



COMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

July 24, 2008

New Executive Director – Communications Leadership Institute

The Communications Leadership Institute Board of Directors is pleased to announce its new Executive Director, Michael Chihak.

Michael Chihak

Chihak is a native of Tucson, Arizona, and spent more than three decades in the newspaper and information business, including 16 years in executive positions. His last post was as editor and publisher of the Tucson Citizen. Previous experience was with The Associated Press, USA Today, The Salinas Californian and El Sol de Salinas, a Spanish-language publication.

In the late 1990s, Chihak recognized the need for the burgeoning Latino community in Salinas, Calif., to have access to news and information in Spanish. He led negotiations to purchase a small, local Spanish-language newspaper, El Sol de Salinas, and began growing its news and advertising base. Today, it is a distinct part of the media landscape in the Salinas Valley, serving the businesses and people who communicate best in Spanish.

From 2001 to 2004, he served as chair of the Advisory Board to the University of Arizona's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the largest college on campus. In that capacity, he helped lead the college's share of Campaign Arizona, a \$1 billion fund-raising effort that brought many new investors to the university.

As world editor of USA TODAY in 1991, Chihak oversaw a team of reporters and freelance correspondents who covered the decline and fall of the Soviet Union, while at the same time overseeing coverage of the opening round of Middle East peace talks that took place in Madrid, Spain.

Chihak, phonetic pronounced Chee-hock, is a member of the National Association of Multicultural Media Executives and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a degree in journalism. He is married, to Hilda Oropeza Chihak, and has two adult children.

“Michael joins us at a very exciting juncture at CLI. The board has strengthened the organization and completed a strategic planning process that will focus our efforts in serving the nonprofit sector’s strategic communications needs,” said Troy Petenbrink, CLI Board Chair. “He is a perfect match. He has a strong media background and rich experience in positive social change.

Strategic Planning Process*

Michael will be carrying out the strategic plan which he helped shape. Some of the key initiatives are:

- Build Communications Training & Talent in the Sector
 - Provide Capacity Assessment
 - Develop Trainers Certification and Network
 - Expand Programs to Mid-Capacity Organizations

- Integrate and Fortify a Vibrant CLI
 - Expand and Integrate Brand
 - Extend geographic reach
 - Engage CLI Alumni in National Network

- Develop Cutting Edge Offerings
 - Incorporate New Media in Programs
 - Revise SPIN Curriculum
 - Expand Spanish Language Trainings

* Our thanks to the 75 stakeholders – clients, funders, peers, and strategic partners who participated strategic planning process and to the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the French American Charitable Trust for their generous support of the planning effort.

About the Communications Leadership Institute

The Communications Leadership Institute (CLI) is a national nonprofit dedicated to providing organizations with the training and tools they need to increase their strategic communications capacity and build stronger messages to achieve their goals. Our vision is that nonprofits will effectively use strategic communications to engage their constituents and achieve lasting positive social change.

CLI offers the gold standard in communications training and capacity building to enable nonprofits to use their voices in the most powerful way possible, and has four distinct programs: The SPIN Project – training and consulting for grassroots, social justice organizations; CLEAR (Communicating for Leadership, Effectiveness and Results) – a year-long skills-building initiative designed to help nonprofit leaders build a communications culture that supports their organization’s goals and drives its mission; Grantmakers training – integrating strategic communications and a theory of change; and Tailored Programs – customized to suit the special needs of our philanthropic and nonprofit partners. Each of these programs helps CLI fulfill its mission by providing unique personnel, skills and training tools.

Please join the CLI Board of Directors in welcoming Michael Chihak. You can reach him at Michael@communicationsleadership.org

Thank you again for your support,

Troy Petenbrink
President, CLI Board of Directors
Principal, Caduceus Marketing
Washington, DC

Ludovic Blain III
Secretary, CLI Board of Directors
Chairperson, SPIN Task Force
Director, Spotlight on Race, Center for Social Inclusion
Oakland, CA

David Brotherton
Chairperson, Personnel Committee, CLI Board of Directors
President and Founder, Brotherton Strategies
Seattle, WA

Piper Kerman
Chairperson, Strategic Planning Committee, CLI Board of Directors
Vice President, Spitfire Strategies
New York, NY

Akilah Monifa
Treasurer, CLI Board of Directors
Director of Communications, CBS 5/The CW 44 Cable 12 (KPIX/KBCW Televisions)
San Francisco, CA

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