

PRSA SAN DIEGO/IMPERIAL COUNTIES

2021 Annual Report





Letter from the President



2021 was a rollercoaster of a year, to put it lightly. The highs – the vaccine roll-out, re-openings of public spaces and the resumption of public gatherings – were exhilarating, but the lows – new variants, new symptoms, ongoing public discourse – brought us crashing back down before we even had a chance to admire the view. With these highs and lows came an ever-changing stream of new regulations and public policies for public health and safety, constantly augmenting operating procedures and requirements for businesses, schools, and daily life. Mask mandates, temperature screenings, vaccination attestations, and test results became a part of our daily vernacular.

These challenges and so many more persisted throughout the year, but with them came a unique opportunity for communications professionals to underscore our value to not only their organizations and constituents, but more broadly to society at large. After all, could any other profession as deftly navigate the constant swing between virtual and in-person (and back again)? I should think not.

Just as our industry, and our society, had to evolve and stay nimble throughout 2021, so too did the PRSA San Diego/Imperial Counties Chapter. We approached 2021 programming with equal parts cautious optimism and rightful trepidation, made bold assertions towards trying to resume in-person gatherings in the summer, but took a calculated step back based on the facts, science, and recommendations of public health officials before us. But we didn't lose hope and were ultimately able to achieve our goal of gathering in person at least once during the year – with a pared down version of our largest annual event, the Edward L. Bernays Mark of Excellence Awards. True, we had to keep the event about half its usual size, a third of its usual length, and hold it outside (brrr), but I think others who attended will agree with me that it was all worth it to be able to get back together in person after almost two years apart.

Events and networking were only part of what we did in 2021, though. At the beginning of the year, our Board of Directors voted to focus everything we did in 2021 through the lens of enhancing equity, diversity and inclusion, within our chapter and local public relations industry. With this clear directive outlined, our Board and members stepped up to organize events, convene an advisory committee, and identify real ways to effect change throughout San Diego and Imperial counties. For the first time, we told bold action as a chapter to speak out against wrongdoing, show



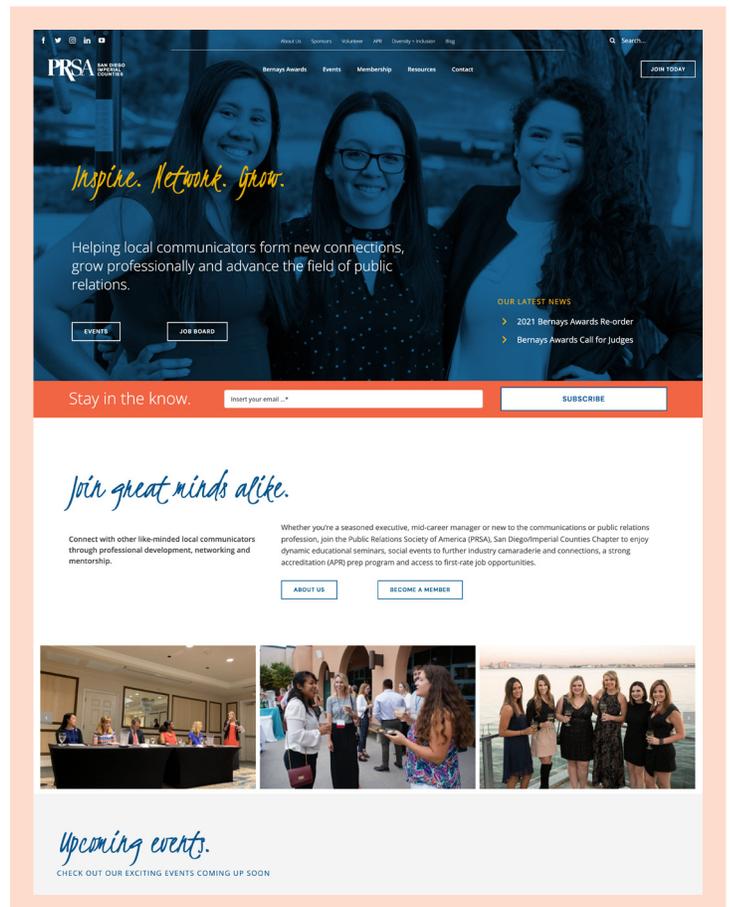
Letter from the President

support for those facing injustices, and reach BIPOC communities to encourage their engagement and involvement in our community. We created a platform to recognize diverse communications professionals through our annual awards program, slashed event ticket prices to remove that barrier to entry, and also cut award entry fees for first-time participants.

Still, we recognized that all of this was just the tip of the iceberg, and we needed more help. So, we also brought in an outside professional to help us enhance our equity, diversity and inclusion efforts and craft a long-term plan for us to continue doing so for many more years to come. As a result of these efforts, we were excited to receive an honorable mention from PRSA National for the Chapter Diversity Award, in recognition of our efforts to advance diversity and inclusion in the industry.

In the midst of all of this, we also found time to develop and launch a new website to make it easier for members and industry professionals to access chapter info and resources. There's not much more to say about 2021 other than we made it to the other side. But the ride is about to start anew, so buckle up, get your booster, and here's hoping that 2022 brings us all more highs, less lows, and more opportunities to gather in person! Cheers!

Hope Reilly





Who We Are

WHO WE ARE

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is the nation's leading professional organization serving the communications community.

PRSA is the principal advocate for industry excellence and ethical conduct and provides members lifelong learning opportunities and leading-edge resources to enhance professional connections and support them at every stage of their career.

MISSION

To make communications professionals smarter, better prepared and more connected through all stages of their career.

VISION

PRSA provides an exceptional member experience that educates, inspires, guides and galvanizes a diverse community of ethical, strategic communications professionals.





Chapter by the Numbers

CHAPTER BY THE NUMBERS

- 206 MEMBERS
- 20 BOARD MEMBERS
- 1 ETHICS OFFICER
- 4 ASSOCIATE BOARD MEMBERS
- 9 COMMITTEES



MEMBERSHIP INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN

- EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
- HEALTH OR MEDICAL
- ASSOCIATION OR NONPROFIT
- GOVERNMENT OR MILITARY
- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
- TECHNOLOGY
- CONSUMER PRODUCTS
- UTILITIES

MEMBERSHIP SPECIALIZATIONS

- MEDIA RELATIONS
- MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
- PUBLIC AFFAIRS
- CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS
- PR COUNSELING
- COMMUNITY RELATIONS
- GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS
- EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS
- DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS
- MARKETING



Chapter by the Numbers

PR EXPERIENCE

(of those who provided information)



CHAPTER METRICS

- **94** BERNAYS ENTRIES
- MENTORSHIP PROGRAM
 - 21** PAIRS OF MENTORS
 - 42** PARTICIPANTS
 - 168** HOURS OF MENTORSHIP
- NONPROFITS HELPED (QUALITY TIME WITH PR MINDS)
 - 19** ORGANIZATIONS (20 PR PRO BONO VOLUNTEERS)
- PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENTS
 - 8** HOURS OF INSTRUCTION



Diversity and Inclusion

As part of a commitment to improving our branding and connection with the community, the PRSA San Diego/Imperial Counties Board of Directors voted to invest in the redevelopment of our website. Work on this project began in 2020 and involved countless hours of volunteer time. The new and improved website launched in Fall 2021 and picks up a contemporary look and feel. What's more is that it is now responsive and allows for seamless integration with Eventbrite making hosting events easier for our volunteer board and Chapter administrator. Members and interested parties can now easily and enjoyably peruse our blog posts, events and job listings. It also gives sponsors prime opportunities for exposure and recognition.

To complement the new website, we also redesigned our newsletter to pick up the branding established through our work with our web designer. We successfully established brand colors and fonts and created a new logo that feels more modern, which we feel more accurately represents the Chapter.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: SMALL CHANGES WITH A PROFOUND IMPACT

Our Chapter is unique in that it has the added benefit of representing a binational region. As 2021 President Hope Reilly wrote in her president's note, "2020 was the year we took a hard look at ourselves, and realized the Board of Directors of our Chapter did not reflect the multicultural makeup of our cities or counties."

Last year was the year that the board took substantial steps to make diversity, inclusion and equity not only a top priority, but a core value. D&I Committee Chair Jamie Hampton kicked off the year by sharing the results of our board member interviews/listening sessions to give us a benchmark of where we were, what we lacked and what we needed to better lead. We started to take stock of our efforts and rededicated ourselves to being a diverse and inclusive organization.

Among our key accomplishments in 2021:

- The Board crafted and adopted an official **Chapter DEI statement**.
- We Issued a statement of support in solidarity with the local Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, who have been targeted by hate, discrimination and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We partnered with We All Belong, an online effort to bring awareness to the increase in hate and discrimination against AAPI community members, and earned media coverage on the effort.
- We created a D&I advisory board, consisting of both Chapter members as well as nonmembers, to hold the Chapter accountable for realizing D&I goals and expand our reach to allow even more PR professionals to be represented.



Diversity and Inclusion

- We integrated D&I into our existing committees, setting a standard that every member must consider how we'd incorporate D&I into every Chapter activity.

Many of these goals were in line with the **PRSA National's diversity goals**, as outlined in their 2020-2022 Strategic Plan. Success was measured in several ways.

- Our Professional Development Committee did its best to achieve a more diverse range of panelists and choose topics that speak to historically underserved communities in our local PR community. This included reaching out to new and diverse speakers who were subject matter experts in a variety of fields, from arts and culture to social media management and journalism. In total, 16 out of our 26 panelists identified as LGBTQ+ and/or BIPOC. That's 66 percent!
- Our diversity-driven board recruitment in 2020 resulted in all three open positions for the 2021 Board of Directors being filled with BIPOC of LGBTQIA+ professionals.
- We also were proud to add a brand new category to our prestigious Edward L. Bernays Awards: a specific D&I Category. The award recognizes a public relations professional who used their platforms to call attention to issues affecting their communities, supported inclusive initiatives, and made contributions to initiate change within their field. Our first recipient was a woman and member of the LGBTQ community who is working to create opportunities for underserved communities to work in science communications.
- Received an honorable mention from PRSA National for its Chapter Diversity Awards, which recognizes efforts to advance diversity and inclusion in the industry.
- And our robust mentorship program has impacted close to 60 mentees and mentors over the past two years. The program, led by Membership Chair Rachel McGuire and Associate Board Member Mariah Hugo, experienced success and is designed to improve connection with the next generation of PR pros as well as keep close ties with our seasoned industry experts.

Finally, an area we are proud of is the board-approved onboarding of D&I consultant Janedra Sykes to help us pave the way toward becoming a more equitable organization and rebuilding our own brand perception within the community. The board is currently half way through a year-long journey of constructive and honest conversations to break down walls, face our bias and build comfort around D&I issues.

These are just some of the efforts we committed to in 2021. This year, we plan to build on the positive and constructive trajectory we've set for ourselves and are devoted to continuing to push the envelope to ensure all communities feel welcome and represented at PRSA SD/IC.

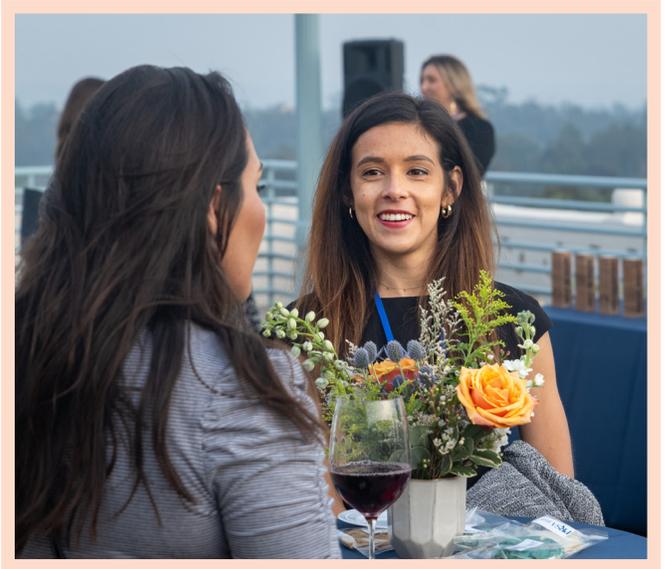


Bernays 2021

Our chapter was so excited to be able to organize and host our first in-person Bernays Awards event since 2019. We were so happy to host members of our community on the rooftop of the San Diego Natural History Museum in November 2021 to celebrate a year's worth of hard work and reconnect, a celebration we called, "Bolder, Brighter, Better." [View the winners here.](#)



Becknays 2021





Corporate Sponsors

SPONSORS

We could not do the work we do without the generosity of our sponsors. Thank you for your support!

RELIANCE PUBLIC RELATIONS

WRIGHT ON COMMUNICATIONS

SAN DIEGO EDC

RMG COMMUNICATIONS

REPUBLIC SERVICES

ATTENTION GETTERS DESIGN

ASHLEY RINGGER DESIGN

HUNTRESS FLORALS

JOHN CAMERON PHOTOGRAPHY

SOUTHWEST STRATEGIES

F&L MEDIA VIDEO PRODUCTION
& PHOTOGRAPHY

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY

WWW.ASHLEYRINGGER.COM

