

Fellow Professionals:

If you have considered pursuing the Accreditation in Public Relations credential, a pilot program recently approved by the Southern Public Relations Federation Board of Directors may be of interest to you. As a means of increasing the number of APRs in your chapter, SPRF will fund the enrollment fee for one member of yours and nine other chapters selected to participate in the APR Online Study Course.

Please note that this pilot program is open to SPRF members who are new applicants to the Accreditation process. Members who have pending or approved applications, are current progressing through the Accreditation process or have taken the computer-based Examination in the past are not considered eligible to participate in this study.

The SPRF Board of Directors has established this study as a means of evaluating and providing credibility to this online study course. Ten SPRF chapters—those with the lowest percentage of APRs among its total chapter membership—have been selected to participate in this study. It is expected that this course will fill a much-needed and sorely lacking resource in these chapters who lack the Accreditation infrastructure, study groups and mentoring opportunities available in SPRF's larger and more APR-equipped chapters.

The online study course, created in conjunction with the Universal Accreditation Board, is an interactive online multimedia course designed to help candidates prepare for the Examination. Course content, geared toward the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) measured during the Examination, is presented through a variety of interactive methods, including multimedia module introductions, asynchronous activities, case study analysis, projects, directed discussions, self-correcting quizzes and simulations. It provides opportunities for self-study, collaboration and teamwork—all situations that public relations professionals encounter in their day-to-day work. Because of its format and features, it offers an excellent opportunity for candidates in chapters with little to no local resources to prepare for the Examination independently.

Information about the course is available using the “Preparation Resources” link in the “Become an APR” tab of www.praccreditation.org. Additional information is also available online concerning the Examination, application process and eligibility requirements.

As the attached document explains, the first step in participating is expressing an interest in the study. That interest, as well as subsequent application to the Universal Accreditation Board and participation in SPRF's study, comes with conditions. If, after you review the attached document, you feel this program is for you, please follow the instructions on how to enroll. Enrollment is time sensitive and based on a first-come, first-served basis, so please do not delay if you are serious about participating.

Best wishes,
Tracy Heggins
SPRF President

Michael Tullier, APR
SPRF Vice President, Accreditation
Member, Universal Accreditation Board



APR Online Study Course Pilot Study Request for Participants

The **Accreditation in Public Relations Online Study Course**, created in conjunction with the Universal Accreditation Board (www.praccreditation.org), is an interactive online multimedia course designed to help candidates prepare for the Examination. Course content, geared toward the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) measured during the Examination, is presented through a variety of interactive methods, including multimedia module introductions, asynchronous activities, case study analysis, projects, directed discussions, self-correcting quizzes and simulations. It provides opportunities for self-study, collaboration and teamwork—all situations that public relations professionals encounter in their day-to-day work. Because of its format and features, it offers an excellent opportunity for candidates in chapters with little to no local resources to prepare for the Examination independently.

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While the course is endorsed and developed in concert with UAB, neither the UAB nor SPRF offers it as a fool-proof means of preparing for and passing the Examination. Successfully advancing from the Readiness Review and mastering all KSAs measured during the Examination are still based on the candidate accessing his or her capabilities and experiences, and properly applying those in progressing through the Accreditation process. To that end, there are no money-back guarantees implied with this program, and the application and testing fees required to pursue Accreditation are the candidate’s full responsibility.

SPRF members who are new applicants to the Accreditation process are eligible to participate in this pilot study. Members who have pending or approved applications, are current progressing through the Accreditation process or have taken the computer-based Examination in the past are not considered eligible to participate in this study.

Participating in the study requires participants to follow current application requirements, which requires an up-front payment of \$205 to apply for the Examination, and payment of the remaining \$205 at the time the Examination is scheduled (or a single up-front payment of \$385).

Candidates participating in the study remain eligible for the \$100 Examination subsidy currently offered by SPRF; however, the subsidy criteria are hereby amended to apply only to pilot study participants who complete the Accreditation process within 12 months of application; any participant not completing the Examination process within 12 months will forego any subsidies offered by SPRF. Additional subsidies available from SPRF member organizations are contingent on the criteria set forth by those organizations.

In exchange for participating in this program, SPRF expects each candidate to meet milestones during the preparation process. Following is an outline of the program milestones:

- By Aug. 11, chapter members wishing to participate must express an interest by e-mailing SPRF Accreditation Vice President Michael Tullier, APR at mtullier@auburn.edu. The one slot per chapter opportunity is on a first-come, first-served basis. Candidates selected for the study will be contacted by Aug. 15.
- By Sept. 1, the initial participant from each participating chapter must provide proof of application to the Universal Accreditation Board. Failure to do such will result in offering the funded slot to the next member on the waiting list. Subsequent invitees will have 15 days to provide proof of application before the next member is extended an invitation to participate; the process will continue until suitable documentation is provided.
- After the application is approved, SPRF will enroll the candidate in the online study course. From that point, the UAB's 12-month deadline for completing the Examination process will apply.
- Within four months following application approval, study participants must successfully complete the Readiness Review process by being advanced by a Readiness Review panel. Failure to meet this deadline will result in the candidate forfeiting online study course enrollment to another candidate of the SPRF Board's choosing.
- Within 10 months following approval, participating candidates must schedule their computer-based Examination in a manner that allows them to complete the Accreditation process prior to their 12-month eligibility expires.

These milestones are important for two reasons. First, they correspond with recommended milestones of the Accreditation process in ensuring candidates stay on track to completing the process in a year. Secondly, as a pilot program, it is important for members of the test group to remain relatively close to one another in terms of progression.

Participants will be asked to sign an agreement accepting the terms of the study. Other terms will include providing periodic feedback to members of the SPRF board and Accreditation representatives in their local or state organizations. Except within these groups, a candidate's participation in the study or their pursuit of Accreditation will not be divulged until he or she successfully passes the Examination and becomes Accredited.

Participants also agree to waive any confidentiality with regard to ongoing participation in individual course modules. Should candidates demonstrate failing participation in the online study course (as deemed appropriate by the SPRF Board), participants may be counseled, and if appropriate, forfeit their enrollment and cease their participation in the study.

We look forward to this study not only expanding our APR membership in SPRF, but creating a basis for further promoting the online study course regionally among our organization, not to mention nationally among the nine participating organizations that currently comprise the Universal Accreditation Board.

If you have any specific questions about this study or Accreditation, please contact Michael Tullier, APR at mtullier@auburn.edu or 334.844.1324.