in college that they can translate into the workplace.

In other words, mentoring students to facilitate their entry into the public relations profession largely inspired Miller's work. Whether it was answering questions about public relations classes, reviewing resumes, or talking about work at a public relations agency, his primary focus—and source of joy as well as positive feedback from students—lay in this domain.

Miller also participated with Schwartz on biweekly conference calls with the PRSSA chapter president and vice president, like her providing counsel on possible activities, speakers, how to generate attendance, and in particular helping to identify public relations agencies for students to visit during Agency Day. He also cited advising officers on how to manage interpersonal conflicts and negotiate with vendors as specific ways in which he contributed, making the direct connection between competencies in these domains and his view of leadership in public relations. "It's being placed in challenging or difficult situations and being able to navigate them in a way that best

serves your client as well as the agency,” Miller stated. “So I would say leadership is really having the adversity to deal with something that’s challenging and making it work so you can have all the parties benefit from that.”

A major theme in Schwartz’s interview—PRSSA membership as a bridge to the profession and at the same time membership in PRSA—only arose at the end of Miller’s interview, and then more in terms of the following response to his frustration with what he perceived as the lack of PRSA chapter board involvement in the professional advisers’ work.

I think this type of position is actually very valuable and I think that until recently (well a couple of years ago) it wasn’t made that big of a deal but now people are seeing there’s value in cultivating a relationship with these students who are PRSSA because hopefully they’ll come on to the PRSA chapter after they graduate and continue to be active so I think that moving forward it should definitely get more attention . . . to make sure that we can translate students at the PRSSA into actual active participating PRSA members.

Neither Miller nor Schwartz sought nor received training to help them fulfill their professional adviser responsibilities. Both cited the need to draw on personal experience and/or to learn by doing, as Miller noted: “You know there really is no rulebook on how to best advise them you kinda always keep in mind what’s good for them in terms of their professional lives.”

In short, the two PRSSA chapter professional advisers primarily provided advice and counsel through formal, scheduled phone meetings with the chapter president, and in one case the individual filling this role offered career-related advice to members by e-mail and through social media. In the process, these individuals highlighted different aspects of leadership as defined by the national affiliate organization, with one focusing on service to organization, profession, and peers, and the other highlighting skills such as

negotiation and facilitating difficult situations involving diverse populations. PRSSA professional advisers also explicitly connected the emergence of leadership and related competencies among chapter officers with performance in their roles. These practitioners largely spoke positively of the relationship between PRSA and PRSSA, and each considered the latter as a bridge to the profession and membership in the former. Finally, the two professional advisers drew primarily on their personal experience and insight to fulfill their specific responsibilities.

Faculty Advisers

While the national PRSSA organization and affiliate PRSA chapter supported the aforementioned activities of professional advisers, faculty advisers apparently received top billing in terms of their importance to chapters. Kardman stated, “the faculty advisor is pillar to the success of PRSSA Chapters. . . (and thus) we want to make sure presidents are keeping advisers up to speed on events (and) continue to network with them.”

Interviews conducted with the current and past faculty adviser to the chapter in this study, presented below, illuminated the ways in which this interaction took place and how these individuals perceived their role as well as their contributions to officer experiences and learning about leadership.

Matthews, the current faculty adviser, assumed the role via a perfunctory handoff from his predecessor with little guidance, training, or direction sought or received either from that individual or the national PRSSA organization. Nonetheless, he articulated a philosophy that echoed remarks by Kardman and Schwartz on how they worked with PRSSA student leaders and also informed subsequent comments on his work with students.

I would take the view that I'm an overseer or counselor to them (as it's) a student-run organization, not a faculty run organization. . . issues come up that they can't deal with as an executive body and they'll come to me to help adjudicate things. . . my job is to empower them to be leaders of the group. . . they get very little hand holding. . . They develop leadership skills they have to if there's a problem a lot of times they have to solve it themselves unless it's a major thing I need to get involved with.

Matthews' relationship with student leaders, in particular his primary contact, the PRSSA chapter's president, thus was "informal" in his words. He encouraged weekly meetings, an invitation to which Franklin responded enthusiastically; Martin did not do so during the study timeframe. The substance of conversations with Franklin focused primarily on "personnel issues. . . group dynamics and all of that. . . my presidents tend to wanna do it all themselves and they get burned out and also get burned by sometimes delegating to someone who is not able or willing to do the job. . . (so I provide) advice on how to hand hold in that situation."

During his brief tenure as faculty adviser to the PRSSA chapter at this university and while filling that role at his previous institution, Matthews witnessed the development of student skills in managing people and projects as an outcome of experiences in visiting public relations agencies, participating in chapter programs, and organizing a Regional Activity. Particularly in the latter case, he noted, students gained increased confidence, born of "taking it to the next level where the magnitude of the project is bigger than just a class project. . . they actually can apply some of those skills they've learned in the classroom and make something happen."

The bigger, and more exciting development from Matthews' perspective, was the opportunity to witness the transition from public relations student to professional. This transformation reflected his perspective on leadership, which he also incorporated into his

classes by requiring students to read books (e.g., *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Tipping Point*) that encouraged them to “think about their roles more strategically as opposed to just coming in and picturing PR simply in the communication role.” For Matthews, leadership in public relations involved “in some sense. . . the idea of moving from being a technician to a manager. . . moving from doing things right to doing the right things. . . the primary job being to help organizations accomplish their objectives.” Leaders in public relations, above all, “help to change the perception of our profession,” a perspective he shared with Kardman and Schwartz, especially in terms of incorporating what Matthews described as ethical elements into daily decision-making. Finally, he differentiated leaders in public relations from followers; in his words, “we know they are leaders because we know they have followers.”

Sidarko, Matthews’ immediate predecessor as faculty adviser to the PRSSA chapter included in this study, initially contributed to this discussion through her knowledge of the curriculum completed by public relations majors. She identified diversity, ethics, and working effectively in teams—topics explicitly connected with leadership development in PRSSA by Kardman and Matthews, and implicitly (in terms of the latter topic) by the two professional advisers—as common learning outcomes in syllabi for four required classes. In response to a question regarding if, and how, leadership was a topic specifically addressed in these classes, Sidarko noted that leader qualities were covered in Contemporary Public Relations; occasionally in questions students addressed in the Case Studies in Strategic Communication course; and in the Campaign Planning and Management and Advertising and Public Relations Student Agency classes. As the latter class required students to work in teams, leadership became

a relevant consideration for students “trying to develop their skills in the direction that if they feel comfortable being leaders what kinds of skills will they need to have in order to succeed at that versus those who would prefer to just never be leaders and only be followers a member of team versus the leader of the team.” These observations aside, leadership was not explicitly mentioned in either learning outcomes or individual session topics in public relations course syllabi reviewed for this study in conjunction with Sidarko’s response to related interview questions.

Sidarko’s role as faculty adviser to this PRSSA chapter also was explored. Like Matthews, she assumed the position in a perfunctory manner from another faculty member who had filled the position for many years. Sidarko advised and counseled PRSSA chapter presidents on a similarly ad hoc basis. “They don’t have time to talk to you,” she lamented when referring to working with chapter presidents. Sidarko nonetheless formed strong bonds with student officers, with her longevity inspiring specific ways she guided chapter presidents in terms of “helping students when they were stuck on speakers, coming up with names who they should call. . . You can remind them oh you’re forgetting about elections that are coming up, or something else. . . (I also provided) records from past chapters. . . and helped them put together bids for Regional Activities.”

PRSSA chapter officers, added Sidarko, cultivated skills in event planning, motivating members, and mentoring students, with the latter effort aimed to help them become more active and ultimately assume officer roles. Like Matthews, she worked most closely with chapter presidents who “often took on way more work than they

should.” Sidarko added that these individuals aspired to “bring a good reputation to the organization to bring in more students and get recognized at the national level.”

Such skills reflected Sidarko’s definition of leadership in public relations for “50-60% of the time” she worked with officers in her faculty adviser role. On the one hand, like Matthews, she pointed out the role of PRSSA leaders in serving the organization and profession and, as noted above, considered the public relations leader as distinct from followers. Her identification of specific leadership skills and competencies, however, far exceeded his perspective, melded sentiments expressed by professional advisors and PRSSA national representatives, and hinted at key skills and aptitudes associated with leadership in public relations that were presented above as part of the review of literature. Sidarko’s comments were as follows:

(As a leader in public relations) I think you have to be able to counsel, you have to be able to advise people based on your experience. . . you have to be able to have a conversation with them (clients or people in your own organization) and lead them through why that might not be the best idea. . . and balance sort of taking an authoritative role with one of being willing to work with somebody. . . You have to also be a good listener. . . and be really open to diversity now. You have to be strong enough to say no.

In summary, the current PRSSA chapter faculty adviser offered advice and counsel on an as needed basis, particularly when the chapter president encountered personnel issues on the executive board or had logistical questions. In this sense, his purpose seemed similar to that filled by the two chapter professional advisers. The current PRSSA chapter faculty adviser also considered leadership to have an ethical component, which echoed his research interests and one focus of the national organization. He also highlighted the importance for public relations leaders to serve the profession itself, a point made by one of the professional advisors and the national

organization representative as well. Finally, both faculty advisers distinguished leaders from followers in public relations, and emphasized attention to the organization or profession, reputation, and officer motivation as key in terms of chapter leadership attributes. This focus on organization or profession and reputation echoed the conception of leadership shared by national PRSSA representatives.

More broadly, data presented here in response to research question one revealed that faculty advisers, professional advisers, and the PRSSA national office focused their efforts on chapter presidents as opposed to students holding other officer positions. Even then, PRSSA chapter presidents generally had to initiate contact to take advantage of what these affiliate organization representatives had to offer. Yet in the process of working with these PRSSA chapter officers these individuals identified service to the profession, advocacy for PRSSA, and group dynamics/team building among chapter executive board members as common officer leadership competencies.

In short, interviews and review of documents completed to prepare the aforementioned response to research question one offer insight into affiliate organization—more specifically, PRSSA and PRSA—contributions to PRSSA student learning experiences while serving as officers. A consideration of student perceptions of these resources and the ultimate assessment of their value in helping them to learn about their responsibilities and develop as leaders rounded out this study's inquiry into the role of affiliate organizations in leadership development. This topic formed the basis of the second research question.

Research Question Two

What are undergraduate public relations students' perceptions of what they learn about leadership by participating as officers in PRSSA?

This research question explored PRSSA chapter leader observations on what they learn about leadership while serving as officers. Students also were asked to identify sources of their learning. Interviews with seven PRSSA chapter officers, along with observations of an executive board meeting, three membership meetings, and two other events that PRSSA chapter officers did not plan but in which they and members participated, yielded insight on four topics that in turn helped to answer this research question. These topics are one, identifying what leaders do and defining leadership in PRSSA; two, student self-assessment of their learning while serving as PRSSA chapter officers; three, student assessment of their officer experience and the PRSSA chapter in general; and four, student identification of resources for their learning about officer roles and leadership. Each topic is considered separately below.

Identifying What Leaders Do and Defining Leadership in PRSSA

Through their words and behaviors, PRSSA chapter officers offered insight into what it meant to be leaders in the organization and their concept of leadership within PRSSA. Six of the seven PRSSA chapter officers highlighted the importance of modeling specific behaviors and attitudes. Chapter leaders had to be “influential. . . and really just lead a group,” said Smith. Leaders needed to be “open and honest,” argued Brooks; they had to “take control,” said Franklin; they needed to “listen to their followers,” stated Jones. In short, a leader had to be “strong, independent, willing to take

on big tasks that need to be done, and fearless. . . (yet) not this scary leader person that they (members) have to take direction from,” maintained Strong.

Above all, argued Franklin, PRSSA officers—as leaders—needed to be individuals with the following attributes:

The members can turn to (them) with questions and concerns and what not . . . it’s about having people feel comfortable enough to come talk to me without me having to take the initiative. . . something I really want to do is to have people not only succeed not because of me but more because of themselves to better themselves and to be able to do this and hopefully down the road to be able to do that for other people.

These attributes collectively informed the higher purpose of leadership in PRSSA expounded on by officers throughout the seven interviews: to provide information and serve as guides to chapter members who wished to enter the public relations profession. Martin to this end spoke passionately of her desire to “bring to members without them having to be an officer to find out things. . . to introduce them to the industry, to show them that these are the topics or things that are going on. . . and to groom them.” Strong captured this sentiment even more succinctly: “My experience in teaching and being a leader is just to help other people.” She added, “We’re also very concerned about the classes. Some students are not sure what teachers to take. Some students aren’t sure about the next series of classes they need to take and so oftentimes we’re like ‘you should take this class next or this class and that class together may not be such a good idea.’ So we kind of help guide them through that.” Internships and jobs also fit into this scenario, as Smith noted, “we have contacts. . . and Felicia (Martin) gets contacts from PR employers who want interns so we kind of can lead the members in this sense to that.”

Observations of chapter meetings reinforced this perception of PRSSA chapter officers as providers of information and guides to fellow public relations students.

Several activities observed during the study timeframe (e.g., PR Day) as well as those discussed at length during informal conversations between students (e.g., Agency Day) featured presentations by alumni and others working in the public relations industry, and highlighted how they applied their undergraduate education to obtain employment and advance in their careers. Extensive commentaries by Martin, with frequent contributions from Franklin, trumpeted the benefits of such speakers and programs, and she often drew on past experience in the PRSSA chapter and her knowledge of the public relations profession to enlighten new members. For example, consider Martin and Franklin's exchange from the October 6, 2010 membership meeting.

A student shouts out: "Are you still working on Media Predicts?" Martin responds immediately: "On December 2 there's a huge event that all professionals go to and you probably will do so someday. We help people check in and fundraise for our chapter. A handful of people in the past made videos to these PR professionals who represent companies. They auction for our services, so if you're interested in working for these companies for a day it's a good idea to participate. We'll send an e-mail out about that."

Franklin adds: "You volunteer at it, and you get dinner. And you get to know people."

Martin responds: "you get to schmooze with them. It's a great networking event and you'll realize in PR that half of it is networking."

The overall message here for PRSSA members seemed to have been threefold: attend these activities to first, learn more about what public relations professionals do; second, to reap specific short-term benefits in terms of skills, abilities, or perhaps most importantly, contacts; and third, to derive a longer-term payoff in terms of one's career development in the field.

Moreover, as suggested by Strong's observation noted above, informal conversations between chapter officers and members about classes, instructors, the public relations major at the university hosting this PRSSA chapter, internships, and jobs also

abounded at meetings. The following exchange from the November 10, 2010 membership meeting was typical of conversations noted during meeting observations completed for this study.

The conversation turns to registration for classes. “Did you sign up already? Winter or spring? Are you junior standing?” are some questions that are asked in a conversation between Jack Johnson, a member, and Jones. Jones seems to awaken from her sickness, as the volume of her voice increases and her facial expressions become more animated. At one point she slaps her hand on the table. Jones cites a conversation with Matthews about what classes to take; Johnson responds to her comment by mentioning his experience in the class she cites. The conversation continues about classes, with Jones driving the discussion as she stands up in front of a group of seated students. Jones asks about Valerie Domingo, an instructor; Strong responds, “she’s an easy A.”

Five of the seven chapter officers cited previous experience in leadership, specifically activities in high school, community college, and/or at this university, that inspired their pursuit of this PRSSA leadership purpose. In some cases, they referred to this background as evidence of an identification with leadership as a role they felt called on to fulfill when presented with the opportunity to serve as an officer in this chapter. For example, Young, who identified as a leader based on extensive work in high school, was explicit in describing her logic in seeking an officer position in her first year of chapter membership. “I didn’t think I was gonna be an officer (but) Felicia (Martin) said that she had openings that needed to be filled. I said well, I might as well skip that awkward year where you really aren’t in charge of anything, you’re just watching things happen because I really don’t like that year anyways. So I just jumped into it.”

Young’s observations, taken together with other student comments regarding the nature of leadership in this PRSSA chapter, also suggested an implicit, clear distinction between officers and members that echoed comments from both faculty advisers interviewed for this study. Officers were leaders who guided and served members;

officers were, to use Jones' words, "more involved not just as members." Yet this distinction was anything but sacrosanct, as several officers also mentioned the path to their current roles included nothing more than expressing interest to Martin—suggesting that, at least during the timeframe covered by this study, officer positions were readily accessible to members who inquired about them. The chapter even had amended its bylaws to create the immediate past president position, so Franklin could have a formal, active role on the board of directors during the fall semester 2010.

Moreover, two of the most visible and active officers, Franklin and Strong, professed reluctance about taking on formal officer roles despite thriving as non-positional leaders in the past. Their comments throughout their interviews, along with those shared by Martin, suggested that their primary motivation, different from some fellow officers, lay in their belief in PRSSA as an organization, the value they derived from it, and their desire to ensure members reaped these benefits—sentiments associated with the concept of leadership in PRSSA that were expressed by Schwartz, the faculty advisers, and the national PRSSA representatives.

In summary, PRSSA chapter officers considered their primary responsibility as leaders to help members maximize the benefits of membership and gain entry into the public relations profession. This dual information providing and advisory role incorporated sharing insight on public relations classes and instructors; details on internships; contacts with working practitioners; advice on interviewing and related matters; and observations on what public relations professionals do. Chapter officers passionately and tirelessly strived to meet this aforementioned leadership objective by planning programs for members; conversing with each other and members at meetings or

via other means; sharing details on related activities they believed would interest members, and why; and encouraging members to attend these activities.

In addition, the majority of PRSSA officers had prior leadership experience, which in turn led them to seek their current positions. Two of the most active and visible officers, however, reluctantly assumed officer roles yet nonetheless found in the chapter's goal to educate and engage members in learning about the public relations profession a source of inspiration and motivation for their efforts.

Student Self-Assessment of Learning while Serving as PRSSA Chapter Officers

In the process of fulfilling the aforementioned leadership objective, the seven PRSSA chapter officers interviewed for this study identified different ways in which they had improved skills or abilities through their experience. Those areas students most commonly mentioned related directly to the information providing and guiding responsibilities they considered integral to their leadership. Smith, noting, "Officers are leaders who students look up to," identified public speaking and networking as areas in which she had improved. She also mentioned the "need to talk to members" more—an area Brooks identified as a strength. That communication skills underlay this social component of the officers' roles was mentioned by several individuals, including Strong's assertion "communication can be stronger by getting to know each other" and Franklin's recognition that officers need to "be direct, but not insulting; some matters are public, others are private." Time management, personal planning, organization also emerged as key learning outcomes. Brooks and Martin commented that they needed to be more organized; Franklin mentioned he could improve his time management skills; and Jones cited the need to "not stretch herself so thin." In total, these observations—

especially the emphasis on communications skills—mirrored professional and faculty adviser comments on officer skills and attributes associated with leadership development.

Student Assessment of Officer Experience and PRSSA Chapter in General

The seven PRSSA officers interviewed for the study shared broader observations about the chapter and their leadership experience, which complemented their individual insight into skills and abilities cultivated through the experiences that were identified in the previous section. These comments about their overall experience can be organized under four themes. First, Smith and Franklin observed that their respective roles involved a lot more work than they had anticipated, much of which was “behind the scenes.” Second, Brooks and Young remarked that meetings could have been better organized; Young suggested “more of a timeline” was needed. Third, the latter two officers also shared concerns about the lack of motivation demonstrated by other officers, comparing it unfavorably to their own. Young went so far as to state “some people are more interested in putting the club (name) on their resumes.”

Fourth, the desire to make the club, in Strong’s words, “interactive and social, versus people coming to a club meeting and breaking up into cliques,” seemed to underlie a conscious but largely unspoken officer goal: to build a community that marshaled the individual energies and talents of PRSSA chapter members—which in turn supported the overarching leadership purpose of maximizing member development. This goal apparently inspired exercises such as the silent charades activity at the October 6, 2010 membership meeting as well as the aforementioned opportunities provided throughout membership meetings for informal conversation among chapter officer and members about classes, specific instructors, internships, jobs, and related topics. That food was

provided at these membership meetings—and considerable time and energy devoted by chapter officers to its acquisition and presentation—no doubt was an attempt to foster such camaraderie and connection among all chapter members.

Martin's reflections on her experience in helping to plan the Spring 2010 Regional Activity conveyed similar group-oriented sentiments, albeit among executive board members.

Last semester when we held the Regional Activity and it was really late planning, and we had so many things against us as far as money and time and you know heart and soul of officers and that sort of thing. But in the end we really came together and there was like that moment we really bonded as a team. All of us realized that wow, like we're so powerful when we came together. We really were able to accomplish what we thought was the impossible. . . when everyone just kind of put in a little bit more and did it.

This team orientation echoed Franklin's thoughts. His experience in assuming the role of chapter president the previous spring ushered in a period of divisiveness among chapter board members that trickled down to the membership at large, which both he and Martin had commented on unfavorably and aimed to correct during the time they served as chapter officers. Their focus also mirrored Sidarko's emphasis on teams and leadership as interconnected phenomena in the public relations curriculum, as well as related observations by the professional and faculty advisers and the PRSSA national organization representative regarding challenges associated with building an effective chapter executive board.

In short, PRSSA leaders focused on the importance of community and team building over other areas in the overall assessment of their chapter experience. This emphasis, in turn, supported the pursuit of their primary leadership objective—as guides

and advisers to chapter members seeking to learn about public relations and secure employment in the field.

Student Identification of Resources for Learning about Officer Roles and Leadership

In addition to pinpointing skills, attributes, and lessons learned during their experience as PRSSA chapter officers, the seven students interviewed for the study were asked to identify those sources they considered most significant for overall learning. Their remarks highlighted the role played by their peers, both current and past, as primary sources of guidance for their chapter roles and leadership. Officers repeatedly mentioned Franklin and Martin by name when discussing their initial inquiry about officer positions and subsequent requests for information to learn about responsibilities as well as other PRSSA related matters. Martin did not mention this aspect of her role as president, although the rapt attention paid to her presentations at membership meetings and the whirlwind of activity around her at other times suggested members were keenly interested in what she had to say. Franklin, in contrast, was explicit in identifying his work in mentoring officers as a primary responsibility of his immediate past president role.

Franklin and Martin, in turn, cited a previous chapter president (Karen Jacobs) as a vital contributor to their overall PRSSA experience. "I joined the chapter because. . . Jacobs came and spoke to our class about PRSSA and the benefits she got out of it and the different things they do and invited us to a meeting and so I went. . . and joined next semester," said Franklin. Martin added, "I really liked Karen's approach and the fact that people were getting together for different reasons."

Strong, drawing specifically on her work in helping to plan a Regional Activity hosted by the chapter during the spring semester 2010, also intentionally observed other officers. “I think that (learning about leadership) comes from your peers and I think it came from going to a National Conference and holding a Regional Activity because you see people in leadership positions so you just pick up on like ‘I like that’ or ‘I don’t like that’ and you just adopt that into your philosophy as a leader.”

On the other hand, Matthews’ role as faculty adviser attracted little attention at meetings and in student interviews. There were two exceptions, however, both of which supported his characterization of the role as primarily advisory in nature—and more importantly the benefits students perceived that they derived from that assessment in terms of their officer learning experiences. Franklin commented, “I think he’s a great advisor because he kind of lets us do our own thing and when we have issues or trouble or questions he’s there for us but he lets us try to figure it out on our own.” For Jones, the challenge of this faculty adviser role was even more profound as she described it during her interview.

It’ll teach me an aspect of leadership different from high school. . . (where) you have a coordinator if the members or the executive board kinda of falls apart you still have the coordinator that says we still have to get this done. But for college it falls on the president and if the president can’t reach out to her executive members then it kind of falls apart.

The professional advisers likewise received minimal attention at meetings and during officer interviews save for two comments. Franklin’s was positive: “Our mentors for PRSSA that are in PRSA. . . They were a huge amount of help and our phone calls we had were great.” Brooks, in contrast, bemoaned the fact that the “PRSA mentors were not

getting back to her” in conjunction with her efforts to plan the chapter’s participation in Media Predicts.

The PRSSA National Conference, however, was the subject of considerable discussion at meetings with four of the seven officers attending the most recent conference in October 2010. A fifth officer (Strong) had attended the 2009 event; Martin and Franklin attended in 2009 and 2010. Yet only Martin attended an activity at the National Conference specifically geared towards students holding her position; she found this President’s lunch “helpful. . . as we talked about the kind of things going on in our chapter and challenges. So it was exchanging information.” Strong similarly related what she learned related to her chapter officer role, albeit in a more general sense that tied back to the officers’ leadership purpose to inform and guide PRSSA chapter members into the public relations profession. “I think it helped in that it expanded my views on public relations, so when someone asks me what is public relations what can I do with it I can tell them, well, you can do this you can do that.”

In short, the students generally did not attend events or find value in National Conference presentations that they felt they could apply to their club roles or to learn about leadership. Yet to echo Strong’s observation, the value they derived from the event itself as far as furthering their understanding of public relations and how to obtain positions in the field was paramount. Consider the following series of brief student presentations about the conference at the November 11, 2010 chapter meeting.

Martin: There was a national conference in the middle of October all the chapters come together. . . so they have different topics and things like we do at meetings. I went to the environmental session they talked a lot about corporate social responsibility you can’t claim to be environmental or green unless you really are. They really stress this. . .

Franklin: The favorite thing I went to was the ethics one. . . Each person gave a story about a situation when they were ethically challenged and how they dealt with it. They never spoke about ethical problems early in their career; they waited until they were established which I thought was odd. Someone asked if their ethics was based on themselves or their company and they couldn't answer that which I thought was odd.

Brooks: Have a plan. Have a job search folder. (The speaker) suggested to build a personal brand. Make a logo for yourself. Know your personal values and what you want from a job in addition to money. Engage in social media but don't over share. Don't be afraid to take your cover letter and resume to the CEO.

Regarding other national PRSSA events, two of the officers, Franklin and Martin, attended the PRSSA National Assembly in 2009. The former indicated he had gained insight at that event into different personalities and the challenges of bringing them together to build an effective executive board for the chapter, echoing his other comments about the importance of teambuilding at the PRSSA chapter level. Martin did not attend officer workshops there but nonetheless found it helpful in terms of "seeing how the National Committee members were elected, and staying in touch with them since then." Neither Franklin nor Martin had attended the PRSSA Leadership Conference held in June, however, prior to becoming chapter president.

Moreover, PRSSA publications and the organization's website generally received little attention from students. Three students indicated that they read the bi-weekly e-mail updates disseminated by PRSSA, although in Martin's case, she was "usually two weeks behind," with Smith referring to them as an "information source on internships and the job search;" Young said she read *The Forum*; and Strong said she skimmed resources "but didn't take anything from them." Two students, Brooks and Young, cited the PRSSA website as a valuable resource when planning their National Conference attendance; Franklin's acknowledgement of the website was more muted, as he "only used it (to obtain) contact information for chapter presidents." The lone meeting

reference to PRSSA resources, apart from National Conference discussions at the September 29, 2010 and October 6, 2010 meetings, occurred at the latter event, when Martin provided students with a password so they could register at the website to access internship and job related information reserved for use only by organization members.

In terms of resources provided by their university, Franklin and Martin were the only two PRSSA chapter officers who attended the Student Organization Leadership Conference held on September 25, 2010. Franklin commented favorably on several sessions he attended, including those focusing on icebreakers at meetings, group dynamics, and leader self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses. In addition to the opportunity to discuss club challenges and potential solutions with other student leaders, what stood out for him in particular was the latter session probing how leader styles shape interactions and experiences of both executive board and chapter members. Franklin commented that he “continued to think about those topics.” Martin, who had attended the event in 2009 as well, cited her participation in The Marshmallow Challenge, a group activity designed to teach participants about the importance of collaboration, innovation, and creativity, as significant for her learning in the following comments.

This is obviously to show us that there are so many people that have different ways of doing things and I thought well I should really keep that in mind not that I didn't know it before. . . And then your team does get closer even though you have different ways of dealing with things you hash em out and you do build a team. . . as a leader it's your job to make sure that everyone brings what they have individually to the table and play off people's strengths know what their weaknesses are and use all of that the best you can.

Martin's observation echoed her remark about the powerful team experience she had as an officer planning the Regional Activity, and tied back to Sidarko's comments

about public relations students learning leadership skills through participating in team activities.

Finally, only one of the seven PRSSA chapter officers mentioned that leadership was covered in a class taken in conjunction with studies at the university where the chapter was located. Smith discussed a recent lecture on leadership in a course she was taking (Fundamentals of Management and Organizational Behavior) for her minor in business. She cited during her interview the qualities of effective and ineffective leaders as the subject of that class.

In summary, PRSSA chapter officers derived considerable value from attending affiliate organization events whose primary purpose was to help them gain knowledge of the public relations profession and insight into careers in the field, such as the National Conference and Agency Day. While these experiences and related learning were critical for helping them fulfill their leadership purpose, they were not deemed relevant for helping them learn about their specific officer roles or leadership. In fact, PRSSA chapter officers learned about their roles and leadership largely from each other, mirroring the national organization's facilitation of peer-to-peer exchanges among officers.

Other potential affiliate organization and university sources of learning about leadership garnered limited recognition from PRSSA chapter officers who were interviewed for this study. Two students acknowledged the hands-off role played by the chapter's faculty adviser as vital to a corresponding "learn by doing" approach. With one exception, PRSSA chapter officers were unable to identify leadership as a subject labeled as such in classes they completed at their university. Finally, only one officer cited leadership as a topic addressed at the Student Organization Leadership Conference, while

two officers who attended that event commented favorably on group process/teambuilding presentations given.

Summary of Major Findings

PRSSA, through a range of optional resources, advice, and counsel provided by student leaders, working public relations professionals, and academics, aimed to help officers in the PRSSA chapter included in this study to fulfill their individual responsibilities and in the process learn about leadership. Throughout the process, their overarching intent was to foster a view of leadership that encouraged support of the organization itself; its parent organization, PRSA; and perhaps most importantly, the public relations profession as a whole. While the individual PRSSA representatives included in this study varied in terms of how they performed their roles, they nonetheless seemed to share similar views on the significance of leadership in the organization as well as the competencies students demonstrated related to that conception of leadership.

In turn, PRSSA chapter officers in the study acted on the belief that their leadership purpose was to help members learn about the public relations profession and find positions in the field. Meetings observed and interviews conducted with these officers were noteworthy for their focus on the provision of information and advice to students on all aspects of their educational experience related to public relations. This counsel covered traditional academic subjects such as classes and instructors, as well as extracurricular matters that fell strictly under the purview of the PRSSA chapter such as meetings, other special events at the university or those held in conjunction with their affiliate PRSA chapter, and activities sponsored by the national PRSSA organization. The enthusiasm for sharing information on all these components of the student's

educational experience was significant and persistent; the discussion about areas of public relations, individual speakers, and the benefits of attending programs like Agency Day and the PRSSA National Conference, among others, seemingly continued unabated throughout meetings during both informal conversations among officers and members or during formal presentations by invited guests.

PRSSA chapter officers clearly derived much value from these myriad activities, and considered what they learned through them vital to their individual efforts to advance in the field as well as to fulfill their leadership purpose. Yet this learning did not extend to their individual officer responsibilities or the topic of leadership; for those areas, especially the latter, students looked to each other and their predecessors for role models and inspiration on how to serve successfully as PRSSA leaders. Nonetheless, despite the relative unimportance students attached to affiliate organization resources and representatives for their learning about leadership they embodied the core attributes of the leadership concept put forth by PRSSA. In other words, PRSSA chapter officers demonstrated a specific brand of leadership consistent with what was promoted by the national organization and the professional and faculty advisers with whom they most closely worked during their time in office.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore undergraduate student perceptions of the contributions of an affiliate organization relationship to what they learn about leadership while serving as officers in clubs or organizations that serve specific occupational interests. The previous chapter presented data that were collected in response to the two research questions crafted to achieve this purpose. In response to research question one, affiliate organization (i.e., PRSSA and PRSA) resources, training, and support to help leaders of student chapters learn about their officer roles and leadership were reviewed. How affiliate organization representatives viewed their contributions to students' PRSSA chapter officer experiences also was considered. In response to research question two, student perceptions of what they learned about leadership by participating as PRSSA officers were explored. Student perspectives on the relative significance of affiliate and other resources for this learning also were considered.

Building on these research results, this chapter will begin with a discussion of research findings and related conclusions. Implications of these conclusions, recommendations for professional practice and future research, and concluding thoughts follow.

Discussion

The study's first research question explored the range of efforts designed to help PRSSA chapter officers fulfill the responsibilities of their roles. The question was as follows: What do the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and its

parent organization, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), provide leaders of student chapters in terms of leadership resources, training, and support?

On the national level, PRSSA provided chapters and their officers with access to electronic resources and activities designed to help them meet typical challenges such as member recruitment, building an effective executive board, and cultivating other skills deemed essential for aspiring public relations professionals. These challenges, in short, coalesced around the need to build an organization (i.e., chapter) that served member interests to learn about the public relations profession and secure employment in the field. Leadership and related skill building activities appeared to be subsumed under the aforementioned efforts. Moreover, while varied delivery mechanisms were used to provide leadership training, peer-to-peer contact seemed most critical as multiple opportunities were provided for chapter officers to connect with each other both in person and electronically in pursuit of gaining specific information, insight, and inspiration for their efforts. The thrust of these efforts was geared towards PRSSA chapter presidents, who had to demonstrate initiative to find and take advantage of these opportunities.

The two PRSA members who served as professional advisers to the PRSSA chapter in this study supported the aforementioned efforts of the national PRSSA organization by providing advice and specific suggestions to officers related to their efforts to lead the chapter. On the one hand, this role formally served as a liaison between PRSSA and the local PRSA affiliate chapter and relied on regularly scheduled contact with the chapter president. On the other hand, the foci of the individuals who served in these roles varied with one more focused on role-specific advice and advocating for the link between the two organizations and the other more apt to deliver career-related

advice to chapter members eager to enter the public relations profession. In the process of performing tasks related to these foci, the two professional advisers offered definitions of leadership that echoed what was proffered by the national PRSSA organization and illuminated similar student leadership competencies—despite seeking little formal preparation from either the national PRSSA organization, their PRSA chapter, or the national PRSA organization for their role. Instead, they relied on experience and instinct cultivated through their efforts as college student leaders and public relations professionals.

PRSSA faculty advisers likewise neither sought nor received formal preparation for their roles from the PRSSA national organization. Moreover, Matthews, the current faculty adviser, identified situational factors that limited the time, attention, and energy that he felt he could devote to the role in a manner consistent with what Nadler (1997) reported. He and Sidarko, his predecessor, like their professional adviser counterparts, relied primarily on past experience and knowledge of the industry in counseling the chapter's president largely on an as-needed basis. This ad hoc provision of advice contrasted with the bi-weekly phone calls between professional advisers and chapter leaders. Yet the fact that the two faculty advisers interviewed for this study interacted with students in the classroom as well as in PRSSA, along with their academic training and scholarship in public relations, undoubtedly contributed to a perspective on student leadership that incorporated skill development and, more importantly, a broader recognition of how undergraduate competencies gained in different contexts contributed to the flowering of leadership in young public relations professionals equipped with the

mindset to succeed. As noted above in brief, Matthews made this connection when commenting on leadership skills and aptitudes he observed blossoming in students.

(S)tudents come in having never done something like this and questioning whether they can do something like put on a big regional event. And then having done it they have this confidence that says, “You know, I guess I can do this.” It’s taking it to the next level. . . it’s bigger than just a class project where people are coming in and they’re paying money and you’re trying to organize all these things. The stakes are high. And there’s a professional aspect to it that if it doesn’t go off well it’s gonna reflect poorly on them. . . there are so many different moving parts to it and sort of the stress it takes to do that but then seeing again from planning to execution to evaluation to seeing it work they come out of that having tremendous confidence that yea, they can do this. That you know, they can actually apply some of those skills they’ve learned in the classroom.

Leadership, however, was not a topic foremost in the thoughts, research, or classes taught by either Matthews or Sidarko. A passing mention of recent scholarly interest in the subject of leadership in public relations during interviews with them did not garner even a glimmer of recognition. Nor did their individual responses to interview questions suggest more than passing familiarity with traditional conceptions of leadership and related theories. At best, leadership seemed to be a peripheral concern they associated with the demonstration of specific skills and aptitudes in a general fashion consistent with the portrayal of leadership in public relations education in the literature reviewed for this study. Nonetheless, these faculty adviser perspectives echoed PRSSA and professional adviser reflections on leadership.

These differences in experience and orientation aside, PRSSA staff as well as these PRSA professional and academic advisers who counseled students in the study were guided by an educational philosophy that advocated “learn by doing” through which PRSSA chapter officers were encouraged to assume responsibility for completing necessary tasks associated with their individual and collective roles. In the process, they

were expected to take the initiative in attending to administrative and related matters large and small, make mistakes, and learn from them. The advisers' guidance primarily focused on logistical matters (e.g., fundraising, recruiting speakers for events) and personnel issues related to building and managing an effective chapter executive board.

As a result, these local advisers functioned largely behind the scenes, and moreover did not attend student events observed during this study save for the opening session of PR Day. Yet undoubtedly that lack of visibility was the point; a student-run organization assumes students are responsible and front and center, as they were in the PRSSA chapter included in this study. Kardman explicitly acknowledged this approach in an observation about her work with members of the PRSSA National Committee: "We allow this student organization to be run by students—we serve from headquarters by providing resources to assist them, keep them on track; so much is given to them and they deliver."

In the process of performing in the aforementioned roles and working with students, PRSSA and PRSA representatives shared different perspectives on the subject of leadership in the student organization and profession. These observations nonetheless had some core elements in common: that leaders in PRSSA and in public relations acted in the best interests of the profession itself and fostered productive relationships with team members—characteristics, among others identified by Kardman, that echo those deemed critical for public relations graduates in the latest report from The Commission on Public Relations Education (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006) introduced earlier as part of the review of literature on public relations education. Such leaders, moreover, were distinct from followers. The individuals interviewed also

concurred that PRSSA chapter officers demonstrated leadership skills in the process of building effective executive boards, planning and promoting events, and delivering information, advice, and resources to chapter members, with Schwartz's following observations epitomizing this perspective.

I think at first it's challenging for the students to delegate tasks so the president a lot of times will take things on and not delegate and so by the end of the semester or year for that matter you quickly see that they don't have as much trouble saying so and so I need your help with this or so and so I need your help with this. . . And you definitely see from first semester to second semester a difference there. And I think that's leadership development as well. . . as well as the confidence level in the field because at first you can see that they're hesitant about the position. . . how well they feel they can represent PR to the members who are maybe just joining where so towards the end of the semester you can kinda tell that they're their confident in advising even new members. . . (about) how they're gonna get through their classes how they're gonna succeed after graduation.

In short, affiliate organization representatives provided a range of advice and counsel through diverse channels the intent of which was to help PRSSA chapter officers meet the challenges of their respective roles. In turn, these industry professionals observed leadership development in the students included in this study.

Turning from the focus on affiliate organization perspectives on resources and leadership development, the second research question probed student views on what they learned about leadership during their experience as PRSSA chapter officers. This second research question was as follows: What are undergraduate public relations students' perceptions of what they learn about leadership by participating as officers in PRSSA? In an effort to connect student insight to affiliate organization contributions, interview questions developed to answer this research question also referenced each of the aforementioned affiliate organization resources, events, and activities, among other

university-based and personal sources, to understand which sources students considered most helpful for contributing to their learning about leadership.

In general, leadership was not a subject that PRSSA chapter officers interviewed for this study were able to identify explicitly in courses or other training although some noted related information and insight. They also seemed to have paid little attention to electronic resources provided by PRSSA to help them learn about their roles and leadership; in fact, the handful of students who attended optional events sponsored by the national PRSSA organization largely panned their contribution to learning and skill development related to their officer roles and leadership as well. Brooks' comment on her experience at the PRSSA National Convention epitomized this perspective: "I didn't attend anything that would improve my role as a chapter officer. . . I don't think I really learned too much on how to improve my leadership skills."

The seven student participants in this study nonetheless reported that through their chapter officer experience they cultivated skills and aptitudes associated with leadership. These included public speaking, networking, time management, personal planning, and organization—outcomes consistent with those identified in studies by Andrews (2007) and Louallen & Riechert (2005) discussed above in the section of the review of literature devoted to research on PRSSA.

More importantly, PRSSA chapter officers individually and collectively adopted a leadership purpose grounded in advising and guiding fellow students in their efforts to learn about the public relations profession and secure meaningful employment opportunities. Learning about what public relations people do, the different environments in which they work, making contacts, and identifying internship and job

opportunities was deemed fundamental for fulfilling this purpose. To that end, chapter officers took advantage of national PRSSA events, local activities held by their affiliate PRSA chapter, and events they planned and promoted for their chapter, to build a necessary base of knowledge and experience that they applied in their own work in the field as well as to fulfill their chapter responsibilities. Brooks' following observation was typical of those shared by students on this point.

I don't think I've really taken advantage of any of my resources to learn more about my role. At least my resources through PRSSA. . . I mean maybe this would be stretching it but I've attended event PRSA events where I've received internships and then I learned things that I've applied to my position from my internship about like social media and connecting with people so.

Observations of officer activities at meetings supported this leadership purpose they articulated passionately throughout interviews, with Smith's following comment capturing the essence of this orientation: "They (the members) kind of look up to us we do give them information about upcoming events and stuff we do give them tips and I feel like we do kind of lead them in a sense for like what they can do next what their next step is to get to that internship or that job opportunity or getting that contact cuz we do have contacts." This leadership purpose mirrored perspectives shared by professional and faculty advisers and the affiliate organization in terms of considering leaders as vital advocates for PRSSA and the public relations profession.

Student comments on leadership also cited the importance of skills in group dynamics, team building, and communication, which also partially echoed the sentiments expressed by affiliate organization representatives in terms of defining leadership in PRSSA and the public relations profession in general. In this fundamental sense, in spite of what students perceived they formally learned from affiliate organization

representatives and resources, they seemed to have derived from their experience a sense of PRSSA leader qualities and behaviors. The students' informal learning and interpretation of experiences, a by-product of facilitated interaction with officers at chapters across the country as well as their observation of predecessors in their roles at this chapter, played a key role in this process. In turn, two officers in particular, the current chapter president and the immediate past president, served as critical resources for peer learning and skill development related to leadership among students serving in chapter officer roles—and by extension to members some of whom they undoubtedly envisioned as future chapter officers. Jones' following comment captured the essence of the importance of this peer learning and support in the experience of PRSSA chapter officers included in this study.

Well, Felicia (Martin) and Fred (Franklin) have been a really big help and Felicia sent me the officer guidelines. . . it states what each officer is responsible for. So that helped getting a sense of what my responsibilities were. And then documents that both Felicia and Fred sent me examples of what they did in the past so seeing an example kind of gives me a guideline of what they're looking for. . . I've had a little bit of experience in fundraising back in high school but this is a little different just because it's more of a professional level so I'm kind of going into it half-blind but at the same time I know that the other officers have my back as well. So they'll never just leave me hanging.

In summary, PRSSA chapter officers learned primarily about leadership from their peers as opposed to affiliate organization resources, advice, and counsel provided to them. Affiliate organization resources, nonetheless, played a vital role in helping them to cultivate the knowledge, insight, and confidence needed to fulfill what they identified as their primary leadership purpose—to advise and guide their fellow students on matters related to the public relations profession including the academic program at their

university. In this sense, their approach to leadership echoed that put forth by affiliate organization representatives with whom they worked.

Conclusions

Through their remarks shared during interviews and actions at meetings, PRSSA chapter officers in the study demonstrated a profound commitment to assisting members with diverse aspects of their professional education and entry into positions in public relations. In the process of doing so, they cultivated and demonstrated leadership skills that echoed related attributes and attitudes articulated by various affiliate organization representatives with whom they interacted.

On the one hand, student comments and related behaviors suggest that such leadership development in general took place—the nature of which has not been explored by previous literature on the student experience in PRSSA. Such development occurred largely through peer-to-peer interaction, with occasional references to workshops and in some cases individual influences. Yet the subject of leadership itself rarely merited direct student comment in officer interviews; some students, like Franklin and Smith, even struggled overtly when attempting to answer specific interviews questions soliciting definitions of leadership and corresponding leadership purpose. Once these concepts were discussed, however, some officers were able to note related insight gained on skills such as teambuilding at national PRSSA events and through on-campus workshops offered by the student affairs office at their university.

Such student observations should not be considered surprising, given the nature of their interaction with affiliate organization representatives as well as others in a position to provide leadership education and/or training. Extracurricular activities by their very

nature are optional and, although a number of the students interviewed for this study were motivated and passionately committed to their roles, PRSSA, and furthering their fledgling careers in public relations, in general school, work, and family obligations clamored for their attention and often got top billing.

The stress and tension created by these competing activities emerged at different points during the study timeframe. Martin at one point complained that she was really “turned off” by the fact that one of her vice presidents had been unable to attend chapter functions because she had an internship. Smith likewise commented on the stress she felt as a new officer attempting to collect dues from chapter members for the first time, and that “it’s hard coz like I have my internship and school and I’m in the agency class here so it was like a bunch of stuff the week before (dues were due).” That such feelings were expressed likely was indicative of the type of high achieving students attracted to leadership positions in PRSSA, a point made by Kardman in describing relationships among National Committee members: “The National Committee members are very hard on each other, in particular on other students who are coming in with a desire to do something or manage a specific area. They are overly critical of these students in their review process. Maybe that’s just because they hold themselves to higher standard; they expect that of everyone.”

Even leaving these sources of stress and tension aside, student officer motivation varied according to at least two officers. Brooks and Franklin commented negatively about the lack of drive among some of their peers at different points during their experience as chapter officers. The latter’s observation about this topic is cited here as it seems to capture the heart of the problem: “What I found is people who don’t really want

to be there and aren't getting paid have no real motivation so you have to find out their motivating tools or factors.”

The fact that additional time, expense, and energy was required to take advantage of affiliate organization resources, moreover, no doubt made it less likely that they would be used. For example, Smith noted during her interview that attendance by chapter members at the PRSSA National Conference in 2009 was nearly double that for the 2010 event; she commented that “I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that it was further in DC versus San Diego is closer easier to drive easier to get a flight cheaper.”

Finally, that professional advisers served as volunteers and faculty advisers, as Matthews noted during his interview, and necessarily considered their responsibilities a lower priority than research and teaching in essence meant that the PRSSA officer experience and any leadership development emerged primarily as a result of the energy and persistence of individual student leaders, especially the chapter president. In other words, PRSSA chapter officers generally needed to seek out the specific guidance and support they deemed appropriate rather than simply sit back and await its arrival from one or more affiliate organization representatives. Even so, there was no guarantee on the timeliness or helpfulness of such assistance, as Brooks' aforementioned lament about professional adviser support for Media Predicts activities suggests. Indeed, student officers received electronic resources from the national PRSSA organization and participated in biweekly conference calls with professional advisers although their comments suggested neither offered significant benefits for their learning about leadership.

On the other hand, the concept of leadership and related skills demonstrated by students in the study mirrored affiliate organization representative sentiments, despite student inability to identify them as such. Their experiences in learning from each other about the responsibilities of PRSSA chapter officers roles, participation in affiliate organization events unrelated to these roles, and fervent desire to enter the profession and help others to do so apparently made a significant enough impression that they became the kind of leaders the national PRSSA organization sought even though they did not explicitly recognize that connection. Franklin's comment about his motivation for becoming a PRSSA chapter officer, as follows, illuminated this essential quality of leadership the organization seems to trumpet. He said, "I became an officer because I feel PRSSA is a great thing that can do a lot of good for people and I've had a lot of good out of it. I've met great people and it seemed to be helping me towards a future career and so I really wanted to help out with that with other people in it."

Implications

This study's findings related to what PRSSA and PRSA provide leaders of students clubs and organizations in terms of resources, training, and support as well as undergraduate public relations student perceptions of what they learned about leadership by participating as officers in PRSSA have implications for three topics. They are one, the study's theoretical framework, the relational model of leadership and the LID grounded theory and related model; two, leadership development in PRSSA; and three, affiliate organizations and their role in shaping leadership experiences of undergraduate student officers in professionally oriented clubs.

First, the study's results have relevance for its theoretical framework, the relational model of leadership and the LID grounded theory and related model. On the one hand, comments about the importance of team and group cohesiveness articulated by some officers reflect an orientation towards collaboration that is consistent with a primary focus of the relational model of leadership. The desire to guide and provide information to members to facilitate their entry into the public relations profession, moreover, hints at the inclusiveness and common effort towards fulfilling PRSSA's mission that the model likewise espouses. Finally, the PRSSA chapter officers' self-awareness and commitment to cultivating skills that further foster connection with and among chapter members points towards some of the primary attributes of relational leaders as specified in literature (Komives et al., 2006).

Yet the differentiation between PRSSA chapter officers as leaders and members as followers articulated consistently throughout student and faculty adviser interviews and supported by observations of officers runs counter to the relational model's framing of followers as participants and partners in a joint mission. If anything, PRSSA chapter officers' orientation towards members and heartfelt desire to support their professional development seems more akin to the servant leadership model. That is, the officers' individual and collective focus seemed more geared to others rather than themselves, with a commitment to the growth of people and building community foremost in their words and actions throughout the study timeframe. In other words, PRSSA chapter officers above all served as stewards to members, operating in service, rather than in control, of them (Block, 1993; Greenleaf, 2002).

Regarding the LID model, PRSSA chapter officers generally seemed to demonstrate characteristics consistent with its third stage given their distinction between leaders and followers and the concomitant emphasis on chapter members looking to officers for guidance. Given the seemingly open access to officer roles and the fact that two chapter officers had held non-positional roles during their PRSSA careers also suggests that at least in theory each member could assume a leadership role consistent with the spirit of the fourth phase of the model, although the PRSSA chapter's officer/member distinction is inconsistent with the overall intent of this phase. Yet Martin and Franklin's passionate remarks and efforts to recruit and assist other officers, along with Strong's comments regarding the influence of past chapter officers on her leadership style, seem consistent with the fifth phase of the leadership identity model when students consider influencing executive board activities after they graduate. Finally, that several officers considered leadership part of their self-identity is consistent with the sixth phase of the model (Komives et al., 2009; Komives, Longerbeam, Owen, et al., 2006; Komives et al., 2005).

Second, this study has implications for leadership development in PRSSA. Chapter officers polished or acquired communications and teambuilding skills and demonstrated aptitudes for advising and counseling fellow students that fueled the leadership development they experienced while filling specific officer roles during the study's timeframe. Their individual and collective evolution served personal aims in terms of learning more about the public relations profession and launching careers in it, a point consistent with what the literature identified as the primary motivation for student involvement in professionally oriented clubs: to further their ability to achieve long-term

career objectives (Abrahamowicz, 1988; Andrews, 2007; Holzweiss, Rahn, & Wickline, 2007; McCannon & Bennett, 1996; Nadler, 1997). Moreover, as noted above, these emerging leadership skills served specific chapter and some broader organizational (i.e., PRSSA/PRSA) purposes as articulated by different participants interviewed for this study.

PRSSA's intent, like that of other professional organizations which sponsor university-based chapters, is to help prepare student participants for careers in the field (Collegiate Chapter Resources, 2009; Pohl & Butler, 1994; Pritchard, Filak, & Beach, 2006; "What is PRSSA?," 2009). Therefore, an assessment of this PRSSA officer leadership development must extend its potential relevance beyond the university setting to developments in practice. More specifically, the extent to which student leadership development might inform specific attitudes and behaviors identified in the literature review as critical for leadership in the public relations profession as a whole needs to be explored.

Reconsidering the definition of excellent leadership in public relations (Meng, Berger, & Gower, 2009) introduced previously allows certain key common threads to emerge and helps provide this bridge between the student and professional worlds. These scholars highlighted in their definition the importance for public relations leaders to develop team leadership skills, facilitate relationships, and contribute to the success of the organizations that retain their services. In these senses, there seems to be much in common between the practices and attitudes of PRSSA student officers and those deemed critical for leadership among senior-level practitioners consulted by researchers. Similarly, the very nature of a student-run PRSSA chapter and national organization is

grounded in active participation by undergraduates in the organization's strategic decision making processes. In this sense as well, therefore, PRSSA chapter leaders gained insight into a conception of leadership in the field consistent with the recommendations of the "Public Relations for the 21st Century: The Professional Bond" (Commission on Public Relations, 2006) report—which in turn apparently were designed to serve as a touchstone for practitioners reaching the culmination of their careers.

Finally, this study has implications for affiliate organizations and their role in shaping leadership experiences of undergraduate student officers in professionally oriented clubs. The PRSSA chapter in this study forged a relationship with its affiliates, the national PRSSA organization and the local PRSA chapter, can best be described as fundamental to its existence. The PRSSA student officer experience, and by extension that of the chapter's members, would have been radically different—if not largely inconceivable—without such relationships and the benefits (i.e., access to speakers and organizations, information, and opportunities for volunteer and workplace activities) derived from them. In other words, the majority of events and activities cited repeatedly by officers and members—not to mention the outcomes associated with them—simply would not have assumed the form observed in this study without the involvement of the respective affiliate organizations. In other words, context in terms of a relationship with an affiliate organization outside the university appears to shape the leadership experience and related individual development in a professionally oriented club in a manner not considered previously in the literature.

Granted, tours of public relations agencies, a public relations career day, an annual event featuring public relations professionals, local journalists, and industry

observers, and educational programs at chapter membership meetings undoubtedly could have been organized without the involvement of a professional organization/affiliate partner. Yet the very nature of their existence and the specific professionals involved, not to mention managing the relevant logistical components, such as finding presenters, likely would have been so significantly different from what the students experienced in this chapter that it would be impossible to fathom what the chapter officer experience would have been like shorn of its affiliate organization relationships—and thus deprived of a formal connection to a larger world of public relations outside the confines of the university. More tangibly, the absence of an affiliate organization would deprive officers of local PRSSA chapters such as the one in this study of access to peers at universities across the U.S., not to mention a national conference, other activities, and resources identified as significant in helping them to learn about public relations—and in turn fulfill their leadership purpose by assisting members seeking access to the profession.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

The study's results lead to recommendations on leadership education and development for practitioners in both higher education and public relations. In terms of the former, PRSSA chapter officers in this study learned about leadership despite the absence of a clear, explicit, and skillfully articulated definition geared both to their short and long-term needs. A more proactive orientation among faculty and professional advisers in terms of introducing this concept, making connections between classroom instruction, extracurricular activities in general, and the practice of public relations in agency, corporate, and other settings thus seems warranted if extension of public relations undergraduate students' leadership skills is desired. In other words, the evolution of the

concept of excellent leadership as relevant to senior-level practitioners needs to be mirrored in activities geared towards those students who have heeded the call to leadership in terms of their actions yet who nonetheless remain bereft of the broader context within which successful public relations leaders operate at least during the pinnacle of their careers. Matthews' discussion of the professional transition from public relations technician to manager and concomitant role in helping organizations achieve objectives—both of which were identified as outcomes for academic programs (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006; Wright, 2004)—hinted at these longer-term career goals. In short, a heightened focus on leadership can clarify what aspiring professionals need to do in terms of skills and aptitudes to make such transitions and in the process become trusted advisers who move skillfully within the dominant coalition of diverse organizations.

To support the aforementioned effort to raise awareness and understanding of leadership as a critical competency in the profession, public relations educators might emphasize the connection between classroom and experiential learning opportunities like those specifically offered to students who choose to participate as officers in PRSSA chapters. In other words, this study's identification of leadership development in a PRSSA chapter might provide the impetus to heed the call of the 1998 NCA study and 2006 Commission on Public Relations Education report to incorporate experiential learning activities that provide opportunities to learn leadership skills—and more specifically lend empirical support to Neff's (2002, 2008) effort to meld leadership development activities and academic curricula. More importantly, students would benefit from this effort in terms of making new connections between their studies and

professional lives before and after graduation, as would local chapters and the national PRSSA organization given that membership and the pool of available officer candidates likely would increase. Concomitantly, leadership in public relations as conceptualized in scholarly literature on the topic would be framed as a vital arena for lifelong professional development in the field—particularly for students aspiring to careers, and not simply a series of jobs, in the area.

Finally, while faculty and professional adviser tacit acknowledgement of the “learn by doing” approach vis-à-vis PRSSA chapter officers seems to have worked well to a point, a more active role by both parties that overtly communicates and mirrors the leadership principles and practices embodied by PRSSA, PRSA, and the scholarly literature discussed above would no doubt enrich their individual roles and strengthen the bond between adviser, chapter, the PRSA affiliate, and the national PRSSA organization. Such increased connections also could help to increase the number of PRSSA members who join PRSA after completing their undergraduate education, an explicit goal of both organizations acknowledged by PRSSA representatives and the two professional advisers to the chapter.

In terms of the implications for public relations practitioners, the existence of leadership skills among future practitioners in terms of a commitment to and advocacy for the profession should comfort organizations seeking new, dedicated talent. Their challenge, not dissimilar from that faced by educators, is to make explicit the focus on leadership as a critical competency for fulfilling the mandate of the public relations function as advisers and counselors to senior organizational leaders. In other words, as Matthews’ aforementioned comment implied, the undergraduate educational experience

is geared towards comprehending tactics and associated skills in conjunction with what public relations people do in different contexts. For example, observations and interviews in this study highlighted a student focus on media relations, event planning, team building, and related skill development—vital and necessary starting points for aspiring public relations professionals, but a far cry from the strategic orientation and core role as advisers to senior management that are integral to the concept of excellent leadership proffered by scholars. Therefore, the realization of leadership potential among these new students requires at the very least an image of the bigger, longer term goal of the public relations profession, which in turn can help elevate the standing of individual practitioners within the realm of organizational politics and as a result the overall status of the public relations profession as well.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study considered the perceptions of the contributions of an affiliate organization relationship to what officers in one professionally oriented student club learned about leadership. In this sense, the study represented at best a small first step towards gaining insight into two topics: one, leadership education and related development as PRSSA chapter-related phenomena; and two, affiliate organization contributions to student learning about leadership across different professional areas.

Regarding the first topic, subsequent research might test this study's findings to see if and how they apply to other PRSSA chapters across the U.S. Such investigations, in turn, could contribute to the development of a refined, more practically oriented definition of leadership and leadership development in the organization that better serves the interests of affiliate organization representatives and faculty in their subsequent

efforts to train new public relations practitioners and serve the needs of their respective entities and the profession they serve.

In terms of the second topic, affiliate organization contributions to student learning about leadership across different professions, subsequent research might explore the experiences of students in different professionally oriented organizations to extend understanding of this phenomenon beyond the public relations profession. This research could discern similarities and differences in terms of what they learned from their affiliate relationships; the relevance of what they have learned to what their respective professions consider vital for leaders; and resources students use and ultimately find most helpful in terms of learning about their roles and leadership in general. The results of such research, in turn, might assist student affairs professionals charged with working with student leaders of professionally oriented clubs.

A third research stream might explore longer-term leadership development based on longitudinal methods that explore the evolution of leadership skills among public relations (among other) professionals over time, beginning with participation in PRSSA, continuing with involvement in PRSA, and culminating in a series of increasingly responsible professional positions. Such investigations could probe the relationship, if any, between collegiate leadership activities, ongoing participation in professional associations, and longer-term career development and professional success—subjects likely to keenly interest PRSA and PRSSA leaders as they grapple with ongoing challenges related to student and professional recruitment, long-term participation, and, most importantly, the standing of the public relations profession. Such longitudinal methods, moreover, are advised as an alternative to self-reported gains in learning and

development such as those presented in this study as the latter may not be valid indicators of student growth (Bowman, 2011).

Finally, future research also might consider the viability of relational leadership and the related LID model as an optimal theoretical framework for interpreting the specific experiences of student leaders in professionally oriented clubs. In other words, the nature of these experiences might be so different practically and philosophically from those that informed the research that inspired this model that despite its seminal role in the field of undergraduate student leadership development another leadership theory or alternate framework might be better suited to understand these particular student leadership activities.

Concluding Thoughts

Leadership has been likened to a side dish and not the main course as far as the attention and energy of undergraduate educators is concerned, as at best the subject receives cursory attention in the classroom and even less consideration outside of it (Glaser, 2010). Public relations curricula, to extend the metaphor, seemingly considers leadership in even lower regard and thus the subject appears at best to be a minor condiment that might get some notice from the occasional chef (in this case, educator) but by and large seems relegated to the back of kitchen cabinet that is out of reach to most people—despite an inkling that it would improve the taste and nutritional value of most dishes. One hopes that this study's findings will initiate a reconsideration of this approach to education about leadership and related development among PRSSA officers and public relations students in general, ushering in a renewed look at the subject in the context of undergraduate public relations training and career development.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Letter Granting Permission for Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs to
Participate in Study

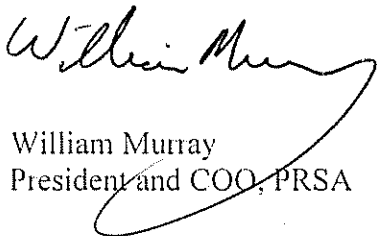
August 18, 2010

Chair
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
University of San Francisco
C/o Mitchell Friedman
P. O. Box 460642
San Francisco, California 94146-0642

Dear USF IRB Chair,

I understand that Mitchell Friedman, a graduate student in education at the University of San Francisco, is completing a research study exploring leadership development in PRSSA. To collect data necessary to answer his research questions, he has expressed interest in speaking with a member of our staff, the Vice President of PRSSA and Academic Affairs, I approve Mr. Friedman's request to speak with Ms. to collect data for his study.

Sincerely,


William Murray
President and COO, PRSA

Appendix B

List of Documents Collected and Reviewed for the Study

The following documents were reviewed and analyzed as part of this study. Those documents cited in the text also were included in the list of references.

Links to resources available online have been provided. The researcher maintains copies of documents for which links to online versions have not been provided.

Source: *PRSSA National Organization*

Annual Reports: These documents provided an overview of initiatives pursued by the PRSSA National Committee and program highlights during academic year. This information was presented in a newsletter format, with individual editions ranging in length from six to eight pages. Documents were reviewed for the following academic years:

1998-1999: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/237.pdf.

2000-2001: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/238.pdf.

2002-2003: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/239.pdf.

2004-2005: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/178.pdf.

2005-2006: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/181.pdf.

2006-2007: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/182.pdf.

2007-2008: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/180.pdf.

2008-2009: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/183.pdf.

Situation Analysis: These documents provided an overview, assessment, and future goals for programs, activities, and other initiatives overseen by PRSSA's National Committee. Each ranged in length from 60-80 pages. Documents were reviewed for the following years:

2006: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/PRSSA_2006_Situation_Analysis.pdf

2007: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/PRSSA_2007_Situation_Analysis.pdf

2008: Retrieved November 16, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/PRSSA_2008_Situation_Analysis.pdf

2009: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/PRSSA_2009_Situation_Analysis.pdf

2010: Retrieved November 1, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/PRSSA_2010_Situation_Analysis.pdf

2011: Retrieved January 30, 2011 from
http://www.prssa.org/about/Leadership/Situation%20Analysis%202011_Final.pdf

Chapter Resources: The following documents, geared specifically for chapter officers, were reviewed during the study.

“PRSSA Chapter Handbook 2010-2011.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/chapters/leaders/handbooks/PRSSA_2010_Chapter_Handbook.pdf.

This 73 page document provided a background on PRSSA; a list of National Committee members; chapter standards; benefits of PRSSA; a description of national events and resources; an overview of Regional Activities; ideas for chapter programming, professional development, fundraising, and using social media; best practices shared at the Leadership Rally; information on the PRSSA style and brand; and official PRSSA documents.

“PRSSA Membership Guide.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/chapters/leaders/handbooks/PRSSA_Membership_Guide.pdf

This four-page document offered an overview of PRSSA, including the organization’s vision; mission; code of ethics; national structure; a list of events and publications; a list of scholarships, awards, and competitions; and Web resources.

“PRSSA National Bylaws.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from
http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/92.pdf

This 11 page document covered rules and related details related to PRSSA membership; the National Committee; national officers; national subcommittees; the National Assembly; the National Conference; publications; other annual PRSSA activities; chapter

application and delinquency; geographic boundaries in the national organization; chapters; and the national insignia.

“PRSA/PRSSA Relationship Manual.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/chapters/leaders/handbooks/PRSSA_2010_Relationship_Manual.pdf.

This 13-page publication provided program-related advice and information for chapter officers, with an emphasis on how they can reach out to and include members of their affiliate PRSA chapter in such efforts.

Biweekly Updates: These e-mail newsletters featured news and information on national PRSSA activities and initiatives, and were e-mailed to all student members every two weeks. Issues distributed during study timeframe were reviewed, as follows:

September 23, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-09-23/>.

October 5, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-10-05/>.

October 28, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-10-28/>.

November 11, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-11-11/>.

December 2, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-12-02/>.

December 16, 2010: Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.prssa.org/news/biweekly/2010-12-16/>.

Blog Postings: The PRSSA blog (<http://blog.prssa.org/>) provided a forum for immediate, topical discussions of news items shared by PRSSA members. National PRSSA representatives also used the blog to share news pertaining to annual events, activities, and initiatives. The following five postings addressed topics deemed relevant to this study and were reviewed.

“Guest Post: My Leadership Rally Experience,” May 10, 2010. Retrieved April 27, 2011 from http://blog.prssa.org/index.php/2010/05/05/guest-post-my-leadership-rally-experience/?utm_campaign=PRSA_Search&utm_source=PRSA_Website&utm_medium=Search&utm_term=my%20leadership

“Managing Different Leadership Styles Within Your Chapter,” September 9, 2010. Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://blog.prssa.org/index.php/2010/09/09/managing-different-leadership-styles-within-your-chapter/>

“PRSSA Leadership Rally,” June 23, 2009. Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://blog.prssa.org/index.php/2009/06/23/prssa-leadership-rally/>

“The Seven Deadly Sins of Leadership,” February 16, 2010. Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://blog.prssa.org/index.php/2010/02/16/the-seven-deadly-sins-of-leadership/>

“Tips on Executing a Campaign,” April 5, 2010. Retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://blog.prssa.org/index.php/2010/04/05/tips-on-executing-a-campaign-2/>

Miscellaneous Documents: The following documents covered events and activities deemed relevant to PRSSA activities discussed in the study, and were reviewed and cited in the text when appropriate.

“PRSSA 2010 Leadership Rally Agenda.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/497.pdf.

“PRSSA Leadership Rally Best Practices Sharing 2010.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/574.pdf

“Marist PRSSA Chapter Recognized for Establishing Leadership Forum,” March 23, 2010. Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/news/chapter/news/display/962?utm_campaign=PRSSASearch&utm_source=PRSAWebsite&utm_medium=SSearch&utm_term=Marist%20chapter%20leadership%20forum

“Regional Activity Workshop,” PRSSA National Conference, October 17, 2010. Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/_lo382974tw/743.pdf.

“PRSSA 2010 National Assembly Agenda.” Retrieved November 8, 2010 from http://www.prssa.org/events/past/assembly/2010/PRSSA_2010_Assembly_Agenda.pdf.

Source: *PRSSA Chapter Included in the Study*

Social Media Sites: The PRSSA chapter included in the study used the following three social media sites to communicate with members. Each was monitored during the period covered by the study.

Website <http://prssasjsu.wordpress.com/>

Twitter account <http://twitter.com/#!/prssasjsu>

Facebook group

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=121447381241849#!/group.php?gid=19660455165>

Printed Documents: The following documents were collected in conjunction with observations of specific PRSSA meetings noted in the study.

Event: Chapter Membership Meeting

Date: November 10, 2010

Document: “Sports PR Ethics Case Study”

Overview: Fred Franklin, one of the PRSSA chapter officers interviewed for the study, attended a workshop at the 2010 PRSSA National Convention that used this document as the basis of discussion. He distributed it at this meeting as part of his effort to lead fellow officers and chapter members in a discussion on ethics in public relations.

Event: PR Day

Date: November 17, 2010

Documents: Official program, promotional flyer, and “Managing Your Online Brand Identity” speaker handout

Overview: The program listed activities and speakers at the event. The promotional flyer prominently displayed the name and affiliation of the keynote speaker (a vice president at a Northern California public relations agency) along with the location of the event. The final document was provided by a speaker at a workshop on finding a job in public relations, and included a list of websites and other tools to be used for personal online promotion.

Event: Media Predicts: 2011

Date: December 2, 2010

Document: Official program

Overview: This document listed honorees and speakers at the event, and provided a brief biography on each of these individuals.

Source: Public Relations Academic Degree Program Completed by PRSSA Chapter Officers in the Study

The following documents related to the public relations degree program completed by PRSSA chapter officers in the study were collected and reviewed.

Public Relations Program Fact Sheet: This document provided an overview of academic program, degree requirements, and lists of individual courses, student organizations, and scholarships. Links to online sources of information on the program also were included.

Course Syllabi: Syllabi for the following courses, offered during the semesters indicated, were obtained and reviewed. Each syllabus included a course description; list of learning objectives; readings and assignments; and grading criteria.

Contemporary Public Relations (Spring 2010)

Case Studies in Strategic Communication (Fall 2010)

Campaign Planning and Management (Spring 2010)

Advertising and Public Relations Student Agency (Spring 2010)

Source: *Student Leadership Conference 2010 sponsored by university where study was conducted*

Three documents were obtained at the September 25, 2010 conference in conjunction with the observation of activities that took place at that event.

Program: This document included a schedule of activities, with short descriptions of workshops and biographies on presenters also provided.

Workshop handout: Materials provided by the speaker at the “Individual Leadership Development: Methods for Awesome Self-Growth” session were obtained and reviewed. This document reviewed different leadership models, StrengthsQuest, and included prompts for students to take action based on the material that is presented.

Workshop handout: A PowerPoint presentation by the speaker at the group dynamics workshop was obtained and reviewed. This “Working Effectively in Groups” document addressed the importance of working in groups and introduced the concept of social loafing along with techniques students could employ to address it.

Appendix C

Coding Categories

1. Setting/Context
2. Definition of the Situation (DOS)
 - a. Officers
 - b. Faculty Advisors
 - c. Professional Advisors
 - d. PRSSA staff
3. Officer relationships with
 - a. Other officers
 - b. Chapter members
 - c. Faculty advisor
 - d. Professional advisors
 - e. Other faculty
 - f. Other professionals
 - g. Other students
4. Officer ways of thinking about
 - a. Faculty advisor
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PR major at school
 - d. PR class(es) at school
 - e. Their PRSSA chapter
 - f. Being a PRSSA chapter officer
 - g. Other officers (past, present, future)
 - h. Other chapter members

- i. Other students
- j. Other faculty members
- k. Who is a leader
- l. What leaders do
- m. Characteristics of leaders
- n. Self assessment: areas of growth
- o. Self-assessment: strengths
- p. Self-assessment: areas for improvement
- q. Other professionals
- r. Sources of information and resources on public relations, officer role, and/or leadership
- s. PR as a profession/what PR people do
- t. PRSSA or PRSA (national organizations)
- u. Executive board of chapter
- v. Their university
- w. Local PRSA chapter with which PRSSA chapter is affiliated

5. PRSSA member and/or specific officer activities

- a. Arranging meeting logistics (e.g., food, room setup, giving directions to speakers, travel)
- b. Planning
- c. Handling administrative items (i.e., bylaws, mailing list, collecting membership fees, filling out forms)
- d. Promoting
- e. Talking about PRSSA (including this chapter)
- f. Recruiting members
- g. Recruiting new officers
- h. Brainstorming
- i. Discussing classes
- j. Discussing instructors
- k. Discussing internships, jobs, and/or PR as a career
- l. Discussing what PR people do
- m. Discussing programs and/or possible speakers

- n. Eating
 - o. Socializing/interacting with others
 - p. Listening to or interacting with speakers
 - q. Updating other officers
 - r. Collaborating
 - s. Communicating through written or spoken word (i.e., giving speeches, writing e-mails, developing brochures, flyers, and newsletters, updating the Web site, using social media)
 - t. Networking
 - u. Fundraising
 - v. Advising/mentoring/helping/providing information
 - w. Motivating others
 - x. Delegating
 - y. Volunteering
 - z. Sponsoring events
6. PRSSA, university, and related events and resources cited as part of officers' experience in learning about public relations, their individual position, and leadership
- a. Fellow officers
 - b. Previous experience (e.g., job, high school leadership role)
 - c. Faculty advisors
 - d. Professional advisors
 - e. PRSSA national conference
 - f. PRSSA regional activity (regional conference)
 - g. PRSSA leadership rally
 - h. PRSSA national assembly
 - i. PRSSA materials (e.g., Web site, e-mail, publications, listserves)
 - j. A university class
 - k. Family
 - l. Other

- m. 9/25/10 club officer training
 - n. Media Predicts
 - o. Agency Tour (Agency Day)
 - p. PR Day
 - q. Bateman Competition
 - r. Other faculty
 - s. Other professionals
 - t. Regular chapter membership meetings
7. Sources of information and resources for officers identified by faculty advisors
- a. Products/services
 - b. Support
8. Sources of information and resources for officers identified by professional advisors
- a. Products/services
 - b. Support
9. Sources of information and resources for officers identified by PRSSA staff member and/or which are available from PRSSA directly via Web site and other means
- a. Products/services/events/activities
 - b. Support
10. Ways of thinking about sources of information and resources on officer positions shared by
- a. Faculty advisors
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PRSSA staff member

11. Ways of thinking about their roles vis a vis PRSSA club officers shared by
 - a. Faculty advisors
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PRSSA staff member
12. Ways of thinking about leadership shared by
 - a. Faculty advisors (in this role and/or as classroom instructor)
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PRSSA staff member
13. Ways of thinking about PRSSA (local affiliate chapter or national organization) shared by
 - a. Faculty advisors
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PRSSA staff member
14. Ways of thinking about PRSA shared by
 - a. Faculty advisors
 - b. Professional advisors
 - c. PRSSA staff member

5V FM: So it's pretty broad. I guess that question are there any type of parameters or just general? Um, well I'll tell ya how I define a leader is someone who can show someone who can do and I think someone who can be part of a team so as a like for instance as a leader I don't wanna be I don't like like "I'm the president so it's gonna be this way." Like I want to be part of a team. I want everyone to be part of that team too. Um, and it's really important for me to convey to students that we are all on the same level you know like I'm using my experience to help you to give you this information or to get you to San Francisco and agency day or whatever it is um but you know it's all for like a cause. A reason. 4M 5F 4h

60 Me: Okay. So you consider yourself a leader?

FM: Yes.

Me: Okay.

FM: Yes.

Me: So as a leader do you have a um leadership purpose?

FM: A purpose?

Me: Yea, as a leader.

4 / FM: Yea, I would say it's to um help advocate for students who you know aren't familiar with with what's going on. What is available to them. 5V

Me: Okay. So the second part of that question you touched on this a little bit already is do you could you identify principles or ethics that guide your leadership?

6b FM: Uh, principles or ethics. Well, I use a lot of my own personal experience.

Me: Okay.

5b FM: Um, definitely. When I you know when I carrying out something or when I'm planning something actually probably my personal experience is always at the forefront um so that's a huge thing and I I guess to try use like my experience like I said you know to do that.

Me: Okay. Alright. How have your attitudes or beliefs about leadership changed since you've been serving as an officer in this club?

4e FM: I realize it is a lot harder than I expected it to be.

Me: How's that?

5a 5b FM: Um, even just you know planning sign-ups sheets or printing out copies or trying to get everyone's information together finding out how much pizza we have to buy I mean it's a lot

Sample of Observation Coded Using Coding Categories

schedule and the program for this evening. He tells me that students are going to speak about their favorite part of the convention that some recently attended in Washington, DC. He comments that his favorite program was on ethics, and I observe a one-page handout nearby that covers this topic. I ask Fred if I can take it and he says yes. "We're going to review a case study," he adds. Fred continues, "ethics really should be the subject of a course here." I comment that at USF there's a PR law and ethics class. He responds, "yea, it's like that here but I don't see why they should combine the two topics."

6e

4r

event

Felicia walks in. I get food. I mention to her that I received an e-mail about the 12/2 event "Media Predicts," which I had heard her talk about at a previous ~~me~~. Felicia then launches into a monologue on the structure of the chapter's participation in that event. While she's primarily responding to my comment, students around me are paying attention as well. Felicia begins to pull up information on her computer. It's now 6:15 p.m. There are nine students in the room. They speak informally, or eat quietly, or use their cell phones.

6n

listening
to
leaders

While the students are eating I begin to ask questions about recent chapter activities they attended at which I was not present. "How many people attended?" I specifically ask. Sally, who works at the television station the students visited on 10/27, responded "20" and added, "it was good, but I was really worried how it would come off as I work there." No other student responds to my question or comments further on the television station tour.

6+

I then ask about the public relations agency tour on 11/5. "How many people attended?" "About 10" is the response I receive. "What agencies did you visit?" I ask. "Shift, Ruder Finn, and Text100" the students respond, almost in unison. My queries elicit a range of comments about the individual agencies. "Ruder Finn was great. . .they brought everyone out to meet us and even asked us students for their feedback." Did any other agency ask for feedback?" I ask. "No," the students responded. Felicia comments that "at Text100 they have an internship program but the girl who presented on it did a really poor job." I ask about Shift and who they met there, specifically mentioning the head of the firm. A silence comes over the room. Felicia asks, "do you know him?" I say, "not personally, but I've exchanged communication with him over the years. Why do you ask? Was he not helpful?" "No, he was kind of mean," Felicia responds. I add, "he's been given the unofficial title of the father of the social media release." The student seated adjacent to Felicia asks, "what's a social media release?" I respond that, "it's a traditional press release that includes social media elements." I ask who set up the visits at the specific agencies. Felicia responds, "Martin and Cassandra."

60

4r

51

4r

6d

I now walk across the room to get another piece of pizza. I continue the conversation with Felicia (and Fred, who is seated next to her and is eavesdropping on our conversation). "What about Edelman? Outcast?" I say. Felicia responds promptly to each agency name I mention, not only recognizing them but able to draw on knowledge of Martin and Cassandra's outreach in conjunction with setting up agency day.

60

knowledgeable-
attentive to
detail

Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter from the University of San Francisco

Mitchell S Friedman <friedman@usfca.edu>

IRB Application #10-083 - Approved

1 message

USF IRBPHS <irbphs@usfca.edu>**Mon, Sep 13, 2010 at 9:50 AM**

To: friedman@usfca.edu

Cc: mitchell@usfca.edu

September 13, 2010

Dear Mr. Friedman:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF) has reviewed your request for human subjects approval regarding your study.

Your application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #10-083). Please note the following:

Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still in collecting data from human subjects, you must file a renewal application.

Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (including wording of items) must be communicated to the IRBPHS. Re-submission of an application may be required at that time.

Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of participants must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRBPHS at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Sincerely,

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
 Chair, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
 IRBPHS – University of San Francisco
 Counseling Psychology Department
 Education Building – Room 017
 2130 Fulton Street
 San Francisco, CA 94117-1080 (415)
 422-6091 (Message) (415) 422-5528 (Fax)
irbphs@usfca.edu
<http://www.usfca.edu/soe/students/irbphs>

Appendix G

IRB Approval Letter from University Where Study Was Conducted

Mitchell S Friedman <friedman@usfca.edu>

IRB Registration - S1004048

4 messages

Alena Filip <alena.filip@xxxx.edu>

Fri, Sep 17, 2010 at 3:21 PM

To: friedman@usfca.edu

Mitchell Friedman:

Mr. Friedman,

This email is to inform you that your IRB application has been registered with the (Name of University) IRB and assigned an IRB tracking number: S1004048. Our office has received documentation of your IRB approval from the University of San Francisco. Because the appropriate IRB approval has already been obtained from your home institution no further documents are required at this time. You may proceed with collecting data at (Name of University) in accordance with the protocol that was approved by your institution.

If at any time a research participant at (Name of University) becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Dr. xxxx xxxx, Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies and research immediately at (xxx) xxx-xxxx. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma, and release of potentially damaging personal information.

This registration is valid for the duration of your University of San Francisco IRB approval. If you plan on collecting data at (Name of University) beyond the date indicated on your IRB approval, an extension of the approval must be submitted to the (Name of University) IRB prior to the continuation of data collection.

Please keep this email for your records as evidence that your registration with the (Name of University) IRB has been approved by our office.

--

Alena Filip
Institutional Review Board & Graduate Thesis Coordinator
Graduate Studies and Research
(Name of University)

Phone: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Email: Alena.Filip@xxxx.edu

Location: Administration Building - Room 223

Appendix H

Consent Cover Letter for PRSSA Student Officers

September 2010

PRSSA Student Officer
Pearce Davies Alpha Chapter
San Jose State University
One Washington Square
San Jose, California 95192

Dear PRSSA Officer:

My name is Mitchell Friedman and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am doing a study on leadership development in PRSSA chapters, and wish to focus on (your chapter) to conduct my research. Your chapter advisor, Dr. Charles Matthews, has given approval to me to conduct this research. I also spoke with Fred Franklin in the Spring 2010 about this study.

You are being asked to participate in this research study because you are an elected chapter officer. If you agree to be in this study, you agree to allow me to observe your participation in PRSSA chapter executive board and general membership meetings and to be interviewed by me in person to answer questions related to your leadership experience.

These interviews will last about an hour. They will occur at a mutually convenient time and place on your university campus. I plan to audiotape the interviews. The observations will take place at regularly scheduled chapter executive board and general membership meetings. I will give you advance notice about my attendance at specific meetings to conduct my research. You may withdraw from the project at any time, should that prove necessary.

I will be writing about and discussing with others what I learn about leadership development in PRSSA. In doing so, I will protect your identity and that of your institution by using pseudonyms rather than real names. While I will quote directly from interviews, documents, and observations, I will be attentive to protecting confidentiality. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Individual results will not be shared with any faculty member, advisor, or other students at your school.

While there will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of leadership development in PRSSA that in turn could help future officers in your chapter.

There will be no costs to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation in this study.

If you have questions about the research, you may contact me at 415-517-5756. If you have further questions about the study, you may contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Your university is aware of this study but does not require that you participate in this research. Your decision as to whether or not to participate will have no influence on your present or future status as a student at your university.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Mitchell Friedman

Mitchell Friedman
Graduate Student
University of San Francisco

Appendix I

Informed Consent Form for PRSSA Student Officers

Purpose and Background

Mitchell Friedman, a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on leadership development in PRSSA. There is ongoing interest in the leadership experiences of undergraduate students who serve as leaders in professionally oriented clubs, and more recent interest in leadership in public relations. The researcher is interested in exploring both phenomena by conducting this study.

I am being asked to participate because I am an elected officer in the PRSSA chapter at (the host university).

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will be observed at a minimum of five PRSSA chapter executive board and general membership meetings held during the fall 2010 and spring 2011 at (the host university).
2. I will participate in a one-on-one interview with Mitchell Friedman, during which I will be asked about my leadership history, beliefs, and attitudes as well as my experiences as an officer in the PRSSA chapter. This interview will be conducted on the (host university) campus at a time prearranged with Mitchell Friedman. This interview will be audiotaped.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. It is possible that some of the questions in the interview may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions if I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded at all times. Only Mitchell Friedman will have access to the files.
3. Because the time required for my participation in the interview will be up to one hour, I may become tired or bored.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of leadership development in PRSSA chapters.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study. In agreeing to be interviewed, I recognize the need to spend additional time above and beyond my normal club officer duties to participate in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in this study.

Questions

I have talked to Mitchell Friedman about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at 415-517-5756.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with Mitchell Friedman. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate will have no influence on my present or future status as a student or employee at (the host university).

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's Signature	Date
---------------------	------

Mitchell Friedman's Signature	Date
-------------------------------	------

Appendix J

Informed Consent Form for Other Students

Purpose and Background

Mitchell Friedman, a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on leadership development in PRSSA (the Public Relations Student Society of America). There is ongoing interest in the leadership experiences of undergraduate students who serve as leaders in professionally oriented clubs, and more recent interest in leadership in public relations. The researcher is interested in exploring both phenomena by conducting this study.

I am being asked to participate because I am a member of the PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) or another club sponsored by (the host university).

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will be observed at meetings attended by Mitchell Friedman (the researcher) during the fall 2010 and spring 2011 at (the host university).
2. I may be informally interviewed by Mitchell Friedman at a meeting I am attending.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. It is possible that some of the questions in the informal interview may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions if I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded at all times. Only Mitchell Friedman will have access to the files.
3. Because my participation in the informal interview may take place outside of the regular meeting time, I may become tired or bored.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of leadership development in PRSSA chapters and other undergraduate clubs.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in this study.

Questions

I have talked to Mitchell Friedman about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at 415-517-5756.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with Mitchell Friedman. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status as a student or employee at (the host university).

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's Signature

Date

Mitchell Friedman's Signature

Date

Appendix K

Informed Consent Form for Professionals

Purpose and Background

Mitchell Friedman, a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on leadership development in PRSSA. There is ongoing interest in the leadership experiences of undergraduate students who serve as leaders in professionally oriented clubs, and more recent interest in leadership in public relations. The researcher is interested in exploring both phenomena by conducting this study.

I am being asked to participate because I am an individual whose professional role offers information and insight deemed relevant to this study and its ability to answer research questions.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will participate in a one-on-one interview with Mitchell Friedman, during which I will be asked questions relevant to the proposed topic. This interview will be conducted in-person or if necessary at a mutually convenient time prearranged with Mitchell Friedman, sometime during the fall 2010 or spring 2011. This interview will be audiotaped.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. It is possible that some of the questions in the interview may make me feel uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions if I do not wish to answer or to stop participation at any time.
2. Study records will be kept as confidential as is possible. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications resulting from the study. Study information will be coded at all times. Only Mitchell Friedman will have access to the files.
3. Because the time required for my participation in the interview will be up to one hour, I may become tired or bored.

Benefits

Given the study's relevance to leadership development of undergraduate students who serve as officers in PRSSA, I may find survey results instructive in conjunction with future educational and training efforts geared towards students.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study. In agreeing to be interviewed, I recognize the need to spend additional time above and beyond my normal professional duties to participate in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement

I will not be reimbursed for my participation in this study.

Questions

I have talked to Mitchell Friedman about this study and have had my questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may call him at 415-517-5756.

If I have any questions or comments about participation in this study, I should first talk with Mitchell Friedman. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the IRBPHS, which is concerned with protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach the IRBPHS office by calling 415-422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu, or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. I am free to decline to be in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate will have no influence on my present or future status as an employee at San Jose State University or in the organization where I am currently employed.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Subject's Signature

Date

Mitchell Friedman's Signature

Date