The Professional Division (PD) was excited to be a part of the November NFLCs in Milwaukee, Daytona Beach, and Dallas. Each year, we find that our outreach efforts pay off as we have seen increased traffic at our booth and attendance at our workshop as well as greater awareness of the PD.

Your PD national officers each attended one NFLC and could be found at the PD booth providing information about the division, including how members could become more involved and how the other divisions could utilize PD members. We also had fantastic demand for résumé reviews and we continue to receive review requests via our PD page at fbla-pbl.org. These résumé reviews have been increasingly popular each year, and numerous students and advisers stopped by to have their résumés critiqued.

We again hosted a panel discussion at each NFLC comprised of an FBLA and PBL national officer and two PD members. The audience was a great mix of people, including members and advisers from all three divisions. The dialogue between audience members and the panelists provided some terrific insight as to how chapters can reach out to and utilize PD members in their states, as well as how PBL members can join and become involved in the PD. We also discussed how to start a state PD chapter and the resources available for this.

Information about the PD, its benefits, recruiting, starting a PD chapter in your state, and more can be found on the PD Membership Benefits & Programs page of fbla-pbl.org.

Your PD national officers look forward to celebrating A Legacy of Leadership with you throughout the year and especially at the National Leadership Conference in Anaheim this summer.

Best Regards,

Blake Reynolds
2015–17 PD National President

PD TIP
Keep your membership current and select the ‘automatic renewal’ option in your member profile.

ANNIVERSARY MEMBERSHIP

We have had a very successful two-year pilot of the PD anniversary year membership with Alabama, Indiana, Utah, and Virginia. The PD anniversary year membership allows someone to join or renew their PD membership and this date would become their new annual membership date. One benefit is that it allows states to sign up new PD members at any point in the year and that member receives a full year of membership.

Over the next year, we will be gathering additional feedback from states so that we understand how to best implement this across all states. Our intent is to roll out the anniversary year membership starting in the fall of 2018. For questions or comments, please email pdpres@fbla.org or membership@fbla.org.
PD COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Conference Experience Committee has been hard at work looking over information they have received from members about the NFLCs this year, preparing for the NLC in Anaheim, and finding ways to improve the experiences for PD members. The committee is always looking for suggestions to help improve your experiences at the conferences, so feel free to share your thoughts with the national officers and they will share your information with the committee.

The State Chapter Development Committee is working to establish PD state chapters in California, Mississippi, and Texas. With the development of this committee, there has been an increase in PD state chapters, but they would like to establish more chapters in states where there is no set chapter for PD. If your state does not have a PD state chapter and you would like to establish one, please reach out to your national officers or visit fbla-pbl.org and click Start a Chapter, then select “Professional Division (start a state chapter)” and fill out the additional information.

The Membership and Alumni Committee is working on ways to attract graduates that were PBL members to join the PD, personal membership videos to attract new members, working with state PBL chapters to create an effective FBLA-PBL booth at their state leadership conferences, and much more. This committee is working hard to help increase our membership.

To become involved in a PD committee, visit fbla-pbl.org and click on the PD Committee Application link under the PD tab.

THE MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL DIVISION IS BACK!

“Our mission is to bring business and education together by creating a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs.”

Mississippi PD members have been eager to set up their PD state chapter, with Kelvin Hill (current PD National Secretary/Treasurer) as the state key contact. The first order of business is updating the Mississippi bylaws, which will be given to all members at their State Conference in April. After the members vote on the bylaws, officers will be elected and goals will be set. This PD state chapter structure is similar to states such as Missouri and North Carolina. Some goals of the Mississippi chapter are:

1. Develop capable and dedicated PD members who will instill leadership and business skills in members of Mississippi’s other divisions of FBLA-PBL.
2. Provide helpful advice and guidance to help FBLA and PBL members transfer from school to the next chapter of their academic or business careers.
3. Campaign for donations to provide scholarships to the youth of the other divisions.

PD COMMITTEES

One of the PD’s major initiatives during the past few years has been our working committees. All three of these committees made great strides in implementing their goals last year, and will continue to do so in the coming year. If you are interested in serving on one of these committees, please contact one of the officers, and we will put you in touch with the committee chair. Current committees are:

**State Chapter Development Committee**—working to develop and support state PD chapters.

**Conference Experience Committee**—working to review the NFLC and NLC in order to recommend and implement ways to enhance PD members’ experiences at these events.

**Membership and Alumni Committee**—working to explore and recommend ways to sustain FBLA-PBL membership at all levels and through to the PD.
CONNECTING WITH PD MEMBERS
by PBL National President Albert Amaya

With our state and national conferences around the corner, there are many opportunities for PD members to get involved with the FBLA and PBL divisions. PD members are advisers, alumni of the organization, and business professionals that all have the knowledge and experience to help any future business leader succeed, whether it be in competition, running a campaign, or helping a member prepare for a job interview. Below are just a few of the many ways that the PD has helped me throughout my seven years in this organization.

Mock Competitions
Since I joined this organization, the PD members in and around my community have helped my FBLA and now PBL local chapter by serving as judges in our annual mock competition. PD members spend the day judging our local chapter competitors and providing them with feedback and tips on how to better prepare for the actual competition. Students truly enjoy this time with our PD members because they get to receive criticism from professionals who have experience in the field. Mock competitions have helped our members place both at the state and national levels.

Mentoring
I have been extremely fortunate to have several PD members serve as my mentors throughout my time in FBLA-PBL. They have prepared me for the real world by providing me with opportunities to develop as a leader and as a professional. Their constant support and advice have led to many internship opportunities with top organizations and a full-time job offer a semester before graduation. Our combined passion for this organization has not only turned into a mentor/mentee relationship, but a friendship that will last a lifetime!

Networking
One of the biggest takeaways from being in this organization is the importance of having a network of individuals that are like-minded and have aspirations of becoming something great. Through my connection with PD members, I have been introduced to many individuals who have all impacted my life and my career in a positive way.

As you can see, the impact that a PD member can have on an FBLA or PBL member is immense. I urge you to connect with the local chapters in your community so that together we can strengthen our lifetime organization for the better and help create a Legacy of Leadership!
ANNUAL GIVING

In addition to contributing to the Professional Division Competitive Event Sponsorship Challenge, you may consider contributing to the Annual Giving Campaign. Your contribution to FBLA-PBL will support scholarships and other student development programs—fulfilling our mission of providing innovative career and leadership development. FBLA-PBL offers a diverse learning community with a commitment to our future leaders. It is important for our students to be a part of an organization that nurtures and challenges the intellectual, creative, and leadership abilities of its student members in a friendly, supportive atmosphere. FBLA-PBL offers rich educational extracurricular and leadership programs and conferences. Please make FBLA-PBL your philanthropic priority—to invest in America’s future leaders.

FBLA-PBL is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) educational association, and all contributions are tax deductible. To contribute to the Annual Giving Campaign, visit go.fbla.org/annualgiving.

PD COMPETITIVE EVENT SPONSORSHIP CHALLENGE

As FBLA-PBL continues to work toward having every competitive event at NLC sponsored, the PD has set a goal of sponsoring one event at the FBLA and PBL National Leadership Conferences. Our goal is to raise $5,000 to sponsor one event at each conference, and 100% of the sponsorship will go to the members in the events we sponsor.

Last year was the first time the PD challenged its members to sponsor a competitive event for FBLA and PBL, and we were able to sponsor an event at the PBL NLC. To sponsor events at both NLCs this summer, we really need your support to be successful. No donation amount is too large or too small. Can you donate $100? If not, can you donate $50, or $25, or $10? Every bit helps us reach $5,000. We encourage you to check with your employer to see if your company will match your donation.

You can find the donation link on the About Professional Division page of fbla-pbl.org or at go.fbla.org/pdgivingchallenge. We will provide updates on the website.

BOOTH VOLUNTEERS

Promote the PD and help us staff the booth at the NLC!

We have had some fantastic traffic at the booth and it’s due to the wonderful enthusiasm and energy of PD members who staff it. The booth will be open during exhibit hall hours at the FBLA and PBL NLCs, and we need your help to ensure we are represented at all times.

Contact PD Vice President Buddy Alberson at pdvp@fbla.org to donate your time.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (NLC) JUDGES NEEDED

It’s not too early to start thinking about the National Leadership Conference to be held in Anaheim. The PBL NLC will take place June 24–27, and the FBLA NLC will be June 29–July 2. Any PD members planning to attend NLC are encouraged to serve as competitive event judges.

Over 1,000 judges will be needed, and your assistance would be appreciated. Conference information will start appearing on the national website in the spring, and we urge you to submit the online judging form at go.fbla.org/NLC_judge.

Start a new job or get promoted? Get married or have a child? Finish graduate school? Win an award?

SUBMIT YOUR SUCCESS STORY

We want to highlight your achievements, because success is better shared!
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meredith-Leigh Craig

A member of the North Carolina Professional Division since 1998, Meredith-Leigh Craig has previously served on the North Carolina 4-H Development Fund Board of Directors and as president for the Kinston Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities. She currently serves on the University of Mount Olive Alumni Board of Directors, Lenoir County Board of Equalization and Review, Travelers’ Protective Association Post V Board of Directors, and is an active Rotarian with the Kinston Evening Rotary Club, where she is currently serving as club president.

Craig has been a member of the North Carolina Phi Beta Lambda Professional Division Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors for the last seven years. While on the board, she has served as vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Craig has been a recipient of the North Carolina Phi Beta Lambda Professional Division Member of the Year Award and is in one of the original classes of the Kinston 20 under 40 professional award.

Craig became part of FBLA-PBL in the fall of 1993 as a freshman at Barton College, and has been a member ever since. While a student member, she held several leadership roles including fundraising chairman for her local chapter. She also served as club president while attending Mount Olive College (now University of Mount Olive).

In 1998, Craig joined the Professional Division (PD) to give back to an organization that “meant so much to [her] as a student member.” She saw the hard work and dedication the PD members did for students both at the local and state level. As a PD member, Craig has had several leadership roles at the local and state levels, assisting with events during the North Carolina State Fall Leadership Conferences, local chapter fundraisers throughout the year, and the North Carolina State Leadership Conferences (SLCs). Since 2001, she has attended each National Leadership Conference (NLC) “as a support system to all our student members in attendance.”

At the local level, Craig has been involved in her local chapters as a meeting speaker and has also assisted them during community service projects, fund-raising activities, local chapter installation ceremonies, and year-end awards activities.

Using her vacation time each year, Craig attends the North Carolina PBL SLC and the remainder to attend the NLC as an extra support system for the advisers and students.

“I remember what it was like to go into a competitive event and have a familiar face giving me encouragement,” says Craig. “I know the local chapter advisers cannot be in multiple places at the same time and I can be the ‘cheerleader’ for each of our students as they get ready to compete.”

On the state level, Craig works with students as the onsite leader for the Leadership Development Seminars at the North Carolina SLC and has served throughout the years as a judge for competitive events.

“Watching students become business professionals through their time with [FBLA-PBL] is the most rewarding experience,” says Craig.

“To see the student who was an introvert as they came into the organization be the student who becomes a state or national competitive event winner or the student who has the chance to become a state or national officer” is what Craig also considers a “rewarding experience.”

“When you ask students how they did on a competitive event and their response is one of disappointment, but then they are called as finalists in their events and you can see the excitement in their eyes, it makes the time away from your professional career worth every penny.”

Craig says that, as a student member, knowing there was a PD member out there who was ready to help her was more than she could have wished for. “Someone who I could go to without going to my local chapter adviser. Someone who I could speak with freely and knew they would be non-judgmental. Now I can be that person for the students.”

(cont’d)
One of the most interesting things Craig has found in being a PD member is the reaction she gets from the students when she mentions she is a volunteer. “It amazes them you would leave your daily routine and spend your time working with them and in return you are not getting paid,” says Craig. “Especially when you travel to State Leadership or National Leadership Conferences. The students know how they have worked to get the funds to have their chapter expenses covered and they know how hard it was to make their budget. Then you explain you are personally responsible for your expenses. I tell them seeing them grow both personally and professionally is worth any paycheck.”

Craig has some words of wisdom for other PD members in regard to reaching out to local chapters:

- Let your local chapters know you are available for traditional meetings and more importantly available for the “after hours” activities.
- Let them know you are an extra person during fundraisers. I can’t count the number of hot dogs and other food I have helped sell through the years!
- Let them know you are there to link them to other people in the community. You may be a bridge between a new professional contact and the local chapter. Knowing what [FBLA-PBL] is about and being able to communicate the goals of the organization to someone unfamiliar can open new possibilities to the community and the local chapters.

“As student members, we all remember the small group of Professional Division members who made our experience one we will never forget,” recalls Craig. “After graduation, we have the chance to be that group to the students who come after us.”

Craig has a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Business Administration with a major in Business Management from Mount Olive College (now University of Mount Olive). She has been with American Tool Rentals, Inc. in Kinston, NC since 1992, where she serves as vice president and special events manager. In March 1999, she opened M-L Craig and Associates, Inc., where she serves as president.