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TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Public Relations Advisory Council

DATE: 6 September 2008

RE: PR Advisory Council Update on Information Ethics Initiative

Membership:

Jill Strand, Chair
Liz Blankson-Hemans (2007-09)
Shira Kavon (2007-09)
Heather O'Daniel (2008)
David Shumaker (2008-09)
Cara Schatz, SLA Staff
Libby Trudell, Board Liaison

UPDATE: The PR Advisory Council (PRAC) is please to report that the Global Information Ethics Summit held at the Annual Conference in Seattle was a big success. Nearly 40 Ethics Ambassadors and leaders attended. In addition to presentations by Christopher Bauer and Barbie Kaiser, everyone participated in a breakout sessions to craft values statements on information ethics. The Summit gave birth to new interest in this initiative as other chapters and divisions have since appointed Ethics Ambassadors.

After the conference, the PR Advisory Council met to synthesize the top five values and sent these with an update to the Ambassadors and Leadership. The Information Ethics Blog has been opened to all to share information and a separate wiki created where information could be shared with and collected from the Ethics Ambassadors.

We have discussed next steps for the initiative and how best to guide and support the Ethics Ambassadors as well as how best to ensure that this topic be given the attention needed in order for this initiative to be embraced by the general membership at a grassroots level.

It is clear to the PRAC that in order to keep ethics on the radar screen of members and their employers, there needs to be considerable attention and time devoted to educating and promoting the issue year-round. We will be requesting that all current members serving in the Ethics Ambassador position retain the position until it is determined how the association will proceed with this initiative in 2010.

In addition to creating the SLA ethics values statements and a new annual global event, we see potential down the road for continuing education, creation of tools/resources for members and possibly a certificate program for Information Ethics.

Given this scope, we propose that the Board create a new standard advisory council for Information Ethics. Factoring into this decision is our understanding that with the Centennial Celebration, we need to shift back to the original charge of the PRAC. The PRAC would like to be able to focus on supporting the Unit PR Chairs during the centennial as well as create a framework for the first Information Ethics Day. Creation of a separate group to provide oversight to the association's ethics-related initiatives above and beyond the celebration of Information Ethics Day would allow this. The PRAC would retain responsibility for the PR activities surrounding the promotion and celebration of Information Ethics Day and would/could partner with an Information Ethics Advisory Council to assist them in their charge going forward.

Recommendation: The Public Relations Advisory Council recommends that the SLA Board of Directors create a permanent Information Ethics Advisory Council which would include a Staff and Board liaison to provide oversight and guidance in matters relating to Information Ethics within the profession as well as within the association.

While we understand that the SLA Committee on Association Governance would formulate the official charge and scope of this council, we suggest the following activities be considered for the Information Ethics Advisory Council's role and oversight:

- Develop and finalize the SLA ethics values statements and guidelines based on input gathered during the recent ethics summit and other interactions with members (conducted over 2008 by PRAC), past work done by the Presidential Study Commission on Professional Recruitment, Ethics, and Professional Standards (PREPS) report (conducted 1991-92 by order from SLA President Guy St Clair) and with reference to ethics codes or guidelines from other information associations (researched by Ethics Task Force in 2007).
- Determine and oversee the appropriate process for review and adoption of the ethics values statements and guidelines by SLA.
- Continued monitoring of emerging ethical issues of importance to inform the addition and revision of ethics value statements and guidelines in the future.
- Determine how to connect the ethics values and guidelines with the SLA competencies.
- Assess opportunities and resources required for offering ethics workshops to SLA members through Click-U.
- Assess the level of interest and potential for offering an SLA certificate program for information ethics.
- Establish an ongoing process for communicating with members and units, and for collecting examples of how information professionals have addressed ethical challenges on the job.
- Work with current Ethics Ambassadors to establish and manage tools and resources for use by SLA members in their day-to-day work.
- Review and make recommendation to SLA Board of Directors whether the position of Ethics Ambassador should be established as a permanent role within SLA units.
 - *Note: Should the Information Ethics Advisory Council determine that the Ethics Ambassador position be a permanent one within Units, the Information Ethics Advisory Council would then assume the role of providing training, tools and oversight to all Ethics Ambassadors on an annual basis*

Please feel free to contact us with any ideas or suggestions Board members might have about these efforts or possible formation of an Information Ethics Advisory Council. Should the Board accept this recommendation, the PRAC will be happy to provide a list of potential members who have expressed a high interest in this topic as well as serving the association in this capacity.

Prepared by: Jill Strand

Respectfully submitted: Public Relations Advisory Council