

## PUBLIC RELATIONS MINOR

### ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2017 – 2018 REPORT DUE DATE: 10/26/2018

**Who should submit the report? – All majors, minors (including interdisciplinary minors), graduate and non-degree granting certificate programs of the College of Arts and Sciences. Programs can combine assessment reports for a major and a minor program into one aggregate report as long as the mission statements, program learning outcome(s) evaluated, methodology applied to each, and the results are clearly delineated.**

**Note:** Dear Colleagues: In an effort to produce a more streamlined and less repetitive assessment report format, we are piloting this modified template for the present annual assessment cycle. We are requesting an assessment report that would not exceed eight pages of text. Supporting materials may be appended. We will be soliciting your feedback on the report as we attempt to make it more user-friendly.

**Some useful contacts:**

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCD, Arts – [adamati@usfca.edu](mailto:adamati@usfca.edu)
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – [lendvay@usfca.edu](mailto:lendvay@usfca.edu)
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – [meritt@usfca.edu](mailto:meritt@usfca.edu)
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – [mrjonas@usfca.edu](mailto:mrjonas@usfca.edu)
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – [schakraborty2@usfca.edu](mailto:schakraborty2@usfca.edu)
6. Ms. Corie Schwabenland, Academic Data & Assessment Specialist- [ceschwabenland@usfca.edu](mailto:ceschwabenland@usfca.edu)

**Academic Effectiveness Annual Assessment Resource Page:**

<https://myusf.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/faculty-resources/academic-effectiveness/assessment>

**Email to submit the report: [assessment\\_cas@usfca.edu](mailto:assessment_cas@usfca.edu)**

**Important: Please write the name of your program or department in the subject line.**

**For example: FineArts\_Major (if you decide to submit a separate report for major and minor);**

**FineArts\_Aggregate (when submitting an aggregate report)**

## I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

Eve-Anne Doohan, Chair, Communication Studies (edoohan@usfca.edu) and  
Zifei Fay Chen, Assistant Professor, Public Relations (zchen96@usfca.edu)

2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program.

Yes! We did not have a mission statement for the Public Relations minor. Fay Chen looked at the mission of the Communication Studies Department to ensure that the mission of the Public Relations minor (housed in COMS) is consistent with the COMS mission statement.

Additionally, she reviewed the mission statements of major PR programs across the country, including the University of Florida, University of Georgia, and University of Miami (the leading PR programs in the country). Based on this information, Fay Chen developed a mission for the PR program that captures the core skill sets that PR students should master and is aligned with the mission and values of USF, with a focus on ethics and social responsibility.

The mission statement is as follows:

*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.*

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.

Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, [gamson@usfca.edu](mailto:gamson@usfca.edu)). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

Yes. Program Learning Outcome 2 was updated to reflect the most recent trends and recommendations as suggested by the Commission of Public Relations Education (CPRE) 2017 report. The original PLO 2 was: *Apply academic and industry theories and tools to frame, analyze, and creatively solve public relations crises and problems.*

The updated PLO2 is: *Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs.*

The three PLOs for the PR minor are:

PLO 1: Demonstrate competency in the standard principles and practices of public relations professionals.

PLO 2 (updated): Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs.

PLO 3: Evaluate the legal and ethical implications of public relations and engage in practices that are professional, civically engaged, and in the mutual interest of the organization and community

#### **4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?**

This past year, Fay Chen worked on developing several new classes for the PR minor. These revisions lead to the new mission statement (described above) and the review and revision of the original PLOs.

This coming year, PLO 2 will be assessed. Fay Chen and Eve-Anne Doohan have drafted a rubric to assess this PLO. The Department of Communication Studies has a Communication Studies Assessment Committee. Fay Chen will be joining the committee this year. The next step is to have the COMS Assessment committee review and provide feedback on the PLO 2 rubric. Fay Chen already has already collected student work products from the 2017-2018 academic year, which will be randomly sampled. Given that Fay Chen is the only full-time faculty member in

Public Relations, and PR is housed in COMS, it makes sense to have the COMS Assessment Committee work with Fay to conduct the minor assessment.

The timeline for assessment of PLO 2 is as follows:

1. Fall 2018: Fay Chen and Eve-Anne Doohan develop draft of PLO 2 rubric. COMS Assessment Committee reviews and provides feedback on rubric.
2. Fall 2018: Student work products will be collected. There are only 13 official PR minors as of fall 2018. Because of this, work products from all PR minors will be collected. Additionally, a random sample of other students, not officially completing the PR minor but enrolled in the related PR courses, will also be collected. Many of our COMS majors choose to “concentrate” in PR but do not have enough room in their schedule to officially be a PR minor, so it makes sense to sample students enrolled in PR courses more broadly.
3. Spring 2018: Practice rating and interrater reliability.
4. Spring 2018: Final rating of a random sample of 10% of student work products.

## II. METHODOLOGY

5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s).

For example, “the department used questions that were inputted in the final examination pertaining directly to the <said PLO>. An independent group of faculty (not teaching the course) then evaluated the responses to the questions and gave the students a grade for responses to those questions.”

**Important Note** – WSCUC advises us to use “direct methods” which relate to a direct evaluation of a student work product. “Indirect methods” like exit interviews or student surveys can be used only as additional complements to a direct method.

For any program with fewer than 10 students: If you currently have fewer than 10 students in your program (rendering your statistical analysis biased due to too few data points), it is fine to describe a multi-year data collection strategy here. It would be important to remember that every 3 years, we would expect you to have enough data to conduct a meaningful analysis.

**Important:** *Please attach, at the end of this report, a copy of the rubric used for assessment.*

The COMS Assessment Committee will assess PLO 2 “Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs” based on the rubric developed. The committee will collect student

work products in the following formats and use questions/components related to this PLO for assessment: group case study and presentation (COMS 320), social media campaign design and presentation (group project, COMS 490 in fall 2017 and spring 2018 and now COMS 325), PR campaign book and presentations (group project, COMS 326). Because Fay Chen is the only full-time faculty member in this department who is teaching the PR minor, both her (instructor of the courses) and other committee members (full-time faculty who are not instructors of the courses) will be evaluating the student work products.

### III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

#### 6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise?

This section is for you to highlight the results of the exercise. Pertinent information here would include:

- a. how well students mastered the outcome at the level they were intended to,
- b. any trends noticed over the past few assessment cycles, and
- c. the levels at which students mastered the outcome based on the rubric used.

To address this, among many other options, one option is to use a table showing the distribution, for example:

Although none of the PLOs of the PR minor have been assessed yet, we still do have some general findings regarding our PR program. Mid-term and final evaluations from the courses indicated that students appreciate the opportunities to have in-depth analyses of current PR events and campaigns, the hands-on experience to develop their own PR campaigns, as well as the integration of tools that are being applied in the industry (e.g., Meltwater and Hootsuite). Students also appreciated the application of theories and the code of ethics that are covered in class.

This past year, a new course, COMS 325: Social Media Strategies for PR, was approved and officially added to the curriculum. Another course, PR Research and Strategy, is currently being offered as a Special Topics course and will be proposed as a regular course this year. Both of these courses are consistent with student feedback and recommendations from the Commission on Public Relations Education report on undergraduate education. The commission consists of 18 organizations including the Public Relations Society of America, Institute for Public Relations, Global Alliance for Public Relations, Canadian Public Relations Society, and European Public Relations Education and Research Association.

#### IV. CLOSING THE LOOP

7. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.

Based on the results from the minor development during the 2017-2018 academic year, as well as the feedback from last assessment report, we have implemented the following changes to the PR minor in order to better achieve the desired level of mastery:

- Added a mission statement for the minor that is distinct but also consistent with the core values of the COMS major and USF's focus on social justice.
- Revised PLO 2 of the minor based on current trends and reports.
- Added an additional course, COMS 325 Social Media Strategies for PR, to the minor curriculum.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, the COMS Assessment Committee will finalize the PLO 2 rubric for the minor and implement this assessment. An additional new course "Public Relations Research and Strategy" that is currently offered as a special topics class will also be proposed for the PR minor curriculum.

Moving forward, we aim to continue our efforts in developing the minor and implementing robust assessment plans for other PLOs. After we assess the PLOs based on student work products, we will also follow the FDCD suggestions and implement additional methods such as student surveys for the assessment.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2016-2017, submitted in October 2017)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

Below please find a recap of the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on the last assessment report and our effort to address these suggestions:

- Developing a mission statement for the minor that is distinct from the major. We have now developed a mission statement for the minor (included in this report).
- PLOs: the PLOs were well received by FDCD on our last assessment report. We made minor revision to PLO 2 following the development of the PR field and the recommendation from the most recent CPRE report, as mentioned earlier in this report.
- Direct assessment methods: A draft of our current PLO 2 rubric is attached.
- Indirect assessment methods: After the PLO is assessed via the direct assessment methods, we will consider implementing a student survey for indirect assessment.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

(Any rubrics used for assessment, relevant tables, charts and figures should be included here)

**PLO 2:** Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs

Blank - N/A	1 Introductory	2	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5
<b>None or</b>	Applies public relations and communication theories and	Applies public relations and communication theories and	Applies public relations and communication theories and	Applies public relations and communication theories and	Applies public relations and communication theories and

<b>un-clear</b>	techniques to effectively <b>analyze</b> and <b>evaluate</b> public relations programs with <b>acceptable</b> clarity and insight.	techniques to effectively <b>analyze</b> and <b>evaluate</b> public relations programs with <b>exceptional</b> clarity and insight.	techniques to effectively <b>analyze, create,</b> and <b>evaluate</b> public relations programs.	techniques to effectively <b>analyze, create, implement,</b> and <b>evaluate</b> public relations programs with <b>acceptable</b> clarity and insight.	techniques to effectively <b>analyze, create, implement,</b> and <b>evaluate</b> public relations programs with <b>exceptional</b> clarity and insight.
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Based on the reflection from our COMS major assessment report, where we found that it was very difficult to be rated a 5 to indicate mastery, we are proposing having both a 4 and 5 be indicative of mastery. We would appreciate any feedback that you have on this current draft of the PLO 2 rubric.

Curriculum x PLO map

	1. Demonstrate competency in the standard principles and practices of public relations professionals.	2. Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs.  (Updated PLO in the 2018-2019 academic year; will be assessed during the 2018-2018 academic year.)	3. Evaluate the legal and ethical implications of public relations and engage in practices that are professional, civically engaged, and in the mutual interest of the organization and community.
COMS 320: Public Relations	I	I	I



Principles and Practices			
COMS 323: Public Relations Writing	D		
COMS 325: Social Media Strategies for Public Relations	D	D	I (or D?)
COMS 326: Public Relations Campaigns	M	M	D (or M?)