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• Business Tips p. 4
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Calendar of Events

DECEMBER
6–9 ACTE Convention–Nashville, Tennessee
15 Dues deadline to receive winter publications

FEBRUARY
1–28 National Career and Technical Education Month
4–10 FBLA-PBL Week
4 Share Your FBLA-PBL Story Day
5 Webinar: National Presidents’ Forum
6 Each One Reach One Day
7 Adviser Appreciation Day/Professional Attire Day
8 Career Awareness Day
9 FBLA-PBL Spirit Day
10 Community Service Day
19 Spring Stock Market Game Registration deadline
Welcome to the 2017-18 membership year!

New beginnings offer a chance to reflect upon past experiences and to start fresh. There is a line in the popular ‘90s song “Closing Time” that says, “Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” The beginning of the 2017-18 membership year signifies the end of something for every Phi Beta Lambda member. You may have left behind the 2016-17 FBLA-PBL membership year, graduated from high-school, finished your time at a two year institution, completed your bachelor’s degree, or left a job to change careers and pursue further education. Whatever path you are on, it has led you to Elevate Your Future with PBL.

The National Officer Team wants to help you make this year the most productive and exciting year of your PBL journey thus far. We are developing a series of toolkits designed to provide your local chapter with resources dedicated to every aspect of running a successful chapter. Next, we are pursuing partnerships with companies that can provide increased benefits to you such as internships, certifications, and graduate school practice tests. In addition, we are working to provide virtual chapter members with an enhanced PBL experience. Finally, we want to give you the opportunity to communicate and share your ideas with us on a regular basis.

If the national officer team can assist you with anything, please reach out to me at pblpres@fbla.org.

I know that this year, we can make PBL history! We left our legacy of leadership last year, and we will Elevate Your Future this year!

March of Dimes Grants

Did you know that FBLA-PBL offers grants for local and state chapters to support their March of Dimes activities? All grant funds must be used for activities and projects to increase awareness and/or donations for the March of Dimes. Other service projects are not eligible for funding.

Awards
- Local Chapters: up to $1,000
- State Chapters: up to $2,500

Find more information and apply online at fbla.org/MOD.
### ACTE Awards

#### 2017 ACTE Business Education Award Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region One</strong></td>
<td>Mary Golden</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region Two</strong></td>
<td>Nicholas Western</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region Three</strong></td>
<td>Kimberly Clark</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region Four</strong></td>
<td>Kennedy Reynolds</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Region Five</strong></td>
<td>Mark Creech</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NLC Recognition

Find a list of competitive event winners at fbla-pbl.org.

**PBL MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

Largest Local Chapter
Johnson & Wales University (RI)—200 members

Largest State Chapter
Pennsylvania—653 members

Largest Increase in State Chapter Membership
West Virginia—200 new members

State Recruitment of Chapters
North Carolina—5 chapters

Largest Local Chapter—Professional Division
Central Carolina Community College (NC)—40 members

Largest State Chapter—Professional Division
North Carolina—220 members

**MARCH OF DIMES**

2016–17 Top March for Babies States
1st Place: Pennsylvania
2nd Place: Mississippi
3rd Place: Georgia
4th Place: Kentucky
5th Place: Arkansas

2016–17 Top March for Babies Chapters
1st Place: University of Pittsburgh (PA)
2nd Place: East Central Community College (MS)
3rd Place: Columbus Tech (GA)
4th Place: Arkansas State University–Newport (AR)
5th Place: Alice Lloyd College (KY)

**MOST CMAP ENTRIES**

Local Chapter
Eastern Region: Rutgers University-New Brunswick (NJ)
Mountain Plains Region: Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OK)
North Central Region: University of Missouri–Columbia (MO)
Southern Region: Central Carolina Community College (NC) & Florida International University (FL)
Western Region: Central Arizona College (AZ)

State Chapter
Eastern Region: New Jersey
Mountain Plains Region: North Dakota & Oklahoma
North Central Region: Missouri
Southern Region: Georgia
Western Region: Arizona

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

Distinguished Business Leader ($500 at NLC)
Ashtyn Rottinghaus (KS)

National Technical Honor Society ($1,000)
Danette Miley (GA)

**2016–17 CMAP PRESIDENT LEVEL**

Casondra Rutschke (ND)
Molly O’Connell (NE)
Kennedy Reynolds (OK)
Kimberly Clark (MO)
Leah Simpson (MO)
Brian Ceballos (FL)
Racarda Blackmon (GA)
Shannon Howard (GA)
Sherry Gomez (GA)
Brodrick Patrick (MS)
Cara Whittington (MS)
Betina Jo Huntworth (NC)
Christopher McDuff (NC)
Amanda Barlow (NC)
Ahmet Dalgic (VA)
Michael Pham (VA)
Mark A. Creech (AZ)
LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network with over 400 million members in over 200 countries and territories across the globe. It was created to connect the world’s professionals by providing them with the opportunity to make meaningful connections and find career opportunities. LinkedIn has something for every user whether you are a business owner, recruiter, job seeker, freelancer or student. When you join LinkedIn, you get access to people, jobs, news, updates, and insights that help you be great at what you do and maintain connections. Here are some tips to help you to optimize your LinkedIn account.

**Creating a profile:** Your profile gives LinkedIn viewers a look at who you are and what you have accomplished. Use your LinkedIn account to establish your professional brand. It’s important to have an attractive and functional profile. Your profile will have your name, headline, experience, industry, location, education, and picture to start.

**Headline:** A headline should provide a professional representation of you and your areas of expertise. This headline or tagline will be the first impression that you present besides your name and photo. A great headline may present your current title and company, as well as your area of expertise while using keywords that will be easily accessible to searchers. This is the section in which you are able to establish your brand and tell the viewer what they should expect to see in your profile. Don’t feel obligated to only list your current job title or education in your headline. LinkedIn has enabled the headline to contain up to 120 characters. Allow your passions to be communicated in your headline. If you are pursuing a position or level of education, you could use a headline like ‘Aspiring Business Writer’ or ‘Future Business Leader’.

**Photo:** You absolutely must have a professional photo on your profile! According to LinkedIn, profiles with a professional photo are 14 times more likely to be viewed by recruiters, which can lead to more connections and increased visibility in your industry. Choose a photo in which you are clearly seen in and either wearing professional or job-related attire. Profiles without photos, may reflect poorly as they seem like fake accounts. Profiles with inappropriate photos give a negative impression to their viewers.

**Contact Info:** Enter an email that is dedicated specifically to business, that is appropriately named. Connect your account to Twitter or Facebook if you see fit. I would recommend only linking it if you have a professional presence on Twitter and Facebook. This feature can be found in settings. You can also post a link to an independent website. Only post your cell phone number if you are interested in taking calls.

**Custom URL:** LinkedIn allows you to create a custom URL. It is likely a good idea to customize your URL so that it is easily shareable. A customized URL is highly preferred by most LinkedIn users because it is more professional in appearance and it provides you with the opportunity to post the link in your email signature, business card, social profiles and other websites. Try to avoid numbers or terms that may be difficult to spell. Your name with or without initials would probably be the most appropriate URL for your public profile. If at all possible, try to use the same name for your other social network addresses to add a synchronized or ‘symmetrical’ (which is what we help small businesses to do) aspect to your digital identity to make it easier to be found and build credibility for your personal brand. Example: www.LinkedIn.com/in/acbelton

**Profile Summary:** Your summary is the section in which you get to tell viewers about yourself. I have seen many accounts with and without summaries, but in order to have an optimized and professional account it is highly recommended to include a summary. LinkedIn has stated that the inclusion of a summary will likely draw more viewers to your account. A summary will also help to optimize your accounts as it can increase the keywords in the account which can draw more views from recruiters and potential prospects. It does not have to be lengthy and complicated. It is often better to create a small and simple summary that briefly informs your audience about yourself and your use of LinkedIn. Listing experiences, posting pictures or documents (résumé, work sample, link to a website), famous quotes, and goals on LinkedIn are excellent items to include in your summary. In addition, if you are looking to have people contact you, add your contact information in your summary. Typical contact information would be an email address and link to your website.
Education: This section allows you to add the institutions you attended, program of study, grade point average, dates attended, honors and awards, diploma earned, and a summary of your time at the school. Write a small summary of your time at the school, highlighting the positive aspects. This is extremely important for college students and interns. LinkedIn also allows you to enter the courses that you have taken at each institution and each job. You can enter the title of course and course code. LinkedIn has continued to work to improve this section and is helping young people to network. In addition, LinkedIn has added a University Finder, Field of Study Explorer, and University Rankings catered specifically to students.

Experience: LinkedIn can essentially serve as a virtual résumé or lead generation tool. In this section, you are able to elaborate and mention far more information than you could in a simple résumé. It is important to fill in all of the fields as this will help to provide an extensive look into your work history, which will likely provide you with more opportunity. Fill in your position, company, dates of employment, location and a summary of responsibilities. It is also suggested to add some background information about the company. For business owners and freelancers, a complete and well-written account can help you to build credibility and be found by clients seeking your services. A well-written account will also help job seekers and students to be found as they search LinkedIn for credible professionals with ‘social proof’ of experience and competencies. Since many LinkedIn accounts are either poorly written or barely completed, recruiters will be impressed to see an account that is complete and written objectively.

Volunteer & Causes: This section is similar to experience, but is solely purposed to show what volunteer work you have done. You can also list the causes that you support. Many recruiters consider applicants with volunteer experience so LinkedIn encourages its members to fill out that section.

Organizations/Certifications: LinkedIn allows you to list the organizations and certifications that you have been a part of or are currently involved with. In organizations relevant to your position or future goals. Any certifications mentioned will be helpful and could potentially increase your profile views.

Languages: List any languages that you know. LinkedIn has an option where you can list a language at the level that you know it by. For example, I have listed Spanish at elementary proficiency since I know and can understand some Spanish, as I attended 3 years worth of Spanish classes during high school.

ProFinder for Freelancers: LinkedIn has recently launched its new ProFinder service that is modeled after popular freelancer for hire sites such as Fiverr and Upwork. ProFinder matches customers looking for a specific type of product or service with a qualified professional. Because of its vast user data, LinkedIn is able to quickly and easily show you the best prospects for a freelance project or ongoing service that you need based on keywords, categories, or search terms. LinkedIn can even filter search results based on your network (who you’re already connected to at a first- or second-degree level), recommendations those professionals have, their physical location (if it is relevant) and more.

Connections: The purpose of LinkedIn is to link professionals and promote communication. So, who would you want to connect with? You should connect with everyone that you know who has a LinkedIn profile. Keep in mind that the more connections you have, the more users you will be able to access. Connect with friends, family members, past and present co-workers (associates, management, people that you interact with at work) acquaintances, business partners and alumni. You can do this by obtaining email addresses or searching for the people you may know. It is highly recommended for college students to connect with classmates so that they are able to see how they found a job and can provide a reference for a prospective employer. The people that you meet are also looking to network for business purposes, so accepting connections are essential since it gives you the opportunity to communicate with those people and build your network. If you see a LinkedIn user who you have not previously met but would like to get in contact with, send them a personalized connection request.
18 Tips for Creating a Well-Optimized LinkedIn Account
(Continued...)

Skills & Endorsements: Recruiters will look to find candidates with specific skills. LinkedIn makes it possible for you to list those skills and receive endorsements. List all skills you feel you possess. It is important to list your skills and competencies because it is the system that LinkedIn allows recruiters to find prospects with the desired skills. At present, LinkedIn limits each user to displaying up to 50 skills on their account. Only your connections can endorse your skills. If you endorse your connections, they will be more likely endorse you back.

Recommendations: Recommendations are written testimonials which should speak to your character, work ethic, experience, and etc. They are far more powerful than endorsements. Recommendations can only be written by connections and have to be approved by you. Proofread each recommendation before you accept it. If there are errors in the recommendation, you can notify the person that sent the recommendation and ask for it to be modified. Ask for recommendations from managers, coworkers, clients, mentors and etc.

LinkedIn Apps: I highly recommend downloading all of the following apps so that you can access your account easily from a mobile device and have access to a multitude of content. LinkedIn, Pulse, Slideshare, Connected, Groups, LinkedIn Jobs and more. LinkedIn has also developed a new app named LinkedIn Students which provides students with information on the college that they are attending and the major that they are pursuing. LinkedIn has made a variety of strategic acquisitions in the past few years to enhance user experience. Most notably LinkedIn has acquired Slideshare, Pulse, Lynda.com which are each mobile compatible applications. Slideshare is a well optimized slideshow publishing platform. Pulse is a professional article publishing platform (which features LinkedIn users that post valuable articles to their profiles). Lynda.com is an E-learning platform centered on business, technology, software and more through videos.

Groups: LinkedIn has a vast number of groups. Each group is focused on a specific industry, company, interest, and goals. Groups present excellent opportunities to build your network and communicate with professionals in your industry. It is important to check in and participate in group discussions. If you participate, your experience will be more rewarding. Groups can be designed to connect professionals within a specific industry, alumni, coworkers, students and job seekers. At present, LinkedIn permits each member to participate in up to 100 groups.

Profile Strength: This is a measure of how well optimized and complete your LinkedIn account is. Aim to strengthen your profile to the all-star level. We hope that this article has provided you with some valuable insights on building a well-optimized LinkedIn account. Add any comments or questions that you have in the comments section.

Contact us for a social media strategy development consultation to learn how to manage your social media accounts for your business or to outsource your social media marketing efforts or more LinkedIn account tips, coaching or training.

Written by: Andrew C. Belton

This article has also been featured on LinkedIn Pulse: LinkedIn Tips Channel and Business2Community.com
LinkedIn: Company Page
Twitter: @Symmetricalmm
FBLA-PBL appreciates our new and returning 2017 NLC competitive event sponsors. With their support, all of our PBL national competitive events were sponsored again this year. For more information on our partners, visit the scholarship, fundraising, and educational programs pages on [fbla-pbl.org](http://fbla-pbl.org).

**NEW SPONSORS**

![New Sponsors Logos]

**RETURNING SPONSORS**

![Returning Sponsors Logos]
The Career and Membership Achievement Program (CMAP) is a comprehensive leadership and membership recognition program for college students. It utilizes PBL projects, goals, and programs to help college students develop their leadership and job skills, with a special emphasis on career development and preparation for the world of work.

PBL members work independently through three integrated levels of the CMAP:

- Director
- Executive
- President

Members may complete more than one level per year and must report and log their progress. Each level builds upon previous work, and you receive recognition when you complete each level. You must be a member of the PBL division.

Learn more at fbla.org/CMAP.

The CMAP Director level focuses on an introduction to community service, career research, and PBL involvement at the local level.

**Recognition:** Pins presented at a local awards ceremony or PBL event.

**Deadline:** March 1

The CMAP Executive level focuses on developing job interview skills, state and national PBL involvement, public relations activities, and leadership skills.

**Recognition:** Pins presented at a PBL state meeting or conference.

**Deadline:** March 1

**Prerequisite:** Director Award

The CMAP President level focuses on total association leadership, business skills, and involvement in community.

**Recognition:** Pins, ribbons, and certificates presented at the National Leadership Conference.

**Deadline:** March 1

**Prerequisite:** Director & Executive Awards
**Region Roundup**

**MOUNTAIN PLAINS REGION**

Scott Riley, Mountain Plains Region Vice President

I am excited to share with you the many exciting happenings in the Mountain Plains Region and with PBL on the national level. I wanted to start by thanking our members for helping us get this year off to a great start. Our region is off to a great start with chapter creation. The Regional Action Committee has already begun contacting the schools in our region that do not have a PBL chapter. North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma all have membership increases from this same time last year. If we can maintain this growth, we will have a successful membership year.

**EASTERN REGION**

Dana Borowski, Eastern Region Vice President

This year, the Eastern Region Action Council is working diligently to create resources to help continue to build the success and recognition of our beloved organization. These resources include a comprehensive list of schools without chapters, a legislative directory, and toolkits based on the expressed needs of members across the nation. As we continue to work on these tools, I encourage everyone to reach out and express what you wish to see your national officers complete this year.

**NORTH CENTRAL REGION**

Corbin Robinson, North Central Region Vice President

The North Central Region is off to a strong start to the membership year! The North Central Region Action Council has reached out to 110 schools that do not have an active PBL chapter. The council’s next goal is to develop a Legislative Affairs Toolkit to aid local and state chapters. Hosted in the region, the second National Fall Leadership Conference in St. Louis offered six business tours and a case study event for PBL members! We wish you the best as you continue to Elevate Your Future this year!

**SOUTHERN REGION**

Nick Western, Southern Region Vice President

What a semester it has been in the Southern Region! We’re wrapping up membership drives and state fall conferences all over—from Virginia, to Louisiana, and everywhere in between. In getting ready to finish out the semester strong, our local chapter officer teams across the region are busily preparing for spring recruitment and competitive events. We’re excited to work with our state and local chapter officers over the coming weeks to make the spring semester the best yet!

**WESTERN REGION**

Mark Creech, Western Region Vice President

Big shout out to Washington PBL who is ready to Rise with Resilience with their new state programs this year, such as: Member of the Month and the FBLA-PBL Mentorship Program. Utah PBL is putting a greater emphasis on individual chapter growth by focusing on membership and relationships. But do not forget about the fact that Arizona PBL state officers created a “Fast Track to Success Program” to help chapters with recruiting and retention. Last, but certainly not least, California PBL had their State Fall Business Leadership Conference November 17–19. At their conference they announced their CA state officer interns! They will gain valuable experience about what it means to be a part of the state team and how they can contribute!
FBLA-PBL members could receive a special discount on GEICO auto insurance. Visit geico.com/fbla-pbl or call GEICO at 800.368.2734 for a free quote today.

By identifying yourself as an FBLA-PBL member, you will also help support your association. Be sure to have your current coverage information available in order to secure a comparable quote.

**Uber** is providing FBLA-PBL new users a free ride (up to $15). Download Uber's free iPhone/Android/Blackberry 7 app, enter your information along with the code FBLAPBL2017. Request a ride 5–15 minutes before you need one. $15 will be applied towards your first ride on uberX, UberBLACK, or UberSUV (excluding uberT).

**IMA® (Institute of Management Accountants)**

The CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification is the global benchmark for management accountants and financial professionals. Why? Because CMAs can explain the “why” behind numbers, not just the “what.” And that can give you greater credibility, higher earning potential, and ultimately a seat at the leadership table. Consider taking the exam while still in school while the material is fresh in your mind. You’ll graduate with a degree and the test under your belt. You can stand out from your peers as you begin interviewing for job opportunities. Visit www.imanet.org for more information.

**STEM Premier** is an online platform connecting the next generation of talent (age 13+) with colleges and companies across the country. PBL members can join and create a digital profile showcasing their skills, talents, and accomplishments. From there, they can share their profile, link up with mentors, and request the **PBL Digital Badge** to be recognized as an official PBL Member on STEM Premier. Badges are also available for each level of the CMAP program.

STEM Premier users also gain access to free resources, tools like our automatic résumé generator, and get matched up with over $20 billion in scholarship opportunities.

PBL members can join for free today by visiting www.stempremier.com/fblapbl.

Congratulations 2017 Spring **Stock Market Game** winners:

**PBL WINNERS**

1st Place: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (AZ)—Javad Gorjidoz, Adviser
2nd Place: Ocean County College (NJ)—Katherine Troy, Adviser
3rd Place: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (AZ)—Javad Gorjidoz, Adviser
Country Meats features fresh, smoked snack sticks that everyone loves! Sell for $1 and receive 45% profit! For FREE SAMPLES call 800.277.8989 or visit countrymeats.com/samplepack.

Custom Shades Sunglasses Fundraiser offers a high-profit fundraiser featuring customized sunglasses with your school logo, colors, and name. Call 888.751.8107 or visit MoneyMakerShades.com.

Ozark Delight lollipops are only available for fundraising. They do not sell to stores or other retail markets. Call 800.334.8991 or visit ozarkdelight.com.

Schermer Pecans offers a delicious and healthy fundraising product. Call 800.841.3403, visit pecantreats.com, or email schermerpecans@yahoo.com.

School Spirit Coffee provides personalized packaging for their coffee fundraiser. Call 800.570.1443, email Debbie@schoolspiritcoffee.com, or visit schoolspiritcoffee.com.

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When the Sigma Epsilon considered community service projects for the year, the members became involved in the First South Arkansas Community College CyberExpo. Although they have participated in many different phases of the CyberExpo, one of the most exciting endeavors was when PBL members arranged for Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge to speak on the problems of cyber security, identity theft, and internet safety. The event was held on Monday, October 23, in the El Dorado Conference Center, and attracted SouthArk students and administrators as well as many from the community. Mathew Shepherd, who is serving his fourth term in the Arkansas House of Representatives, introduced Attorney General Rutledge. Arkansas Senator Trent Garner also attended.

Eleven members of the Western Carolina University’s Phi Beta Lambda organization traveled to Greensboro to Elevate Their Future with other members and business leaders from across the state. The chapter was accompanied by their Adviser, Mr. Bryant Barnett and chapter mentor and NCFBLA Professional Division Member, Mr. Shannon McConnell.

Alderson Broaddus Phi Beta Lambda has a main focus of community outreach for the 2017-2018 academic year. There is a disconnection between the residents of Philippi and the students at Alderson Broaddus, so we have made it a priority to get more involved in our community. One attempt at accomplishing this goal is working with one of our local organizations, World Vision. We have a committee who goes to World Vision weekly to help out with warehouse work and community projects. The warehouse work consists of sorting items that are donated to be distributed better to those in need. World Vision receives multiple shipments of donations a day and counts on volunteers to help unload and sort the shipments. Their main focus is helping children in need, so community projects usually involve benefiting children through things like fixing up a basketball court or starting a food drive. We have participated in packing backpacks with school supplies to be shipped to underprivileged students and will be anticipating more projects in the future.

Submit your chapter news and photos at fbla-pbl.org/news.