

Marist College Red Foxes PRSSA Chapter, Constitution and Bylaws

As revised and proposed, February 2013

ARTICLE I. Name

The name of this non-profit organization shall be the Marist College Red Foxes Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA). This organization shall be referred to herein as the Chapter.

ARTICLE II. Objectives

In accordance with the objectives of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), the objectives of this student Chapter shall be to advance the art and science of public relations in the public interest; to encourage research, discussion and study of the problems and techniques of the public relations profession; to strengthen and maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct by students and members of the public relations profession; to exchange ideas and experiences and collect and disseminate information that may enhance or improve the professional and theoretical knowledge, standards, ethics and standing of the membership; and to promote friendly association among members of the public relations profession.

ARTICLE III. Membership

Section I. **Eligibility.**

- a. General Membership – Membership in this Chapter shall be extended to undergraduate and graduate students at Marist College, regardless of age, race, color, creed, sex or national origin, who are either communication majors or who have demonstrated an interest in public relations and other communication fields. Only those students who are enrolled full time at Marist College and in good standing shall be eligible for membership in this Chapter. Any student meeting the above criteria shall be entitled to membership in this Chapter. The PRSSA National Committee must approve additional Chapter restrictions.
- b. Affiliate Membership – International students enrolled in a Marist College degree-granting college or university outside the United States that has passed CEPR Certification are eligible for affiliate membership. The National Committee must approve additional restrictions.

Section 2. **Dues and Fees.** Chapter membership shall be limited to those students who meet all eligibility criteria and pay annual national and Chapter dues.

- a. Determination of Dues – The PRSSA National Assembly shall determine the amount of national dues annually with counsel from the National Committee. This Chapter must be notified of any proposed change in national dues at least 21 days prior to the National Assembly. The amount of Chapter dues shall be determined by a quorum of eligible voting members on an annual basis.
- b. Collection of Dues – National and Chapter dues shall be collected from each member by the Chapter Director of Finance at the outset of each semester and sent, with the official form provided by PRSSA National, to the PRSSA

Headquarters no later than November 1. National dues for members joining the Chapter on or after March 1 may be forwarded by the Chapter Director of Finance, together with the official form provided by Nationals, to the Headquarters in the spring.

- c. Fees – The Chapter may establish, upon a majority vote of a quorum of eligible voting members, an initiation fee for membership in the Chapter. This fee would be collected from each new member one time, along with annual dues (local and national) at the beginning of the first year of membership.
- d. Entitlements – On payment of such dues and applicable fees, a member is entitled to one full year's membership, extending from November 1 to October of the following year. On payment of such dues on or after March 1, a member is entitled to one full year's membership, extending from March 1 to the last day of February the following year. Dues shall not be prorated. Advisers are entitled to Chapter membership based on the services that they provide and they will not be charged initiation fees or annual dues – other than national PRSA dues that are required of Professional Advisers and other members of PRSA.

Section 3. Rights and Privileges of Membership. Students who meet the membership requirements and pay the necessary national and Chapter dues shall be eligible for participation in all PRSSA activities at the national and Chapter levels. This shall include the right to serve as a national officer, provided the member has met additional criteria defined in Article III, Section 5(a) of the PRSSA Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and the right to serve as a Chapter officer, assembly delegate or national subcommittee member, as well as entitlement to services provided from Headquarters as described in the annual PRSSA National Chapter Handbook.

Section 4. PRSA Associate Membership. An individual who has received, or is in the process of receiving, a baccalaureate degree and who is a member of the Chapter at the time of graduation shall be eligible for Associate Membership in PRSA. The application process, membership fees and election to Associate Membership are subject to change and are at the determination of the PRSA Board of Directors. Interested members should refer to PRSA for additional information.

ARTICLE IV. Chapter Executive Board

Section 1. Composition. The Chapter executive board shall be composed of:

- a. Elected Officers – The Chapter executive board will be composed of eight student members elected by a majority vote of a quorum of eligible Chapter members to the following positions: Chapter President, Vice President and six directors. The directors shall be Firm Director, Director of Chapter Advancement, Director of Chapter Programming, Director of Member Services, Director of Public Relations and Director of Finance.
- b. Advisers – One or two Professional Advisers and one Faculty Adviser shall serve on the Chapter executive board as counselors to the student officers. The Faculty Adviser will be appointed by the Dean, School of Communication & the Arts, Marist College, based on professor availability and willingness to be

involved. The proposed Faculty Adviser will be approved by a majority vote by a quorum of eligible voting members. The Professional Adviser(s) will be agreed upon by the Dean, School of Communication & the Arts, Marist College, and the Faculty Adviser, and approved by a majority vote by a quorum of eligible voting members. These advisers will serve as ex officio, nonvoting members of the board. Advisers should fulfill roles and perform duties described by the National Committee. These include:

- i. The Faculty Adviser will serve as the official faculty representative to the Chapter and act as the academic link between the student Chapter, the college administration, and the sponsoring PRSA Chapter. The Faculty Adviser will set the tone of professionalism for the Chapter, its officers and its members. This tone will stress that PRSSA is a national organization that is affiliated with PRSA, the world's largest organization of public relations professionals. By definition, this professional Chapter is not a student club.
- ii. Professional Advisers will serve as professional, public relations role models and represent their respective counterparts at the PRSA Chapter level. Professional Advisers will coordinate with the Faculty Adviser, the sponsoring PRSA Chapter, and board members to help establish and carry out the Chapter's annual objectives. Professional Advisers are accountable to the president and board of their PRSA Chapter for performance and should report to their PRSA board at least twice a year.

Section 2. Responsibility and Authority. The executive board shall be responsible for managing the business and affairs of the Chapter and shall operate within the powers granted to it by the PRSA National Committee, Board of Directors, the PRSA Bylaws, and the PRSSA Bylaws.

Section 3. Voting Members. Voting members of the executive board shall be the Chapter President, Vice President and all six directors.

Section 4. Meetings. Chapter meetings of the general membership will be held at least once a month during the fall and spring semesters. Executive board meetings and special meetings will be held, as required, at any time during the calendar year.

- a. **Announcement** – The board must notify the general membership and Advisers at least three days prior to convening general membership meetings. The board may also schedule executive meetings, committee meetings and special meetings of the general membership; however, the board must provide members and Advisers with adequate advance notice of these meetings.
- b. **Time and Location** – The time and location of routine, monthly meetings of the general membership will be agreed upon based on room availability and members' schedules. The board, for the convenience of Chapter members, may reschedule time and location of meetings periodically. Time and location of executive meetings must be approved by a quorum of voting board members.

- An invitation must be extended or permission granted by the Chapter President for non-board members to attend executive meetings.
- c. Agendas and Minutes – An agenda for general membership and board meetings will be developed by the Director of Chapter Programming, approved by the Vice President and distributed at least 72 hours prior to each meeting. Minutes of each general membership and board meeting will be drafted by the Director of Chapter Programming, approved by the Vice President and distributed within 72 hours after each meeting.
 - d. Procedure – The Chapter President shall be responsible for the procedures of all general membership and Board meetings. General membership meetings shall follow a procedure guided by Roberts Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V. Terms and Election of Officers

Section 1. Elections.

- a. Eligibility – Candidates for executive board offices shall be members in good standing and shall be available to maintain PRSSA membership for the duration of service on the executive board. Candidates must also be enrolled full time in school at least through the current term while serving on the board.
- b. Nomination Procedure – The nominations for office shall be submitted to the standing Vice President on the official form provided by the Director of Chapter Programming.
- c. Time and Location – The election of board officers shall take place annually during the Chapter’s annual April meeting (on or before April 15).
- d. Rules and Procedures – Chapter officers shall be elected by a majority vote of a quorum of the eligible voting membership.
- e. Quorum – Two-thirds of the Chapter’s voting members constitute a quorum in a general election. Two-thirds of the executive board’s voting members – including the Chapter President (mandatory) – constitutes a quorum for executive board votes.
- f. Tabulation of Results – The outgoing Chapter President and at least one other member of the executive board must tabulate and certify election results.

Section 2. Terms in Office. Each of the executive board officers shall be elected by Chapter members by April 15 of each year to serve for a period of one year, beginning on the last day of the classes during the spring semester following the previous annual election. Members of the executive board, with the exception of graduating seniors, shall be eligible for re-election to the board, provided that they continue to maintain good standing at Marist College and fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their office.

Section 3. Absences from Campus. The proper functioning of the Chapter is contingent on commitment from all executive board members. Those that plan to study abroad, participate in Marist in Manhattan or spend an extended period of time away from campus while serving on the executive board are encouraged to run for either Vice President or Director of Public Relations. All other positions require a physical presence on campus to fulfill all required duties.

Section 4. **Interim Positions.** If members are planning to be absent from campus and wish to run for a position separate from those outlined in Article V, Section 3, he or she has the option to ask others that plan on running if they will be away at some point the following academic year.

Interim positions must be agreed upon by both parties concerned and approved by the Faculty Adviser. This agreement must be adequately addressed to the general voting membership at the time of elections. The terms in office run from the last day of the classes during the spring semester following the previous annual election to November 30 and December 1 to the last day of the classes during the spring semester following the annual election. Prior to the first officer's departure from campus, a formal transition period must occur.

Section 5. **Vacancies.** If a board member vacates a position with more than four months left in his or her term, a special election will be called for by the Chapter President to fill that position. The Chapter President may nominate another student to fill a student office until a general election is held or if less than four months remains in a term. The Dean of the School of Communication & the Arts may nominate another professional or faculty member to temporarily fill a vacant adviser position until a new adviser is elected by the general membership or if less than four months remains in a term. In case of a temporary appointment, a quorum of voting board members must approve the Chapter President's or Dean's choice.

Section 6. **Removal from Office.** Any executive board officer of the Chapter may be removed for cause by a vote by a quorum of the Chapter's eligible voting membership during a special meeting of the general membership called by the Chapter President, and approved by the Faculty Adviser, for that purpose. General members must be notified at least three weeks before the special meeting. All parties concerned shall have the opportunity to present their cases to the general membership prior to the special meeting and during the special meeting, prior to voting. If two-thirds of the dues-paying members attend the meeting, along with a quorum of the executive board, they shall constitute a quorum and the vote will be taken. If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the Executive Board members are in attendance, balloting will be conducted electronically. The Chapter President will notify the general membership of the petition for removal from office with statements from all parties concerned. The general membership must respond within two weeks. If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the executive board members respond, the process will be repeated. If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the executive board members respond the second time, the executive board will move forward. Grounds for removal shall be misconduct so as to bring discredit to Marist College, the Chapter, PRSSA or PRSA; dereliction of assigned duties and responsibilities; intentional violation of Chapter Bylaws; failure to maintain g Marist College; or violation of any policies outlined in Article VII.

Section 7. **Ineligibility.** A student elected to office on the executive board shall not be eligible to hold more than one board office concurrently at the Chapter level. If a student fails to maintain good standing at Marist College, he or she will be ineligible to continue holding office and must immediately vacate office.

Section 8. **New Officer Orientation.** Members of the current executive board shall annually meet with the newly elected executive board members to orient new officers.

ARTICLE VI. Duties and Responsibilities of Officers

Section 1. **Chapter President.** The Chapter President, as the principal administrative officer of the Chapter shall lead the Executive Board and:

- a. Serve as principal liaison with Advisers, the Marist College Administration, the PRSA National Headquarters; and external groups and individuals.
- b. Ensure proper organization of the agendas, minutes and procedures for Chapter meetings.
- c. Supervise all Chapter activities and ensure that the Chapter adheres to established Chapter, PRSSA, and PRSA bylaws.
- d. Approve and supervise Chapter committees and subcommittees, as needed.
- e. Delegate and assign tasks to specific executive board members based on their position requirements.
- f. Act as a mentor to all executive board members and assist them in performing their jobs at a higher level.
- g. Oversee, edit and approve any published Chapter materials or social media content.

Section 2. **Vice President.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, performing presidential duties if the Chapter President is absent or unable, directing and assisting executive board members and reporting their progress and performance on current projects to the Chapter President and Faculty Adviser and assisting the Chapter President in coordinating and directing committee activities and Chapter operations.

Section 3. **Firm Director.** The duties and responsibilities of the Firm Director position are outlined in the student-run firm's policies and procedures. On the Chapter level, the Firm Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to, working closely with Chapter executive board to promote the firm and ensuring that the firm adheres to established Chapter, PRSSA and PRSA bylaws.

Section 4. **Director of Chapter Advancement.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, acting as liaison between the PRSA Sponsor Chapter, Nationals and alumni members, serving as the National Delegate for the annual National Assembly, acting as the head of the community service committee, working closely with the Chapter President and Vice President to ensure the Chapter is meeting all PRSSA National Initiatives and developing new ideas to enhance the Chapter.

Section 5. **Director of Chapter Programming.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, working closely with the Chapter President and Vice President on planning semester events such as general meetings, guest speakers and workshops and acting as the main event organizer by contacting distinguished PR professionals to arrange times and dates for their visits.

Section 6. **Director of Member Services.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, tracking member participation and involvement, leading all mentor program activities, passing along any beneficial information to Chapter members (scholarship and award opportunities, PRSSA Regional Conferences, internships, free PRSSA events and jobs) and recruiting new members by speaking to public relations students and classes, promoting the Chapter at the semiannual activities fair and developing new recruitment tactics each semester.

Section 7. **Director of Public Relations.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, promoting the Chapter on and off campus, coordinating and organizing the production of the Chapter's on-campus publication, *esPResso*, promoting the Chapter's presence on campus through news releases, flyers, etc. and managing the Chapter's presence online and across all social media channels

Section 8. **Director of Finance.** Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, keeping records of all financial transactions, depositing and withdrawing all monies from the Chapter's PRSSA club account, collecting Chapter and national dues and completely and accurately submitting them to Nationals, working closely with the Chapter President and Director of Chapter Programming on preparing annual budget allocations and acting as the head of the fundraising committee.

Section 9. **Other Officers and Committees.** The Chapter President shall have the right to appoint additional Chapter officers and committees to coordinate special projects or to conduct the business of the Chapter. A committee must be led by a member of the executive board or a designated chairperson. Special officers and chairpersons report directly to the executive board. Upon designation, special officers and committees shall serve for a maximum one-year period. Thereafter, the permanent establishment of an office or committee must be approved at the annual April meeting of the general membership; and officers or committee chairpersons must be elected on an annual basis. Special officers and committee chairpersons shall be considered *ex officio*, non-voting members of the board.

ARTICLE VII. Disciplinary Policies and Procedures

Section 1. **Attendance.** All executive board members must attend all events and meetings throughout the year. If unable to attend a meeting or event, each executive board member must submit a request form via email to the Chapter President and Vice President at least three days prior to missing a meeting or event. The reason for absence must be valid.

Valid reasons include:

- a. Family emergency
- b. Illness
- c. Uncontrollable circumstances (e.g. car issues, extreme weather, etc.)

Invalid reasons include:

- a. Work
- b. Homework, test, etc.
- c. Group meetings/projects
- d. Social events for another club or organization

Section 2. Tardiness. All executive board members are required to be on time for meetings and events. If an executive board member plans on being tardy, he/she must notify the Chapter President and Vice President via email at least 24 hours before the meeting or event time and must have a valid reason, per Article VII, Section 1. If the executive board member did not intend on being tardy and is simply running late to a meeting or event (no more than ten minutes), he/she must notify the Chapter President and Vice President by either phone call or text message prior to the meeting or event's designated start time.

Section 3. Completing Tasks and Communication. Assigned tasks to executive board members should be completed on time and in a professional, well-developed manner. All executive board members must maintain communication with the Vice President on a basis determined by the Vice President and executive board and approved by the Chapter President and Faculty Adviser. Updates should outline the completed tasks to date and the goals and projects for the coming week(s). Updates are mandatory and must be sent, even when updates are minimal or nonexistent.

A 24-hour response policy applies for all internal communication. Executive board members are expected to respond to emails, text messages and all other forms of communication within 24 hours. As stated in Article VII, Section 1, an executive board member must have a valid reason for failing to do so, or must notify the Chapter President and Vice President ahead of time (e.g. will be on vacation, lost phone, etc.).

In the event of a scheduled academic break (e.g. winter break, spring break, etc.), the communication policy for executive board members will be determined by the Chapter President, Vice President and Faculty Adviser based on projects and assignments at hand, events or meetings scheduled and the overall performance of the executive board to date. This communication policy will be decided ahead of time and announced to the executive board no less than three days prior to the start of break.

Section 4. Disciplinary Procedures. The first infraction of the policies stated in Article VII, Sections 1-3, will result in a written warning and will be considered a "warning." The first infraction will be documented by the Vice President.

The second infraction of the policies stated in Article VII, Sections 1-3 will result in a debriefing with the Chapter President and/or Vice President. The board member must

write a written apology to the rest of the board members as well as the Faculty Adviser. This will be considered the board member's second "warning." The second infraction will be documented by the Vice President.

The third infraction of the policies stated in Article VII, Sections 1-3 will result in a debriefing with the Chapter President, Vice President and Faculty Adviser. The board member charged must write a written apology to the rest of the executive board members as well as the Faculty Adviser. This will be considered the board member's third "warning" and could result in termination at the discretion of the Chapter President, Vice President and Faculty Adviser.

Upon the fourth infraction of the policies stated in Article VII, Sections 1-3, refer to the removal from office process, as stated in Article V, Section 6.

ARTICLE VII. Changes to Constitution and Bylaws

The executive board may approve routine, administrative changes to the Constitution and Bylaws for the purpose of maintaining professional correspondence standards. Substantive changes will constitute amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws that must receive interim approval by a vote by a quorum of the Chapter's eligible voting membership at a general or special meeting – and final approval by PRSSA at the national level. General members must be notified of the special meeting and proposed amendments at least three weeks before the meeting. Members eligible to vote shall have the opportunity to offer comment on the proposed amendments prior to voting. If two-thirds of the dues-paying members attend at the meeting, along with a quorum of the executive board, they shall constitute a quorum and the vote will be taken.

If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the executive board members are in attendance, balloting will be conducted electronically. The Chapter President will notify the general membership of the petition for Constitution and Bylaws amendments. The general membership must respond within two weeks. If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the executive board members respond, the process will be repeated. If less than two-thirds of the dues-paying members or less than a quorum of the executive board members respond the second time, the executive board will move forward.

If the Chapter approves amendments, the executive board will submit proposed amendments to the National Committee for final approval of amendments. Upon approval of amendments, the Chapter President shall distribute amended Bylaws to the Dean of the School of Communication & the Arts, Advisers, the executive board and general membership of the Chapter. Amendments will not be made to the Chapter's Bylaws prior to approval by PRSSA at the national level.