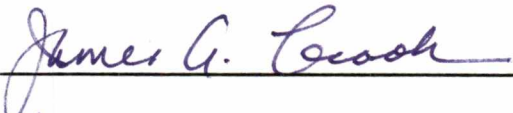
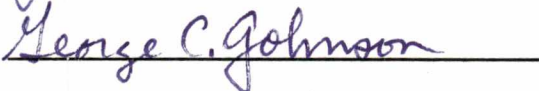


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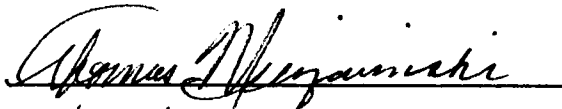

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A CASE STUDY OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY
OF AMERICA'S ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Thomas E. Mierzwinski
December 1986

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father and best friend,
Chester V. Mierzwinski (1919-1986), who taught me how to
love and live.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the expertise, wisdom, guidance and understanding of my committee: Dr. Jerry Morrow, chairperson, Dr. James Crook, and Dr. George Johnson. Each professor offered something unique and immeasurable to my work.

I am also indebted to Dr. Ed Caudill, whose kindness and generosity made it possible for me to complete this work on schedule, and to Ann Lacava, for her advice and patience.

Most of all, I thank my mother and father, Ramona and J.C. for their endless love and support.

Love is all you need.

ABSTRACT

The Public Relations Society of America began a voluntary accreditation program in 1965 to certify the competency of its members and, ultimately, to establish public relations as a profession. Is this accreditation program a viable approach to the professionalization of public relations? This question was investigated through a case study of the program. As a background to the case study, professions and other methods of credentialing were discussed. The case study was divided into three parts: (1) the development of the program, (2) the program in 1986, and (3) the future of the program. Data were gathered from periodicals, public relations literature, PRSA publications and program materials, and personal communication with PRSA officers and program administrators.

The case study revealed that the role of accreditation had evolved from the sole means of professionalizing public relations to one aspect of the process--professional development. The conclusion was that four changes in the program would contribute to the successful professionalization of public relations. These suggested changes were: a universal accreditation program, mandatory reaccreditation, increased promotion, and an enforceable code of ethics tied to accreditation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1923 when Edward L. Bernays introduced the world to the term "counsel on public relations" in his seminal work Crystallizing Public Opinion, he referred to the occupation as a profession. Though public relations had a new name, the practice was as old as the human race. Men and women who could influence and persuade others to formulate an opinion or viewpoint gained reputations throughout history as persons with power. Indeed, men such as Socrates and Jesus Christ were great persuaders with power and prestige. But with power came criticism and persecution. While some respected the skills of persuasion, others called it trickery and manipulation. Suffering the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" has been a perennial problem for public relations practitioners, and searching for ways to combat that negative image has been their overwhelming passion.

One of the ways that contemporary public relations practitioners attempted to change negative public opinion about their work was to continue efforts begun by Bernays to establish public relations as a profession. To this end, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) instituted an accreditation program to acknowledge and certify the competence and skills of its members with the

"stated aim of raising professional standards and improving public relations practice" (Kendall et al., 1984).

To set the background for this case study of the PRSA accreditation program, this chapter discusses professions, the debate over accreditation vs. licensing, and accreditation programs in other occupations and organizations. The statement of the research problem, methodology, and the review of literature also are included.

Background of the Research Problem

Professions and Professionalization

This section offers a brief review of the concepts of professions and professionalism as well as the process of professionalization as a preface to the examination of the PRSA accreditation program.

The purpose of this review was to develop a basic understanding of rudiments professions, professionalism and professionalization from a sociological perspective, not an in-depth analysis, for that was not the intent of this thesis study.

The review was divided into two parts. First, the concept and criteria of professions, and the related qualities of professionalism were defined and delineated. Second, the process by which an occupation becomes a profession, or professionalization, was examined.

Numerous definitions exist for the term or concept "profession," many in the context of the field or occupation being discussed. Often these definitions were devised by members of a particular occupation to promote the importance of their activities and to justify their claim to professional status. Sociologists, however, have examined the existence, emergence and status of professions in society and have arrived at some conclusions that were valuable to this thesis study.

A. M. Carr-Saunders (Vollmer & Mills, 1966) defined a profession as:

an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purpose of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary. (p. 4)

This definition was basic, yet practical. The criteria of a profession that Carr-Saunders outlined were education, training, skill, service and compensation.

Millerson (1964) added several dimensions to the Carr-Saunders definition:

It is a type of higher grade, non-manual occupation, with both subjectively and objectively recognized occupational status, possessing a well-defined area of study or concern and providing a definite service, after advanced training and education. (p. 10)

Millerson qualified the degree and type of skill required and noted that recognition of professional status among the members as well as society or the public was necessary. Another element added to the concept was the

"area of study," often called a body of knowledge. This differed from Carr-Saunders' "intellectual study," which was equated with education. Compensation was omitted from Millerson's definition.

Hughes (Lynn, 1965) took a more pragmatic approach, defining the concept in terms of the attitudes and actions of the profession's members. He stated that a profession provided abstract services and that professionals "profess to know better than others certain matters, and to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs" (p. 2). He added other characteristics such as "esoteric knowledge and high skill," the ability to determine its own "public policy," and "solidarity" among its members (p. 3).

Hughes' definition included the skill and knowledge components. It also included the element of recognition by the public, but from another perspective--public policy. Public policy was defined as state licensing and other types of regulations or legal considerations.

Larson (1977) combined the elements of compensation and recognition by focusing on the rewards of status and influence given to the profession:

Society grants these rewards because professions have special competence in esoteric bodies of knowledge linked to central needs and values of the social system, and because professions are devoted to the service of the public, above and beyond material incentives. (p. x)

Larson divided the characteristics of a profession into three general areas: "cognitive"-- the knowledge, training and skills required; "normative"--the contribution or service provided to society and the code of ethics; and "evaluative"--its degree of power and status, as compared to other occupations (p. x). The notion of unity or a sense of community among members of the profession was also included by Larson.

Greenwood's analysis (Vollmer & Mills, 1966) of the attributes of a profession seemed to serve as an umbrella under which all the previous definitions fit.

The first attribute of a profession noted by Greenwood was a "systematic body of theory" (pp. 11-12). He dismissed the notion of a high degree or level of skill because some trades required above-average expertise. Instead, he stated that a profession's skills were connected to a "fund of knowledge . . . called a body of theory." In other words, the skills have a theoretical base, supported by an educational and training system. Greenwood's first attribute, therefore, included the body of knowledge, skill, education and training elements previously described.

"Professional authority," based on education and advanced theoretical skills, was the second attribute suggested by Greenwood. This authority was exemplified by the relationship between the professional practitioner and

his or her client. Unlike transactions between customers and providers in nonprofessional occupations, the professional told the client what he or she wanted or needed. Thus, in transactions with professionals the customer was no longer "always right" and had to "accede to professional judgment." This professional authority was similar to Hughes' concept of a professional as one who "knows better." This attribute implied service to the community and compensation, at least in terms of power, prestige and status (pp. 12-13).

The third attribute that constituted a profession, according to Greenwood, was the "sanction of the community" (pp. 13-14). This sanction or recognition of professional status by the public was embodied in certain powers and privileges. The regulation of its educational system and the ability to limit entry into the profession through licensing and accreditation were given as examples of powers granted to professions by society. Society's concession to allow performance evaluation of professionals only by their peers was used as an example of a privilege. The sanction of the community was based on recognition of the occupation as a profession and included the right of the profession to determine its own public policy.

Greenwood's fourth attribute of a profession was a "regulative code of ethics" (pp. 14-16). This code of

ethics served as a check against abuse of the power and prestige awarded to a profession. Greenwood stated that:

Through its ethical code the profession's commitment to the social welfare becomes a matter of public record, thereby insuring for itself the continued confidence of the community.
(p. 14)

A system of enforcing the code of ethics was implicit in this attribute and was usually implemented by a professional association.

The final attribute was "professional culture" (pp. 16-18), which was referred to by the previously cited sociologists as community or solidarity. Greenwood stated that there were three types of groups to which professionals belong. The first was the institutions, such as hospitals, universities, etc., through which the profession provided its services. The second group was the educational and research organizations that trained professionals and increased the profession's body of theory. And the third group was professional associations.

More important than the groups to which a professional belongs, however, were the "values, norms and symbols" (p. 16) shared within the profession. These values, norms and symbols, according to Greenwood, were the true essence of the professional culture. The social values of a profession were the ideals or morals on which it was based; the norms were accepted standards of conduct for all

situations; the symbols were simply the profession's accoutrements.

Although Greenwood stated that professions were distinguished by these attributes, they were not the sole criteria for professional status. He believed that all occupations were on a "continuum" (p. 10) with the established, recognized professions such as law and medicine at one end and menial occupations on the other. An occupation's status in the process of professionalization, then, was determined by the number of these attributes it possessed and their level of maturation.

Caplow (Vollmer & Mills, 1966, pp. 2-21) saw the process of professionalization as a series of steps. Organizing a professional association such as PRSA was the first step. The main goal of the professional organization was to establish qualifications for entry into practice. Changing the name of the occupation to differentiate it from its former lower status was the second step. In 1923 Edward L. Bernays coined the term "counsel on public relations" to distinguish the occupation from publicists and flaks, for example. Today, some have suggested that the public relations moniker be changed to public affairs, community relations or public communications (Bernays, 1979, p. 26). The third step was the establishment of a code of ethics that described the occupation's contribution

and value to society and helped to prohibit unprincipled practitioners. The final step was the attainment of legal recognition of the occupation as a profession.

Legal recognition was the step that Freidson (1973) focused on to define the process of professionalization. Freidson stated that once an occupation established standards of competency and ethics and gained public recognition for its contribution to society, it had to obtain legal sanction. This legal sanction was an "exclusive right" (p. 22) to determine how the profession's services would be provided and how people would be trained to perform the professional services.

Larson (1977) described professionalization from an economic standpoint as:

the process by which producers of special services sought to constitute and control a market for their expertise.

Professionalization is thus an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources--special knowledge and skills--into another--social and economic rewards. (p. xvi)

Goode (Etzioni, 1969) stated that an occupation became professionalized when it was recognized by society as a profession. Success in obtaining society's acceptance of professional status was determined by how well the occupation fared in three "markets"--prestige, power and money (p. 269). He predicted that public relations would not become a profession.

Barber (Lynn, 1965, pp. 23-24) characterized "emerging" professions in terms of the actions of their leaders. In an effort to professionalize their occupations, the leaders advocated and instituted professional associations, ethical standards or codes, "prestigious titles," and academic training programs at colleges and universities. The leaders also attempted to compare their occupations with others that successfully acquired professional status and to inform the public about the services provided to the community. Conflicts within the occupational group and with the public were also mediated by the leaders.

Successful professionalization of an occupation, according to Millerson (1964, pp. 10-13), was based on four factors. The occupation must, first, be able to define its body of knowledge and, second, offer means to acquire the knowledge. Third, the members of the occupation must be aware of their struggle for professional status and act accordingly. Finally, the occupation must be acknowledged as a profession by society.

Accreditation vs. Licensing

In 1984, Public Relations Quarterly (Hudson) published a "Symposium in Print," which examined accreditation and licensing of public relations practitioners. In the introduction to the symposium, E. W. Brody stated that the

"major issues" facing public relations at that time could be reduced to two basic areas of concern--"education and professional stature" (p. 7). Although he pointed out that there was no evidence that "professional stature is a consistent correlate of any given credentialing process" (p. 7), he noted that many practitioners believed that public relations could be professionalized through either licensing or accreditation. Indeed, the debate over accreditation vs. licensing remains one of the most controversial issues within the public relations community.

The most renowned proponent of licensing has been Edward L. Bernays, known as the "Father of Public Relations." Bernays first outlined his arguments for the licensing of public relations in 1953 and continued to expound his viewpoint in numerous public relations books and periodicals. Essentially this was Bernays' argument:

Public relations has all the characteristics of a profession except one. It is an art applied to a science (social science) in which the public interest and not pecuniary motivation is the primary consideration. It has its literature of over 10,000 items. It has its educational facilities provided by many colleges and universities in the U.S., some with advanced degrees. It has its voluntary associations where practitioners can learn from each other. It has its ethical standards of conduct. It does not as yet have recognition by the state through licensing and registration. (Bernays, 1985a)

Bernays also believed that in addition to professionalizing public relations, licensing would protect the public from "unscrupulous practitioners" (Hudson, p. 27).

Bernays (1986) was so convinced that licensing would professionalize public relations that he organized a committee of "Public Relations Practitioners for Licensing and Registration" to begin efforts in several states to license public relations.

Simon (1980, pp. 398-399) listed several other arguments commonly used to support licensing of public relations, in addition to protection of society and professionalization. He stated that a "grandfather clause" could be incorporated into any licensing legislation to ensure that experienced practitioners would not be excluded. Another argument that dealt with the public relations community was that licensing would regulate all practitioners, not just members of professional associations such as PRSA and IABC. Finally, licensing proposed by public relations practitioners as self-regulation would be better than government intervention, which would correct abuses after the fact.

State licensing of a profession, however, was a complex issue. Cutlip, Center and Broom (1985) noted that licensing raised several constitutional issues and legal questions. The constitutional issues dealt with the First Amendment and freedom of speech, the Tenth Amendment and

states' rights to license occupations, and individual rights to practice an occupation.

The legal grounds for state regulation of a profession were that licensing must be "crucial to the well-being and preservation of society" (p. 462). For example, it must be proved that without licensing unethical practitioners posed a danger to society. Citing two federal court cases, Cutlip et al., maintained that the notion of licensure as protection for society was "directly refuted in law" and that the courts have traditionally guarded speech even when "abusive" (p. 462). The second general argument for licensing--professionalization--also had no legal precedent.

Other problems with licensing involved defining the activities or practices to be regulated, defining ethics and morality, and developing uniform legislation from state to state (Crabbe & Vibbert, 1986, p. 119; Simon, 1980, p. 399).

While many public relations practitioners expounded their viewpoints in opposition to licensing, few seemed to specifically advocate accreditation. After outlining the previously cited arguments against licensing, Philip Lesly (1985), for example, simply stated that "accreditation is the answer and all the society's [PRSA] efforts should go into the promotion of accreditation."

Two of the 19 public relations leaders who participated in the Public Relations Quarterly (Hudson, 1984) forum on credentials supported accreditation. Kerry King (pp. 17-18) advocated accreditation as a professional development for practitioners. He felt that accreditation should be renewed annually. Lowndes F. Stephens advocated accreditation in conjunction with a graduate education (pp. 22-23). However, he stated that more "empirical support" was needed to demonstrate the relationship between accreditation and job performance.

The most commonly cited arguments in support of accreditation were:

(1) that given the drawbacks to licensing it was the next best method of ensuring ethical practice;

(2) it served as professional development and continuing education;

(3) it enhanced public relations' image in business and in society;

(4) and it was a step toward professionalizing public relations (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985, p. 464; Awad, 1985, p. 7; Canfield, 1968, p. 19; Crable & Vibbert, 1986, p. 423; Johnson, Kindre, & Yolen, 1968, p. 192; Wilcox, Ault, & Agee 1986, p. 114; Nolte, 1979, p. 59; Lovell, 1982, p. 43).

Accreditation in Other Occupations and Associations

Professional status was the goal of many occupational groups, not only public relations practitioners. Many of these occupations chose some form of credentialing--registration, certification, accreditation, licensing--as the path to professionalism.

The terms "certified, "accredited" and "registered," were often used synonymously to designate a level of competence in practice, experience or education and an adherence to a code of standards or ethics.

The Encyclopedia of Associations (Gruber, 1986) listed more than 100 national, nonprofit membership associations that had some program of accrediting individual members and practitioners or educational programs and institutions. Some of the programs for accrediting individuals had some general similarities to PRSA accreditation program, but usually were structured to meet the specific needs and goals of the occupation and its association.

The Accreditation Council for Accountancy (ACA) accredited practitioners in accountancy and taxation through a written examination. The accreditation program was coordinated with a continuing education program. Consequently, to maintain their accreditation, accountancy practitioners were required to earn 60 hours of educational credits during a two-year period. This combination of accreditation and continuing education and the lack of a

work experience requirement (students may apply for accreditation) differentiated this program from the PRSA program.

The ACA was established by the National Society of Public Accountants. Membership in the society was not a requirement for accreditation.

Interior designers received accreditation through The Interior Design Society. Accreditation was equated with membership. To attain the highest level of membership--professional--an applicant had to pass an accreditation examination as well as meet requirements for education or experience, or both. Accreditation also was awarded to associate members who met lower standards of education and/or experience; no examination was required. The society used the terms certification and accreditation synonymously and loosely.

Certification was the credentialing method used by the Administrative Management Society. Requirements for certification of administrative managers were extensive and stringent. Applicants had to meet requirements in five areas, including experience, character and leadership. The requirements had to be met within a seven-year period. A series of four successive written examinations also had to be taken to maintain active status during the seven-year period. Membership in the society was not a requirement

for certification. Intermediate levels of certification were also available under similar requirements.

The IABC also had an accreditation program for "professional communicators" and public relations practitioners. Candidates for accreditation had to be members of IABC and had to have a bachelor's degree and three years of work experience, or some combination of post-secondary education and experience totalling seven years. After the candidate's application was accepted, he or she had to answer a questionnaire on "contributions to the profession," submit a portfolio of work samples and take oral and written examinations.

The ABCs of accreditation (1985), an 11-page summary of the program, stated that the purpose of the IABC program was to provide a "gauge" by which members could measure their "career progress in the field of organizational communication at a critical stage of professional development" (p. 1). The program was also described as a way to demonstrate competence to peers, employers and clients (p. 1), as "personal and professional achievement" (p. 10), and as a demonstration of a "deep and continued commitment to the advancement of organizational communication as a profession" (p. 3).

The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) had an accreditation program similar to PRSA, with the addition of a reaccreditation process. The eligibility

requirements for NSPRA accreditation were three years of membership in the organization and of educational public relations experience. Candidates had to pass a written and an oral examination, similar in form to the PRSA accreditation examinations. To maintain their accredited status, members were required to answer a four-page questionnaire on their ethics, goals and achievements in school public relations and their reasons for seeking reaccreditation. Reaccreditation was required every five years.

Demonstration of competency, professionalism and credibility were some of the stated purposes of NSPRA accreditation. The organization represented about 1,700 practitioners involved in public relations for educational institutions, systems, agencies, organizations and public relations firms as well as communication teachers in accredited schools, colleges and universities.

The Florida Public Relations Association (FPRA) was the only state public relations organization with an accreditation program. Two levels of accreditation were offered: accredited public relations practitioner (APRP) and certified public relations practitioner (CPRP). The requirements for accreditation at the APRP level were five years of full-time public relations experience and membership in the organization. The CPRP level was offered to senior practitioners who had earned APRP and had 10

years of experience. Successful completion of written and oral examinations was required. The lower level examination followed essentially the same format as the PRSA examination. It was administered in a daylong, two-part session, with one part covering public relations theory and principles and the other testing practical skills with case studies. The CPRP examination consisted entirely of case studies for which the candidate was required to develop public relations strategies and campaigns. Reaccreditation through CEUs and demonstration community involvement and professional development was required every two years to maintain CPRP status. About 10 percent of FPRA's 900 members were APRP accredited. Eight members of the association were CPRP accredited.

Some other professional associations that provided credentials for members of a particular occupation were:

(1) American Academy of Actuaries and the Society of Actuaries. Membership in the academy was viewed as a form of accreditation and was based on education (an examination administered by the Society of Actuaries) and three years of experience.

(2) American Cardiology Technologists Association and the National Board of Cardiovascular Testing, Inc. The board administered examinations through which cardiovascular technicians were certified and registered in various specialties.

(3) National Association of Health Unit Clerks-
Coordinators and Assessment Systems, Inc. Health unit
clerks-coordinators were certified through an examination.

(4) National Center for Housing Management. The
center was created by Presidential mandate to certify
housing managers and occupancy specialists in federal
housing regulations and procedures. (see Appendix B for
the addresses of professional organizations cited in this
section, from which the previous information was obtained.)

Statement of the Problem

The general research question posed by this thesis
case study was: Is the Public Relations Society of
America's accreditation program a viable approach to the
professionalization of public relations?

To answer the general research question, four
corollary research questions guided this case study.
First, did the original intent of the program differ from
its practical purpose in 1986? Second, was the program
appropriately structured to achieve its original goal?
Third, what were the effects and results of the program?
Finally, what was the future of the program? The case
study, therefore, was divided into three sections that
covered (1) the beginnings of the accreditation program,
(2) the present operation of the program and (3) future
plans for the program.

Questions on the beginnings of the PRSA accreditation program focused on the people and events that shaped it. What was happening in the country, the business world and public relations community at the time? Who were the founders and designers of the program? What were their founding philosophies, purpose and goals for the program? How was the program originally approved and implemented? Who were the early proponents and opponents of the program?

Specific questions about the operation of the accreditation program in 1986 zeroed in on the structure and implementation of the program. How was the program outlined in the society's bylaws? How was the program administered on the national and local level? What were the requirements for accreditation? How did the actual accreditation process work? What program materials were available? What planning process, if any, was used? How was the program evaluated? What public relations strategies were used to promote the program? Finally, what did some PRSA officers think about accreditation, its purpose and its future?

The future of the PRSA accreditation program was investigated through questions about goals and objectives. What changes were planned for the program? What were the goals for the program? Were other forms of credentialing and methods of professionalizing public relations being discussed by PRSA?

Methodology

Hillway (1964) defined a case study as a research "method [that] comprises a careful and comprehensive analysis of the development and status of one individual, group or institution" (p. 244). In this thesis case study, the unit analyzed was the accreditation program of the Public Relations Society of America.

The analysis of the development of the program was conducted primarily as a historical study, in conjunction with the review of literature. A review of popular periodicals such as The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, and trade publications such as Editor & Publisher, and Public Relations Journal offered a wealth of information on the conception and implementation of the program and its early development. The PRSA Information Center assisted in this research.

The primary research tool of the case study was the personal interview (Hillway, 1965), which was used to investigate the present operation of the PRSA accreditation program and its future. Telephone interviews were conducted with PRSA President John Felton; Dolores Swift, a member of the PRSA Board of Directors; Mary Ann Pires, chairperson of the PRSA Accreditation Board; Dorothy McGuinness, PRSA Accreditation Administrator; and Donna Peltier, PRSA director of public relations. The

accreditation committee chairperson, Bob Wesley, of the Volunteer Chapter (Knoxville, Tenn.) of the PRSA was also consulted to corroborate information received from the national PRSA headquarters on involvement of the local chapters in the accreditation program. Sammie Lynn Puett, founder of the Public Relations Student Society of America chapter at the University of Tennessee, was interviewed about her knowledge of the program as a member of the national PRSA Task Force on Demonstrating Professionalism. Followup telephone calls were made to interviewees when clarification and verification of information was necessary.

Data received from personal interviews was corroborated by published records of the program and its participants and PRSA accreditation program materials.

PRSA accreditation materials and documents, including brochures, booklets and reports, also provided useful information on the present status and operation of the program. A review of articles and advertising related to accreditation in the society's Public Relations Journal also was conducted for this integral portion of the case study.

Background information on professions and professionalization came from scholarly periodicals and books in the field of sociology. Discussions of professions and professionalism in public relations

textbooks also were consulted. A wealth of information on the debate over accreditation vs. licensing was located primarily in public relations literature, periodicals, scholarly journals and textbooks.

Review of Literature

Simon's (1966) work was a collection of treatises on issues in the field of public relations. In the third chapter, three different approaches to the question of ethics were explored. One perspective, written by Edward L. Bernays (pp. 79-87), related ethics to the licensing of public relations counselors. The discussion was a reprint of the oft-quoted article "Should public relations counsel be licensed?," which originally appeared in the December 23, 1953 issue of Printer's Ink magazine.

Canfield (1968) stated that the PRSA code of ethics and accreditation program would prove to be the keys to the professionalization of public relations (p. 19). The text included a brief outline of the accreditation program and its goals.

Johnson, Kindre and Yolen (1968) edited a collection of speeches and articles by members of Hill and Knowlton, Inc., a public relations agency, to local chapters of PRSA around the country. Richard Darrow, president of the agency at the time, was a member of the PRSA Counselors Academy committee that developed the original proposal for

the accreditation program. In a speech to an Ohio PRSA chapter he offered his view of the program:

I see in accreditation a stimulus for people to learn, to prepare themselves to do a better job. I also see a tangible reminder that sound and ethical performance does have its reward, and that malpractice risks at least the penalty of exclusion for notice if not more drastic punishment for judicial procedures. (p. 192)

Budd (1969) commented that before the PRSA accreditation program was established the "anointing" of a public relations practitioner required "no more preparation than it takes to be a self-styled poet" (p. 84).

In Nolte's (1979) view public relations was not yet a profession in the "traditional or legal sense" because it had no method of controlling or regulating the actions of practitioners such as licensing. He stated that licensing would be difficult because "so far, no one has come up with a definition of what a practitioner should do, or be able to do, as qualifications for professional status or a license" (pp 58-59).

Nolte believed that accreditation was a step toward professionalization and that an increasing number of companies were using it as a criterion for employment and promotion.

Marston (1979) included a description of the accreditation program, and a discussion of licensing vs. accreditation (pp. 427-429). Marston did not see the program as a "cure-all" for the problem of professionalism

but predicted that it would be "more meaningful" (p. 463) as qualifications increased and more severe penalties were established for ethical violations.

Darrow and Forrestal's (1979) handbook noted the possible advantages of establishing public relations as a profession, but felt that the PRSA accreditation program "falls far short" (p. 42) of that goal. They stated that the program was a personal "boon" to practitioners and provided "qualitative values of public relations business" (p. 49). The success of the program depended on its acceptance by business, industry and institutions.

The appendix of the first edition, which was published in 1967 (Darrow, Forrestal & Cookman), contained the official description of the PRSA accreditation program, the accreditation guide, and the society's code of ethics.

Simon's (1980) work was one of the textbooks recommended as a study reference by PRSA for the accreditation examination. And like the Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations, the other text recommended by PRSA, the accreditation program was not advocated or promoted. In fact, Simon did not even describe the program or make any references to it.

Simon did, however, lead into an analysis of the arguments for and against licensing with a brief discussion of public relations as a profession (pp. 395-401). He stated that public relations was not a profession because

it failed to meet all of the criteria of a profession such as medicine. One of the standards that public relations did not meet was licensing, which controlled or restricted entry into practice.

After the discussion of the licensing issue, Simon arrived at the same conclusion reached by Cutlip and Center and others:

the actions and activities of all those who practice public relations--and this includes non-PRSA as well as PRSA members--ultimately decides the kind of reputation the field will have in the mind of the public. (p. 401)

The eighth edition of Moore's (1981) textbook included only a superficial discussion of public relations as a profession and no mention of accreditation or licensing. The preface to the ninth edition (Moore & Kalupa, 1985) attributed "increased responsibility and greater respectability" (p. vii) in public relations to the accreditation programs of the PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) as well as education. No further mention of accreditation was made in the body of the textbook.

Lovell (1982) described the PRSA accreditation procedure in some detail and concluded that the program represented the "only large-scale effort of upgrading a profession that has had many lapses in ethics and training . . . in the past" (p. 43).

Lesly's Public Relations Handbook (1983) mentioned the accreditation vs. licensing debate only cursorily in a discussion of ethics and standards in public relations (p. 670).

Black and Sharpe's (1983) text suggested that education and research were necessary as training and qualifications for public relations practice. In general, they supported accreditation but believed that it should be based on education in an accredited public relations program and an internship, in addition to the examination. They stated public relations curricula should be accredited by a public relations association, not the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Although, Black and Sharpe advocated accreditation, they felt that ultimately it would not elicit "respect" from the media and the public. Their solution to gaining this respect was a "policy of openness and full communication" (p. 12).

Black and Sharpe also were confident about the professionalization of public relations and felt that the process would "parallel the medical and law professions with educational development of general practitioners as well as specialists" (p. 12).

A brief description of the PRSA accreditation program was included in Appendix B of the book. Black is a former president of the International Public Relations Association.

Arnoff and Baskin (1983) stated that professional associations, a code of ethics and licensing were necessary to professionalize public relations. They maintained that the accreditation programs of the PRSA and IABC were the "closest anyone has come to licensing procedures" (p. 75). The merits and drawbacks of licensing were discussed. The authors concluded that "licensing standards would probably not result in significant change" (P. 75) in the field because the majority of practitioners, employed by corporations in business and industry, would not have to be licensed to practice.

Edward L. Bernays wrote the prologue to Cantor's (1984) work, part of the Longman Series in Public Communication. Bernays argued that public relations was "fundamentally" a profession because of its literature, associations, academics and code of ethics.

But unfortunately in the United States, words have the stability of soap bubbles and Belgian lace unless they are defined by law. The two words 'public relations' are in the public domain. This is contrary to criteria of other professions. . . . [which] are defined by law, with economic sanctions for those who transgress. (p. xii)

For Bernays, the answer to the professionalization of public relations was licensing.

Grunig and Hunt (1984) did not discuss accreditation specifically, but did examine the issue of professionalism in public relations (pp. 63-84). For example, they noted research that indicated that many practitioners had

stronger "careerist" values than professional values. Therefore, they concluded that "there are not yet enough practitioners with professional values for public relations to be called a profession" (p. 70).

And after looking at professional organizations, codes of ethics, the field's body of knowledge and educational system, Grunig and Hunt's prognosis was unchanged. They concluded:

. . . public relations has the necessary infrastructure to be a true profession. . . . however, the majority of practitioners have not been exposed to that infrastructure and thus have not become professionals. (p. 82)

Seitel (1984) stated that public relations had not reached professional status because practice was still open to "frauds" (p. 4). He also noted the importance of the public's perception of the field in the quest for parity with law and medicine: "As the field increases in prominence, it grows in professional stature" (p. 4). Seitel related this increase in public recognition to the PRSA accreditation program.

In the first chapter, Awad (1985) set the tone of his work by emphasizing the need for "professional development" in public relations to improve the quality of its service to the community (the nation) and to separate the "skilled professional from the amateur and the phony" (p. 7). Awad equated this "professional development" with accreditation.

He stated:

Accreditation and the preparation for it provide the foundation for career-long programs of professional development, reinforced by the incentives and recognition provided by continuing education credits. (p. 7)

He believed that the PRSA accreditation program was a "model" for other organizations because it was based on theory as well as experience and predicted that it will become the "hallmark of professional competence" (p. 126).

Newsom and Scott (1985) tied the issues of accreditation and licensing to the "social responsibility" by posing the question: "If a client wants to hire a PR practitioner, what assurances are there that he or she is ethical and responsible?" (p. 442). They discussed the pros and cons of both procedures without drawing any conclusions. Included in the discussion was a letter written to Newsom by Edward Bernays in which he explained his stand on licensing (p. 443).

Cutlip, Center and Broom's Effective Public Relations (1985) was probably the best-known textbook in the field. The fifth edition (Cutlip & Center, 1982) was cited in the PRSA Accreditation Primer (Kendall et al., 1984) workbook as a "representative general text" (p. 7) to prepare for the examination, and it was referred to throughout the workbook.

The authors devoted an entire chapter to a discussion of the professionalization of public relations and the

implications of the process and related issues. They theorized that public relations was an "emerging profession," which had to face the "questions" of ethics and competence to continue its advance (pp. 449-450). To this end, public relations practitioners were striving to "qualify" in three ways: (1) "functionally," (e.g., membership in professional associations); (2) "morally," (e.g., "adherence to a set of professional norms" or code of ethics); and (3) "through knowledge and expertness" (e.g., training, education and scientific research) (p. 453).

They argued that the "trend toward professionalism" is evidenced by:

(1) large national societies (PRSA and IABC), supplemented by several strong specialized associations; (2) codes of ethics clearly spelled out; (3) association peer review judicial committees created to enforce their standards upon members; (4) fairly stiff eligibility standards for full-fledged membership in PRSA and IABC; (5) training, education, and research in many universities and colleges, a small part of which is supported by PRSA and IABC; (6) a large and growing body of scholarly books, papers and journals, in addition to professional technical publications; (7) greater status for practitioners within their organizations; and (8) increasing public service contributions by practitioners. (p. 454)

Although the PRSA accreditation program was conspicuously absent from the preceding list, the issues of licensing and accreditation were addressed in the discussion of ethics and efforts to qualify morally.

On the "question of licensing," Cutlip et al., stated emphatically:

Codes of behavior will lack wholly effective means of enforcement until there is legal certification of practitioners. Controlled access is the sine qua non of a recognized profession. We believe that there must be controlled access through licensing to the title of "certified public relations counselor." This is the only way that frauds and flacks can be separated from legitimate practitioners.

Licensing should be done to protect society as well as to advance the cause of professionalism. Voluntary codes do not do this. (p. 461)

This strong statement was tempered, however, by an examination of legal problems, after which the authors concluded that "licensure will not soon provide a means of elevating the ethics and competence of practitioners" (p. 463). Because of this dim outlook for licensing, the authors supported accreditation, by default, as the only alternative. While they acknowledged the accreditation programs of the PRSA and the IABC, they felt that a "single cosponsored certification program" (p. 463) would be better. Their rationale was:

Given the weakness of voluntary codes, the splintered efforts of the different associations and societies, and the absence of state licensing, a single, well-publicized, and strongly enforced accreditation program is needed to move public relations toward professional status. (p. 464)

Despite all their rhetoric on licensing and accreditation, Cutlip et al., conceded that in reality "public opinion determines what is a profession--a fact

that practitioners ought to know better than most" (p. 454).

Cutlip et al. offered the public relations student and practitioner one of the most thorough examinations of the professionalization of public relations. It was ironic, however, that one of the textbooks recommended by PRSA as a preparation tool for the accreditation examination did not contain any detailed discussion or support accreditation until the sixth edition. The chapter subheading "Accreditation" was not included in previous editions.

Crable and Vibbert (1986) mentioned accreditation only once, in a list of continuing education services offered by the Public Relations Society of America. However, a discussion of the "concept of licensing" was included in a chapter on ethics and professionalism. The authors cited four problem areas that might prevent the successful professionalization of public relations through licensing-- "the legal, the constitutional, the pragmatic, and the definitional" (p. 119). They concluded that contractual agreements, not licensing, were the best methods of establishing public relations as an ethical profession.

Wilcox, Ault and Agee's (1986) contemporary, first edition textbook devoted considerable space to the issues of ethics, professionalism, accreditation and licensing.

The codes of ethics of the PRSA and IABC were reprinted in the sixth chapter (pp. 108-112).

The authors of this work did not consider public relations as a profession at its "present level" (p. 112). But, like Seitel, they noted the importance of public recognition of the field as a profession and professional conduct among practitioners for the successful professionalization of public relations.

The advantages and drawbacks of licensing were clearly presented, coupled with a brief discussion of accreditation by PRSA and IABC. The only conclusion drawn was: "The major effort to improve standards and professionalism in public relations has been related to establishing accreditation programs" (p. 114).

Wright (1981) surveyed 435 members of PRSA to determine if there were any differences in their levels of professionalism. The questionnaire contained five scales on which the 148 respondents rank-ordered their attitudes on occupational values related to professionalism. Roughly half of the respondents were accredited. The data revealed that although accredited practitioners had a "greater professional orientation" than nonaccredited practitioners, their level of professionalism was low. He concluded, therefore, that: "true professional status might not exist for public relations until there is some form of legal certification of practitioners (p. 60).

Public Relations Quarterly (Hudson, 1984) devoted an entire issue to a "Symposium in Print," which examined three possible credentials for public relations. Nineteen recognized leaders in public relations, including Edward L. Bernays, Allen H. Center, Scott M. Cutlip, Philip Lesly, Doug Newsom, and Donald R. Stephenson, explained their rationale for advocating licensing, certification or accreditation. Twelve of the participants were accredited by PRSA; one was an accredited member of the IABC.

Shortly after the accreditation program was approved by the general assembly of PRSA, the society issued a four-page summary (Pendray & Druck, 1964) of the background of the program and answered 30 frequently posed question about it. The report was written by two members of the PRSA Counselors Academy committee that developed the program. It was available from the PRSA Information Center.

Walker (1964) reported on the approval of the accreditation program for Editor & Publisher magazine. He described the original organization, administration and requirements of the program.

Golden (1964a), public relations writer for Saturday Review, discussed three steps taken by PRSA in response to the SEC disclosure of abuses in financial public relations. One of those steps was the establishment of the accreditation program.

The New York Times (Carlson, 1965d) reported on the initial details of the accreditation program, after it was approved at the PRSA annual conference in November 1964. The article offered Kalman Druck's comments on the program, which were delivered at a meeting in New York.

Significance of the Study

Popular, trade and public relations literature provided reports of various stages of development of the PRSA's accreditation program. And issues related to accreditation, such as professionalism, professionalization and licensing also were discussed in this literature as well in scholarly journals. But no comprehensive case study of the entire program and its ramifications has been conducted. This thesis case study, therefore, provides insights into a topical issue of importance to public relations practitioners and students--the professionalization of public relations through accreditation.

The professionalization of public relations has been widely recognized as a concern of practitioners, educators and students. It was hoped that professional status would help to dispel the stereotype of the public relations practitioner as a flak and increase employment opportunities for practitioners through enhancement of the field's value and credibility in business and government.

This case study should shed some light on whether accreditation could establish public relations as a profession and achieve these and other goals.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRSA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

This chapter deals with the inception of the accreditation program, concentrating on the three areas: the issues and events that prompted the PRSA membership to develop and approve the credentialing process, the philosophies and goals of the founders, and the initial organization of the program. This approach is taken to answer in part the first and second corollary research questions, which compare the original intent and structure of the program with its purpose and results in 1986. The next chapter completes the other half of the puzzle, providing a complete picture of the program.

In 1961 when the Public Relations Society of America as it is known today was formed by a merger with the American Public Relations Association, Richard L. Tobin (1961, p. 79), communications editor of the Saturday Review, saw the situation as a "golden chance" for public relations practitioners to create "something comparable to the American Bar Association or American Medical Association." He envisioned the new organization as a champion of ethics, a white knight that had the potential to "attack at their roots the insidious diseases manifest in public relations practice" (p. 80).

From its very beginning the Public Relations Society of America assumed the task of establishing public relations as an honorable profession, recognized by society for its high ethical standards. To accomplish this task, members of the new public relations association had to deal not only with a negative public image but also with criticism from their media partners--the press and advertising people.

In 1962 Newsweek magazine (September 10, p. 66) noted a survey of reporters and editors conducted by the Opinion Research Corp. The survey revealed that 81 percent of the 256 journalists polled preferred not to deal with a corporate public relations person when reporting on a business organization.

Public relations practitioners were becoming more common and respected in the business world, but problems still existed. A Wall Street Journal analyst (Faltermayer, 1962, p. 1) noted that some executives believed public relations practitioners to be deceitful and ineffective.

While the corporate public relations practitioners were dealing with an untrusting press and skeptical executives, agency practitioners were facing equally difficult problems with their colleagues in the advertising world. At the time, most advertising agencies offered public relations services to their clients as part of an

overall advertising package. It was a marriage of convenience, but the relationship was tenuous at best.

An advertising reporter for The New York Times (Bart, 1962d, p. 14) noted that public relations departments were a "thorn in the side" of ad agencies because they were difficult to organize and to operate. One agency president described the problem as the "fast talking, improvising, fly-by-night approach" of public relations. In other words, the public relations departments needed a more definite rate structure and a way to measure the effectiveness of their work to justify the rates. The crux of the problem was that public relations departments were unprofitable. To deal with the problem several large advertising agencies, including J. Walter Thompson, Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, and Benton & Bowles, curtailed the majority of their public relations services.

Saturday Review's public relations writer, L. L. L. Golden (1961), captured the tenor of the times in his description of public relations' struggle for recognition:

Public relations practitioners have almost an obsession with their status in the community. They worry constantly about acceptance as a profession and they swing wildly between those who claim black magic in changing public attitudes and those who see themselves as simply performing a useful function for management.
(p. 45)

In November 1961, 700 members of the Public Relations Society of America gathered in Houston, Texas for their

annual national conference to discuss their "obsession" and other problems. The PRSA President-elect Walter W. Belson ("There is no alternative," 1962) addressed the issue of licensing as the path to the professionalization of public relations. Belson said that he opposed licensing and added:

If our performance is in the best traditions of the great professions, recognition will inevitably follow in the course of time. If it is not up to those standards, the designation [as a profession], of itself, is useless or perhaps worse than useless. (p. 10)

Although Belson opposed licensing, the Counselors Academy of PRSA had not ruled out credentialing as a method of professionalizing public relations. The Counselors Academy, which was established at the 1960 national conference in Chicago, represented PRSA members who were owners or employees of public relations consulting firms and agencies. In 1962, the chairperson of the Counselors Academy, Paul Cain, organized a committee to study accreditation as a possible form of credentialing for the counselors. The committee was composed of seven counselors--G. Edward Pendray, chairperson, Richard A. Aszling, Robert L. Bliss, Richard W. Darrow, Kalman B. Druck, Ward Stevenson and Sally Woodward (Pendray & Druck, 1964). The committee studied accreditation, certification and chartering programs in other occupations and

professions in an effort to find potential pitfalls and outline the elements of success.

While the Counselors Academy was researching accreditation, two important events that drew national attention to public relations practitioners and practices were transpiring.

On April 3, 1963 the Securities and Exchange Commission issued the first five parts of a report on the securities market. The 14-part study, which was conducted over a 17-month period, detailed "grave abuses" in the market involving securities workers as well as investment analysts and corporate public relations practitioners (Shanahan, 1963). Congress had commissioned the study to investigate possible fraud and manipulation in the securities market.

The study included an investigation of the financial public relations practices of 46 companies. The report focused on the five companies, in particular, whose activities were representative of the major abuses discovered. The commission charged that these companies often issued press releases that mislead buyers through exaggerated, unfounded claims about their status and future. These practices duped customers into buying stock in the company at inflated prices and raised conflict-of-interest questions concerning the public relations practitioners.

The report cited several instances in which a corporate public relations person benefitted financially by trading in his client's stock. For example, one financial public relations consultant used his position to purchase stock at a discount price from a firm he represented. He sold the stock at a substantial profit after publicizing the company. The practice as such was not illegal but was unethical because "neither the press, the financial community nor the public may be aware that corporate information which they receive comes from an interested source" ("SEC runs up," 1963, p. 13).

In response to these abuses the SEC recommended that the financial public relations community establish self-regulatory programs and policies to deal with these ethical problems.

The president of PRSA, Ward B. Stevenson, responded to the SEC recommendation with a letter stating that the society would "invoke" its Code of Professional Standards if necessary and proposed a meeting with SEC officials to discuss the problem ("SEC reports on," 1963, p. 14).

Public Relations Society of America representatives met with SEC officials in June 1963 to discuss ways to prevent future abuses ("SEC aides," 1963). At the meeting the SEC urged PRSA to institute standards for the practice of financial public relations. At that time, the PRSA code of ethics did not deal specifically with financial public

relations. Subsequently, the PRSA Code of Professional Standards was "strengthened . . . in the area of financial public relations practice" ("PRSA conference sees," 1964, p. 6) at the 16th national PRSA conference in San Francisco in November 1963. A financial public relations guide also was adopted at the meeting ("PRSA sets voluntary," 1963 p. 6; Watson, 1963, p. 13).

The second national event that focused public attention on public relations practitioners in 1963 was the hearings held in July by the Fulbright Committee on Foreign Affairs. The committee was investigating the activities of representatives of foreign governments in the United States who were not involved in diplomatic work. Two problems surfaced from the committee's investigation of the Hamilton Wright Organization, a public relations firm that handled foreign accounts: (1) identification of the source of information prepared by public relations firms for foreign countries and (2) compensation (junkets, money, etc.) to journalists for the publication of that information, which was usually arranged through the public relations firms (Schuyler, 1963, p. 9). These practices involved the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938.

One of the principal witnesses at the hearings was Hamilton Wright Jr., executive vice president of the Hamilton Wright Organization. Wright repeatedly denied any intention to deceive the public about the source of the

information, claiming that the journalists were informed of the source and, therefore, it was their responsibility to decide whether or not to disclose it. He also defended the practice of compensating journalists for publication of the information (Schuyler, 1963, p. 9, 52).

Despite Wright's insistence of innocence, he became the first person to be suspended from membership in PRSA. A PRSA judicial council held its own investigation in October 1963 and recommended the suspension, which was approved by the PRSA board in March 1964. The board suspended Wright for six months for violation of two provisions of the Code of Professional Standards:

(1) engaging in any practice which tends to corrupt the integrity of the channels of communication and (2) proposing to a prospective client or employer that his fee or other compensation be contingent on achievement of certain results; nor shall he enter into a fee agreement to the same effect. ("PRSA suspends," 1964, p. 127)

In his Saturday Review column on public relations, L. L. L. Golden (1964a, p. 72) analyzed the effect of the SEC report and the Fulbright Commission hearings on PRSA. Golden saw these events as the climax of the "swelling chorus of abuse of public relations [that] could no longer be shrugged off by its practitioners." He noted that three "beginning steps" taken by PRSA after these events, in an attempt to "stop the critics" of public relations. These steps were: (1) the inclusion of financial public relations

standards in the PRSA code of ethics, (2) the suspension of Hamilton Wright Jr., and (3) the initial approval of the accreditation program.

When PRSA convened its annual conference in San Francisco in November 1963, the Counselors Academy had concluded its study of accreditation and approved an accreditation plan. At the meeting, the counselors requested the required changes in the PRSA bylaws to put the program in effect. After reviewing the counselors' request, the PRSA Assembly of Delegates decided to extend the program to all sections of the society. The accreditation plan was presented to the members at the meeting, and another committee was formed to adapt the plan to the larger group of practitioners. The committee members were: G. Edward Pendray, chairperson, Kalman Druck, Milton Fairman, Ed Lipscomb and Hale Nelson (Pendray & Druck, 1964; "PRSA conference sees," 1964, p. 6).

The original organization of the program included an oral and written examination on public relations fundamentals, techniques and ethics. Requirements included eight years experience in public relations, a bachelor's degree or the equivalent and PRSA membership. (Watson, 1963, p. 13; "PRSA sets voluntary," 1963, p. 6).

The accreditation program was hailed by PRSA as "a major step toward true professionalism in public relations" ("PRSA conference sees," 1964, p. 6) and a way

to "assure the public of high standards of performance, ethics, integrity and self-regulation" (Watson, 1963, p. 13).

Others were more skeptical about the proposed program's merits. Peter Bart (1963c, p. 12F), the advertising/public relations writer for The New York Times, reported that that PRSA members at the conference "fell all over themselves in their enthusiasm [and] hunger for achieving this quasi-professional status" through accreditation.

In the following year, the accreditation committee developed (with assistance from the Psychological Corporation) and pretested the written examination and produced a study guide. The entire PRSA membership was given the opportunity to review the details of the proposed program and offer recommendations for changes. The members were also surveyed on their interest in the program. Over half of the members (1,800 of 3,500) responded to the survey. Eight hundred and twenty-five said that they would apply for accreditation, and 450 said they would not apply. The remainder were undecided (Pendray & Druck, 1964; Walker, 1964, p. 16).

In November 1964 the PRSA annual conference was held in Montreal, in conjunction with World Public Relations Week activities (Kraner, 1965). At the conference the proposed accreditation program was ratified by the PRSA

board of directors and put into motion (Walker, 1964, p. 16).

After the meeting two of the principal developers of the program, Kalman B. Druck and G. Edward Pendray, (1964) wrote a detailed outline of the program. The accreditation program was essentially the same as the original proposal. It was administered by a five-person accreditation board, which included Kalman Druck, chairperson, Milton Fairman, Ed Lipscomb, Hale Nelson and William Gaskill. Applications were reviewed by a jury of three accredited practitioners, selected by the accreditation board. This jury, known as the panel of examiners, also administered the oral examination and made the final recommendation to the board on whether or not an applicant should be accredited. Four prerequisites were established: (1) active PRSA membership; (2) a college degree and seven years of experience, including five as a PRSA member, or 10 years of experience for those without a college degree; (3) acceptable moral conduct and reputation; and (4) employment as a practitioner at least half-time. The three-part, six-hour written examination covered public relations history, theory, fundamentals, techniques and ethics. The oral examination was primarily an interview of the accreditation candidate.

In order to organize the initial panel of examiners, a grandfather clause was written into the provisions of the

program. Under this provision members with 18 years of experience could be accredited without a written examination. However, they were required to meet all other qualifications for the program as well as several others. They had to agree to serve as examiners for three years, be in good standing with the society and furnish three recommendations from active PRSA members.

Accreditation could be suspended or revoked for code violations after a hearing or when membership in PRSA expired.

Proof of accreditation was permitted through the use of four designations--PRSA Accredited, Accredited by the Public Relations Society of America, PRSAA and PRSA Acc.

Pendray and Druck (1964) offered this explanation of the "over-all [sic] effect of the accreditation program":

On the profession as a whole, the ultimate effect is expected to be a definite increase in stature and effectiveness, and in greater acceptance by employers, clients and the public. For individual practitioners, Accreditation will provide the opportunity and extra incentive for self-improvement, and a means of demonstrating to themselves and to their employers and clients that they are professionals in the full sense of the word.

There will also be important beneficial effects on the literature of public relations, on the development of new knowledge and techniques, and on public relations education.

Accreditation will provide a norm against which all public relations people may measure themselves, and will stimulate the development of the profession in many subtle ways.

J. Carroll Bateman, chairperson of the PRSA Business and Professional Association Section, described the program as a step toward professional status for public relations and added:

Indeed, true professional status is the only appropriate alternative to the present chaotic situation in public relations, with our doors wide open to any charlatan, shyster, bagman, inexperienced clown or unprincipled jackass who wishes to hang out a shingle and claim that he is in 'public relations.' (Walker, 1964, p. 16).

Promotion of accreditation was done through PRSA chapters around the country. A slide show was developed to introduce the program to members and to explain how it was organized and administered ("PR people ready," 1965, p. 48). In January 1965, Kalman B. Druck, chairperson of the accreditation board, presented the slide show at a meeting of the New York PRSA chapter. At the meeting Druck stated that the purpose of the program was "to raise professional standards and improve the practice of public relations" (Carlson, 1965d, p. 49). He compared the PRSA program to licensing for the medical and legal professions and stated accreditation would someday be a requirement for PRSA membership. But he also stressed that the program was voluntary and that non-accredited practitioners should not be considered unqualified.

In November 1965 the society announced that 430 members had been accredited ("430 PR execs," 1965, p. 11).

Summary

The perennial struggle of public relations for recognition as a profession rose to a peak in the early 1960s, climaxing at the PRSA annual conference in November 1964. Problems of low credibility and a lack of respect from the press, the business community and advertisers, which persistently plagued public relations over the years, were further aggravated by the allegations of the SEC and Fulbright Commission. These events seemed to confirm the stereotypical image of public relations practitioners as flaks and charlatans. The society responded to this situation by revising and enforcing its code of ethics, and, finally, by ratifying an accreditation program.

The purpose of the accreditation program, as its principal architects G. Edward Pendray and Kalman Druck (1964) noted, was to demonstrate that public relations practitioners were "professionals in the full sense of the word." The program, however, was developed and structured with a sense of urgency and little discussion or consideration of sociological studies of the process of professionalization, the attributes of a profession and the role and effects of a credential. The society assumed that the accreditation credential alone would professionalize public relations.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRSA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM IN 1986

Chapter 3 describes all aspects of the accreditation program as it functions in 1986--from its organization and administration to its evaluation and planning process to its public relations and promotion. In doing so, the answers to the first and second corollary research questions are complete. Furthermore, the third corollary question, which focuses on the effects and results of the program, is addressed.

Administration of the Program

Ultimate responsibility for the accreditation program lies with the PRSA Board of Directors, which "may make provision for Accreditation and certification of competence in the practice of public relations" (Public Relations Society of America Bylaws, Art. XIII, Sec. 1). In practice, the board of directors approves appointees to the accreditation board made by the president and is involved in general planning and goal-setting for the accreditation program (M. A. Pires, personal communication, October 6, 1986). The 1986 PRSA Board of Directors includes: Stephen H. Baer, manager of public and employee information, Southern California Gas Company, Los Angeles, Calif.; William M. Dietrick, president, Media Consultants,

Richmond, Va.; E. Zoe McCathrin, manager, David A. Meeker & Associates, Inc., Columbus Ohio; Lloyd N. Newman, executive vice president, Manning, Selvage & Lee, Inc., New York, N.Y.; Sunshine Janda Overkamp, associate executive director, United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast, Houston, Texas; Isobel Park, counsel, Jackson, Jackson & Wagner, Exeter, N.H.; Dolores M. Swift, principal, Dolores M. Swift Public Relations, Chicago, Ill.; and Dennis L. Wilcox, coordinator of the public relations degree program, San Jose State University, San Jose, Calif.

The board of directors also includes the five officers of the organization--president, president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and the immediate past president, who serves as an ex officio member. Because the 1986 PRSA President Anthony M. Franco, chairperson and chief executive officer of Anthony M. Franco, Inc., Detroit, Mich., resigned before completion of his one-year term (see Appendix A), the president-elect John W. Felton assumed the position, effective August 29, 1986. Felton is vice president of corporate communications, McCormick & Company, Inc., Hunt Valley, Md. The other officers are: Secretary Nancy B. Wolfe, president, The Wolfe Group, Inc., Winston Salem, N.C.; Treasurer Dwayne Summar, senior counsel, Robinson & Weskel Communications, Inc., Miami, Fla.; and immediate past President David Ferguson, senior consultant, Hill and Knowlton, Inc., Chicago, Ill.

Officers of the society serve one-year terms; board directors serve for two years. All national, district and professional section officers, the national board of directors and committee chairpersons must be accredited.

Responsibility for the direction of the accreditation program is delegated to the PRSA Accreditation Board. The accreditation board is composed of 12 accredited PRSA members. Every year the PRSA president appoints an accreditation board chairperson and four accreditation board members. The chairperson serves a one-year term; the board members hold three-year terms. The 1986 chairperson is Mary Ann Pires; the vice chairperson is Thomas C. Sanger. The accreditation board members are: Michael F. Canning, Wesley J. Christenson, Robert L. Kendall, Steve R. Lee, F. Michael Lorz, Cecile H. Malone, Kenneth Owler Smith, Parry D. Sorenson, Norman P. Teich and Joanne C. Tremulis. The board of directors' liaison to the accreditation board is PRSA President John W. Felton.

Generally, the accreditation board is empowered by the board of directors to administer and manage the accreditation program. These powers include the authority to make and change the rules and regulations concerning the program and the use of the accreditation credential by members. The accreditation board also appoints an examination administrator who coordinates the actual accreditation process. This administrator is responsible

for verification of applicants' eligibility; the dissemination of program materials, including study guides, training tools and promotional publications; distribution of examination materials and general supervision of the examinations; coordination of the scoring of the examinations; and, in general, as a liaison between the accreditation board and the 93 PRSA chapters located around the country. The current examination administrator, whose title is accreditation administrator, is Dorothy McGuinness. McGuinness has been serving as accreditation administrator since 1972 (D. McGuinness, personal communication, October 2, 1986).

Accreditation awarded to a practitioner also can be revoked or suspended by the accreditation board. Violations of the accreditation regulations and misuse of the credential are cause for revocation or suspension, pending a hearing by the accreditation board. Accreditation can be suspended or revoked by the accreditation board without a hearing if the board of directors suspends or expels a member for violation of the society's code of ethics. Conversely, the board of directors may censure, suspend or expel a member whose accreditation was revoked or suspended by the accreditation board.

Requirements for Accreditation

Following are the eligibility requirements that must be satisfied by an applicant before taking the PRSA accreditation examination:

(1) active membership in the society. Membership is granted to applicants with two or more years of experience as public relations practitioners or public relations educators at a college or university. Associate members are not eligible.

(2) a minimum of five years of experience in the practice of public relations or in public relations education as a teacher or administrator at a college or university.

(3) "high standards of personal and professional conduct, and enjoy the respect of colleagues" (Accreditation Study Guide, p. 3).

The Accreditation Process

Accreditation is granted to an applicant after successful completion of written and oral examinations. The written examination is administered in two sessions: a two-and-one-half-hour morning session and a three-hour afternoon evening session. Public relations theory, principles and techniques are covered in the first portion of the written examination. In the afternoon session, the

candidate is required to demonstrate proficiency in the application of the theories, principles and techniques covered in the morning session by developing a comprehensive public relations plan for a hypothetical situation.

A sample accreditation examination is included in the accreditation primer (Kendall et al., 1984) for use as a preparation tool. The sample examination, according to the primer, "follows very closely the design and composition of the actual examination" (p. 106). The first section includes a total of eight questions, six of which the applicant must answer. Four questions are compulsory; the applicant is allowed to select two of the four remaining questions to answer.

The second section of the sample examination presents hypothetical situations that a public relations practitioner might encounter. The situations deal with special interest areas in public relations, such as financial relations or community relations, in an attempt to match an applicant's particular type of practice and expertise. The applicant is given an "assignment" related to each situation and asked to respond. The assignments entail the development of a comprehensive public relations plan. The plans are divided into five questions or parts, which include a statement of objectives, planning and selection of communication strategies. In effect, this

portion of the examination tests the practical knowledge of the applicant.

The written examination is prepared and updated by the accreditation board. A different examination is used for each testing period.

The oral examination is approximately one hour long and is conducted by a team of three accredited PRSA members selected by the accreditation chairperson of the local chapter. Basically it is a review of the applicant's "career . . . views . . . accomplishments and specialties of practice" (p. 98) in an interview format. The oral examination is designed to test the applicant's instinctive knowledge of public relations and ability to respond effectively to unplanned situations.

The examinations are offered to PRSA members during a two-week period twice a year by the local chapters. Written and oral examinations are not given on the same day. The number of chapters offering the examinations depends on the availability of applicants in any given jurisdiction. Two or more chapters also may team up to offer the examination in one location. Each chapter appoints a committee to supervise and coordinate the accreditation process in its area. The chairperson of the committee names accredited practitioners to serve as oral examiners.

The written examinations are scored by an independent testing company with a key prepared by the accreditation board. Guidelines are established to help the scorers evaluate answers in terms of the criteria developed by the accreditation board. Points are assigned to the correct, expected responses. For example, question No. 3 in Section I of the sample examination asks the candidate to evaluate a definition of the term "public relations" (Kendall et al., 1984, p. 107). The key states the origin of the definition and explains that:

Candidate should demonstrate an awareness of the range and areas of applications. He [sic] can do this either by comparing this definition with one or more of the standard definitions now current or with his own experience and knowledge. In either case, he should note these areas in which the definition is defective:
(p. 116)

The key then delineates four criticisms of the definition, which are valued at five points each, and five "narrower considerations" (p. 117) valued at three points each. A definition written by the applicant also is acceptable, but it must include some of these nine considerations to receive points. The question is worth a total of 30 points, and the estimated completion time is 20 minutes. To pass the written examination, the applicant must earn 360 of 600 possible points, a minimum score of 60 percent. Although the written examination is scored by a testing firm and the oral examination is scored by the team of

accredited practitioners who administer it, accreditation is granted to an applicant only after the results of both examinations are evaluated by the accreditation board.

A candidate who has complaints about the scoring of an examination may appeal to the accreditation board for a review. If not satisfied with the accreditation board's decision, the candidate may appeal to the board of directors. A candidate who fails may retake the examination within another scheduled examination period. However, if a candidate fails the second time, he or she cannot take the examination again for two years. After the two-year waiting period, the candidate must reapply for accreditation and pay the fee again. An estimated 70 to 75 percent of the candidates pass on the first attempt, and 80 to 85 percent pass on the second attempt (D. McGuinness, personal communication, November 25, 1986).

The current total cost for accreditation is \$125, which includes the primer and study guide. The PRSA membership fee is separate.

Preparation Materials

The society offers two publications to help candidates prepare for the accreditation examination. The primary preparation tool is the Accreditation Primer (Kendall et al., 1984). The primer functions both as a self-study and group-study handbook and is divided into two sections. The

first section is a "Content Review or Instruction Guide" (pp. 6-97), which outlines the concepts, definitions, factors, methodologies, theories, etc. covered in the examination. The outlines are in the form of brief synopses, lists, charts and guidelines. For example, the review of public relations planning presents a checklist of 22 points to consider in the process, which is divided into four steps--research, adaptation, response and evaluation. The review of public opinion processes and theories uses three different diagrams to illustrate the salient points. Each area of study covered in the primer includes a reference to a specific citation in one of the two "representative general texts," Cutlip and Center's Effective Public Relations (1982) and Simon's Public Relations: Concepts and Practices (1980), or to other recommended works in communication literature.

Part II (pp. 97-134) of the primer reviews the examination process, offers preparation hints and suggests some strategies for taking the examination. The previously described sample examination and a sample scoring key also are included in the second section of the primer.

The Accreditation Primer, which was first published in 1981, was revised by the Minorities Committee of the Chicago PRSA chapter in 1984.

The second PRSA publication offered to help candidates prepare for accreditation is the Accreditation Study Guide.

The study guide is a succinct 13-page booklet divided into four sections--"PRSA Accreditation: What it is and how to prepare for it"; responses to commonly asked questions about the program; a "Study Outline"; and a reference list of literature applicable to the examination. The list of commonly asked questions deals with qualifications, administration and scoring of the examinations, logistics, recourse for applicants who fail the examination, proper use of accreditation and penalties for abuse of accreditation.

A set of cassette audiotapes offered by PRSA also are used to prepare member practitioners for the accreditation process.

The Role of Local Chapters

The 1986 chairperson of the accreditation board, Mary Ann Pires (personal communication, October 6, 1986), described the local PRSA chapters as "the engine that runs this program." Indeed, the participation of the 93 PRSA chapters is essential to the operation of the accreditation program. The local chapters not only actually administer the written and oral examinations (as previously noted), but also may assume the tasks of promoting the program to their members and preparing them for the process. Some chapters conduct group-study sessions or review courses using the primer and study guide to prepare their

candidates for the examination; others develop their own materials for group or individual preparation programs (D. McGuinness, personal communication, October 2, 1986).

The Volunteer Chapter in Knoxville, Tenn., provided an example of the interaction that may occur between the PRSA national office and a local chapter in the accreditation process.

The Volunteer Chapter, which was chartered by PRSA in 1973, has about 50 members, a third of which are accredited. Robert L. Wesley (personal communication, October 23, 1986), chairperson of the accreditation committee, said that the chapter promoted accreditation in several ways. Word-of-mouth was the most frequently used method of promoting the program. Accredited members talked about the credential frequently, tying it to discussions, seminars, professional development programs and speeches. For example, at a meeting on Oct. 23, 1986, the Volunteer Chapter had a panel discussion on professionalism in public relations, during which accreditation was mentioned numerous times. Members also are notified about the examination dates and encouraged to participate when they reach five years of experience.

Another method of promotion on the local level is the encouragement of members to participate in seminars and workshops designed as continuing education courses or preparatory training sessions for accreditation. The

workshops and seminars are offered New York City and Washington, D.C., by private organization in such areas as internal/employee communications, financial public relations, speech writing, marketing and government public relations. One such organization is The Professional Development Institute Baldwin, N.Y., which conducts public relations seminars in New York City. The institute awards CEUs upon completion of their seminars. The New York University, School of Continuing Education, Management Institute and the New York Chapter of PRSA cosponsor similar seminars and workshops in the same city. Noted public relations practitioners also can be contracted to conduct the programs in a chapter's area. The Volunteer Chapter once hired a member of the national accreditation board to conduct a workshop training program for its members before an accreditation examination in the late 1970s.

Wesley said that the chapter had "experimented" with accreditation group study sessions and an audiotape study course developed by the University of Wisconsin. In 1986, however, the chapter did not have plans for any formal study or preparation programs and examinations.

Planning and Evaluation

The accreditation board is divided into six subcommittees: (1) materials and training review, (2) new

test questions, (3) communications with chapters and districts, (4) promotion, (5) monitoring credentialing, and (6) special assignments. Planning for and evaluation of the program is primarily a function of these committees. However, the board of directors (as previously noted) also may be involved in the planning process. Mary Ann Pires (personal communication, October 6, 1986) said that "ideally" plans and goals for the program come from the accreditation board, but added that the group traditionally has received input from the board of directors.

The accreditation board subcommittees develop "initiatives" through "assessments, judgments, awareness of trends, etc." in their particular areas of study (M. A. Pires, personal communication, October 6, 1986).

An "ongoing evaluation based on prior examination results" is conducted by the accreditation board at its quarterly meetings (M. A. Pires, personal communication, October 6, 1986). If the success rate among candidates differs significantly from one examination to another, for example, the accreditation board will attempt to find the cause of the discrepancy. The effects of new questions or changes in training procedures and study materials are examined. "There's constant reference back to the empirical data and sensitivity to change. And then corrective action is taken," Pires said. In another example cited by Pires, several chapters complained about

the irrelevancy of an oral examination guideline. The problem was examined by the board, and subsequently the procedure was removed from the oral examination. Pires said feedback from the chapters is a "major resource" in the evaluation process.

Public Relations and Promotion

Donna Peltier (personal communication, September 30, 1986) PRSA public relations director, said that the public relations plan for the accreditation program was "basically two-fold"--(1) internal promotion to the PRSA membership and (2) external promotion.

The external promotion of accreditation to the society's various publics was done primarily through the public relations department's media relations program. One responsibility of the media relations program was to "function as a news bureau." In response to inquiries and requests from writers and reporters generating stories on public relations, the department provided an "information kit" that included facts on accreditation. For example, the information kit (as furnished by Peltier for this case study) included a brochure on accreditation; a three-page fact sheet on the society, which contained a one-paragraph description of the accreditation program; and the PRSA Master Series report on accreditation. Also included in the information kit were: the PRSA Code of Professional

Standards, the society's "Official Statement on Public Relations," a brochure on the PRSA Information Center's services, a brochure on the professional-interest sections in the society, and a general brochure that describes all of the society's programs, services and departments, including accreditation. Peltier said that in addition to supplying the media with information kits, she also mentioned accreditation "where it's appropriate." The PRSA public relations department also had a "pro-active" media relations program, "pitching story ideas regarding the profession of key society programs Again, where it's appropriate the accreditation program is mentioned and highlighted." Despite her efforts to emphasize the accreditation program in this manner, Peltier felt that "it would be difficult for an article to focus exclusively on our accreditation program."

A second aspect of external promotion involved the local chapters. The public relations department prepared and sent press releases and photographs on newly accredited members to the "top three media in each chapter area." Additional copies of the press releases were also available to the newly accredited members themselves to send to other publications. This service was provided only on request from the local chapters.

In 1985, then Accreditation Board chairperson Wally Nicoll (personal communication, July 23, 1985) embarked on

a campaign "to put greater emphasis on external promotion-- explaining the significance of the APR designation to managers of organizations that hire and use the services of public relations professionals." One method of achieving this goal, Nicoll suggested, was the placement of advertisements on accreditation in business and other publications by local chapters. Nicoll (personal communication, July 23, 1985) sent a memo to the chapter presidents describing this strategy. Attached to the memo were "suggested" advertising copy and layout, and a clipping of an advertisement placed by the Houston, Texas PRSA chapter in the Houston Business Journal.

Basically two methods were used to promote the accreditation program internally among the PRSA membership: (1) advertisements and articles in the Public Relations Journal, PRSA News and professional-interest section publications and (2) involvement of the local chapters (as previously discussed in "Role of Local Chapters").

The first advertisement for the accreditation program in the Public Relations Journal appeared in October 1983. The advertisement was in the form of three testimonials by accredited practitioners (see Appendix C). Before 1986, the advertisements featured the headline "Who Cares About PRSA Accreditation?" and the slogan "APR--The Best Thing You Can Put Next to Your Name," with a testimonial written

by a prominent practitioner. In July 1986, the slogan changed to "PRSA Accreditation--The Standard for Professionals." The headlines are excerpted from the practitioner's testimonial, which is still used for the body of the advertising copy. The advertisements feature less well-known practitioners. At first, the advertisements were published irregularly, but began to appear monthly in 1986.

Listings of newly accredited members have been published in the Public Relations Journal at various times since the program began. The listings now appear regularly in the publication after each examination period.

Interviews

A comprehensive analysis of the accreditation program required more than a description of its mechanics. Practical knowledge must be combined with a study of the theoretical forces guiding the program. Knowledge of the practical aspects of the program was gleaned mainly from program materials such as the primer, study guide and the annual PRSA Register. The fundamental research method of the case study--the interview--was used to develop a theoretical understanding of the accreditation program. Telephone interviews were conducted with John Felton (personal communication, September 30, 1986), PRSA president; a member of the PRSA Board of Directors, Dolores

Swift (personal communication, October 1, 1986); and the accreditation board chairperson, Mary Ann Pires (personal communication, October 6, 1986). Felton (as previously noted) assumed the presidency of the organization prematurely. His term runs through December 1987. Swift's second year on the board of directors will end in December 1986; she has been elected secretary of PRSA for 1987. Pires will complete her one-year term as head of the accreditation board in December 1986. She formerly was a member of the board of directors.

Felton said that the purpose of accreditation is to serve as a "benchmark . . . [that] identifies people who have met certain minimum standards or qualification for the profession we call public relations." For Swift the program has a more practical mission: to maintain the "credibility" of public relations, especially among the media. Pires envisioned two purposes for accreditation: (1) "the professional development and . . . broadening of the individual" and (2) "elevating the stature of the profession" as a whole. She added, however, that the "announced purpose is to test one's knowledge of the profession and measure competency."

Despite the heralding of accreditation as the sole path to professional status at the time of its inception, Felton, Swift and Pires see accreditation in 1986 as only one method of professionalizing public relations. Pires

cited other "hallmarks" of a profession--an enforceable code of ethics, a professional organization, a body of knowledge, an historic or "generational aspect." She said that these hallmarks, which are at various levels of "maturation," also contribute to the professionalization of public relations. Felton believed that the performance of practitioners on the job and in the classroom are other important aspects of the professionalization of public relations. He said that a "credible" practitioner can gain "access to the executive suite" through professional development and continuing education in management and other areas dictated by the demands of the company or clients. Felton considered involvement in community and civic groups as another important aspect of the professionalization of public relations. Swift argued that accreditation is only the "first step" toward professional status for public relations. "I think it's all we have right now to make us professionals," she said. She advocated accreditation as a mandatory requirement for PRSA membership and the extension of the program to practitioners outside the society.

In practice, Felton said that accreditation helped him to "stretch and measure" his competence and abilities. He added that he enjoyed taking examinations and that he found the process challenging. Swift felt that accreditation helped to gain clients for her counseling service. She

said that a prospective client usually will choose an accredited practitioner over a nonaccredited practitioner. However, Swift said that in most cases she had to explain accreditation to clients because they were not familiar with the process and its benefits.

Felton's plan of action for the accreditation program focused on promotion. He planned to increase promotion of the program internally to "encourage" more PRSA members, particularly senior practitioners, to seek accreditation. His general goal for his term was to maintain the program's "momentum" by surpassing the number of practitioners accredited in 1986. Swift's plans for the accreditation program were less pragmatic than Felton's. She said that it was time for the society to re-evaluate the status and worth of accreditation and investigate alternatives, such as mandatory accreditation, licensing and registration. Swift said that the board of directors was considering a reduction of the eligibility requirement from five years' experience in public relations to three years, a change she opposed.

As chairperson of the accreditation board, Pires was more specific about plans and goals for the program as well as accomplishments. She said that five years ago the board of directors contracted a consultant to analyze the accreditation program. The consultant's report resulted in a "five-year plan" for the program. The "major reforms"

achieved through the plan were: (1) improvement and revision of study materials for the accreditation examinations, (2) a "feedback mechanism" between the chapters, districts and the accreditation board, (3) adapting the written examination to a "more modular" format to facilitate revisions and updates, (4) better chapter training programs, and (5) stepped-up internal and external promotion.

Pires offered some examples of the changes made in the written examination and the study materials. New questions were added to the examination to reflect current trends and advances in public relations. "Problem solving" questions focusing on public relations specialties such as crisis communications were also inserted in the examination. The questions were developed by the accreditation board members and pretested by a panel of practitioners. The process of developing new examination questions is an ongoing function of the accreditation board. Pires emphasized the precautions taken by the board to ensure "equity" and "confidentiality" in this process.

The improvements in the study materials included a revision of the study guide reference list. New public relations textbooks were reviewed and, upon approval of the accreditation board, added to the reference list. The primer and a list of recommended readings in periodicals

also were updated. A new script for the cassette audiotape training tool was being developed.

Pires set four goals for herself during her term. The first was "to put a major emphasis on promotion." To that end, she asked the Counselors Academy to consider developing a program to market accreditation to executive recruiting firms as a necessary job qualification for applicants for public relations positions. The Counselors Academy agreed to implement a marketing plan. She also sought approval by the board of directors for a plan to expand external promotion through advertising in "selective publications that go to key audiences, such as the business community, human resource personnel . . . news media." This plan received tentative approval from the board of directors. She added that internal promotion was improved by a change in the accreditation advertisements that appear in the Public Relations Journal (see Appendix C). The advertisements traditionally featured endorsements by well-known figures in public relations. Young, upcoming public relations practitioners are now used in the advertisements. Increased coverage of the accreditation program in PRSA News, the society's newsletter also has boosted internal promotion. Pires' second goal coincided with Felton's plan to encourage senior PRSA members to become accredited. She described efforts in this area as a "pilot" program that required a "slow and delicate"

approach because senior practitioners generally are not receptive to accreditation. The routine, "continual upgrading" of the examination was Pires' third goal. She said that this process must be a "priority" of the accreditation board, especially the chairperson. Pires' final goal was to enhance relations between the chapters and the accreditation board. She planned a "success-story swap shop" for chapter accreditation chairpersons at the 1986 PRSA national conference in Washington, D.C. Communication with the chapters was increased through a personal letter-writing campaign.

Summary

During its 22-year history, accreditation became firmly entrenched as a PRSA program and service. Certainly, this standing in the society was one of the goals of the program's developers. But because of this accepted status in the society, the program became commonplace, routine. Although public relations' struggle for recognition has not diminished, the sense of urgency that surrounded the effort in 1964 has. This decline in fervor, combined with the reality of over two decades of experience with the credential, has tempered the expectations of the society for accreditation. Officers of PRSA, such as John Felton, Dolores Swift and Mary Ann Pires, saw accreditation as one aspect of

professionalization, not as the sole savior of public relations. And with less than one-third (about 3,400) of the society's membership accredited, it is clear that the rank and file of the society was not convinced that the credential leads to professional status, or yields any other benefits.

CHAPTER 4

FUTURE OF THE PRSA ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

Would the accreditation program change and, if so, in what way? That is the question on which this chapter focuses. A PRSA symposium, which in effect dealt with this question, is the subject of this discussion.

Pat Jackson (1986a), a former PRSA president, began a discussion of the issue of professionalism in public relations with the statement: "Public relations practitioners have been talking about professionalism, in one way or another, for at least half a century." Indeed, it seems that with the exception of the institution of the accreditation program, PRSA's efforts to professionalize public relations have been limited to talk. That is not to say that PRSA members have not demonstrated their professionalism through adherence to a code of ethics, contribution to a body of knowledge, or other accepted characteristics of a profession. But the accreditation program, now over 25 years old, has been the only true society-wide endeavor to establish public relations as a profession. An argument could be made that because the stated aim of the program is only "to help raise professional standards," its success can only be measured in those terms. And comments by John Felton, Mary Ann Pires and Dolores Swift seem to support the notion that

accreditation is regarded by some PRSA members as only one aspect of the professionalization of public relations. On the other hand, the society seems to place greatest emphasis on the credentialing aspect of professionalization, not on the other marks of a profession.

Given this emphasis on credentials, it would seem logical for PRSA to periodically reassess the effectiveness of accreditation and consider changes in or alternatives to the program. The most recent, and probably the most organized, effort to evaluate the accreditation program and chart its future was the Task Force on Demonstrating Professionalism, created by former PRSA President Anthony M. Franco. The task force held a symposium in Chicago on September 5-7, 1986 "to formalize the universal discussion" (Jackson, 1986a) of existing and proposed methods of demonstrating professionalism.

The Task Force on Demonstrating Professionalism, co-chaired by Pat Jackson, senior counsel, Jackson, Jackson & Wagner, Exeter, N.H., and Ann Barkelew, vice president, corporate public relations, Dayton Hudson Corp., Minneapolis, Minn., chose 12 topics or proposals to discuss and debate at the symposium. These proposals were outlined in a series of "pink papers" commissioned by the task force and written by PRSA members. The titles and authors of the pink papers were: Pink Paper No. 2,

"Licensing Public Relations: Problems and Opportunities," Paul Forbes; Pink Paper No. 3, "Approaches to Self-Regulation of Professions," (no author indicated); Pink Paper No. 4, "Registration," a reprint of Possible Resolution: Alberta's Registration Act," which appeared in pr reporter (Dec. 2, 1985), and a copy of the legislation; Pink Paper No. 5, "Mandatory Accreditation," Pat Jackson; Pink Paper No. 6, "Reaccreditation: How a Sister Society Handles It," Ann Barkelew; Pink Paper No. 7, "Levels of Accreditation," William V. Fenton Jr.; Pink Paper No. 8, "Non-Member Accreditation," Debbie Mason; Pink Paper No. 9, "Fellow Status in the Profession of Public Relations," Michael C. Killian; Pink Paper No. 10, "Professional Progression," Barbara Hunter; Pink Paper No. 11, "Continuing Education Requirement for Membership," Dorothea R. Willix; Pink Paper No. 12, "Other Possible Professional Development Opportunities," Michael B. Hesse; and Pink Paper No. 13, "A Proposal for Cooperative Accreditation," David Smoker. Jackson (1986a) authored an introduction to the symposium titled "The First Question: Does Public Relations Qualify as a Profession?"

In Pink Paper No. 1 Jackson (1986a) concluded that the answer to the question "Can public relations be a true profession? . . . is hardly debatable any longer." He supported his claim with two reasons: public relations is (1) "endemic to the human condition" and (2) it satisfies

all the criteria of a profession defined as "an art applied to a science in which public interest takes precedence over personal gain." Jackson, however, conceded that although public relations qualifies as a profession it lacks one important component--public recognition as a profession. The symposium, therefore, was organized to investigate "strategic methods" of demonstrating the professionalism of public relations. The goal of the symposium was not to "take action," but "several calls for action" were expected to ensue from the discussions.

"Approaches to Self-Regulation" (1986), Pink Paper No. 3 also helped to set the stage for symposium discussion. The paper offered background information on the relationship between "professions and public trust," and a succinct history of self-regulation and its legal implications. Authoritative definitions were provided for four self-regulation methods--certification, accreditation, registry programs and licensure. The pros and cons of these methods also were discussed. Finally, the paper posed three questions to serve as guidelines for the symposium debate:

1. Which provides the greatest degree of assurance of continual improvement of the level of practice within a profession--self-regulation or governmental regulation?
2. Which conveys the most credibility to the consumer--a certified/accredited professional or a licensed professional?

3. Which best controls the legal risks to the private organizations engaged in voluntary self-regulation programs?

Paul Forbes' (1986) pink paper dealt with the issue of licensing. He outlined the proposal for licensing made by Bernays' group and the pros and cons of the credential. Forbes' conclusion was that licensing was the only answer to the dilemma caused by public relations' "fractured identity." For Forbes, the PRSA code of ethics and accreditation program were inadequate but "notable steps forward." He reasoned that:

neither [accreditation nor code of ethics] goes far enough in either setting quality performance standards for all practitioners or providing a mechanism for weeding out those who engage in what amounts to professional malpractice. Only a small percentage are accredited. Furthermore, a member brought up on charges for violating the PRSA Code of Ethics [sic] can avoid sanctions by resigning and continuing to practice as before.

A case in point of Forbes' last comment on the enforcement of the code of ethics was the controversy involving Anthony M. Franco (see Appendix A).

Pink Paper No. 4 ("Registration," 1986) described the "Professional and Occupational Association Registration Act," which was promulgated by the Legislative Assembly of Alberta, Canada (1985 Bill 57) in 1986. The act allowed professional and occupational associations to register with the government in order prescribe "conditions or limitations applicable to that field of practice . . . standards of conduct, including a code of ethics, and

standards of competency" and to determine "governing eligibility, including examinations, for registration as a registered member." Provisions also were made in the act for enforcement of the standards and regulations as well as continuing education.

At the time of the symposium, the Calgary and Edmonton chapters of the Canadian Public Relations Society had applied for registration. To become registered, an organization had to provide evidence of service to the public and a membership "whose primary object is to advance the interests of a profession or occupation." The organization also had to be large enough to justify the need for registration.

Pink Papers Nos. 5-13 generally treated various possible permutations in accreditation. Jackson (1986b) discussed mandatory accreditation for PRSA members. He described a proposal considered by the PRSA Assembly several years ago. Under the proposed plan practitioners would be required to earn accreditation within 5 to 12 years, "depending on the point in their careers," after joining the society.

The chief advantages of mandatory accreditation cited were that it would demonstrate that all members had command of public relations' body of knowledge and would formalize professional development and continuing education in the society. Disadvantages centered around whether or not to

"grandfather" current members. Jackson suggested that the symposium might recommend that the proposal be reconsidered by the assembly.

Maintenance or renewal of the accreditation credential was examined in Pink Paper No. 6, prepared by task force co-chairperson Ann Barkelew (1986). She summarized the NSPRA reaccreditation process (See Accreditation in Other Occupations). The object of a PRSA reaccreditation plan would be to provide proof of a practitioner's "continuing development as a professional."

The accreditation of public relations practitioners outside PRSA was the subject of Pink Paper No. 8 by Debbie Mason (1986). Mason argued that a non-member accreditation could be "based on the concept of mandatory accreditation as a form of licensing or a universal differentiation mode." Thus, accreditation could be substituted for licensing in any proposal for legislation or could simply serve as an advanced rank of professional achievement for all public relations practitioners. Mason maintained that expansion of the present accreditation program was an "attainable goal" for PRSA that would serve as a "status-elevating mechanism" for public relations as a whole. And PRSA would receive credit for that accomplishment. The drawbacks to non-member accreditation were the difficulties in marketing accreditation as a worthwhile credential.

Pink papers written by William V. Fenton Jr. (1986) and Michael C. Killian (1986) explored the possibility of creating different ranks or levels of accreditation. Fenton Jr. offered a brief summary of two public relations accrediting programs in FPRA (See Accreditation in Other Occupations) and the American Society for Hospital Marketing and Public Relations, which offer their members different levels of credentials. He added that the PRSA Counselors Academy was discussing a proposal to certify public relations firms, which would, in effect, establish another level of credentialing. He suggested that the task force ask PRSA members for their opinions on establishing different levels of accreditation, such as the counselors' plan or "fellowship" status.

Fellow status for PRSA members as proposed by Killian (1986) would be "another layer of ranking, bestowed on accredited members according to some well-established and rigorous criteria." This higher rank could be awarded to practitioners who mastered a specialization in public relations or to those who made an outstanding accomplishment. Killian cited two potential problems with fellow status: it might be meaningless outside the society and "difficult to administer." Mary Ann Pires (1986) noted that there was considerable opposition in the past to fellow status as a "level above accreditation" in PRSA.

Pink Papers Nos. 10, 11 and 12 discussed professional development and continuing education programs that could be implemented in conjunction with or in place of the accreditation program.

Barbara Hunter (1986) described a program titled "Professional Progression," which was originally proposed in 1984. The proposed program was based on continuing education units (CEUs), a certain number of which had to be earned to initially qualify for accreditation and to maintain the credential. A fellow or "diplomate" rank also would be awarded to senior practitioners who continued to earn CEUs. Hunter conceded that the program was still in the developmental stage and many details had yet to be worked out.

Michael B. Hesse's (1986) recommendation was essentially the same as Hunter's--mandatory accumulation of CEUs to maintain accreditation. Hesse's main contribution to the symposium, however, was his analysis of the "main constraint blocking the path of professionalism" in public relations. He argued that without a "formal educational training" requirement entry into public relations practice cannot be controlled. Because he felt that there was no immediate solution to that problem, Hesse recommended a continuing education program for practitioners.

Accreditation was not part of the continuing education program outlined by Dorothea R. Willix (1986). Instead, the accumulation of CEUs would be required for maintaining PRSA membership. Although Willix argued that the program would "raise the professional competence of members and identify the PRSA standards of excellence for the profession," she said that it could cause a decline in membership.

The final proposal delivered to the symposium was developed by David Smoker (1986), an accredited member of PRSA and NSPRA. Lew Armistead, NSPRA president, asked his society's accreditation committee to study the possibility of a cooperative accreditation program with PRSA. Consequently, Smoker, as a member of the NSPRA Accreditation Committee, chose the symposium to discuss the possibility with PRSA leaders. He offered several reasons why a cooperative program deserved consideration. First, a "number" of practitioners already opted to become accredited in both organizations, regardless of the cost and "redundancy." Second, separate programs prevent both organizations from listing the credentials of their members who are accredited in the other organizations. A cooperative program, therefore, would increase the number of accredited practitioners in both associations. Cooperation between the programs would also "enhance professionalism" and yield financial savings.

At the end of the symposium, the attendees gathered for a "'sense of the symposium' session." The result of that session was a seven-page draft report (P. Jackson, personal communication, September 17, 1986) detailing "recommendations" to the PRSA Board of Directors.

The first recommendation was the formation of an "Issue Analysis Study Group on Licensing and Registration." Although the consensus of the symposium attendees was that licensing was not "the way to proceed (at least in the near future)," they recommended that the credential be studied "to ascertain its benefits or detriments to the public interest." The report said that the study group "should" examine the registration programs of nurse-anesthetists and Alberta, Canada, as well as licensing, and develop a "position paper" with further recommendations within a year. Preparation of a sample state public relations licensing bill was suggested as one possible way to approach the issue.

By relegating licensing to the status of a possible but not probable alternative, the symposium attendees affirmed the society's commitment to accreditation as the credential of choice for public relations. The symposium, however, felt that possible changes in and expansion of the program should be studied by a task force on accreditation. The report emphasized one general area of change to be investigated by the task force:

The symposium sees the goal for accreditation as becoming a minimum requirement for practice, whether or not practitioners are members of PRSA. Accreditation should become a minimal standard of achievement on a continuing course of learning and practice.

In addition, the report named nine specific symposium recommendations to be studied and prioritized by the task force.

The first recommendation was an elaboration of the symposium's consensus on the goal of accreditation as stated above. In addition to opening accreditation to the entire public relations community, the symposium said that the society's Code of Professional Standards should be part of the new program and "enforceable on accredited non-members." Non-PRSA members also would be charged more to become accredited initially and required to pay an additional annual fee.

The other recommendation were: (1) a required five-year reaccreditation process; (2) mandatory accreditation for PRSA members, with special consideration given to the issue of "grandfathering existing members"; (3) to change the current five-years-of-experience eligibility requirement to three years for graduates of accredited public relations programs on the college-level; (4) to design an "aggressive" internal and external promotion program; (5) to develop one "uniform" accreditation program and code of ethics for all public

relations organizations and practitioners; (6) to delegate administration of the accreditation program to an "autonomous body"; (7) to require the accumulation of CEUs, college credits or some form of continuing education for "maintenance" of accreditation; and (8) to change the name of the credential from accreditation to certification.

While the symposium affirmed PRSA's commitment to accreditation as the preferred credential, it also continued to explore other strategies in its quest for professionalism. In no uncertain terms, the symposium report declared:

By unanimous acclamation the symposium asks the Board of Directors to find a way to make professional development the priority. It may have to be viewed as a money maker for the Society--but that should not be the only criterion.

Some possible ways suggested by the symposium attendees to implement this mandate included home study programs and professional development programs conducted by PRSA chapters, using computer software and videotapes.

In addition to the recommendations relegated to the board of directors and the proposed Task Force on Accreditation, the symposium returned a series of recommendations on related issues to the Task Force on Demonstrating Professionalism for further study. These recommendations dealt with other strategies for

demonstrating professionalism involving membership, ethics and education.

Several proposals concerning PRSA membership were suggested. First, the symposium recommended that an examination on the code of ethics be developed as a requisite for membership in the society. Continuing education, professional development programs and CEUs were named as possible membership maintenance methods. To give senior practitioners incentives to remain in the society, the symposium asked the council of PRSA sections (Counselors Academy, Public Affairs Section, Hospital Academy, etc.) to study the fellow credential or methods of acknowledging lifetime accomplishments in areas of specialization.

Another recommendation involving the code of ethics was to increase the "visibility of sanctions" for violations by requiring members to periodically reaffirm their adherence to PRSA Code of Professional Standards.

In the area of education, the compilation of a list of public relations practitioners willing to offer their practical expertise as advisers to college and universities was suggested. The report noted that this type of academic/practitioner "interaction" was part of public relations programs at the University of Florida, the University of Tennessee and Ball State University.

Lectureships also were proposed to increase cooperation and understanding of public relations in the academic world.

Recommendations also were made to involve the business community. The symposium asked the task force to consider developing programs to foster "dialogue" with corporate chief executive officers (CEOs) and upper-level management. These business leaders would be asked for their input on the various proposals and recommendations made by the symposium and task force and to participate in dialogues on professionalism.

A meeting with some of PRSA's "sister professional societies" was proposed to determine the feasibility of cooperative efforts, such as a universal accreditation program. More information about NSPRA's reaccreditation program, for example, could be acquired at such a meeting.

The attendees also asked the task force to consider holding a Symposium on Demonstrating Professionalism annually and to encourage PRSA chapters and districts to plan conferences and symposia on professionalism.

Two recommendations not specifically addressed in the pink papers were to develop proposals for "cleaning up the semantics of public relations" and to consider a method of recognizing non-public relations professionals. An award, in some form, would be given to a "non-practitioner or CEO or senior executive who exemplifies the highest

principles of public relations or abets the profession in some particularly meritorious way."

Finally, the symposium asked the task force to combine the recommendations into a "formal professional progression tied to membership" with a timetable for implementing the plan.

One recommendation for further study made by the symposium seemed prophetic in light of the controversy involving ex-PRSA President Anthony M. Franco. The report stated:

The symposium urges development of a paper setting forth the ways ethical and unethical practice affects the public interest. What is the demonstrable power of public relations activity to help or harm the public?

Summary

In 1986, accreditation once again came to the forefront of issues relevant to the practice of public relations, largely because of the efforts of the PRSA Accreditation Board to promote the program as well as the work of the Task Force on Demonstrating Professionalism. This renewal of interest in the credential was evidenced was the Symposium on Demonstrating Professionalism, which reassessed accreditation's role in the professionalization of public relations and began to seriously evaluate possible changes in and alternatives to the program. At the symposium, licensing was rejected as an immediate

alternative and an emphasis was placed on professional development. But accreditation remained the preferred credential, although it was seen more as continuing education or a professional development tool, than as a direct means of establishing public relations as a profession. Regardless of the role given to the credential, it was clear that PRSA was dedicated to achieving professional status and that accreditation, in some form, would be part of that endeavor.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this thesis study was to answer the question: Is the PRSA accreditation program a viable approach to the professionalization of public relations?

As a background to the case study, the sociological concepts of professions and professionalization as well as the various methods of credentialing were examined. This examination was necessary to provide a theoretical context in which to discuss the effects of accreditation on professionalization, because few discussions of the program dealt with these concepts in depth.

The five attributes of a profession as outlined by Greenwood (Vollmer & Mills, 1966)--a "systematic body of theory" (pp. 11-12); "professional authority" (pp. 12-13); "sanction of the community" (pp. 13-14); a "regulative code of ethics" (pp. 14-16); and "professional culture" (pp. 16-18)--established the necessary requirements for professional status. Greenwood's most important contribution to the study of professions was his "continuum" theory (p. 10), which stated that professional status was determined by the number of these attributes an occupation possesses and their degree of maturation.

Public relations clearly has two of these attributes. Its body of knowledge is evidenced by a scholarly research

journal, Public Relations Review, and academic literature on public relations theory and practice, communications theory and related psychological and sociological studies. Societies such as PRSA and IABC, institutions such as public relations agencies and corporate public relations departments, and public relations educational and research organizations at colleges and universities constitute a professional culture.

The remaining three attributes are present in public relations to a lesser degree. Codes of ethics are established for public relations practice. However, there is not a uniform, universal code accepted and recognized by all practitioners. In addition, experience with enforcement of these codes has demonstrated that they are often impotent (see Appendix A). The authority to prescribe a course of action to clients or employers is growing among public relations practitioners. Unfortunately, many practitioners still spend a great deal of time proving their work is effective, necessary and valuable.

The final attribute of profession offered by Greenwood was the sanction of the community. This sanction allows the occupation to regulate its educational system, to limit entry to practice and to evaluate its own performance. Recognition of the occupation as a profession by society is implied in this attribute. The first qualification of

this attribute may be satisfied through the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, which regulates public relations education by accrediting programs at colleges and universities. This association serves about 80 colleges and universities in the field, but does not include public relations education in departments such as speech and business administration. Attainment of the remaining two qualifications of community sanction, however, poses the greatest challenge to practitioners intent on professionalizing public relations.

The PRSA accreditation program can be seen as an attempt to limit entry to practice and provide a process of self-evaluation. Although an accreditation program was being considered by the Counselors Academy prior to the SEC investigation and the Fulbright Commission hearings, the general assembly adopted the program in response to these events. The intent of the counselors may have been to establish a credential that would garner the respect of prospective clients, but PRSA as a whole had a different purpose in mind. It saw the program as quick route to professional status by establishing some means of prohibiting unethical people from practice. The accreditation program, however, is inadequate as a limit to entry to public relations practice. The program sets a minimum standard for the practice of public relations, not a limit to entry. Any person who chooses to practice

public relations may do so without restriction.

Furthermore, PRSA represents only a fraction of the estimated 120,000 (Newsom & Scott, 1985, p. 484) public relations practitioners in the United States. To function as a means of limiting entry to public relations practice, accreditation would first have to become a requirement for PRSA membership. With only about one-third of the current PRSA membership accredited, a mandatory program does not seem probable. In addition, accreditation is an inadequate form of self-evaluation as defined by Greenwood. Self-evaluation, according to Greenwood, is a right awarded by society to an occupation to determine its own public policy. While society may view public relations practices as unethical in some instances, it has not yet recognized the need for a public policy. In summary, accreditation falls short of functioning as a limit to entry and a process of self-evaluation.

Contemporary proponents and administrators of the PRSA accreditation program are more realistic than their predecessors. Experience has shown them that accreditation alone is not capable of elevating public relations to the position of the medical and legal professions. In 1986, PRSA officers see accreditation as a program of professional development in which a practitioner can demonstrate her or his competence and knowledge, and commitment to continuing education.

Although the administrators of the program have changed their view of the purpose of accreditation, many members of the society still equate accreditation with instant professional status. The promotional efforts of the PRSA accreditation board and the public relations department seem to be aimed at changing this view of accreditation. The new slogan, "Accreditation--the standard for professionals," still alludes to professional status, but the advertising copy presents a different message. Advertisements for the program in the Public Relations Journal, for example, now quote young practitioners attesting to the practical benefits of accreditation, such as a demonstration of competency and a dedication to continuing education.

A second change in view of the purpose and effects of accreditation is the realization by PRSA officers, such as John Felton, Dolores Swift and Mary Ann Pires, that recognition of public relations as a profession by society is essential. This realization is reflected in the accreditation board and Counselors Academy's cooperative effort to promote accreditation to executive recruiting firms. Increased efforts to publicize newly accredited members in local newspapers and the consideration of advertisements in non-public relations newspapers and periodicals are other examples.

Promotion of the program, especially through the local chapters, is essential to the success of the program. The accreditation board is aware of the need for increased promotion and has taken steps to improve this aspect of the program. In the past, promotion was limited to infrequent advertisements in the Public Relations Journal, press releases to local newspapers and word-of-mouth.

The recommendations of the Symposium on Demonstrating Professionalism indicated that PRSA's leaders are aware of the limitations of the present accreditation program in the process of professionalization. Proposals to offer accreditation to non-PRSA members and to designate an independent organization to administer a universal program show that the society has recognized the importance of limiting entry into practice. Proposals to link accreditation to membership and to require reaccreditation through continuing education or CEUs demonstrate PRSA's commitment to professional development. In sum, the symposium proved PRSA's desire to update the accreditation program to reflect the growing understanding of the role of credentialing in the process of professionalization.

In general, PRSA's efforts to increase promotion and to reevaluate the role and purpose of accreditation seem to be headed in the right direction. Accreditation alone cannot professionalize public relations, but it should be

an integral part of the process. Four recommendations for further study offered by the Symposium on Demonstrating Professionalism seem likely to contribute to the successful professionalization of public relations, if implemented. First, a single, universal accreditation program, developed under the auspices of a coalition of public relations organizations, would benefit the entire field. Accreditation could be offered to all practitioners, regardless of professional affiliation. The endorsement and promotion of such an accreditation program by all public relations organizations would demonstrate to practitioners and the public the need for this credential. In this way, accreditation would begin to function as a limit to entry to practice. The program would remain voluntary, but professional peer pressure and public acceptance of the credential would motivate practitioners to seek accreditation. The second recommendation that has promise for public relations is reaccreditation. Reaccreditation would ensure that practitioners are involved in professional development, which is essential to establishing and maintaining credibility, integrity and acceptance by the public. Third, increased internal and external promotion would yield many benefits. Public relations practitioners could demonstrate their competency and effectiveness by successfully communicating the value, purpose and goals of accreditation to the publics they work

with. It seems ironic that until recently PRSA had not applied its expertise and knowledge of public relations theory, principles and strategy to the promotion of the program. By doing so, PRSA could increase participation in the program and makes strides toward overcoming the greatest hurdle to the professionalization of public relations--public recognition. Finally, some method of strengthening the enforcement of the code of ethics and tying it to membership and accreditation must be found. Expulsion from the society and revocation of accreditation are not sufficient to prohibit unethical practitioners from the field. The recommended plan for maintenance of membership and accreditation through periodical, mandatory examinations on the code would help to increase awareness of the importance of ethical behavior in the process of professionalization.

In conclusion, public relations practitioners must continue to work to change their negative public image, for the key to professional status is recognition as an ethical profession whose services are essential to the well-being and prosperity of society.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Securities and Exchange Commission began an investigation of then PRSA President-elect Anthony M. Franco, after he purchased 3,000 shares of one of his client's stock in June 1985. On August 26, 1986, the SEC filed a complaint in U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. charging Franco with alleged insider trading in his client's stock. Franco signed a SEC consent decree, which was neither an admission nor a denial of guilt, at that time. Three days later, Franco resigned as president of the society. Franco appeared before the PRSA Board of Ethics on September 19, 1986. The board of ethics' decision was remanded to the PRSA Board of Directors. The society's directors met on October 4, 1986 to determine if Franco had violated the PRSA Code of Professional Standards. Franco tendered his resignation as a member of the society on the same date, making any possible disciplinary actions by the board of directors moot. (Sources: Lipman, J. (1986, September 26). PR society receives some very bad PR--From its ex-chief. The Wall Street Journal, pp. 1, 27; J. W. Felton, personal communication, October 5, 1986; D. Peltier, personal communication [PRSA press release], October 5, 1986.)

APPENDIX B

Addresses Of Professional Associations

National Association of Health Unit Clerks-Coordinators
1821 University Ave., Suite 155 S
St. Paul, MN 55104

Administrative Management Society
Maryland Rd.
Willow Grove, PA 19090

Interior Design Society
405 Merchandise Mart
Chicago, IL 60654

American Academy of Actuaries
1835 K St., NW, Suite 515
Washington, DC 20006

American Cardiology Technologists Association
11800 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 808
Reston, VA 22091

National Center for Housing Management
1275 K St., NW
Washington, DC 20005

National School Public Relations Association
1501 Lee Highway
Arlington, VA 22209

International Association of Business Communicators
870 Market St., Suite 940
San Francisco, CA 94102

Florida Public Relations Association
Liberty Square, Suite 205
1137 New Bartow Highway
Lakeland, FL 33801

American Academy of Actuaries
1720 I Street, N.W., 7th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20006

Accreditation Really Matters

"My clients are professionals who have earned letters after their names: AIA, LL.B., J.D., M.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., ASTA, PE, CLU, NASDAQ, ASLA, CAE, RN, IBD, ASID, AIKD, M.Ed., RPT. They respect the level of knowledge and experience required to pass a professional accreditation examination.

"More than once, prospective clients have become *real* clients precisely because of the APR after my own name. Some clients introduce me to their colleagues as an Accredited practitioner and offer to explain the designation. On-going clients appreciate that when I recommend particular public relations strategies, I can explain the theory that supports them. To these people, Accreditation really matters."

Susan Perloff, APR
Consultant
Philadelphia, PA
Perloff, Accredited in 1980, has
been in public relations for 20 years.

**PRSA Accreditation—
the standard for
professionals**

Fall Exams: October 5-19
Spring Exams: April 19-May 3



For information, call or write:
your local Chapter Accreditation
Chairman or PRSA, 845 Third
Avenue, New York, NY 10022
(212) 826-1750.



Who Cares About PRSA Accreditation?

Kenneth L. Bowers cares:



Kenneth L. Bowers, APR
Vice President
Corporate Communications
Hershey Foods Corporation
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Fall Exams: October 5-19, 1986

For more information, contact your local Chapter Accreditation Chairman or Dorothy McGuinness, Accreditation Administrator, PRSA, 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022.

APR—The Best Thing You Can Put Next To Your Name

APRs on APR

JACK E. NETTLES, APR

Manager-Corporate Communication & Public Policy Issues
Aluminum Company of America

"I found the Accreditation examination to be quite a valuable experience. I urge practitioners to take it."

GERALD J. VOROS, APR

President
Ketchum Communications, Inc.

"Those who fear taking the Accreditation exam should remember two things: If you want to know just how good you are, this is one way to do it; and, to paraphrase Roosevelt, there's nothing to fear but fear itself."

WILLIAM E. DUKE, APR

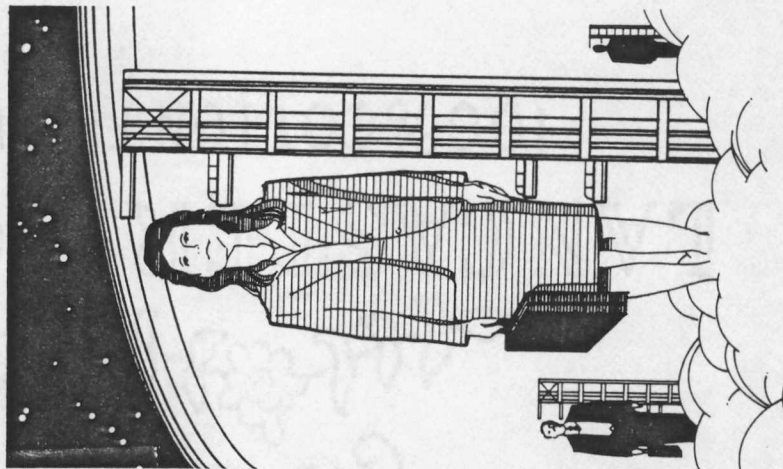
Manager, National Programs-Public Relations
Atlantic Richfield Company

"Accreditation is akin to taking post-graduate courses . . . it doesn't guarantee a job, but it sure demonstrates seriousness of purpose."

The Public Relations Society of America's fall Accreditation examinations will be held November 6-20, 1983. For information contact your local chapter Accreditation chairman, or write or call Dorothy McGuinness at PRSA, 845 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022, (212) 826-1750.

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Public Relations Journal	Communications Technology Task Force
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1925 Monroe Drive, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30324

Listed below are the Members newly Accredited of the Public Relations Society of America. Public relations professionals with a minimum of five years of experience in the field qualify for PRSA Accreditation by successfully completing a written and oral examination testing their knowledge and competence in the practice of public relations.



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Duval County School Board

VITA

Thomas Edward Mierzwinski was born in Longbranch, New Jersey on September 8, 1951. After living near the Jersey shore and the nation's capital, he moved with his family to Nashua, New Hampshire. In 1969, he graduated from Bishop Guertin High School, where Bro. Roger Muenier taught him the fundamentals of writing in senior English class. After high school, Mierzwinski went to Boston, Massachusetts to experience the big city and study for a bachelor's degree. The lure of city life was too great, however, and he succumbed to it. After 11 years of self-exploration, Mierzwinski finally received a bachelor's degree in English/communications from Rivier College, Nashua, N.H., in 1980. He was one of the top five students in the continuing education division. His first public relations position was director of communications for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester, N.H. In 1983, he moved to Satellite Beach, Fla., his parents' new home. He was employed as an information specialist at the Florida Solar Energy Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla. Mierzwinski entered the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he earned a master's degree in communications with a major in public relations in 1986. His formal education may have ended, but his search for truth continues.