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Number of Public Relations Professionals Who Earn Accredited in Public Relations (APR) Credential Up 30% Over Prior Year

NEW YORK (Feb. 2, 2016) — In 2015, 179 public relations professionals earned the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) credential, a 30 percent increase over 2014’s 138 APRs. For a full list of those individuals who earned their APR during 2015, click here. In addition, seven public relations professionals earned the APR+M, a designation for those who meet all the qualifications of APR and demonstrate additional skills in the nuances of military public affairs.

While overall APR applications were down 5 percent from 2014 to 2015 (253 to 240), the number of professionals who participated in each part of the two-step process and received certification increased in 2015 over 2014:

- Readiness Review participation, an in-person presentation and assessment of strategic public relations skills and knowledge, was up 22 percent (203 to 248).
- The Readiness Review Advanced rate was up 24 percent to 207 candidates being Advanced (167 in 2014).
- Computer-based Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations (CBE), a computerized assessment of strategic public relations knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), was up 19 percent (266 to 317).
- The Examination pass rate rose 30 percent to 179 candidates passing (137 in 2014).

“Both research and anecdotal conversations with Accredited professionals tell us that PR practitioners experience value in earning APR, our profession’s globally recognized credential,” said Elizabeth McMillan, APR, the 2016 chair of the Universal Accreditation Board. “Through the work of board members, volunteers and impassioned APRs, we expect to see continued growth through 2016.”

In other information released by the UAB today, a 2015 Practice Analysis of nearly 700 PR professionals from a range of industries found that the 2016 update of the Examination aligns well with what PR professionals do in their work lives. Key findings include:

- Managing relationships and the four-step RPIE process (research, planning, implementation and evaluation) are the most frequently used knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) for mid- to senior-level practitioners.
- More than 90 percent of respondents indicated that they manage relationships a great deal of the time, and 100 percent indicated they manage relationships a great deal or some of the time. This KSA currently constitutes 15 percent of the questions on the Examination.
Similarly, about 85 percent of respondents indicated that they use the four-step strategic planning process a great deal of the time, with 100 percent indicating such usage either a great deal or some of the time. The RPIE process currently constitutes 33 percent of the questions on the Examination.

The Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) administers the Examination for Accreditation in Public Relations and coordinates all activities related to the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation. The UAB was established in 1998 by a coalition of public relations professional organizations including the Agricultural Relations Council, Asociación de Relacionistas Profesionales de Puerto Rico, Florida Public Relations Association, Maine Public Relations Council, National School Public Relations Association, Public Relations Society of America, Religion Communicators Council, and Southern Public Relations Federation. Each organization contributes resources and senior-level volunteer members representing all segments of the public relations profession. For more information about the APR designation and the UAB, visit www.praccreditation.org.