

AY20-21 Assessment Report of Public Relations Minor (PR)
Department of Communication Studies
Degree Types: Minor

Prepared by

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Public Relations (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 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 last report*

Curriculum Map (**No changes since 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
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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: Revamping the revitalizing 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 revising the PLOs to reflect the most updated practice of public relations, and the updated curriculum; refining rubric for PLO 1

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

AY 20-21: Report of PLO 1 assessment

Fall 2021: Finalizing PLO 1 rubric, inter-coder reliability testing, full department assessment of PLO 1

AY 21-22: Creating rubric for PLO 2; collection of work products for PLO 2; inter-coder reliability testing and refining/finalizing rubric for full department assessment

General Assessment Timeline for each AY:

Fall Semester:

- Department Assessment Report Due (usually October 1st)
- Develop rubric for current year's PLO
- Developing codebook for current year's PLO assessment (rules and examples)
- Pull student work products to assess current year's PLO

Spring Semester:

- Train all faculty on rubric
- Rating of work products

- Reliability check

Methodology used:

We have a two-part process for assessment. The first involves work products identified by students that we use to develop and test our rubric. Because this is the first time we are assessing PLO 1 since the revamp and revitalization of the PR minor program after college approval of updating mission statement, PLOs, and curriculum map. We pulled work products from AY 18-19 PR courses to help us practice with the rubric we have developed and do an initial test of our interrater reliability.

For the second part of the assessment of PLO 1, we randomly select 10% of the students enrolled in the classes that address PLO 1 per the PR minor curriculum map. Identifying information was redacted. The COMS Assessment Committee then trains all the other faculty on the use of the rubric.

Because of remote working, our schedule occurred a bit behind our traditional timeline. The PLO 1 rubric was finalized and practice rating occurred in September 2021. Then training of all faculty and rating occurred in October.

We had 45 students enrolled in AY20-21 in courses that met PLO 1 (including COMS 320 and COMS 325). We rated 6 randomly selected work products, representing 13.3% of the students enrolled (as recommended we aim to rate at least 10%). Each work product was rated three times (by three different faculty members). Cronbach’s alpha was .76, which indicates that an acceptable level of reliability was reached.

We would like to point out a few things about our assessment plan. All COMS faculty rotate on to the COMS Assessment Committee and serve for two years (with the Department Chair serving as Chair of the COMS Assessment Committee and serving for the duration of their term as Chair). This past year (2020-2021), the COMS Assessment Committee was made up of Marilyn DeLaure, Zifei Fay Chen, and Bryan Whaley, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. For this coming year (2021-2022), the COMS Assessment Committee is made up of Zifei Fay Chen, Marilyn DeLaure, and Marco Jacquemet, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. Also, all the faculty but one served as faculty raters, due to that one faculty’s responsibility with another program. As such, we think the participation is impressive.

Rubric used

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 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
No framework,	Applies some framework(s)	Applies framework(s)	Applies framework(s) of	Applies framework(s) of

principles or theories applied and unclear analysis.	of principles and theories AND Provides analyses with <i>acceptable</i> clarity.	of principles and theories, AND provides analyses with <i>acceptable</i> clarity that are linked to the principles and theories.	principles and theories, AND provides analyses with <i>acceptable</i> clarity that are linked to the principles and theories AND provides <i>critiques and recommendations</i> that are generally based on insights from analysis, principles, and theories.	principles and theories, AND provides analyses with <i>exceptional</i> clarity that are linked to the principles and theories AND provides critiques and recommendations that are solidly based on insights from analysis, principles, and theories.
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Results

The rubric we developed allows us to indicate what level of achievement was met and to map whether this is the appropriate level of achievement for that particular course (e.g., COMS 320 is supposed to meet PLO 1 at the Introductory level, whereas COMS 325 is supposed to meet PLO 1 at the Developing level). The results for PLO 1 are below:

Introductory Level (COMS 320):

2 work products = 4

2 work products = 3

These results indicate that the students in COMS 320 are surpassing expectations for PLO 1 by moving beyond the introductory level.

Developing Level (COMS 325):

2 work products = 3

These results indicate that the students in COMS 325 are meeting the expectation for PLO 1.

Closing the Loop: Faculty in Reflection

Results of the assessment were shared with the COMS faculty in October. Faculty reflected that the updated PLOs for the PR minor program is much clearer than the previous version prior to the revamp of the program. They also reflect that the framework of principles and theories in public relations—a practical and career-oriented field, may appear to be different from that of more academic oriented field, thereby requiring the necessity of more detailed explanation in the code book. The training process was successful because the frameworks of principles and

theories used to assess the PLOs in COMS 320 and COMS 325 were laid out and explained separately and in details with the faculty. They suggest this process should continue in the future to make the assessment process transparent and straightforward. Overall, faculty agreed that the PR minor curriculum map adequately laid out the courses that meet the varying level of PLO 1.

Beginning in Spring 2022, we will assess PR PLO 2: “Demonstrate competency in the creation and implementation of public relations campaigns and programs.” Because this is also a new PLO included in the revamped PR minor program, it will require us to propose, refine, and finalize a new rubric, which the assessment committee will aim to accomplish in Spring 2022.

Suggestions from Previous Report(s):

It was noted from last year’s assessment report that the feedback “acknowledges that the Public Relations minor program has successfully adapted to the remote learning environment, maintaining its ability to provide course material to students in an efficient and effective manner. The program has communicated its recognition of, and responses to the general challenges of the situation, as well as those specific to its curriculum and courses.” The report did not suggest any changes. We appreciate the positive feedback and plan to continue our assessment plans for the updated PLOs of the revamped PR minor program.