



ABOUT THE CPRS THOUGHT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The CPRS National Board approved the formal establishment of the CPRS Thought Leadership Council and affirmed the appointment of Colleen Killingsworth, MCM, APR, FCPRS, as Presiding Officer of the Council, June 26, 2025.

The CPRS Thought Leadership Council (TLC) will be a national platform that brings together public relations (PR)/communications management (CM) professionals, academics, and researchers to generate, share, and apply meaningful insights into the top trends and issues in public relations/communications management.

The Council will focus on creating a made-in-Canada approach to research-driven, actionable ideas that advance the profession and elevate PR/CM as a critical part of organizational success. The CPRS Thought Leadership Council will promote research, share knowledge, and build connections between professionals and academics, so that collectively we can influence the evolution of PR/CM in Canada and continue to promote our made-in-Canada profession.

The Council will serve the needs of upper mid- to very senior PR/CM leaders (heads of functions) by creating a space for senior leaders to connect, share what they are seeing in the profession, identify the vehicles to elevate their teams and future leaders, and advance knowledge and the profession in Canada.

Objectives:

The CPRS Thought Leadership Council will focus on the following objectives:

Research and evidence-based insights: Promote and share Canadian research in public relations and communications. This includes working with educational institutions to highlight findings from academic research, capstone projects, surveys, and other publications. The focus will be ensuring the research relates to real-world PR challenges and issues, providing actionable insights.

Educational development: Strengthen the vital link between academic research and real-world experience amongst practitioners and academics. Host virtual and in-person events, workshops, and webinars that promote lifelong learning and professional development.

Thought leadership and advocacy: Develop thought leadership pieces, white papers, and presentations that help raise awareness about the value and impact of PR/CM on business and society.

Collaboration and community building: Foster collaboration between industry professionals, academic institutions, and corporate partners. Create networking opportunities that connect thought leaders across sectors.

Knowledge dissemination: Publish “State of Public Relations” report every two years, highlighting research papers, trending thought leadership, results of workshops and conversations as well as insights on current and future challenges in the field.

CPRS Thought Leadership Council Members

Colleen Killingsworth, MCM, APR, FCPRS, Principal, CKCommunications Strategies and TLC Chair, MCPRS

Kim Blanchette, APR, Chart.PR, FCPRS, EVP, Castlemain/ChangeMakers and CPRS Board Member, MCPRS

Lisa Covens, MA, CAIP, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs and Communications, Leger, MCPRS

Terry Flynn, Ph.D., APR, FCPRS, LM, Graduate Director, McMaster University – Master of Communications Management (MCM), MCPRS

Blair Peberdy, APR, FCPRS, LM, Senior Vice President, Regulatory, Government & Corporate, Alectra and CPRS Education Council, MCPRS

Sara Rafuse, MBA, CPF, President, The Rafuse Group CPRS Executive Director, MCPRS

Claire Ryan, MCM, APR, Director of Public Relations, Cooke Inc., MCPRS

Alex Sevigny, Ph.D., APR, Associate Profession, McMaster University – Master of Communications Management (MCM), MCPRS

Christine Szustaczek, MCM, APR, SCMP, FCPRS, VP Communications, UofT and College of Fellows, MCPRS

Amy Thurlow, Ph.D., APR, FCPRS, Professor, Communication Studies, Mount Saint Vincent University, MCPRS

Richard Truscott, MBA, APR, Vice President, Prairie Sky Strategy, MCPRS

Martin Waxman, MCM, APR, President, Martin Waxman Communications and CPRS Thought Leadership Major Award Recipient, MCPRS