

PUBLIC RELATIONS MINOR

ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019 REPORT DUE DATE: 11/1/2019

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
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – lendvay@usfca.edu
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – meritt@usfca.edu
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – mrjonas@usfca.edu
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – schakraborty2@usfca.edu
6. Ms. Corie Schwabenland, Academic Data & Assessment Specialist- 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

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 2018? 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.

No, there have been no changes to the mission statement, as it was revised last year and we received excellent feedback on it.

The current 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.

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? 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). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

Yes. Although the PLOs were revised last year, and we received excellent feedback on them, in discussions with the COMS Assessment Committee, in particular about the rubric for previous PLO 2, we decided to further revise the PLOs. Specifically, the previous PLO 2 was divided into

two separate PLOs (current PLO 1 and PLO 2)--one (current PLO 1) to capture students' ability to analyze, critique, and evaluate existing and past public relations programs and the other (current PLO 2) to capture students' ability to create and implement their own public relations program. Previous PLO 1 was replaced, as it was looking at the understanding and practical application of public relations principles, which we see as an integral part of in current PLO 1 and PLO 2. PLO 3 was also revised in wording to be more concise and capture a broader spectrum of ability (e.g., "ethical implications" would include the legal aspects; "socially responsible" practices encompasses practices that are civically engaged; "publics" include a wide spectrum of stakeholders including communities).

The previous PLOs are:

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

PLO 2: 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

The three revised PLOs for the PR minor are:

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.

4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2018-2019?

This past year, we worked on revising the rubric for PLO 2 (in previous version of PLOs-- "Apply public relations and communication theories and techniques to effectively analyze, create, implement, and evaluate public relations programs"). The Communication Studies Assessment

Committee was tasked with reviewing the draft of the rubric. The current membership of the committee is Marilyn DeLaure, Allison Thorson, and Bryan Whaley. Eve-Anne Doohan, as Chair of Communication Studies, chairs the committee. Fay Chen, as the public relations faculty member, joined the committee in the spring of 2019 and will serve on the committee going forward. The committee discussed how PLO 2 seemed to involve two different levels of knowledge: one being the ability to analyze and evaluate existing public relations programs and the second being the ability to create and implement their own public relations program. Because of this, the decision was made to revise the PLOs, as described above. In previous years, the COMS Assessment Committee realized that developing and training on a rubric in the spring and rating in the fall was not very efficient. So we intentionally postponed the training on the rubric to this fall. The revised assessment timeline for PLO 2 is outlined below.

The timeline for the assessment of the NEW PLO 2 is as follows:

- 1-Spring 2019: Fay Chen and Eve-Anne Doohan revised the wording of PLOs per the committee's recommendation. Previous PLO 2 has now been divided into new PLO 1 (focus on the ability to analyze, critique, and appraise existing and past campaigns and programs) and PLO 2 (focus on the ability to create and implement their own public relations campaigns and programs).
- 2- Spring 2019: Based on the updated PLOs, Fay Chen and Eve-Anne Doohan also proposed new rubric for the new PLO 1 (see the attached rubric at the end of the report), which is approved by the committee.
- 3- Spring 2019: Fay Chen collected work products from COMS 320: Public Relations Principles and Practices and COMS 325: Social Media Strategies for PR for the rating of the new PLO 1.
- 3- Fall 2019: Practice rating using the newly revised rubric.
- 4- Spring 2020: Training on rubric, final ratings, and inter-rater reliability.

The COMS Assessment Committee will be doing the rating of work products for the Public Relations Minor. All COMS faculty rotate onto the COMS Assessment Committee, so while not all faculty will rate Public Relations work products every year, all faculty will rate them at some point when they serve on the COMS Assessment Committee.

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 new 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” based on the new rubric developed. Student work products including group case study (COMS 320) and individual social media case analysis (COMS 325) have already been collected.

A copy of the new rubric for assessing new PLO 1 is attached at the end of the report.

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:

Due to revision of new PLOs and development of new rubric, none of the new PLOs for the PR minor have been assessed yet. However, importantly, 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 and past PR campaigns and programs, 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., Brandwatch and

Hootsuite). Students also appreciated the application of theories, principles, and the code of ethics that are covered in-depth in classes.

This year, Fay Chen developed a new course, COMS 324: Public Relations and Advertising Research Methods (to be offered first in spring 2020 as COMS 490 special topics). This course will serve as an additional upper-division elective course for the PR Minor, and is also an elective for the Research Track of the Advertising Major. This course is consistent with student feedback as well as the recommendations from the most recent Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) report on undergraduate education. CPRE 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. The plan is for this class to be submitted this semester to the College Curriculum Committee.

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 Public Relations Minor development during the 2018-2019 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:

- Revised the PLOs to better reflect the current trends, and to incorporate recommendations from the COMS Assessment Committee as well as the recent report on undergraduate education from CPRE.
- Added an additional course, COMS 324: Public Relations and Advertising Research Methods, to the minor curriculum.
- Fay Chen attended the CPRE West Coast summit in fall 2019, in which the commission discussed the updates on including ethics as one of the core courses in public relations education. Therefore, the PR minor program will keep COMS 322 PR Law & Ethics in the curriculum, as an elective for the PR minor and an upper division course for the

Communication Studies major. This course intends to meet the new PLO 1 and PLO 3 for the minor at the developing level.

In the 2019-2020 academic year, the COMS Assessment Committee will finalize the PLO 1 rubric for the minor and implement this assessment.

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 2018-2019, submitted in October 2018)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

We received excellent feedback on our 2018 assessment report for the Public Relations Minor. There were no suggestions for improvement that we needed to work on.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

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

New 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

1 Non-existing	2 Existing but incompetent	3 Introductory	4 Developing	5 Mastery
No framework, principles, or theories applied and unclear analysis.	Applies certain framework(s) of principles and theories, but analyses are unclear or lack the link to principles and	Applies framework(s) of principles and theories, <i>AND</i> provides analyses with <i>acceptable</i> clarify with link	Applies framework(s) of principles and theories, <i>AND</i> provides analyses with <i>acceptable</i> clarify with link	Applies framework(s) of principles and theories, <i>AND</i> provides analyses with <i>exceptional</i> clarify with link

	theories applied.	to the principles and theories applied.	to the principles and theories applied <i>AND</i> provides <i>critiques and recommendations</i> that are generally based on insights from analysis, principles, and theories.	to the principles and theories applied <i>AND</i> provides critiques and recommendations that are solidly based on insights from analysis, principles, and theories.
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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.

Updated Curriculum x PLO map

	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 320: Public Relations Principles and Practices	I		I
COMS 322: PR Law & Ethics	D		D

COMS 323: Public Relations Writing		I	
COMS 324 (New-to be added) Public Relations and Advertising Research Methods		I	I
COMS 325: Social Media Strategies for Public Relations	D	D	
COMS 326: Public Relations Campaigns		M	D