

2023 Assessment Report  
Public Relations Minor (housed in the Department of Communication Studies)  
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**PR Minor Mission Statement:** The public relations minor aims to prepare students to become ethical and socially responsible public relations professionals. Our courses focus on developing students' skills in critical thinking, research and analytics, strategic planning, writing, and integrated communication. The program educates students on the importance and practices of cultivating mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and various publics, preparing them to become future strategic communication leaders.

*\*No changes since the last report*

**PR Minor Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. Apply public relations and communication principles and theories to effectively analyze, critique, and evaluate public relations campaigns, programs, and communication strategies and tactics.
2. Demonstrate competency in the creation and implementation of public relations campaigns and programs.
3. Evaluate the ethical implications of public relations, and engage in practices that are professional, socially responsible, and in the mutual interest of organizations and their publics.

*\*Because there are many students taking the Public Relations courses as a concentration area of their Communication Studies major and do not necessarily have the room to officially declare the minor, we are sampling work products from all PR classes offered in AY20-21 for this assessment, rather than just pulling those from declared PR minors.*

*\*\*No changes since the last report*

**Curriculum Map** (*\*No changes since the last report; \*The following curriculum map was approved by the College Curriculum Committee in Spring 2020*)

	PLO 1: Apply public relations and communication principles and theories to effectively analyze, critique, and evaluate public relations campaigns, programs, and communication strategies and tactics.	PLO 2: Demonstrate competency in the creation and implementation of public relations campaigns and programs	PLO 3: Evaluate the ethical implications of public relations, and engage in practices that are professional, socially responsible, and in the mutual interest of organizations and their publics
COMS 202 Rhetoric and the Public Sphere	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)
COMS 203 Communication and Everyday Life	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)

COMS 204 Communication and Culture	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)	N/A (for COMS major PLO)
COMS 320: Public Relations Principles and Practices	I		I
COMS 322: PR Law & Ethics	I		D
COMS 323: Public Relations Writing		I	
COMS 324 Public Relations and Advertising Research		I	I
COMS 325: Social Media Strategies for Public Relations	D	D	
COMS 326: Public Relations Campaigns		M	D

### **Assessment Schedule**

AY 17-18: Revamped and revitalized the PR minor program by proposing mission statement, revising PLOs, collecting work products, and creating rubric for PLO 2 (later became PLO 1 after further revision)

AY 18-19: Further revised the PLOs to reflect the most updated practice of public relations, and the updated curriculum; refined the rubric for PLO 1

AY 19-20: New PR minor curriculum was approved by the College Curriculum Committee in Spring 2020 and implemented starting Fall 2020; collected work products for PLO 1 assessment

AY 20-21: Report of PLO 1 assessment; tested and finalized PLO 1 rubric and full department assessment of PLO 1 was conducted

AY 21-22: Created a rubric for PLO 2; collected work products and conducted an assessment for PLO 2

AY 22-23: Based on AY 21-22 assessment, revised and refined rubric for PLO 2, conducted a more comprehensive training within the department

AY 23-24: Collected work products that were not rated before and conducted assessment for PLO 2 based on the refined and revised rubric

### **Methodology used:**

The method of assessing PLO 2 consisted of two steps. In the first step, a rubric was developed and discussed by the assessment committee. In the second step, 10% of student work from the classes that address PLO 2 was used for assessment, based on the PR minor curriculum map in the past AY. Identifying information was redacted.

The COMS department conducted an assessment of PLO 2 for the first time in AY 21-22, with all faculty serving as raters in the assessment. There are a few caveats that we addressed in our assessment report in AY 21-22. Particularly, we reflected that while the updated PLOs for the PR minor and the rubric of assessing PLO 2 were well structured, refinement of the rubric and more detailed instructions on rating were called for. This is because Fay Chen is the only person in the department with a specialty in PR, and the framework of PR minor assessment—a practical and

career-oriented field—is distinctively different from that of a more academic-oriented field. Following the faculty suggestion and reflection from the previous AY, the two-step process of assessing PLO 2 was reiterated to make the assessment process more transparent and straightforward. As such, in AY 22-23, given that the COMS department was under APR review, we completed the first step of reiterating PLO 2 assessment—revising and refining a rubric for PLO 2 and conducting more comprehensive training within the department; in the following AY (23-24), we will collect work products that were not rated before and conduct assessment for PLO 2 based on the refined and revised rubric.

## Results

Below please see PLO 2 and its revised rubric and rating instructions, with the revised part marked in red.

**PLO 2:** Demonstrate competency in the creation and implementation of public relations campaigns and programs.

1 Introductory	2	3 Developing	4	5 Mastery
<p><b>Does 1 out of the following well:</b></p> <p><b>Research</b> on the issue, the brand/organization, and the key publics of a PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 324, COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media</p>	<p><b>Does 1 element well and attempts to do more than 1 but doesn't quite succeed.</b></p>	<p><b>Does at least 3 out of the following well:</b></p> <p><b>Research</b> on the issue, the brand/organization, and the key publics of a PR campaign or program (<i>COMS 324, COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p>	<p><b>Does 3 elements well and attempts to do all but doesn't quite succeed.</b></p>	<p><b>Does all of the following well:</b></p> <p><b>Research</b> on the issue, the brand/organization, and the key publics of a PR campaign or program (<i>COMS 324, COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program. (<i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i>)</p> <p>Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media</p>

content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials). ( <i>COMS 323, COMS 326</i> )		Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials) ( <i>COMS 323, COMS 326</i> )		content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials) ( <i>COMS 323, COMS 326</i> )
Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program. ( <i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i> )		Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program ( <i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i> )		Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program ( <i>COMS 325, COMS 326</i> )

Courses to be rated: COMS 323, COMS 324, COMS 325, COMS 326

*Further instructions on rating:*

- **Research** should properly synthesize information from academic, industry, or consumer reports and insights.
- **Objectives** should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.
- **Strategies** and tactics should be relevant to the goals and objectives.
- **Materials** should be clearly organized and follow proper writing conventions such as AP style.
- **Evaluation** plans should relate back to the objectives and include measurement plans.

The refined rubric provides clearer guidance on rating the areas set forth in the rubric in particular courses. Different from the previous version, it not only allowed us to indicate what level of achievement was met but also allowed us to pinpoint what area(s) (e.g., research, strategy, material creation, evaluation) in the rubric is met. Further, it provides more specific instructions for each area on what constitutes “doing well.” The rubric was discussed and deemed appropriate by the COMS assessment committee, ready to be implemented in the next step of PLO 2 assessment.

### **Closing the Loop: Faculty in Reflection**

The faculty reflected that the PLOs for the PR minor program are clearer since the revamp and restructuring of the PR minor program. Given that Fay Chen is the only person with a specialty in PR in the department and the career-oriented PR work products are distinctively different from the rest of the courses that are more academically oriented, the detailed instructions in the refined rubric were deemed necessary and important for training purposes, and for the assessment committee and the department to rate the work products appropriately and accurately. The refined rubric now links courses in the curriculum map to the rating criteria more clearly and provides clearer guidance on what constitutes “doing well” for each criterion being rated. In the following AY, we will rate work products from COMS 323, COMS 324, COMS 325, and COMS 326 using the revised and refined rubric and instructions.

**Suggestions from Previous Report(s):**

It was noted from last year's assessment report that our initial assessment of PLO 2 for the minor was successful. The report did not suggest any changes and endorsed our plan for moving forward. We appreciate the positive feedback and plan to continue the next phase of our assessment plans for PLO 2 using the refined and revised rubric.