

2022 Assessment Report  
 Department of Communication Studies  
 Degree Types: Minor  
 Prepared by Drs. Zifei Fay Chen & Brandi Lawless

**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
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: Testing and finalizing PLO 1 rubric and full department assessment of PLO 1

AY 21-22: Creating rubric for PLO 2; collection of work products and assessment for PLO 2

AY 22-23: Revising and refining rubric for PLO 2, conduct more comprehensive training; collect work products and continue assessment for PLO 2

### General Assessment Timeline for each AY:

#### Fall Semester:

- Department Assessment Report Due (usually October 1<sup>st</sup>)
- 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 2 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 17-18 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 2, we randomly select 10% of the students enrolled in the classes that address PLO 2 per the PR minor curriculum map in the past AY. Identifying information was redacted. The COMS Assessment Committee then trains all the other faculty on the use of the rubric.

The PLO 2 rubric was developed, and practice rating occurred in Fall 2021. Then training of all faculty and rating occurred in Spring 2022.

Because this is the first time we ever assessed PLO 2, we wanted to expand our assessment and looked back at courses in the past two years that met PLO 2. We had 44 students enrolled in Spring 2020 in courses that met PLO 2 (including COMS 490 [later COMS 324] and COMS 326), 19 students in Fall 2020 (including COMS 325), and 20 students in Fall 2021 (including COMS 325), for a total of 89 students. We rated 19 randomly selected work products, representing 22.8% of the students enrolled (as recommended we aim to rate at least 10%). Each product was rated three times (by three different faculty members). Mode was calculated for each work product and where there is no mode, mean was used.

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, and the PR program coordinator serving as the lead for the PR assessment on the committee). This past year (2021-2022), the COMS Assessment Committee was made up of Marilyn DeLaure, Fay Chen, and Marco Jacquemet, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. For this coming year (2022-2023), the COMS Assessment Committee is made up of Fay Chen, Sarah Burgess, and Allison Thorson, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. Also, all of the faculty serve as faculty raters. We had 100% faculty involvement this past year, which we think is impressive.

*Rubric used*

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

1 Introductory	2	3 Developing	4	5 Mastery
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<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</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials) that correspond with a campaign's strategies and tactics</p> <p>Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program</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</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials) that correspond with a campaign's strategies and tactics</p> <p>Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program</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</p> <p>Setting <b>goals and objectives</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>strategies and tactics</b> for the PR campaign or program.</p> <p>Create <b>materials</b> (e.g., social media content, media alert, press release, media list, promotional materials) that correspond with a campaign's strategies and tactics</p> <p>Provide plans or insights on the <b>evaluation</b> of a PR campaign or program</p>
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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 324 is supposed to meet PLO 2 at the Introductory level, COMS 325 is supposed to meet PLO 2 at the Developing level, COMS 326 is supposed to meet PLO 2 at the mastery level). The results for PLO 2 are below:

Introductory Level (COMS 324):

1 work product = 3

5 work products = 4

These results indicate that the students in COMS 324 are surpassing expectations for PLO 2 by moving beyond the introductory level.

Introductory Level (COMS 323):

This class was not taught during Spring 2020-Fall 2021.

Developing Level (COMS 325):

5 work products = 4

4 work products = 5

These results indicate that the students in COMS 325 are surpassing expectations for PLO 2 by moving beyond the developing level.

Mastery Level (COMS 326):

1 work product = 3 [Note: Among the original three raters, two rated the product 3 and one rated 5; however, upon independent reviews from two additional raters, a consensus was reached that the product should be rated at 5. As such, the final mode rating of this work product is 5.]

3 work products = 5

As explained above, the results indicate that the students in COMS 326 have met the expectation for PLO 2 by meeting the mastery level. However, the issue described above with the one work product indicated that further clarification and training is needed for this new PLO of the revamped PR Minor program. Further suggestion on this is laid out in the next section.

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

Results of the assessment were shared with the COMS faculty in September. 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. Overall, faculty agreed that the PR minor curriculum map adequately laid out the courses that meet the varying level of PLO 2. They also reflect that the framework of public relations assessment—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. Because Fay Chen is the only person with a specialty of PR in the department, further refinement of the rubric for this new PLO and more comprehensive training is called for. Faculty suggest the process of rubric development, refinement, and training should continue in the future to make the assessment process transparent and straightforward.

Beginning in Fall 2022, we will revise and refine rubric to assess the PLO 2, conduct more comprehensive training in the department, and continue assessment for PLO 2.

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

It was noted from last year's assessment report that our assessment of PLO 1 for the minor was successful. 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.