2015 Fellowship for Educators

Application Deadline for Educators: February 15, 2015

Application Process

• To apply, candidates must send via email to the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations (plankcenter@gmail.com) at the University of Alabama, the following:
  o Personal statement addressing:
    ▪ Areas of special interest or need that you, as a candidate, will hope to develop;
    ▪ Areas of expertise you can contribute to the host organization;
    ▪ Expectations on what you will accomplish with respect to your teaching and research as a Plank Center Fellow;
    ▪ Thoughts on how you would bring key learnings gained during the Fellowship back to your academic institution for the growth of your department, your students and the larger university;
    ▪ Whether you would be willing to do the residency in the fall or spring; and
    ▪ Whether you would be willing to spend longer than two weeks with the sponsor.
  o CV/Resume
  o Letter of recommendation from a department chair, director or dean indicating how the Fellowship will enhance your teaching and/or research and how the key learnings gained during the Fellowship will be shared with others at your academic institution.
• A committee of public relations professionals and educators will review the applications and make recommendations to the sponsoring organizations, which will make the final acceptance decision. Acceptance will be based on the candidate's personal statement, research and teaching interests, need for exposure to the industry and potential contribution to the growth of the sponsoring organization.
• Notification of the decisions and matches will be made by the end of April 2015.

Background

• This fellowship program for public relations educators is designed with the dual purpose of exposing professors to current day-to-day operations of the public relations function and in creating an exchange of information and ideas that will enhance the professional development of both the educators and the practitioner-sponsors.
• Key beneficiaries are public relations students, who can be ensured their professors are knowledgeable in the current practices and issues facing practitioners and that practitioners have a greater appreciation for the value of theory and research of their classrooms in today's public relations work.

• The Plank Center is the convener of this opportunity, using its own visibility to draw attention to the program; marketing the program to both educators and organization leaders; and coordinating the application process and “match.”

• Sponsoring organizations will be drawn from public relations agencies, corporations, not-for-profits and the government sector. Placement with a particular organization depends on the educator’s area(s) of expertise.

• The number of placements depends on the number of organizations willing to host an educator. Since the program's inception in 2010, the following organizations and agencies have hosted educators: the American Red Cross, Arizona Public Service, BMW North America, Constellation Energy/Baltimore Gas & Electric, Discover Financial Services, Edelman, General Motors, Harley-Davidson, Home Depot, Insidedge/GolinHarris, JetBlue Airways, Johnson & Johnson, Ketchum Public Relations Agencies in Chicago and New York, McDonald’s Corp., Navistar, Northwestern Mutual, Praxair, Regions Financial Corp., Southern Company, Sprint Nextel, Tesoro Companies, USAA, and Wisconsin Energy.

Expectations

• Educators selected as Fellows will spend at least two full weeks in the offices of the sponsoring organization with which they have been matched. (Some sponsoring organizations require up to four weeks on-site.) The period of the Fellowship typically occurs in June or July although in some cases it may occur in the fall or spring. The dates are as agreed upon by both parties.

• Educators will be given a full orientation to the sponsoring organization, the particular department, staff duties and responsibilities, clients and/or projects.

• Sponsoring organizations will designate a key professional as the official host and mentor for the visiting professors during their time in residency.

• In exchange for their time in residency, the educators will be expected to use their own expertise to assist the sponsoring organization with a particular project; conduct a workshop or seminar for the staff of the sponsoring organization; conduct a research project of value to the sponsoring organization; or produce a report or white paper highlighting their impressions, key takeaways and recommendations for how the sponsors can develop new proficiencies in a key discipline; or develop proprietary knowledge in existing or new areas of strategic focus.

• To participate in the Fellowship for Educators, the sponsoring organizations will pay housing and per diem expenses up to a maximum of $3,000 for the chosen educator (or more if the period of residency is longer than two weeks); the educators will pay for travel to/from the sponsoring organization, and any out-of-pocket expenses.

Please direct specific questions regarding the application process or interest that your organization may have in serving as a sponsor for a Plank Center Educator Fellow to Dr. Karla Gower at gower@apr.ua.edu.