



July 7, 2004

**TO: All Chapter Board Members of North Pacific District Chapters**

**FROM:** Dianne Danowski Smith APR, Chair of the North Pacific District  
(Board Member At Large, Portland Metro Chapter)  
[ddsmith@ulum.com](mailto:ddsmith@ulum.com); P: 503.646.9854 F: 503.350.0771

**RE:** Mid-Year North Pacific District Report

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Dear Chapter leaders:

I wanted to provide you with a quick overview of the progress the North Pacific District has made this year in striving to meet the Leadership Development needs of chapter leaders in our 16 chapters. As you may know, the NP District is one of the largest regarding member chapters and so we have had ample opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to you as you do the important daily work of leading your chapter in the practice and the profession of public relations.

As you may know our District M.O. this year has been to grow the effectiveness and vitality of each Chapter in the North Pacific District through Chapter board development. To this end, I've provided here important information that will provide resources to you throughout 2004 and will help you get started in planning 2005.

**Upcoming Leadership Development Sessions:**

***Next North Pacific District Leadership Teleconference:  
Succession Planning in Your Chapter's Leadership for 2005- The Future is Now  
Tuesday, July 20 from 2-3 p.m. PDT  
Call -in info: Toll free dial in #: 1-800-416-8128  
Passcode: 209605#***

**Expert speakers will include:  
Linc Smith, President of Hampton Roads PRSA Chapter and  
Reed Byrum, 2003 National PRSA President and former chapter president of Silicon Valley  
Watch the [www.prsanpdistrict.org](http://www.prsanpdistrict.org) web site starting 7/15 for How Tos on this topic.**

Plan now to join us at our upcoming teleconferences: "Succession Planning" and "Chapter Financial Resources." All teleconferences are free and are held the third Tuesday of every other month. In alternating months, District Board calls take place.

All chapter leaders and committee chairs are welcome and encouraged to join the call. Note: If you are interested in this information but have not received notice of these teleconferences, contact your chapter's President, President Elect or Assembly Delegates for updates. This information is distributed monthly to them.

Also - plan now to join us for the next North Pacific District leadership teleconference: *Chapter Financial Resources- Smart Planning*: Tuesday September 21 from 1-2 p.m. PDT (call in logistics will be sent out at a later date).

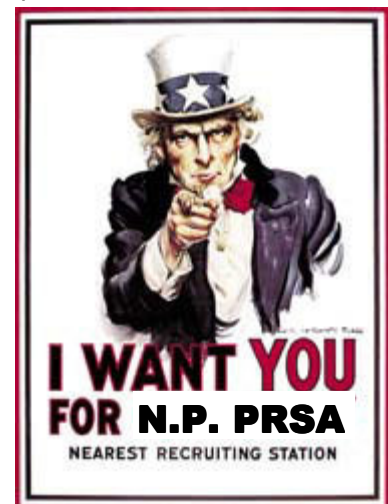
#### **Leadership Development To Date:**

To date we've held three District Leadership Development teleconferences: "*How to Lead and Manage Your Chapter Board*," "*Hot Tips and Topics in Membership Recruitment and Retention*," and "*A Conversation with PRSA National President Del Galloway*." Handouts from the first two sessions are provided on the district's Web site ([www.prsanpdistrict.org](http://www.prsanpdistrict.org)).

One of the most important resources provided to chapter leadership is the National Leadership Rally. A summary report of this year's rally is provided here for you - see pages 2-4.

#### **All the news that fit to post/print:**

- Have you checked out our upgraded North Pacific District Web site? Meeting minutes, session postings and the calendar of District leadership development opportunities are all posted. Check it out at [www.prsanpdistrict.org](http://www.prsanpdistrict.org). Thanks to Amber Chiang of the Central California chapter --she's our district's very capable Webmaster.
- The effectiveness of the district model was queried this year among chapter leaders in all PRSA chapters. The North Pacific District had the highest response rate of all districts! Please see the summary of the research included here in pages 7-9.
- Work is starting now to find more of our best and brightest to lead the North Pacific District in 2005. We look to cultivate APRs who have chapter leadership experience. Are you up for the challenge? If yes, the nominating process will begin next month. We ask those interested to provide a brief statement of interest and experience as well as a current resume. You can send these to me.



## 2004 Leadership Rally Report

*John Kvasnosky, APR, our the North Pacific District's chair-elect, from the Puget Sound Chapter, attended PRSA's national leadership rally in New York City on June 4-5. Here's his report on the event, which is consistently rated by chapter leaders as one of the society's most valuable services.*

**“Building a Community of Leaders”** – Bearing that theme, this year's rally was held at the Marriott Financial Center near New York's Wall Street and adjacent to “Ground Zero,” the former site of the World Trade Center towers. The location provided a sobering backdrop for the event, but at the same time the many renewal efforts under way in the area offered hope to a world forever marked by the horrific events of 9/11.

**Five Strong from North Pacific** -- More than 100 chapters and sections were represented at the rally. Attendees from our own North Pacific District included Tamitha Anderson and Maggie Crabtree of the Spokane Chapter, Susan Aufort Viggiano of the Greater Oregon Chapter, Caroline Bombar-Kaplan and Kvasnosky of the Puget Sound Chapter (representing the North Pacific District), and Allison Rae Knox of the Alaska Chapter.

**New Offices** – The event began with a tour of national's new offices at 33 Maiden Lane in the heart of the financial district. The new space features a dedicated area for on-site professional training and an expanded professional resources center. Work space for staff is greatly improved. The new office is planned to begin operation on June 14.

**Resources Galore** – At Friday's welcoming lunch, national leadership introduced office staff and provided an overview of a now financially healthy PRSA with nearly 20,000 members in 116 chapters. New York chapter members pitched the virtues of attending this year's national conference to be held there in late October.

If there was one overriding message over the two days, it was that the PRSA national office in 2004 represents a tremendous resource for chapters and section members and leaders, but one that can still can be better known and more easily navigated. This was a subject of discussion that arose frequently in a series of otherwise valuable skill-building workshops, particularly as staff presented examples of handbooks, policies and other helpful documents available to leaders and members on PRSA's impressive Web site.

**Managing Your Board or Executive Committee** – National board member Grace Leong shared her lessons learned about effective chapter and team leadership which she wrapped up in two essentials in her view – first, host a kickoff meeting for your new team well before taking office (she suggested the September timeframe) and, second, at that meeting, share your vision, goals and expectations for the new year, engage your team in refining them and creating a chapter plan, and clearly define each member's roles and responsibilities. Chris Lynch of the Greater Cleveland Chapter added his advice – keep your focus foremost on provide member value and respect your fellow leadership volunteers by confirming attendance for team meetings, having and keeping to agendas and scheduled times, encouraging consensus building wherever possible and making deadlines and expectations clear for all. Leaders were given excerpts from a chapter president/president-elect handbook available on the PRSA web site ([http://www.prsa.org/\\_Chapters/resources/pdf/presidentshandbook2002.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/_Chapters/resources/pdf/presidentshandbook2002.pdf)) and an example of one of many such leadership resources the society has available.

**Navigating the PRSA Organization** – Incoming president Judy Phair and Executive Director Catherine Bolton took leaders through PRSA's current staff and organization structure. Their key messages – first, PRSA has made tremendous strides in recent years in being responsive and accessible to local leaders and members. Second, don't be afraid to call or e-mail staff with questions, concerns and feedback. Leaders were especially encouraged to contact our chapter and section representative, Kelly Albanese. A full roster of national staff can be found on the website at <http://www.prsa.org/About/leadership/staff.asp?ident=lead9>.

**Financial Management** – Leaders were walked through the basics of chapter finance and budgets by CEO John Coletti and Board Treasurer Maria Russell. They covered items including annual budgeting, establishing reserves, potential tax issues and audits among others. Again, they pointed leaders to a treasurer’s handbook available on the web site at [http://www.prsa.org/\\_Chapters/resources/pdf/treasurerhandbook2002.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/_Chapters/resources/pdf/treasurerhandbook2002.pdf).

**Using Technology to Help Management** – PRSA’s web master Robin Michaels and IT Manager Alex Ortiz joined Board Member Steve Lubetkin in a guide through PRSA’s online resources. Attendees were awed by the many links and resources provided on the web site, including an ever-growing “e” community” of discussion groups for various interest areas. Staff was urged to do a better job of promoting and previewing web enhancements to members through ongoing communications; leaders left with the call to encourage members to explore the site in depth to see the online value it now offers. Soon, member registration will be fully automated and available via [prsa.org](http://www.prsa.org).

**Professional Development** – Saturday’s session included one on PRSA’s most-frequently mentioned value and benefit – professional development. PD staffers Robert Levy and Judy Voss talked about current and planned resources to aid local planners – including the growing list of telephone and web-based seminar and the often little-known national speaker’s bureau available via the web site. This service links local chapters with experienced speakers from throughout the PRSA network including some who will appear for free or at minimal expense. Ideas offered to chapters included tapping section leaders for leads for interesting speakers from among their ranks. Local groups were encouraged to comb recent listings of Silver and Bronze Anvil winners in their region or elsewhere, along with local universities and PRSA chapters, for possible speaker leads. Also, staff said popular national live seminars like the financial-skills training “Account-ability” can often be brought to local areas at somewhat reduced rates when participation rates can be guaranteed. During a roundtable discussion, chapters shared innovative programming ideas. Salt Lake City provides free, chapter-paid teleseminars to members; the Kansas Chapter held “Survivor Day” where PR pros competed in challenges judged by local media members. Again, chapters were directed to a PD leader’s handbook available on the PRSA site at [http://www.prsa.org/\\_Chapters/resources/pdf/pdhandbook2002.pdf](http://www.prsa.org/_Chapters/resources/pdf/pdhandbook2002.pdf).

**Advocacy and Ethics** -- Board members and immediate past chair Reed Byrum led a discussion on how the society’s increasing efforts to advocate for the profession can provide benefits at the local level. National operates a core committee to review advocacy opportunities suggested by members or otherwise called to the society’s attention. “Advocacy alerts” to leaders and sometime the membership at large provide talking points that can be used in local forums and media. Recent issues tackled included the FCC’s indecency ruling, the Martha Stewart case, the uproar over VNRs and the LA mayor’s ban on contracting to PR firms. Subjects considered by not engaged included marketing techniques for the recent movie “The Passion of the Christ.” Chapter leaders were urged to identify a local “scanner” to identify issues worthy of consideration and communicate them to the advocacy committee, who promises a quick turnaround on action decisions. September is Ethics Month – Ethics board chair Dave Rickey said a new toolkit will be forthcoming shortly for local ethics officers. He encouraged chapters to consider ethics-focused programming during this year’s ethics month in September.

**Districts Session** -- PRSA Secretary and liaison to the District Council Rhoda Weiss led a roundtable discussion that began with a preview of a recently completed chapter and district survey in support of PRSA’s second strategic plan now being developed. While not yet shared with the board, the survey indicated that the majority of chapter leaders surveyed were unclear about the role districts play, although those who reside in active districts typically see value in this level between local chapters and the national organization. It led to a lively discussion about causes and possible solutions, along with those present agreeing that districts provide a natural progression for leadership development beyond the local chapter level to help fulfill a continuing need for talented and involved national leadership.

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## 2005 District Conference Planning Survey

The PRSA North Pacific District is considering offering a regional professional development event in spring 2005 depending on chapter interest across our eight-state region. It would be the first such event for our district in 10 years. The survey was distributed on June 17 to all chapter Presidents-Elect and Presidents. **We ask all feedback to be submitted by Friday July 9. Responses can be sent to:**

*Dianne Danowski Smith APR - Chair, North Pacific District  
Portland Director, The Ulum Group -- [ddsmith@ulum.com](mailto:ddsmith@ulum.com)  
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Based on initial feedback, Seattle has been proposed as a cost-effective meeting location that would be convenient to our many chapters. It would likely be a full day-plus event beginning with a social opportunity on a Sunday evening and continuing on through Monday. Timing considerations could include other area events or attractions of interest to visitors or those seeking weekend leisure or adventure.

### Your responses to the following questions are essential to our planning:

1) Is your chapter planning a major professional development event for 2005? If so, what is the length and planned date for it? Type in your preferences for dates/months, days of the weeks and times.

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Partial or half-day event. Preferred month: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Full-day event. Preferred month: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Multi-day event. Preferred month: \_\_\_\_\_

2) Among the following, what would be your chapter's preferred timing for a 2005 district conference? (Other possible accompanying leisure events are noted). Choose your first preference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. Mid January (Seattle Boat Show)
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Mid February (Northwest Flower and Garden Show – 2/9-13)
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. March
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. April (Mariners baseball)
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. May (Mariners baseball, Folk Life Festival, etc.)

3) Could you estimate the level of interest in your chapter for attending a 2005 district conference? Estimate your best guess of interest:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. No interest (no likely attendees)
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Some interest (1-5 attendees)
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Moderate interest (5-10 attendees)
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Considerable interest (10 or more attendees)

4) Using a 1-5 scale (1 being low and 5 high), please rate which of the following topics would be of most interest? (please specify if not included)

- \_\_\_\_\_ a. PR agency issues/ business development – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ b. Public policy/public affairs – advocacy, growth, development– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ c. Regional/NW issues – energy, natural resources, tech, biotech, etc. – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ d. Economic/general business issues– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ e. Health care issues– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- \_\_\_\_\_ f. Issues related to particular section or interest group within PRSA– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (please indicate interest area \_\_\_\_\_)
- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Solo practice – starting out on your own, self-employment issues, etc– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5



- h. PR trends – planning, measurement, technology, etc. – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- i. Career development– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- j. Workforce diversity– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- k. Chapter development– 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
- l. Other – please specify :

5) Would a price range of \$150-175 (conference cost only, travel and lodging not included) be acceptable to your members for a one-day-plus event?

- a. Yes
- b. No (If so, please indicate reasons)

6) Would your chapter be willing to forego holding a local event during the month of the district conference to encourage its attendance? (Note: Chapter sponsorships are being solicited and revenue sharing is an option)

- a. Yes
- b. No

7) What other factors are important to your members in determining whether they would attend such an event? Please rate in order of priority, starting with 4 as your first choice, to 1 as your last choice:

- a. Cost and quality of lodging
- b. Proximity to airport or other travel centers
- c. Proximity to shopping areas, events and attractions
- d. Other – please specify:

8) Are there speakers from your district or elsewhere that you would recommend? If so, please provide contact information (names, phone, e-mail). Please provide your name and contact info.

9) What other comments would you add for our consideration?

Thanks for completing our survey!

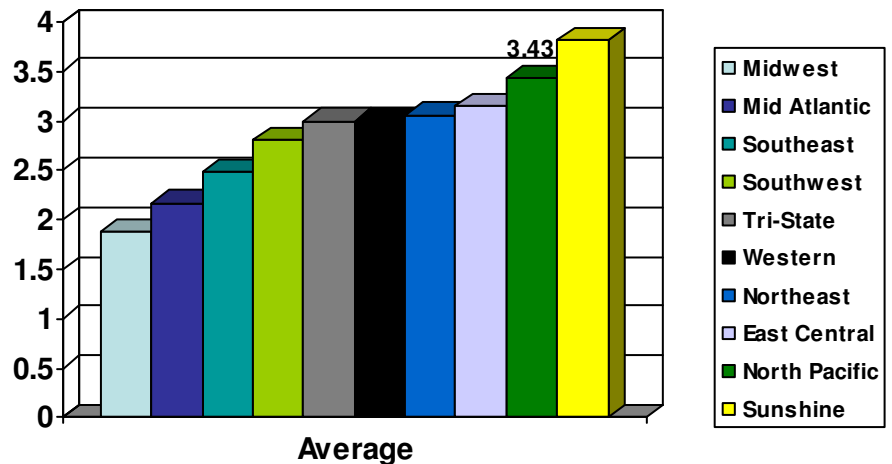
## PRSA Chapter Leadership Survey District Analysis

The following summarizes results of the recent PRSA Chapter Leadership Survey as they pertain to districts. This overview is particularly focused on the North Pacific District. A rating scale of 1 (Poor/Not Valuable) to 5 (Excellent/Valuable) was used in the questions.

### Involvement of Chapter at District Level

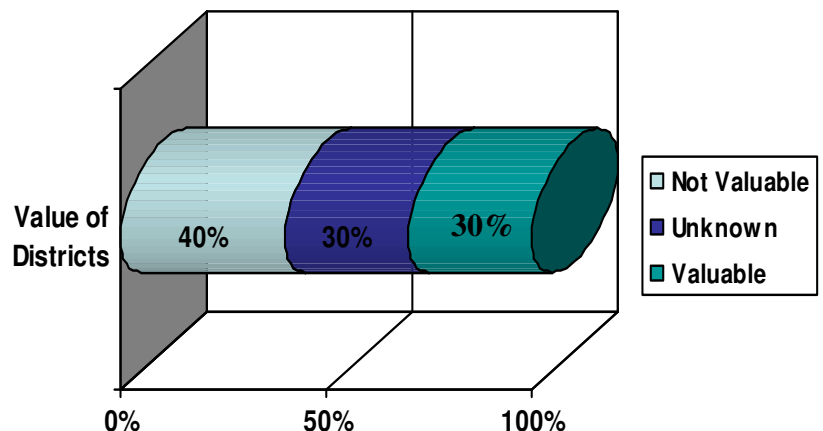
The North Pacific District scored second only to the Sunshine District in the level of involvement chapters feel with the district. The average of all scores was 2.82, while the **NP District rated 3.43.**

Where respondents awarded higher than average scores they cited specific programs such as awards programs, QuickStart, district visits and conferences, consistent communication and local participation on district board as important factors. Offering tangible, visible programs adds to satisfaction. Clearly, it is critical that each district provide one or more programs during the year. If the district leadership is visible, chapter satisfaction increases. Based on the comments in the survey, the overall low average scores reflect that members do not understand how the districts connect to chapters.



### Value of Districts

Almost 40% of chapter leaders rated the Districts as being “not valuable” (1 or 2) while **30% rated them valuable** (4 or 5). The remaining third rated the value of the District in the middle of the scale. Based on comments, almost 25 percent had little or no idea of the value/resources provided

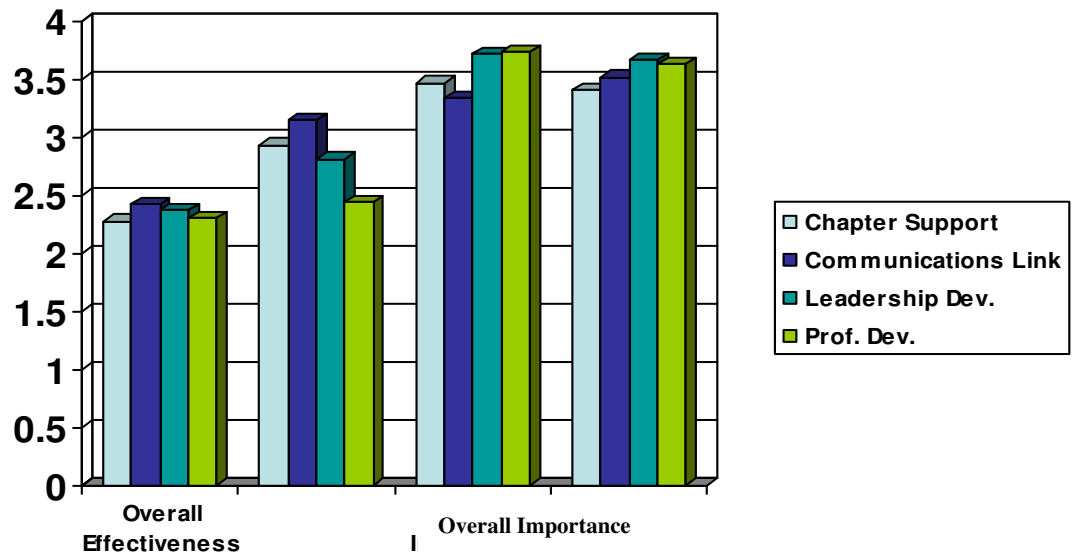


by the Districts while another quarter said the District provided some valuable purpose or had the potential to do so. Where active district interaction exists, value is more apparent. There is still work to be done to help chapters understand the value of districts.

## Effectiveness and Importance of Districts to Chapters

**The North Pacific District compared favorably** in effectiveness in the four areas measured and consistent in the importance of these areas. North Pacific District ratings for overall effectiveness were:

- 2.93 in chapter support (2.28 average)
- 3.15 in communications link (2.42 average)
- 2.81 in leadership training (2.37 average)
- 2.44 in professional development (2.3 average).



Note that while the NP District was higher than the average, there is still a gap between the level of importance and the level of effectiveness in each of these areas, including a large gap in professional development. Additional services chapters want from districts include: speakers bureaus; teleconferences; and the QuickStart leadership conference. Districts can better serve chapters by offering more professional development, teleconferences, district conferences, best practices and more regular communications.

## Role of Districts in Governance

The large majority of respondents believe district and geographical representation on the national nominating committee and national board are very important. This was universal across districts and chapters of all sizes.

## Candidate Selection and the Selection Process

Respondents were divided between those who think the current practice of balancing the board is sound and those who don't know. Those who had concerns about the candidate selection process noted the ethical questions raised in 2003 and the APR requirement for candidacy. There seems to be an equal measure of agreement and apathy toward these issues. Geographic balance in national board candidates is an important issue.

## Equality of Districts and Redrawing District Boundaries

The question was raised as to how important various measurements of districts are in determining district boundaries. **The North Pacific District was consistent with other respondents in indicating that board representation, access to district leadership and professional development opportunities for members were the most important factors in district boundaries.** However, the division between whether or not districts should be divided evenly based on either geographic size or membership numbers was an almost even split between yes, no and don't know. Before boundary changes can be fairly addressed, the issues above of establishing and communicating the value of the districts should be addressed.

## Summary

Common elements that arose from the survey were:

- Communication on the value of districts to members and chapters must increase.
- Districts should look for creative ways to best serve their membership (i.e., sub-district meetings in heavily populated Midwestern states; teleconferences/webinars in widely scattered Western states).
- There is great opportunity for more local professional development through the districts, particularly taking a look at issues local to regions for professional development seminars.
- Members want representation to National PRSA. The districts should be sure they show members they are representing their membership to National.

## Survey Analysis

This synopsis was developed with thanks To Mark Carpenter, a member of the Board of the North Pacific District, and an assembly delegate with the Utah Valley chapter. The full survey was administered and results were analyzed by the District Council, which comprises each District Chair. For the full analysis of the survey, please contact North Pacific District Chair Dianne Danowski Smith APR, at [ddsmith@ulum.com](mailto:ddsmith@ulum.com) or 503.646.9854.