



Educator Fellowship Program

Bridging the gap between education & practice

A two-week summer fellowship developed specifically for public relations educators for the purpose of immersing the professors in the current day-to-day operations of the public relations function and helping create an exchange of information and ideas that will enhance the professional development of both the educators and their host organizations.

THE PLANK CENTER
FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

To learn more about the program and to apply:

Email:

plankcenter@gmail.com

Website:

plankcenter.ua.edu

OBJECTIVE

Our founder, the legendary Betsy Plank, known as the First Lady of Public Relations, had a life-long dream of facilitating a relationship between educators and professionals so both would grow together. In 2010, Betsy's vision would be transformed into the Educator Fellowship program. Since its inception, more than 50 educators have been selected to the Educator Fellowship Program.

The program consists of an intensive, two-week summer fellowship developed specifically for public relations educators, which allows the fellows to develop or enhance skills in:

- **Professional Development**

Fellows will experience the current day-to-day operations of the public relations function and help create an exchange of information and ideas that will enhance the professional development of both the educators and their host organizations.

- **Leadership**

Fellows will develop greater knowledge of the skills necessary for today's public relations work. Key beneficiaries are public relations students. They can be assured 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 in their classrooms.

- **Networking**

Fellows will interact closely with public relations professionals, becoming part of the team during the fellowship. The host will agree to spend up to two days on the educator's college or university campus with faculty, administrators and students.

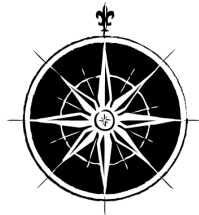
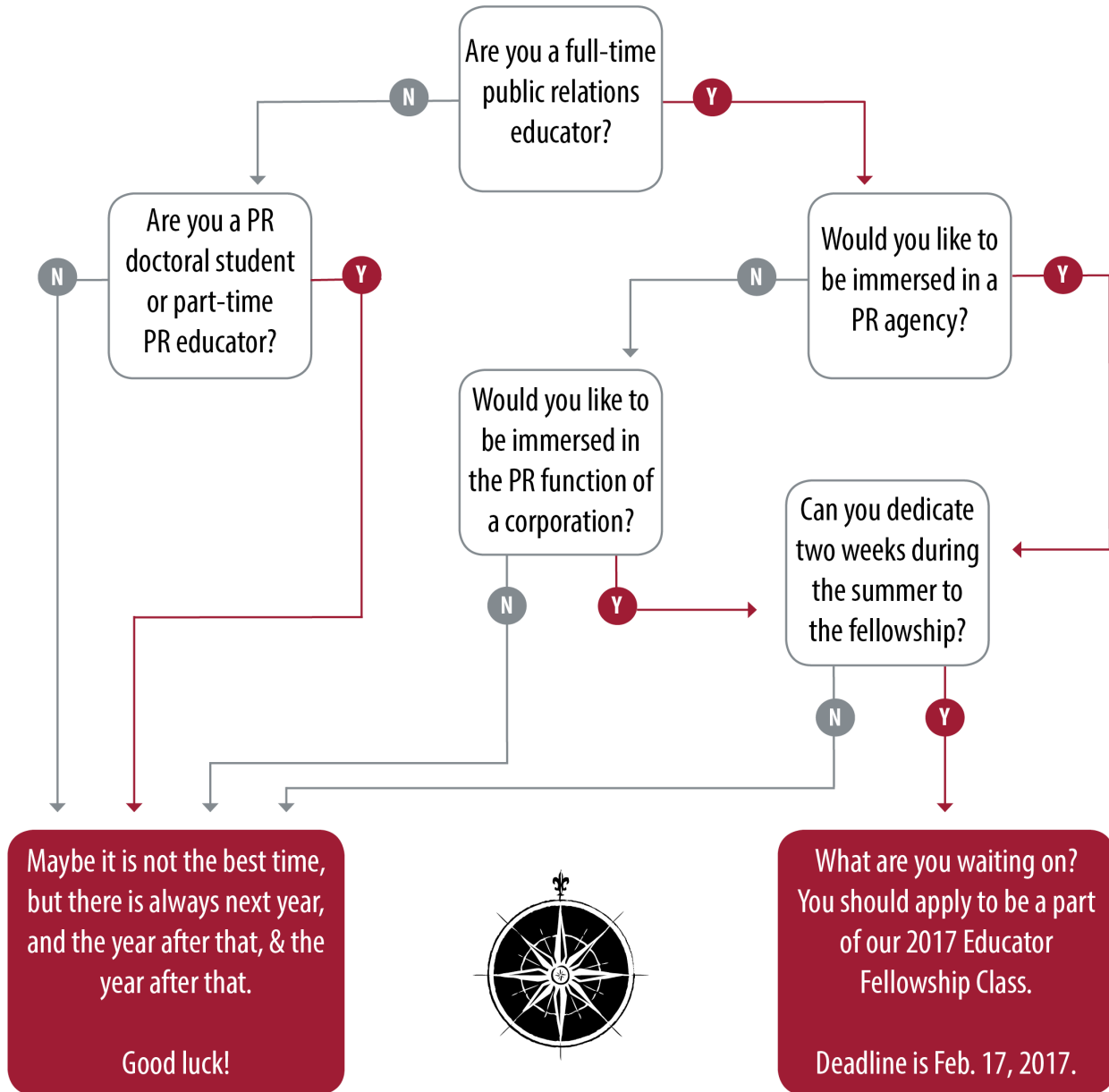
TIMELINE

- Application opens: December
- Deadline for fellowship application: February
- Notification of selection: May

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Completed application per instructions
- Eligibility (see next page)

ELIGIBILITY



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EXPENSES

The sponsoring organization will pay housing and per diem expenses up to a maximum of \$3,500 for the chosen educator; the educators will pay for travel to/from the sponsoring organization, and any out-of-pocket expenses.

All per diem costs presented for reimbursement will need to be filed in accordance with the host's travel and entertainment reimbursement practices and no later than two weeks following the completion of the residency.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Candidates must send via email to the Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations (plankcenter@gmail.com), the following:

- 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 of what you will accomplish with respect to your teaching and research as a Plank Center Fellow; and
 - 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.
- CV/Resume
- 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.

WORLD-CLASS HOST ORGANIZATIONS

Sponsoring organizations are drawn from world-class public relations agencies, corporations, not-for-profits and the government sector. The hosts truly see the value in the Educator Fellowship program. 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.

Throughout the history of this program, a number of agencies and corporations have participated, including such organizations as General Motors, Harley-Davidson, Sprint, Ketchum, Edelman Worldwide, Deveney Communications, Home Depot, Johnson & Johnson, Golin, ESPN, the American Red Cross and others. Plank Center advisors undertake an outreach to past host organizations and seek to recruit new companies and agencies to join us each year. Our goal always is to recruit the leading organizations that share our deep commitment for leadership and mentoring.

EXPECTATIONS

Educators selected as Plank Fellows will spend at least two full weeks in the offices of the host organization typically in June or July. They will be given a full orientation to the host organization, the particular

department, staff duties and responsibilities, clients and/or projects. Hosts will designate a key professional as the official host and mentor for the visiting professors during their time in residency. In return, educators may use their own expertise to:

- Conduct a workshop or seminar for the staff of the sponsoring organization;
- Conduct a research project;
- 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; and/or
- Develop proprietary knowledge in existing or new areas of strategic focus.

Upon completion of the fellowship, educators and hosts will be expected to complete an interview session with the Center for feedback on the value of the fellowship for both parties. Also, the educators and hosts will agree to participate in interviews in the public relations and academic media as the Plank Center seeks to provide visibility for the program.

PLANK FELLOWS

If selected, you will forever be referred to as a Plank Fellow. For a complete list of previous Plank Fellows, please visit our website at plankcenter.ua.edu

REVIEWS

Don't just take our word for it. From London and Hong Kong to New York and Chicago, we've had more than 50 educators participate in our fellowship. Here is what they have to say about their experience...

"I have nothing but positive things to say about my experience as a Plank Center Fellow. I had the pleasure of working with the Johnson and Johnson Corporate Communication office this August. Before arriving in New Brunswick, NJ, I was really hoping to learn more about how the company handles its social media presence. During my two weeks, this is exactly what I was exposed to. I worked with and learned from a number of talented people. I also got to contribute to the organization by giving a workshop and doing research projects. I was immersed in the day-to-day activities of corporate communication. I am taking back all the knowledge that I gained to my students in Newton, MA. This is an experience I would highly recommend for any professor teaching courses on public relations and interested in staying current with communication trends and efforts." – [Dr. Dana Janbek, Lasell College](#)

"The experience really helped to remind me of the importance of real world perspectives and actively helping students connect theory with application. If you're thinking about applying, I say go for it. You'll be so glad you did and your students will benefit greatly too." – [Dr. David Remund, Drake University](#)

“I had an opportunity to spend two weeks working with General Motors up in Detroit on social media analytics and social media influence. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I really appreciated the hands on work experience, learning from experts at General Motors, and bringing back those insights to the classroom at the University of Louisville and online. And I can tell you right now, this Fall semester, my students have been just thrilled. They’re eager, they’re wanting to learn more information about General Motors and the current trends that they’re facing in social media and PR.” – **Dr. Karen Freberg, University of Louisville**

“Having been at USAA has inspired me in many ways to do some different things in the classroom and in how I am presenting the PR program at AU. I have never been huge on social media, but having been with USAA has made me re-evaluate social media and how to use it in effective ways. I have talked up the Educator Fellow program with my junior faculty hoping that they will some day apply for the program as well. I truly believe it is a not-to-miss opportunity.” – **Dr. Brigetta R. Brunner, Auburn University**

QUESTIONS

Questions should be directed to Dr. Karla Gower, director of The Plank Center, at gower@apr.ua.edu.



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