

ELECTION BALLOT

2018 ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE AND BALLOT

Chapter elections will be held at the Annual Meeting Celebration, held on November 15 at Coles in Buffalo. Registration is required.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, complete this proxy form and email it by November 13 to the Nominating Committee at esilverman19@gmail.com.

Listed below is the slate for our 2019 chapter board:

PRESIDENT-ELECT (1-year term, but a three-year commitment)

Yes No Other _____

Michael Freedman is the associate director of public relations and manager of online content for Niagara University. He has been a member of the PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter since 2009, serving as treasurer in 2017 and 2018 and as a member of the chapter's E-Communications Committee since 2012. A recipient of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership's Spotlight Professional Award and a member of Niagara County's inaugural 12 Under 40 class, Mike also serves on the boards of the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce and the Center of Renewal at Stella Niagara. Mike, in addition to his work with PRSA, is a member of the marketing/communications committees for Leadership Niagara and the Heart, Love and Soul food pantry. Prior to joining Niagara, where he also is an adjunct professor and co-advisor of the Public Relations Student Society, Mike served as director of communications at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute and Artpark. He holds a bachelor's degree in communications from SUNY Geneseo and an MBA in strategic marketing from Niagara University.

TREASURER (1-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Marcene Robinson is news content manager at the University at Buffalo and has more than five years of experience in the public relations field. A chapter member since 2013, he has served on the Board as Assembly Delegate in 2018 and PRSSA Liaison for three years. Marcene has received several awards, including gold Excalibur Awards in media relations in 2014 and 2015, as well as the Rising Star Award in 2018 from PRSA Buffalo Niagara. He graduated cum laude from the University at Buffalo with a bachelor's degree in English.

SECRETARY (1-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Sarah Miller is the marketing and communications specialist at Elite Technology Sales Recruiters and has served as co-chair on the PRSSA Liaison committee for the past three years. Prior to joining Elite Technology Sales Recruiters, Sarah worked with a tech startup and an advertising agency after working as a freelance marketing professional for four years. She received her Master of Science in public relations management from SUNY Buffalo State and was also an active member of the University at Buffalo's PRSSA chapter before graduating with her Bachelor of Arts in communication.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (3-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Mike Barone is the owner and founder of Str84wrD Communications. He has a quarter century of marketing communications experience, during which he has helped numerous clients and organizations in dozens of industries to improve and advance. He served as Director of Marketing and Communications for the State University of New York at Fredonia from 2008 to 2016, where he led or supported all of the university's marketing efforts, including its advertising, public relations, branding, marketing, crisis communications, digital media, publications, event management, fundraising and government relations activities.

Mike also has more than 15 years of agency experience, including 13 years with Travers Collins & Company, where he rose from Account Coordinator to Vice President. There, he worked with dozens of private, not-for-profit and publicly held companies. He's earned numerous awards, including three "Best of Show" honors from the PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter. He's also a former President of the Buffalo Niagara Chapter, which honored him in 2011 as its Practitioner of the Year. In 2010, he was named to Business First's "Forty under 40" list. He holds a bachelor's in Communications from Cornell University and an M.B.A. from the University at Buffalo.

ASSEMBLY DELEGATE (3-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Matthew Biddle is assistant director of communications at the University at Buffalo School of Management. His work in public relations has been honored by PRSA, SUNYCUAD and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). A chapter member since 2014, Matt serves as chair for the programming committee. In addition, he is a freelance writer for regional publications, including Buffalo Spree and Buffalo Magazine. Matt graduated magna cum laude from Ithaca College.

LIAISON TO PRSSA CHAPTERS (1-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Samantha Schlein is the Marketing and Communications Manager at Vanner Insurance, overseeing all brand and integrated marketing initiatives. Since joining Vanner Insurance in 2016, Samantha has implemented strategic initiatives to expand Vanner's brand recognition and increase customer loyalty. She is the auction chair and volunteer for WNYHeroes, a Buffalo non-profit that supports local veterans following their transition to civilian life, and volunteer coordinator at JFS Buffalo, which helps support local refugee resettlement and a myriad of family challenges. Before Vanner, she worked as the digital specialist at WGRZ Channel 2, and interned at Roswell Park, Sirius XM, SUNY Fredonia, and Crowley Webb. She is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and in Audio Communications.

DIVERSITY CHAIR (*1-year term*)

Yes No Other _____

Rene Petties-Jones is the Community Engagement/Fund Development Director for the National Federation for Just Communities of WNY, Inc. She is active with the National NFJC as well as a mentor for other chapter members. Rene is an advocate for issues surrounding diversity and inclusion and currently serves as the chapter's Diversity Chair after being involved with the committee for many years. She recently received the May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner Award from PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter. Rene is also a former member of the Buffalo News Diversity Advisory Board. Working as an educator, administrator, advisor, and public relations associate with a number of area non-profit organizations, over the years she has done numerous presentations and seminars to thousands on a variety of relevant topics.

The following individuals were previously selected to serve on the 2019 PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter Board.

PRESIDENT (*1-year term*)

Stacy VanBlarcom, APR, is the communications manager at Liazon. As an accredited and established public relations practitioner, Stacy aims to exemplify the best of the profession, building relationships between organizations and their audiences that bring tangible benefits to all involved. An active PRSA Buffalo Niagara chapter member since 2006, Stacy is the co-chair of the chapter's e-Communications committee, and previously served as Board Secretary. Stacy volunteers as a guest lecturer at several regional educational institutions and programs, and served on the PR Committee for The Steadfast Foundation's Catwalk for Charity for multiple years. Outside of the communications realm, she is also a teacher and professional Bgirl at Buffalo's only school dedicated to the art of Bboying and Hip Hop culture, Verve Dance Studio.

PAST PRESIDENT (*1-year term*)

Devon Jerla was our 2018 Board President. She has served various roles within the chapter for nine years including Excalibur Awards chair, assembly delegate and president-elect. Most recently in her position as assistant marketing manager for the University at Buffalo, she received a Bronze Anvil award, and with our chapter she was named Rising Star, won three platinum Excalibur awards and received several other gold and silver Excaliburs and ADDY awards from the Advertising Club of Buffalo. Jerla began her career at Gelia as a public relations account coordinator, growing to public relations account manager and copywriter. She graduated summa cum laude from SUNY Buffalo State in public communications, leading the college's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter for several years.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (*3rd year of 3-year term*)

Rose C. Caldwell joined Catholic Charities of Buffalo as Communications and Public Relations Director in 2002. She previously served in the Public Relations Departments of Buffalo General Hospital and then Kaleida Health. After earning a bachelor's degree from SUNY Buffalo State College, she worked as a reporter and then editor with area weekly newspapers. She received the May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner of the Year award in 2014, has received several Excalibur awards and participated in an Excalibur Awards task force in 2014. Caldwell also serves on the Seneca Street Community Development Corp. board.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (*2nd year of 3-year term*)

Grace Gerass serves as membership chair and PRSSA Liaison committee member for PRSA Buffalo Niagara. She works as a content developer for the University at Buffalo Office of Donor and Alumni Communications, where she's responsible for planning, creating and implementing content that supports the Division of University Advancement. Grace graduated from SUNY Fredonia in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in public relations and minors in business administration and leadership studies.

ASSEMBLY DELEGATE (*2nd year of 3-year term*)

Samantha Pierce is a public relations specialist at Bak USA. She has eight years of experience providing regional and global public relations support across a variety of B2B and consumer technology, healthcare and lifestyle brands. Samantha is an active member of PRSA. She is the 2018 E-Communications co-chair and will assume the E-Communications chair role in 2019. She was also involved in the PRxNE18 Conference Logistics Subcommittee, where she assisted with A/V setup and coordination and organized speaker gifts for more than 40 speakers.