



FLORIDA  
PUBLIC RELATIONS  
ASSOCIATION

June 10, 1994

An open letter to the members of FPRA:

When rumors are perceived as reality, it's time to step in and set the record straight; hence this personal correspondence to you.

The Sunshine District of Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) approached me about six months ago to discuss the potential of a merger of FPRA into their organization. As your association president my response was for them to bring any proposals to the forum of our state executive committee and board where they could be discussed. This has not happened.

Meanwhile, PRSA members around the state have been randomly approaching members regarding the concept of a merger. These random contacts have produced considerable confusion. This approach is not acceptable to me and, I believe, not acceptable to the members of FPRA.

We have sought no such merger with any group nor has the state board received any official offer for consideration.

While PRSA's interest was a bit of a surprise, the concept of a PRSA/FPRA merger was not. In 1981, FPRA agonized over this question and after considerable debate voted to merge with the national association. However, the ultimate acceptance of the merger lay in obtaining the approval of the then four PRSA Florida chapters. Two rejected the merger and the organizations went their separate ways. FPRA literally lay in ruins. The issue divided the membership nearly down the middle and after rejection of the merger by PRSA, our membership fell by nearly 50 percent. Chapters folded and some members never returned.

It was only through the motivational skills and determination of 1982 President Joseph Curley, APRP, and his board that the association rebounded and ultimately prevailed.

If there is any lesson to be learned it is that a merger of FPRA with any national organization holds the potential for great controversy and, as such, should be afforded the very best of careful consideration and impeccable member communication. There is much to be considered.

For fifty-six years, the Florida Public Relations Association has operated the largest statewide organization in the country for public relations professionals. We are Florida's dominant public relations organization. Why? Consider these facts:

- Our annual dues are \$125 - PRSA dues are currently \$175. (PRSA chapters do not receive rebates.)
- Our early annual conference early registration fee is \$340 and features speakers and subjects equal to any national offering. PRSA's fee is \$525 (and requires national travel).
- Our focus is on the profession in Florida as well as bringing national issues and speakers to you.

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Letter to FPRA members  
J.D. Rayburn, II, Ph.D., CPRC  
Page 2

- Our size and structure allow us to act more quickly (i.e. In May, the state board approved the installation of "on-line" computerized member services. Preliminary testing of the service will begin in June.)

Perhaps the most appropriate opportunity to further cooperation between our organizations would be the successful approval and implementation of a "universal accreditation" program.

Since 1988, FPRA has committed considerable energies and resources to pursuing this goal through the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC). PRSA sits as a member of the council as well and holds great influence over how quickly a universal accreditation agreement is reached. Originally targeted by 1990 State President Del Galloway, CPRC, successful implementation of a single accreditation program and credential for our profession remains among FPRA's top priorities.

When and if a merger with any organization becomes a prudent course of action, it is a matter for your elected chapter leaders to deliberate upon collectively in an official state board meeting.

Put more simply, in the spectrum of issues outlined by our chapters as priorities for member service ... there are bigger fish to fry. If you have questions or concerns, please call me at 904-644-8750.

Sincerely,



J.D. Rayburn, II, Ph.D., CPRC  
1994 President

xc: Frank Stansberry, APR  
Chairman, Sunshine District