



Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations

Educator Fellowship Program

Host a Plank Educator Fellow

Bridge 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.

To learn more about the program and to be a host:

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 program.

The Plank Center acts as convener of the program, matching educators to their hosts based on specific areas of interest, expertise and geographic preference. 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

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 organizations, 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 new proficiencies in a key discipline; and/or
- Develop proprietary knowledge in existing or new areas of strategic focus.

Organizations will be prepared to host their Plank Fellows for a minimum of two full weeks at a time and in the geographies and areas of discipline agreed to by both parties. The period of the Fellowship typically occurs in June or July; however, if mutually agreeable, the Fellowship may occur at any time during the year.

Prior to the residency, the host and the educator will develop a work plan to achieve the expected outcomes of both parties and an agenda for the residency that will maximize their time together.

During the Fellowship, hosts will provide a dedicated workspace for the educator. Telephone, photocopying and computer access will be available. Advance notice will be required for computer access to determine whether the host or the educator will supply a computer for use.

As a host, you agree that any research, articles, curricula or critical intellectual contributions developed during the residency will be the property of the educators. It is the expectation, however, that the educators will share their work and any findings directly with the hosts so that mutual benefit is assured, from a knowledge perspective, from these contributions.

In return, the hosts will agree to spend up to two days on the educator's college or university campus with faculty, administrators and students for the purpose of sharing the organization's perspective and key learnings from the Fellowship.

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.

EXPENSES

To participate in the Educator Fellowship program, the hosts will pay housing and per diem expenses up to a maximum of \$3,500 for the chosen educator; the educator will pay for travel to/from the host, 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.

REVIEWS

Don't just take our word for it. Hosts truly see the value in the Educator Fellowship program. Here is what they had to say about hosting an educator...

"At Deveney Communication, we're truly grateful and proud of each Plank educator who shared their ideas and their passion with us and we can't wait to share even more. The Educator Fellowship Program has inspired us, motivated us, it's driven us to be better at what we do. Giving us a chance to feel the same rush we did when we were once students, and I know Betsy [Plank] would love that. For the educators, they get to feel that same rush too. The rush we get from working with clients every day, pushing the needle, making an impact, making a difference, making an impression. Educators are frequently the mentors that launch our careers. Being an educator means being a mentor. And that isn't easy, but it is rewarding. And when you're able to find a mentor that believes in you, challenges you, and encourages you, you feel like, and you can, do anything."

— **John Deveney, President, Deveney Communications**

"As a host company, General Motors benefits greatly from thought leadership coming from educators. They have an incredible network that they can bring in both personally and professionally that allows us a whole different level of exposure. Whether the educators work on social media or analytics projects, they bring an entire research-based mindset to it and share that mindset with the organization. It's an excellent opportunity for our teams to learn from it." — **Tony Cervone, senior vice president of global communications, General Motors**

QUESTIONS

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



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FOR LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC RELATIONS