



Canadian Public
Relations Society
Edmonton Society

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 – 2021



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: DISRUPTION BRINGS OPPORTUNITY

Lyn Brown, President, ABC, BA, MBA, ICD.D



In every way imaginable, this past year presented CPRS Edmonton with not only opportunities, but the necessity to break with convention, and to innovate and experiment. Looking into the rear-view mirror, four factors shine a spotlight on the character, creativity and camaraderie of our community.

- CPRS Edmonton held its first virtual annual general meeting on May 29, 2020 and the board was entrusted to serve differently in light of volunteer fatigue, digital platforms, and the pandemic.
- Our board planning session in June boldly explored scenarios for public relations and our chapter evolving from specialization to stepping-stone, and from renaissance to sea-change.
- PD/Programming was offered at no charge to members, richly varied and aligned intentionally with the career development arc from professional entry to retirement.
- We expanded our sense of “local chapter” offering joint programming with CPRS Calgary, CPRS Regina, CPRS Vancouver Island and participants from Red Deer to Vancouver and Kelowna.

We anticipated membership would shrink given economic impacts and the pandemic, and this was the case as we ended the year with 25 fewer members. We maintained strong links with faculty and students at MacEwan University, NAIT and

other relevant post-secondary programs and look forward to evolving these connections in the year ahead.

Fresh insights and energy flowed to the chapter thanks to dedicated volunteers who contributed their talents to support Communications with digital and social posts and promotion. PD/Programs were delivered through the year at no charge to members and modestly priced for non-members. Revenue loss was balanced with avoided hosting costs and a roster of largely pro bono presenters and speakers.

As a result, we operated on a break-even basis for the year and ended it in a healthy financial position at \$28,000 in net assets with \$5,000 in revenues and \$5,000 in expenses.

We made slow progress in transitioning from paper and manual administrative processes to online banking and Google-based record keeping but still have work ahead to fully embrace digital governance and best practices as a volunteer-driven local chapter.

As I close this year, I want to extend special thanks to Sharmin Hislop, BSc, APR and Mike Lupien, APR who served as our first co-past presidents in recent memory. Thanks also to Gwen Hunka, director-at-large, focused on student liaison, and a big shout out to Melanie Houley who was persuaded to steward our vital Membership role through the turbulence of 2020. Melanie is now stepping away after years of dedicated CPRS Edmonton volunteer service. Gratitude also to the dedicated professionals – Peter Haight, Michelle Mondeville and Narith Hang – who will carry on their volunteer service to our local community under the awesome leadership of President-elect Crystal Wood, APR.

It has been a privilege to serve our community and I look forward to staying in touch with many of you online, and to supporting the direction Crystal is setting for the year ahead.

Onward and upward,

TAKE A RISK.
IT'S THE MOST
EDMONTON
THING
YOU CAN DO.



COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVES DEDICATED VOLUNTEER BOOST

Peter Haight, Communications Chair

Communication is the key to building successful relationships, whether it's with our professional work colleagues or our friends and families. It became even more important when many of us moved from the work office to a home office during the pandemic. Over the past year, a dedicated group of volunteers helped us stay in touch virtually, whether it was preparing a member profile or finding resources to help us do our jobs better.

A big thank you goes to the following members and volunteers for their outstanding talents:

- Heather Mah, for writing profiles about our members and recaps of many of our events
- Tamara Vineberg, for live-tweeting our events
- Daniel Purcell, for researching resources, and writing and posting social media content
- Deanna Kibap, for researching resources and tracking social media analytics
- Julie Williams, for researching resources and drafting a social media plan

Through their hard work, we were able to support a full virtual programming calendar that brought together members and even inspired other communicators to join our local society. As Edmonton and northern Alberta recover and open up again, we will continue to support our members. We will try new ways to engage in open, timely, two-way dialogue with our members. If you want to volunteer or provide feedback, suggestions or ideas, feel free to reach out to communications@cprsedmonton.ca.



MEMBERSHIP REFLECTS IMPACT OF COVID-19, CHANGE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Melanie Houley, Membership Chair

This time last year, at the beginning of the pandemic, I reflected on how as communicators we had been thrust into the spotlight. We were called upon to be the calm, factual voice of our organizations, communicating ethically and with empathy.

To help our members navigate and meet the challenge, CPRS rallied to provide needed resources and support. Now a year later, we are still pivoting to new ways of working. While the pandemic has been a unique phenomenon, the reality is that change is constant in our profession. Part of CPRS' role is to provide needed support for every career stage and challenge, whether in a pandemic, doing the work around

diversity and inclusion, or simply offering opportunities for members to connect and learn.

As a local chapter, we were also acutely aware of the challenges COVID-19 posed for our members economically, professionally, and personally. As such, CPRS Edmonton took a strategic decision to offer our entire 2020/21 program at no charge to members with virtual events each month including several specifically for students. A big thank you to Director at Large, Gwen Hunka, for her insights and assistance with student membership.

Not surprisingly, a wave of job losses and evolving member needs saw most CPRS chapters report a decline

in members and Edmonton was no exception as shown in this table.

After three years proudly serving on the CPRS Edmonton Board, I'm thrilled Peter Haight will be stepping into the role for 2021/22, as he truly embodies the CPRS values of strategic, ethical and participatory communications. I'm thankful for the friendships forged and for the inspiration and learning received from fellow CPRS members and know Peter will be a great advocate in supporting the ever evolving needs of our profession and its practitioners.

*as of April 21	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Current Members	127	143	132	108
Number of Student members	26	21	18	17
Lapsed Members (past 12 months)	25	39	53	74
Life Members	2	2	4	4
Accredited Members	28	28	29	29
College of Fellows	5	6	7	7

PROGRAMMING WENT VIRTUAL AND EXPANDED SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Crystal Wood, APR, President-Elect and Programming

2020 represented an opportunity to do professional development programming a little differently -- to adapt to our circumstances and find a way to keep our community connected in a long period of isolation.

This year, we moved our events to a completely virtual environment, navigating the tools and challenges of Zoom, experiencing the betrayal of faulty internet connections at inopportune moments, and welcoming visits from pets and children.

Our events kicked off in September, with an enormous virtual mixer where we used breakout rooms to ensure everyone could have collegial conversations.

We held mixers every few months to create an ongoing sense of community, and spent time getting to know one another. This included a Halloween mixer, Christmas party, new year event and "Spring Fling". We also hosted speed mentoring twice to offer communicators advice and support from senior professionals.

In our program planning, we varied our content to appeal to communicators at all stages of their careers. To support our community with professional development, our events included:

- How to start your own communications business
- The future of media and journalism
- An accreditation workshop
- A US election watch party
- New technology, tools and techniques for PR pros
- Nonprofits pivoting in a pandemic season of giving
- A crisis communications cyber security and artificial intelligence workshop
- A deep dive into social media analytics, marketing and targeting
- News fatigue and avoidance, and the impact on journalism and communication
- How communicators can stand up for truth in our profession
- Change management
- Board governance

Over the past few years, our in-person events have dwindled from about 40 participants down to 10 - 15 per event. This year, we tried to share events with as much as six months' notice.

Virtual events helped us circumvent our usual challenges with participation, like commuting, parking and timing.

By hosting our events over lunch hours or in the evenings, when most of us are isolated in our homes anyway, and by offering access to recordings of our events, we were able to reach more fellow communicators during the pandemic. Further, we had national reach where previously we struggled to be accessible even to Edmonton members.

We also dramatically reduced prices while people coped with pandemic-driven layoffs. PD events that previously cost \$40 to \$60 with a hot meal in a hotel ballroom were reduced to \$15 for non-members and offered at no charge to members. Networking events were offered for free to members and modestly priced at \$5 to \$10 for non-members.

These changes drove our PD participation up to about 40 people per session. As more people are vaccinated, we look forward to safe in-person events in the future. Still, we expect to offer many of our learning opportunities virtually so we can stay connected with all Northern Alberta communicators.



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Michelle Mondeville, Secretary

A large focus of the role of secretary rests on ensuring due diligence and process are followed as well as compliance with the Societies Act of Alberta and CPRS National and that CPRS Edmonton Bylaws are followed. This past year, the secretary conducted a review of CPRS' bylaws, which were amended in spring 2019, given the context of the current environment of the global pandemic and the need to be responsive to changing times and the needs of the Society. It was found that much of the bylaw language needed to be more responsive to technology and adapt for digital administration, collaboration

and removing barriers to enable participation in chapter activities and governance. Proposed bylaw amendments would take CPRS Edmonton boldly into the future – allowing for the flexibility of digital connection and collaboration. Future activities for the secretary involve embracing the Google platform and ensuring CPRS Edmonton has a good system of digital record keeping and documentation process, which started in early 2021 and will continue into the next year.



2021 STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

CANADIAN PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY EDMONTON

Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2021

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 29,032	\$ 31,252
Accounts receivable	725	-
Goods and services tax recoverable	45	-
Prepaid expenses	872	100
	\$ 30,674	\$ 31,352
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 2,058	\$ 1,724
Goods and services tax payable	-	48
	2,058	1,772
NET ASSETS - UNRESTRICTED	28,616	29,580
	\$ 30,674	\$ 31,352

Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31, 2021

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2021	2020
REVENUES		
Membership dues	\$ 3,378	\$ 5,620
Professional development events	588	2,082
	3,966	7,702
EXPENSES		
Professional fees	1,800	1,800
Insurance	1,329	1,523
Communication	995	697
Office and administration	358	529
Licenses and memberships	323	-
Professional development	63	4,381
Bank charges	62	97
	4,930	9,027
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ (964)	\$ (1,325)

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year Ended March 31, 2021

(Unaudited - See Notice To Reader)

	2021	2020
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$ 29,580	\$ 30,905
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	(964)	(1,325)
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$ 28,616	\$ 29,580

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the statement of financial position of Canadian Public Relations Society Edmonton as at March 31, 2021 and the statements of operations and changes in net assets for the year then ended.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon.

Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

RSM Alberta LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

Edmonton, Alberta

May 7, 2021



Canadian Public
Relations Society

Edmonton Society

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