



PRSA Foundation

2019 Annual Impact Report

PRSA Foundation 2019

At A Glance

The PRSA Foundation is pleased to release its 2019 Annual Impact Report, highlighting key accomplishments in the past year. The PRSA Foundation continues to fervently pursue the mission of promoting diversity among public relations professionals and companies so that they can best serve the public good and address the needs of a diverse world.

The PRSA Foundation provides awards and scholarships, supports research, and leads awareness and advocacy initiatives to help promote diversity and inclusion within the communications field.

With your generous support we will continue to empower and inspire communications students and professionals with meaningful programs and resources that positively impact the inclusive landscape of our profession.

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Dear PRSA Foundation supporters,

With great excitement, I joined the PRSA Foundation as its first Executive Director this past July. In 2019, we continued to promote diversity through our traditional events, programs and sponsorships and have broken ground on an exciting new coalition called the Diversity Action Alliance (detailed in this annual report). It was a stellar year of programming and planning in support of our mission, and I couldn't have felt more inspired by the PR community.

I first experienced the breadth of the PRSA Foundation at the launch of *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* at the Twitter headquarters in New York. It was there that I met our Foundation President Joe Cohen. Joe, along with the rest of the PRSA Foundation Board and representatives of the Diversity Action Alliance, took a leap of faith with me as an individual who is not just ethnically diverse, but someone with a diverse career and education background – an unlikely candidate. Diversity and inclusion are inherently important to me, and I am dedicated to unapologetically pursuing a more diverse profession through the programs and strategic pillars of the Foundation.

As the demographics of our country continuously change, we are encouraged that the Foundation's focus is increasingly relevant. From the Business Roundtable statement redefining the purpose of a corporation – which places D&I high on the list of priorities – to the growing body of research pointing out the necessity of a diverse workforce in communications, the Foundation's mission continues to be timely. Even now, as our nation and the world experience a

devastating public health crisis, diversity issues are paramount. The existing workplace and academic challenges for diverse populations are amplified by the impacts of COVID-19.

In the wake of the unprecedented events of COVID-19, the PRSA Foundation leadership has decided to temporarily scale down its operations in 2020 and focus specifically on its awards and scholarships (see press release with more details [here](#)). During this time, I will take a temporary leave of absence to join Joe's team at AXIS as a consultant, returning to the Foundation on January 1, 2021. Student scholarships will still be awarded this year as they need our support now more than ever. This seamless transition is yet another example of our leadership being focused on ensuring the career continuity and upward trajectory of diverse scholars and talent in PR.

Your generosity to the PRSA Foundation year after year helps us make an indelible impact on the culture of inclusion in our industry. Thank you for your continued support, and please continue to follow our social media pages for updates.

Carmella Glover



Carmella Glover

*Executive Director,
PRSA Foundation*

To our friends and supporters:

As I write this introduction, our world has been upended by social, economic, and political disruption caused by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). As we together navigate the impacts of COVID-19, the importance of advancing diversity and inclusion must not be ignored. Indeed, even amidst the COVID-19 crisis, our social fabric continues to be challenged by divisiveness, xenophobia and political, racial and ethnic tensions.

Due to the challenges posed by COVID-19, the PRSA Foundation made the difficult decision to temporarily scale down its programming in 2020 and concentrate our efforts on providing awards and scholarships for students and new professionals, to help improve diversity and inclusion within our profession. As part of the scale-back, we won't host the Paladin Awards in 2020. In addition, our Executive Director Carmella Glover will take a temporary leave of absence – during this period, she will join my team at AXIS as a full-time contractor and will return to her role at PRSA Foundation on January 1, 2021. Even as we make these short-term adjustments, we remain dedicated to our mission of increasing diversity and inclusion within communications.

And our work is sorely needed. For decades the communication industry has talked a good game about the importance of D&I but unfortunately our ability to recruit and retain diverse talent – and ensure representation at the management level – has been abysmal. Recently it has seemed as though we are beginning to turn a corner. More organizations are instituting formalized D&I programs and practices. The best are rolling out 360° programs that include recruitment and retention protocol and benchmarks, pay equity reviews, succession planning, employee education and training, advocacy and transparent measurement programs. As we work together to recover from COVID-19, we must simultaneously remain focused on advancing these efforts.

Our team at the PRSA Foundation is working hard to get more organizations to commit to taking tangible, measurable actions. I encourage you to read about the work that we are helping to lead, along with our partners, through the Diversity Action Alliance (DAA). I also ask that you read about our work to engage and empower students and new professionals, including the Diverse Voices book and related events. These efforts will continue during the 2020 year, even as we manage through the challenges of COVID-19.

Finally, thank you for taking time to read this report. I would be remiss if I did not express my gratitude to Ann Melinger and the fantastic team at Brilliant Ink for developing this report pro bono and for their years of support, partnership and friendship. Thank you also to our pro bono agency partners at Prosek, D.S. Simon and Talkwalker. In addition, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Carmella and the Foundation staff, as well as to our Board of Directors – I feel privileged to serve alongside you. I would also like to extend my gratitude to PRSA and Interim CEO Phil Bonaventure as well as its Board, for the organization's continued support and partnership, as well as to our partners within the DAA.

Lastly, to our readers, I have a simple ask: leverage your seat to advance diversity and inclusion. Be bold, be brave, take conscious actions to drive positive change.

Joe Cohen



Joe Cohen
*President, PRSA
Foundation, Chief
Marketing &
Communications
Officer, AXIS, APR*

Lead together. Act now.

For decades, the public relations industry has been facing a deficit when it comes to diversity. While efforts have been made, the progress is far too slow and as individual organizations, we are often competing where we should be collaborating. With the launch of the Diversity Action Alliance (DAA), it is our intention that this will no longer be the case. Throughout 2019, PRSA Foundation partnered with our peer industry associations, as well as a volunteer team at the University of Florida, to develop the DAA, an industry-wide coalition to accelerate progress in achieving meaningful and tangible results in diversity, equity, and inclusion across public relations and corporate communications. DAA is in pursuit of an urgent and critically essential goal: to achieve continuous improvement for under-represented groups as measured by recruitment, retention and representation in management. The PRSA Foundation was selected by its peer organizations to serve as the hub of the Alliance. In the spring of 2020, we will formally launch the DAA while issuing a call-to-action to industry leaders to commit to taking tangible actions to improve diversity and inclusion within their organizations.



**DIVERSITY
ACTION
ALLIANCE**

The DAA Founding Organizations include:

- [ColorComm](#)
- [Institute for Public Relations](#)
- [Hispanic Public Relations Association \(HPRA\)](#)
- [National Black Public Relations Society \(NBPRS\)](#)
- [The LAGRANT Foundation](#)
- [The Arthur W. Page Society](#)
- [PR Council](#)
- [PRSA](#)
- [PRSA Foundation](#)
- [The Plank Center for Leadership in Public Relations](#)
- [The University of Florida](#)
- [International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication \(AMEC\)](#)
- [International Communications Consultancy Organisation \(ICCO\)](#)
- [The Museum of Public Relations](#)

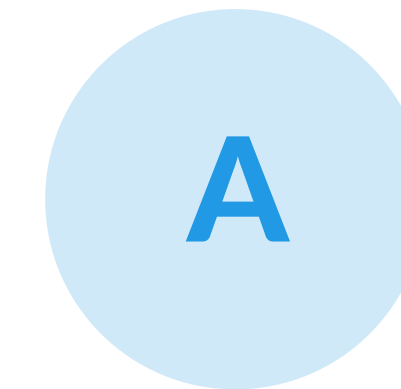
Now is the time for action.

Officially launching in the spring of 2020, the Diversity Action Alliance had a soft launch this past fall timed to Fall Conference season. Following review and approval from the boards of the participating organizations, initial announcements were made at a number of fall industry events including the Arthur W. Page Fall Conference and PRSA ICON. In addition, PRSA Foundation Trustee Sheryl Battles, who also serves as Co-Chair of Arthur W. Page's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, delivered a public industry-wide announcement via PRWeek's weekly podcast in early October, timed to Conference season.

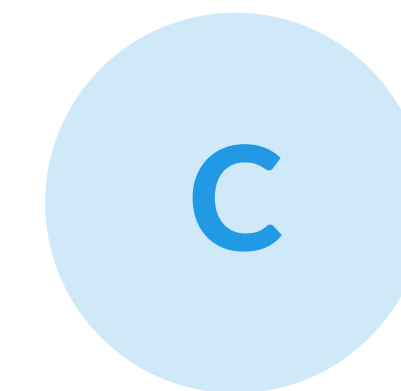
The DAA is supported and guided by an advisory council of D&I experts, champions, and thought leaders. The advisory council is a mix of emerging leaders and company executives from across every sector of the profession.

The Diversity Action Alliance is urging top communications leaders in corporations, PR agencies, academia, the non-profit and government sectors to commit to ACTION through its three-pronged commitment. The commitment makes crystal clear the expectations of individual leaders and the organizations they represent.

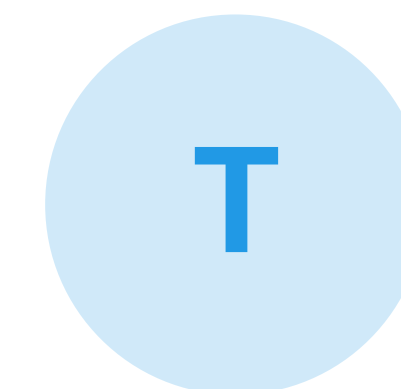
The Diversity Action Commitment will be available for organizations to sign on the Alliance's website at the time of launch. The website will also offer resources for companies who are looking to expand or begin their D&I growth strategy. In the future, the DAA will commission D&I research through the Institute of Public Relations, and provide actionable tools and resources.



Adopt best practices



Champion the cause



Track our progress

Driving Commitments and Tangible Actions

In 2019, PRSA Foundation joined forces with its DAA partners to conceptualize a sustained campaign to enlist public relations leaders to commit to near-term and long-term steps (see ACT commitment graphic on this page) aimed at recruitment and retention of diverse talent, and leading to representation at all levels in their organizations.

The DAA will serve as an advocate and force multiplier, promoting D&I initiatives, education and programming that exist as a resource for our profession. D&I efforts continue to be as important as ever in this challenging environment.

In 2020, our efforts are centered around preparing for an industry-wide research and benchmarking initiative that will be fully launched and implemented in 2021. The research initiative will focus on gaining consensus on industry-wide diversity and inclusion metrics to be achieved over the next decade, as well as consistent, comprehensive measurement and reporting on our progress each year. The DAA will be a central source for the latest in best practices in PR and other professions and a catalyst for enabling broader participation in training and other projects.

The PRSA Foundation is grateful for the volunteer support that it has received from DAA Steering Committee Chair Pat Ford and the team at the University of Florida, DAA Senior Advisor Mike Paul, the staff and volunteers who are involved through our partner organizations, as well as to Brilliant Ink for creating the DAA visual branding and website.

A

Adopt best practices | Organization Commitment

- **Accelerate progress in representation** by hiring and promoting people of color, and other diverse talent, at all levels
- **Attract and retain diverse talent** through internal and external announcements of diverse executive-level hires
- **Bolster the pipeline** of people of color through an annual review of internal metrics, leveraging best practices to address any identified issues and including diverse leaders for actionable problem solving

C

Champion the cause | Personal Commitment

- **Actively sponsor diverse talent**, including people of color
- **Role model positive change** internally and externally through my words and actions
- **Drive and embed inclusivity** as part of my organization's culture, helping to empower people of color in their career
- **Visibly hold myself and the leaders in my organization accountable** for progress

T

Track our progress | Organization Commitment

- **Benchmark and track inclusion** and improve the culture of inclusion within our organization
- **Share key representation metrics with the Diversity Action Alliance** for benchmarking and for anonymized reporting of the aggregate progress within the communications profession

Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership

Launched in October 2018, more than 1,000 copies of *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* have been sold.

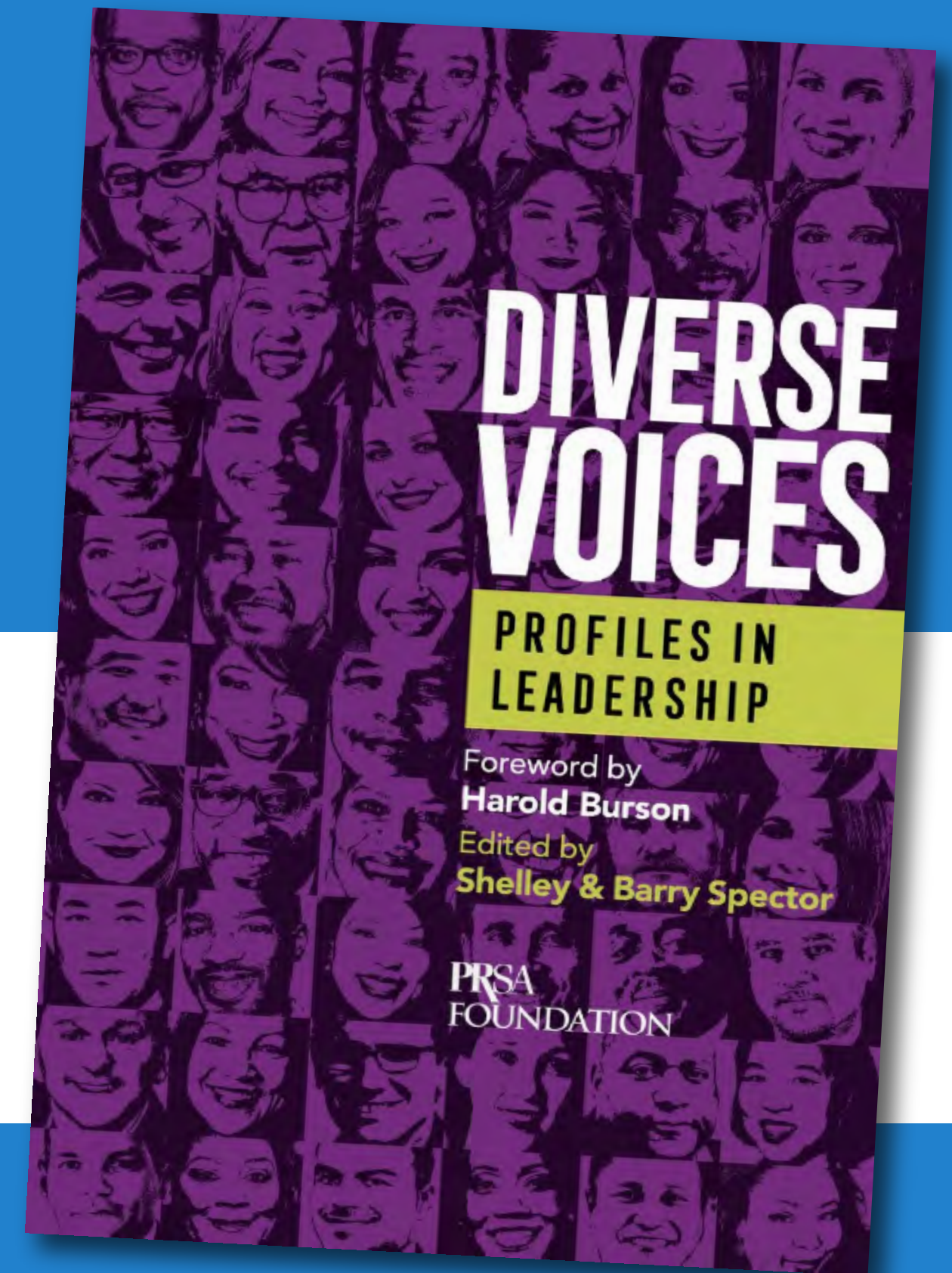
Published in partnership with the Museum of Public Relations, *Diverse Voices* features interviews with 40+ diverse corporate and PR agency executives whose successes, challenges, and lessons throughout their career are insightful and inspiring.

The book was designed to help communications professionals, leaders and those aspiring to be in these roles to better understand the challenges faced by minorities in the field through the anecdotes and collective wisdom of the contributors.

The book is presently being used as supplemental text for communications classes at a number of universities, including:



PRSA Foundation created a standalone website www.diverseleadership.net to serve as a resource to professionals, educators and students while also serving as a hub to drive book sales.



PRSSA's Bateman Case Study Competition

In 2019, the PRSA Foundation sponsored the Public Relationship Student Society of America's (PRSSA) annual Bateman Case Study Competition, which challenges PRSSA's members to demonstrate critical thinking and communication skills through the execution of public relations campaigns. The 2019 competition invited students to develop a strategic public relations campaign that focused on diversity in public relations, incorporating the use of the *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* book.

Sixty-six student teams from across the country competed and were judged based on the quality of their research, strategy and creativity, implementation of tactics, and quality of their overall project. The top three student teams came to New York and presented their campaigns to a panel of judges comprised of PRSA Foundation representatives and PRSA members.

California State University Long Beach PRSSA's "Diversity LB" campaign prevailed as the winning team. The five-student team's efforts amassed more than 115,000 impressions through earned, owned and shared media, and raised funds to purchase copies of *Diverse Voices* for five universities. The team also created a mentorship program, hosted networking opportunities, and compiled a digital publication titled "Stories of Diversity," through which students shared their own diverse experiences.

The team was honored in October at the PRSSA 2019 International Conference in San Diego along with the other two finalist teams from the University of South Carolina and Brigham Young University.



The winning PRSSA team from California State University Long Beach, with PRSA Foundation Immediate Past President Judith Harrison and Bateman judge and PRSA Foundation volunteer Alberto Canal.

11th Annual 2019 Paladin Awards

Tuesday, June 25th, 2019 - Verizon Media - New York City

The PRSA Foundation's annual Paladin Award Celebration brought together leaders from across the industry to honor a colleague recognized as a champion for diversity and inclusion in Public Relations. More than \$100,000 was raised to help advance the PRSA Foundation's diversity and inclusion programming and initiatives. The theme of the 2019 Paladin Awards was "Candid Conversations."

The theme was carefully and deliberately selected to encourage the powerful conversations that lay critical groundwork for faster, measurable progress on recruitment results and increasing overall engagement in diversity, equity and inclusion. Lenovo CCO Torod Neptune was honored with the Paladin Award, joining a class that includes such luminaries as Harold Burson, Daniel J. Edelman, Jon Iwata and Patrice Tanaka. Keynote speakers for the evening included David Albritton, President of General Motors Defense and Ramcess Jean-Louis, Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Verizon Media. Verizon Media generously provided its space pro bono and the event was supported by a volunteer inter-agency team that included Prosek Partners, DS Simon Media, Talkwalker, and Braya. PRSA Foundation Trustee and Wells Fargo SVP of Stakeholder Relations for Consumer Banking, Vickee Jordan Adams and PepsiCo SVP of Communications, Chris Kuechenmeister served as event cohosts. A key highlight of the evening was a Rising Stars panel featuring speakers from LinkedIn, Hilton Hotels and Resorts, KPMG and the Advancement Project.



*Torod Neptune,
Chief Communications Officer
at Lenovo and
2019 Paladin Award Honoree*

Scholarships, Awards, Grants and other 2019 Programs

In 2019, the PRSA Foundation gave out 18 different scholarships and awards to nearly 30 deserving students. Below are some highlights of more of the PRSA Foundation's work:

California State Fullerton PRIME Scholars Program Grant

Funded by the PRSA Foundation, [The Cal State Fullerton PRIME Scholars program](#) sent four students to internships in NYC from Cal State Fullerton. In all, 28 Latinx and African American students were prepped and polished for interviews and did resume building with the PRSA Foundation and Cal State Fullerton's Latin Communications Institute.

Diverse Voices: Atlanta

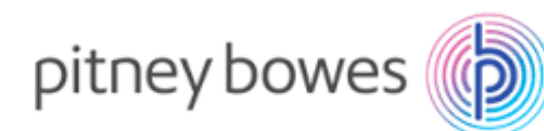
In partnership with [PRSA Georgia](#), the PRSA Foundation hosted an evening event centered around fostering an authentic and productive conversation about improving diversity and inclusion within communications. The event was attended by approximately 140 professionals, educators and students. The evening boasted approximately 140 attendees to see the "Real Talk, Real Action" panel featuring panelists from Coca Cola, Aflac, P&G, Humana, Porter Novelli, the CDC and Hilton Hotels. The event raised an additional \$32,000 for the Foundation and also featured a *Diverse Voices* branded scholarship that was awarded to two students. The program featured keynote speaker Damon Jones, Vice President, Global Communications & Advocacy of P&G who shared D&I best practices and case studies including the company's breakthrough creative campaigns, "The Talk" and "The Look."

Champions for PRSSA

The PRSA Foundation proudly supports Champions for PRSSA. Each year PRSA Members, chapters, various organizations and agencies who have a special affinity for PR students become "Champions" by donating to the Foundation through the Champions for PRSSA platform. Champion contributions help to offset expenses for student chapters and sponsor the annual awards given to outstanding chapters, advisers, and scholars. The donors to this program are called Champions because in addition to their monetary donation, they also provide mentorship to PRSSA members and inspire them to continue their affiliation with the association by transitioning to the professional society upon graduation. In 2019, there were more than 100 individual Champions for PRSSA, many of whom met with the PRSSA student leaders during their International Conference in San Diego, CA. Even if you are not a PRSA Member, you can become a Champion as well. For more information, visit prsa.champions.org.



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A heartfelt and final thank you to all our 2019 donors who helped us raise nearly \$320,000 to promote and advance diversity in the public relations and corporate communications field.

Contributions from PRSA and its memberships totaled \$100,000 and we are grateful to the organization for its continued support as our largest donor.

In 2019, the PRSA Foundation generated an unrestricted surplus. This excess funding is invested back into our operations so that we can advance our mission of improving diversity and inclusion within communications.