

The Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship Minnesota PRSA

The Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship, sponsored by Minnesota PRSA, is given annually in honor of the late Dr. Willard Thompson of the University of Minnesota School of Journalism. A panel of Accredited Public Relations (APR) professionals will judge the student entries and the award recipients will be announced at the Minnesota PRSA Classics award ceremony in the spring of 2007 in the Twin Cities.

The top five scoring applicants (scoring a minimum of 70 out of 100 points) from the eight affiliated PRSSA chapters of Minnesota PRSA will receive Dr. Willard Thompson scholarships. The top-scoring applicant will be named "Best of PRSSA" and will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. A \$1,000 scholarship will be given for second place, and three other winners will receive \$500 scholarships. All award winners will receive a free PRSA associate membership.

In addition, one finalist from each chapter will be selected for the President's Award and will receive an honorary certificate. These finalists will have the top-scoring applications within the communications experience (Section C) of the scholarship entry. The Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship and President's Award recipients will be invited to a special lunch with the president of Minnesota PRSA.

To qualify for the Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship and President's Award, applicants must:

- be in good standing with their PRSSA chapter
- have attained a junior or senior level standing
- use any scholarship funds for educational expenses

The following point breakdown is considered when scoring the applications:

10 pts. Grade Point Average

10 pts. Faculty Recommendation

40 pts. Communications Experience

40 pts. Case Study

Applications are due no later than February 6, 2007!

Section A: Background Information

Applicant name:

Applicant's PRSSA chapter:

Current address:

Daytime telephone number:

Home telephone number:

Mobile telephone number:

E-mail address:

Overall grade point average: _____ (on a 4.0 scale)

Scholarship funds may be used for educational expenses including tuition, books, fees, student loan repayment or internship-related costs. Please specify how you will use the scholarship funds as a Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship winner:

In accordance with the rules governing this scholarship and the PRSSA National Bylaws, I, _____, swear that all information provided in this application is true to the best of my knowledge.

Student signature:

Date:

Faculty advisor signature:

Date:

Section B: Faculty Recommendation

This recommendation will contribute to the applicant's overall point total. Please include any insight you have into the student's academic performance, leadership qualities and social skills. You may print or type your recommendation on this page, or on your personal letterhead. Please staple any additional sheets to this form and return it to the student for submission with the application.

Applicant's name:

Faculty member's name:

Institution:

Title:

Faculty signature:

Date:

Section C: Communications Experience

Please attach a copy of your resume detailing your communications experience. Include activities such as internships, related employment, PRSSA projects and volunteer community work. Be specific and list your responsibilities for each activity. Please note this portion of the application contributes significantly to the applicant's overall point total and the selection of the President's Award.

Applicant's name:

Section D: Case Study

Applicant's name:

Please complete a double-spaced, typewritten public relations plan for the following situation. Put your name on all pages and staple them to this form. Your scenario is:

As the community relations manager for Minneapolis Care Community Resources (MCCR), a local Twin Cities food shelf and community center, you are responsible for media relations, community outreach and fundraising. MCCR provides many benefits to the inner-city community including food, clothing and career resources. Since opening in 2001, MCCR has assisted more than 5,000 families and individuals. As the holidays are fast approaching, MCCR is faced with a difficult issue, empty food shelves.

For MCCR, the remaining supply for 2006 is dwindling and the holidays have yet to arrive. Suburban food shelves are receiving many donations and although the need is just as high in the inner city, the supply is scarce. Recently, the MCCR board of directors approved a small community relations budget of \$3,000 to be used for driving food donations.

Develop a campaign to address this situation and increase food and monetary donations to the Minneapolis food shelf during the holiday season. The communications plan should include media relations, community outreach, event planning and execution.

Using no more than six pages total, include in the plan:

Research

- Provide a situation analysis for the client including a breakdown of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Objectives

- Outline several clear objectives for the campaign
- Define three to five target audiences
- List key messages for the campaign

Planning

- Identify three to four communications strategies
- List supporting tactics for each strategy
- Indicate a timeline and budget for campaign execution

Evaluation

- Identify three to five ways to measure the effectiveness of your plan

News Release

- Draft a news release using AP style that can be used as part of your campaign plan. The news release should be no more than two pages

**Please return all sections of this completed application to
Brant Skogrand no later than February 6, 2007.**

Tips for Willard Thompson Scholarship Entries

The key to winning a Dr. Willard Thompson Scholarship is a clear, concise plan. The following are some things to consider while completing your entry.

- Follow the research, objectives, planning and evaluation format for your plan.
- Before writing your new release, try to ask yourself what the news or media hook is.
- Try not to focus on the design of the company logo and visual aspects of the news release, but rather concentrate on formatting your news release correctly – using the correct components (i.e. dateline, contact information, etc.)
- Ask someone to read through your plan (preferably someone outside your major) to look for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Format your plan so it is easy to read – maybe add some section headings and bullet points.
- Think about your target audience.
- Do not forget to include a budget. (This is the reason most people get docked points in the plan portion of the application.) If you don't know how to formulate a budget, ask someone for guidance.
- If you decide to include advertising in your plan, remember to budget for the cost to design the ad and determine the cost to purchase ad space in a publication.
- Remember to include at least one quote in your news release.
- Ask for help. If you don't really understand something on the application, ask a professor or call a Minnesota PRSA Student Relations committee member.

Applications can be sent by fax, courier or postal mail to:

Brant Skogrand, APR
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
MS680
625 Fourth Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Phone: 612-340-5088
Fax: 612-340-4070

Please complete the following application completely, including sections A through D.

Good luck!