

BALLOT

2020 ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE AND BALLOT

Chapter elections will be held at PRSA Buffalo Niagara's Annual Meeting Celebration, being held virtually on November 19 from 12-1:15pm.

Registration is required. **If you are unable to attend the meeting,**

complete this proxy form and email it by November 18 to the Nominating Committee at

prsabuffaloniagara@gmail.com.

Listed below is the slate for our 2021 chapter board:

PRESIDENT-ELECT (1-year term, but a three-year commitment) Yes No Other _____

Marcene Robinson is a news content manager at the University at Buffalo and has more than seven years of experience in the public relations field. A chapter member since 2013, he has served on the Board as Treasurer for two years, 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 received an MBA and bachelor's degree in English from the University at Buffalo.

SECRETARY (1-year term) Yes No Other _____

Ginger Geoffery, APR is the director of communications for Canisius High School. She started in this role in 2015 following a long career in television news which included serving as a morning news anchor at WKBW-TV in Buffalo, an editor at KUSA-TV in Denver, and a Headline Sports anchor for CNN in Atlanta. Her experience also includes two years working for a marketing agency prior to joining Canisius. Ginger achieved her Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) in 2020. She grew up in Winter Haven, FL, graduated from the University of Florida, and now lives in Kenmore, NY with her husband.

TREASURER (1-year term) Yes No Other _____

Christopher Schobert has nearly two decades of experience in communications, marketing, higher education, and journalism. As Communications Director for the University at Buffalo's Clinical and Translational Science Institute (CTSI), he helps tell the story of one of the most accomplished and respected research centers in the area and the nation. He has previously worked in communications and marketing at Medaille College, in legal marketing at Goldberg Segalla, and as an editor at Buffalo Spree magazine. In addition to these roles, he has been a prominent film critic since the mid-2000s, first for The Buffalo News and now for internationally read film websites like The Film Stage. His annual coverage of the Toronto International Film Festival, and, recently, the London Film Festival and New York Film Festival, has brought his film writing to a worldwide audience. He continues to write a monthly column for Buffalo Spree, and contributes often to other outlets. A Buffalo native, he lives in Snyder with his wife, Mindy; his children, Evan and Nora; and a lazy terrier, Benny.

DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE (1st year of 3-year term) Yes No Other _____

Samantha Schlein is the Technology Partner Engagement Manager at Garland Technology, overseeing relationships and communication with key alliance partners. She has 10 years of experience in public relations and marketing roles focused on a variety of capacities including media relations, brand research and creation, project management, and events and sponsorship management. Since joining PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter in 2017, she has sat on the membership committee and is currently the PRSSA Liason. Schlein is an active member of a variety of organizations and boards including WNYHeroes gala chair, Fifty Fabulous Women Giving Circle, Danceability, and JFS of Buffalo. She is a graduate of SUNY Fredonia, where she received a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations and in Audio Communications.

LIAISON TO PRSSA CHAPTERS (1-year term)

Yes No Other _____

Alex Dean was raised in a small farming town on the outskirts of Rochester, and is thrilled to finally be making the move to the bustling City of Buffalo. A multi-talented corporate communications professional, Alex brings together experience in traditional PR and media relations, social media management, and video production. Alex has had a vested interest in PRSA since his days at SUNY Brockport, which he graduated from in May 2019. As a professional working in Rochester, Alex was a member of both PRSA Rochester's PRISM Award Planning Committee and its PRSA Young Professionals Committee. In his free time, Alex enjoys exercising, cooking, playing video games and exploring the City of Buffalo. Alex is a life-long Buffalo Bills fan as well as an avid supporter of the Toronto Raptors.

The following individuals were previously elected to serve on the 2021 PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter Board.

PRESIDENT (1-year term) Lori A. Allan serves as director of communications and development at the Charter School for Applied Technologies where she is responsible for the school's communications strategies including brand awareness, enrollment marketing and advertising campaigns, digital communications, social media platforms, special events and media relations. A senior communications practitioner, she previously held positions at Pharmacy Benefit Dimensions, the Orchard Park Central School District and Child & Family Services. Lori has completed board terms as treasurer and assembly delegate for the PRSA Buffalo Niagara chapter, in addition to her service as co-chair and chair of the Excalibur Awards committee. A recipient of the PRSA Rising Star Award, Lori has been recognized with both Silver and Gold Excalibur awards in Newsletters, Newspapers and Magazines. She is currently treasurer of the WNY School Public Relations Association and a former board member of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Outside of the communications world, Lori is an avid champion of ending Alzheimer's, working to raise money for the WNY Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association in honor of her late father.

PAST PRESIDENT (1-year term) Michael Freedman is the associate vice president of marketing & first-year enrollment 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 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 is also 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.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE (3rd year of 3-year term) Mike Barone is the owner and founder of STR8 4WRD Communications. He has more than a quarter century of marketing communications experience, during which he's 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 for eight years, 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. He also has 18 years of agency experience, including 13 years with Travers Collins & Company, where he rose to Vice President. There, he worked with dozens of private, not-for-profit and publicly held companies. He's earned numerous awards, including four "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.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE (*2nd year of 3-year term*) **Cassandra Kubiak** currently serves as the e-communications committee co-chair for the Buffalo Niagara chapter. She works as a Content Marketing Specialist at Niagara University. As a member of the Enrollment Marketing team, Cassie is responsible for the University's social media channels and website strategy, social media analytics reporting and implementation of new social media and digital communications strategies. Cassie has been a member of PRSSA since her sophomore year at The Ohio State University, in which she graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in communications. Cassie went on to receive her master's degree in communication with a concentration with digital advertising from Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

ASSEMBLY DELEGATE (*3rd year of 3-year term*) **Matthew Biddle** serves as assistant director of communications for the University at Buffalo School of Management. A member of PRSA Buffalo Niagara since 2014, Matt has served on the board of directors for the past four years and previously served as chair of the chapter's programming committee. Matt's work in communications has been honored by PRSA, the SUNY Council for University Advancement (SUNYCUAD) and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). In addition, Matt is a writer for regional publications, including *Buffalo Spree* and *Buffalo Magazine*. Matt graduated magna cum laude from Ithaca College's Roy H. Park School of Communications and is currently a student in the UB School of Management's Professional MBA program.

The following individuals were previously re-elected to serve another term on the 2021 PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter Board.

DIVERSITY CHAIR (*1-year term*) **Rene Petties-Jones** is the president for the National Federation for Just Communities of WNY, Inc., a position she was appointed to as part of the first leadership transition in over 30 years. She currently serves as the PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter Diversity Chair after being involved with the committee for many years, and as secretary of the board of directors for the Northeast District PRSA. Rene is recipient of the May C. Randazzo Outstanding Practitioner Award from PRSA Buffalo Niagara Chapter and the Women of Influence Award, Behind the Scenes, from Buffalo Business First. She is a former member of the Buffalo News Diversity Advisory Board and is a vocal advocate for issues surrounding diversity and inclusion. Working as an educator, administrator, advisor, and public relations associate with a number of area non-profit organizations, she has presented numerous seminars and workshops to thousands over the years and is a highly sought after speaker on issues surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

ASSEMBLY DELEGATE (*1-year term*) **Grace Gerass** is currently an assembly delegate, membership co-chair and PRSSA Liaison committee member for PRSA Buffalo Niagara. She works as an assistant director of communications and alumni engagement at the University at Buffalo School of Nursing, where she's responsible for supporting the overall alumni engagement, special events, marketing and communications strategies for the school. She's also enrolled in the Professional MBA program at UB, which she is expected to complete in 2022. Grace graduated from SUNY Fredonia in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in public relations and minors in business administration and leadership studies. She was a member of SUNY Fredonia's PRSSA chapter from 2011-2014, during which time she served as chapter president and treasurer. Grace received the PRSA Buffalo Niagara chapter Ann R. Carden Rising Star Award in 2019 and the May C. Randazzo Memorial Scholarship award in 2013.