

## PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY: SHORT PROGRESS REPORT

- 1. Reporting Institutions:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations
- 3. Date:** 12/19/2019
- 4. Contact Persons:** Matt Gill & Claudia Janssen Danyi
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### **5. Summary of Program Goals and Objectives and Progress at Meeting Them**

The original purposes of the Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations were to

- provide a comprehensive program for students who wish to pursue a career in public relations
- prepare students for careers as communication specialists in for-profit and non-profit contexts, as well as graduate studies in communication.

#### Knowledge-based learning goals

At the completion of the Public Relations major the successful student will understand:

- the role and value of public relations to organizations, individuals, and society.
- how an organization's operating environment (including its competition, relevant advocacy organizations, and the broader societal or global context) influences its ability to achieve its goals.
- how public relations has evolved as an organizational and societal function.
- the role ethics play in effective communication.
- what is measured in public relations and how to measure it.
- how to interpret analytics and draw insight from the data.
- communication theories relevant to the practice of public relations.
- how public relations functions across traditional, contemporary, and emerging media channels.
- how to use persuasion ethically and effectively.
- contemporary public relations techniques and how they function.
- current business models and their contextual importance to public relations activity.

#### Skills-based learning goals

At the completion of the Public Relations major the successful student will be able to:

- Conduct research in relevant public relations contexts and understand the implications of the data.
- Advocate for others in ethical and effective ways.
- Solve public relations problems creatively and effectively based on data, theory, or previous research.
- Create public relations plans, campaigns, tactics, and messages that clearly reflect how public relations functions to achieve organizational goals.
- Set clear goals and measurable outcomes for public relations practices.
- Create superior public relations content across multiple platforms.
- Utilize contemporary public relations techniques and tactics.
- Write effectively across multiple platforms and for multiple purposes.
- Communicate clearly and effectively both orally and visually.

**Assessment:**

The assessment plan for the Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations follows university guidelines and requires annual assessment of several learning outcomes in line with university learning; disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, writing, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. Further, responsible citizenship, communication flexibility, professional ethics, and multicultural sensitivity are assessed centrally across all majors in the communication studies division in the School of Communication and Journalism.

Our assessment reports (see Appendix I) show that our students exceeded or met the majority of our defined goals for each category during the past two years.

**Enrollment and Students:**

The public relations major started with 37 students in the fall 2016, has since consistently enrolled above 45 students since the spring 2017, and graduated 47 students to date. While this has fallen short of our original projection, it reflects the overall enrollment drop at EIU since the budget crisis from 2015-2017. The public relations major is currently the second-largest major among five majors in the School of Communication and Journalism. During the academic year 2018/19 we have recruited more students than graduated, helping the major grow.

	Fa 2016	Sp 2017	Fa 2017	Sp 2018	Fa 2018	Sp 2019	Fa 2019
<b>Students Enrolled</b> (10 <sup>th</sup> day numbers)	37	60	66	68	46	56	52
<b>Degrees Awarded</b>	0	0	0	25	5	14	3

The major has also attracted high-caliber students. The 3.14 average graduating GPA reflects a challenging program and well-performing students. On average, 11 public relations majors made either the deans and honors or the provost list each semester. Among the 47 students who graduated with a B.A. in Public Relations eight students graduated with institutional honors (Summa Cum Laude (6), Magna Cum Laude (1), or Cum Laude (1)). Further, three public relations majors have received the EIU Distinguished Senior Award and many more have taken leadership roles on campus. Most noteworthy, two of our recent graduates applied their advocacy and leadership skills when they served as elected Presidents of EIU’s Student Body and another student served as the elected President of EIU’s University Board.

**Career Outcomes:**

In 2018, 91% of our graduating class either found employment (61%) or started pursuing a graduate degree (30%) within six months of graduation. Only two students were still seeking employment at the time of the survey.

**Noteworthy Developments:**

- In the fall 2018, the **School of Communication and Journalism** was founded and is now the academic home of the public relations major. The School comprises the former Department of Communication Studies and the Department of Journalism.

- The public relations major has joined the EIU's **Accelerated Law School Option** with Northern Illinois University. This allows public relations students who qualify for the program to complete their B.A. in Public Relations and their J.D in six total years.<sup>1</sup>
- Students who meet the requirements may now also enroll in our new **Accelerated Graduate School Program** (M.A. in Communication Studies, for instance, with an emphasis in Strategic Communication). Specifically, students can take three senior-level public relations classes for graduate credit (CMN 4920Z, CMN 4919Z, CMN 4921Z).
- More than 20% of public relations students are currently active members of our local chapter of the **Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)**, which focuses on fostering students' professional development outside of the classroom. The chapter has visited public relations agencies in Chicago, hosted guest speakers, and participated in a national PRSSA conference, among others.
- The Agency is a student-run PR firm. Since August 2018, our students have participated in the national **PRSSA National Bateman competition** and developed and implemented a full public relations campaign for a national client on campus as part of the competition. For the academic year 2019/20, the team has been funded by a Redden Grant. It is currently working on a campaign for the US Census Bureau.
- We created a new elective course (**Strategic Social Media Communication**) to respond to the increasing demand for social media communication specialists. We have also expanded the list of electives.

#### Future Plans:

We are currently working on or considering:

- An applied persuasion class for public relations majors (and advertising minors).
- A professional development class for seniors to better prepare them for navigating the job market and their transition into the PR profession.
- An international cooperation with the Jade Hochschule Wilhelmshaven in Germany, which will create opportunities for public relations-specific international student and faculty exchange.
- With the implementation of a new university-wide assessment plan, we will be refining and reviewing our assessment schedule, instruments, and methods.

#### Decision:

Program in Good Standing

Program flagged for Priority Review

Program Enrollment Suspended

#### Dean's Comments

This is a young program that has drawn robust enrollment from the time of launch and

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<sup>1</sup> Students in this option complete all requirements for the public relations major at EIU.

is well above IBHE benchmarks for students enrolled and graduated, and is a frequently-requested program at recruiting events. While assessment across the university is currently being re-imagined, it is worth noting that the program's learning objectives and expected outcomes are clearly defined, and data collected in this period is generally very encouraging. As the new School of Communication and Journalism matures, we expect growth to continue, particularly as the accelerated Master's program becomes an increasingly-attractive option to high-caliber students. Having Public Relations as a unique degree program (as opposed to an option within a Communication Studies degree) continues to distinguish the Institution from its in-state peers.

### **Provost's Feedback**

This program is in good standing and enrollments exceed IBHE standards. While the program is relatively new, the assessment plan is exceptionally well developed and demonstrates the faculty's commitment to academic excellence. Additionally, the program and faculty are to be commended for their engagement with students and the program's emphasis on the professional development of students through co-curricular programs, student organizations, and faculty mentoring inclusive of scholarly activity/national competitions. Finally, I note the program has outstanding student outcomes based on observed placement rates.

***STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM***

***SUMMARY FORM AY 2018-2019***

**Degree and**

**Program Name: B.A. in Public Relations**

**Submitted By: Dr. Claudia Janssen Danyi**

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**PART ONE**

What are the learning objectives?	How, where, and when are they assessed?	What are the expectations?	What are the results?	Committee/ person responsible? How are results shared?
1. Students will acquire disciplinary knowledge of public relations theories, concepts, and practices.	Student disciplinary knowledge enables students to explain major theoretical public relations perspectives and principles, discuss major contexts of public relations practice, and understand how	Since students take the pre-tests before they have received any disciplinary knowledge we expect those scores to be below 60%. However, they set a baseline for analysis as	The pre-test resulted in a student average of 63.11% and a median score of 64. The post-test resulted in a student average of 74.15% and a median score of 72.	Individual faculty members distribute the tests in their classes.  Data is reviewed by the Public Relations

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>to communicate strategically on behalf of another.</p> <p>In order to assess and measure disciplinary knowledge, students complete a pre-test/post-test exam to determine the change in students' knowledge over time. Public relations faculty members wrote the exam questions and they are based on topics and content areas covered by the Public Relations Society of America Accredited Public Relations exam.</p> <p>The pre-test is given to students at the beginning of semester in CMN 2920: Introduction to Public Relations, the first public relations content class in the major. The post-test is given to students at the end of the semester in CMN 4921: Seminar in Public Relations, the senior capstone experience. This ensures that students have completed as much of their public relations</p>	<p>students move through the major. They also allow us to determine which theoretical perspectives and principles demonstrated adequate levels of student learning and which areas need to be addressed more in classes, potentially in different ways.</p> <p>We expect that our students would reach the level of competent (an average of 70%) on the post-test.</p>	<p>Notably, 44% of students failed the pre-test, but only 8% failed the post-test. 22% received a B on the pre-test and 46% received a B on the posttest. No student scored above 90%.</p> <p>The post-test results exceeded our expectations and demonstrate that students reached the level of competence on average.</p> <p>The item-analysis showed that students particularly struggled with a few concepts. The public relations faculty discussed these results and ways to emphasize those concepts more strongly in our classes.</p>	<p>Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>specific education as possible between the two times the test is administered.</p>			
<p>2. Students will enhance their critical thinking skills.</p>	<p>Students will improve the quality of their thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. With these critical thinking skills, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Articulate an argument/thesis statement relevant to the assignment.</li> <li>b) Use relevant evidence to support claims related to the argument/thesis statement.</li> <li>c) Synthesize evidence in order to draw a conclusion.</li> <li>d) Express ideas with precision and clarity.</li> <li>e) Differentiate her or his knowledge and thought processes from other sources and/or class content.</li> <li>f) Apply and identify relevant</li> </ul>	<p>Expectations are that students are able to identify problems, apply and synthesize relevant evidence, express ideas clearly, and are aware of their own assumptions.</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their critical thinking skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment</p>	<p>The Critical Thinking Rubric had an overall student average of 3.1, exceeding expectations; 83.3% of the students were at least competent and 16.7% of students were highly competent (average scores ranged from 2.7 to 3.5).</p> <p>Out of the classes assessed, no rubrics for a 3000-level class were available. The average rubric score in our 2000 level classes (2.9) was competent and exceeded expectations. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes (3.3) fell within the competent category and just below the expected level of highly competent (3.5).</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>course concepts appropriate to the assignment.</p> <p>In order to assess students' critical thinking skills, instructors will utilize the critical thinking assessment rubric. Classes across the major will be used to evaluate assignments that focus on the use of critical thinking skills.</p> <p>The Public Relations Major Coordinator will select courses to be evaluated and communicate this to the faculty members teaching the courses. Courses are strategically chosen in order to assess students at different points throughout the major. Faculty members will identify the specific course assignment that fits best and use the critical thinking rubric to evaluate the assignment.</p>	<p>rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric).</p> <p>Additionally, we expect that across all of the classes students, on average, are deemed to be at least "competent" in their critical thinking (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>The results also demonstrate that scores were higher in the 4000-level class.</p>	<p>the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

<p>3. Students will cultivate a sense of responsible citizenship through social and ethical responsibility</p>	<p>Students will cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility as well as multicultural sensitivity. They will enhance their understanding and concern for the conditions of contemporary society and be aware of the factors that affect ethical behavior. Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the role of the individual in society.</li> <li>b) Evaluate and develop constructive communication approaches to addressing social and ethical issues.</li> <li>c) Demonstrate a sophisticated sense of responsibility and be engaged in community activities.</li> <li>d) Understand the value of multicultural sensitivity.</li> </ul> <p>In order to assess social and ethical responsibility, each year public relations students will complete the</p>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to understand the role of the individual in society, evaluate and develop constructive communication approaches to addressing social and ethical issues, demonstrate a more sophisticated sense of responsibility and be more engaged in community activities. We expect that students will be above average on each scale (a score above of 3.0 on the Social Responsibility and Ethics scales, a score below 3.0 on the Multicultural Sensitivity scale).</p>	<p>The survey assessing social responsibility, professional ethics, and multicultural sensitivity is administered centrally for all majors in the Communication Studies Division in the School of Communication and Journalism; data was not collected during the 2018/19 AY.</p>	<p>The MSS, SR, and PE scales are completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chair of the Communication Studies Division in the School of Communication and Journalism. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>Multicultural Sensitivity Scale (MSS), the Social Responsibility measure (SR), and Professional Ethics measure (PE) in an online survey during the spring semester.</p>			<p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>4. Students will be able to create and implement written message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>Students will understand how to strategically create written messages in various media environments and across multiple communication channels. Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify different message strategies and their strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>b) Analyze rhetorical situations.</li> <li>c) Identify appropriate content, tone, channel, and structure of messages.</li> <li>d) Create messages to accomplish strategic outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to create a variety of written messages in various contexts. We expect that students will score above average on the Communication Flexibility scale (a score of 3.0).</p> <p>Given that the creation of messages strategies in public relations is a critical skill, we would expect our students to be at least competent in these skills (a score of at least 2.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>The Writing Assessment Rubric had an overall student average of 3.02, which exceeded our expectations.</p> <p>91% of the students were at least minimally competent. Specifically, 18% of rubrics were rated as highly competent, 73% as competent and 9% as minimally competent or not competent.</p> <p>Out of the classes assessed, no rubrics for a 4000-level class were</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>The Communication Flexibility scale is completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chaise of the Department of Communication Studies. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>All data is reviewed by the Public Relations</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>In order to assess students' ability to create and implement diverse message strategies, students will complete the Communication Flexibility measure in an online survey. In addition, classes across the major will be used to evaluate previously planned, assigned, and completed written assignments using the Writing Assessment Rubric.</p>	<p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (a score above 3.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>available. The average rubric scores in our 3000-level (3.04) and 2000-level (3) class were competent and exceeded expectations.</p> <p>The survey assessing communication flexibility is administered centrally for all majors in the Communication Studies Division in the School of Communication and Journalism; data was not collected during the 2018/19 AY.</p>	<p>Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>5. Students will be able to create and implement oral message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>Students will understand how to strategically create oral messages in various media environments and across multiple communication channels. Students will be able to:</p> <p>a) Identify different oral message strategies and their strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to create a variety of oral messages in various contexts. We expect that students will score above average on the Communication Flexibility scale (a score of 3.0).</p>	<p>The Oral Presentation Rubric had an overall student average of 3.3 exceeding expectations.</p> <p>100% of the students were at least competent. Specifically, 30.8% of rubrics were rated as highly competent, and</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>The Communication Flexibility scale is completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chaise of the</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>b) Analyze rhetorical situations.</p> <p>c) Identify appropriate content, tone, and structure of messages.</p> <p>d) Create messages to accomplish strategic outcomes.</p> <p>e) Demonstrate communication competency and speaking ability.</p> <p>In order to assess students' ability to create and implement diverse message strategies, students will complete the Communication Flexibility measure in an online survey. In addition, 3000 and 4000 classes across the major will be used to evaluate previously planned, assigned, and completed oral presentations using the Oral Presentation Rubric. There are no 2000 level PR classes with planned oral presentations.</p>	<p>Given that the creation of messages strategies in public relations is a critical skill, we would expect our students to be at least competent in these skills (a score of at least 2.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (a score above 3.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric).</p>	<p>69.2% were rated as competent.</p> <p>Rubrics were returned for a 4000-level and a 3000-level class. The average rubric score in our 4000 (3.35) and 3000-level (3.26) was competent, and just below the level of highly competent. While the results in our 3000-level class exceeded our expectations, results in the 4000-level class fell slightly short.</p> <p>The survey assessing communication flexibility is administered centrally for all majors in the Communication Studies Division in the School of Communication and Journalism; data was not collected during the 2018/19 AY.</p>	<p>Department of Communication Studies. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>All data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>6. Students will be able to use quantitative data to</p>	<p>Students are evaluated from classes across the major on</p>	<p>In cases where quantitative reasoning is peripheral to</p>	<p>One rubric was returned that assessed quantitative</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

<p>analyze, interpret, and evaluate material in an effort to inform strategic decision-making processes.</p>	<p>assignments where quantitative reasoning is central or peripheral to the assignment.</p> <p>When quantitative reasoning is peripheral to the assignment (there are potential uses of numbers to provide useful detail, enrich descriptions, present background, or establish frames of reference but quantitative reasoning is not the central purpose of the assignment) instructors utilize part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the students' overall ability to quantitatively reason.</p> <p>When quantitative reasoning is central to the assignment (there are potential uses of numbers to address a central question, issue, or theme) instructors utilize part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the students' overall ability to quantitatively reason and part 3 assess various elements of</p>	<p>the assignment we expect that students, on average, are deemed to be at least "competent" in their quantitative reasoning (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on Part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their quantitative reasoning skills improve. Students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p> <p>In cases where quantitative reasoning is central to the assignment we expect that students, on average, are deemed to be at least</p>	<p>reasoning as peripheral (3000-level class), and one that assessed quantitative reasoning as central (4000-level class).</p> <p>Rubrics that identified quantitative reasoning as central (4000-level) had an overall student average of 2.34 on part 2 of the rubric and the average student was able to reach the level of minimally competent on the rubric. Only 17% of students reached the level of competent, and 83% the level of minimally competent. The average score fell just short of our expectation for a 4000-level class and average performance when quantitative reasoning was central to the assignment.</p> <p>Rubrics that identified quantitative reasoning as peripheral (3000-level) had an overall student</p>	<p>their specific classes.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>quantitative reasoning.</p> <p>The Public Relations Major Coordinator will select courses to be evaluated and communicate this to the faculty members teaching the courses. Courses are strategically chosen in order to assess students at different points throughout the major but only focus on courses at the 3000 and 4000 level since no quantitative reasoning happens in major class on the 200 level. Faculty members will identify the specific course assignment that fits best and use the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the assignment.</p>	<p>“competent” in their quantitative reasoning (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on Part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric). We also expect our students to be at least competent in the skills found in part 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric (score of at least 2.5).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their quantitative reasoning skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on parts 2 and 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on parts 2 and 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p>	<p>average of 2.5 on part 2 of the rubric and the average student was able to reach the level of competent. 66.6% reached the level of minimally competent, 16.6% the level of competent, and 16.6% the level of highly competent. These results met our expectations for 3000-level classes.</p>	
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(Continue objectives as needed. Cells will expand to accommodate your text.)

## APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

### **PART TWO**

Describe what your program's assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the CASA Director's comments on last year's report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.

During the AY 2018/19, assessment reports were put on hold because of ongoing restructuring of the university's assessment plan. However, we continued to collect data on disciplinary knowledge, writing, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and speaking for our public relations majors. Data for communication flexibility, multicultural sensitivity, professional ethics, and social responsibility is collected school-wide and forwarded to the PR major director. These items were not assessed during the academic year.

We are particularly excited that our majors exceeded our expectations on disciplinary knowledge and writing and show good competence in oral presentation and critical thinking. We continue to see a need to help students improve quantitative reasoning skills. At the same, time the current restructuring of the university assessment plan will provide an opportunity to revisit our methods of assessment.

The director of the B.A. in public relations shared the assessment results with PR faculty. We also used the disciplinary knowledge data as a base to identify topics and theoretical concepts students seem to struggle with and mapped them to where and how individual instructors cover them in our current classes. This allowed for a discussion of where these concepts can be reinforced and covered in more depth in the curriculum in the future. The review also resulted in the identification of several questions where the wording might have impacted responses, and we have edited those questions for clarity (For instance, the definition provided for legitimacy could have easily been interpreted as a definition of reputation based on how the concepts are taught). The updated disciplinary knowledge scale will be implemented in the AY 2019/20.

We appreciated the encouraging and positive feedback from the CASA Director on our first assessment report and are responding to the suggestions below.

Learning Objectives: We appreciated the suggestion to "be more specific about the content knowledge referenced in objective one." It now reads, "Students will acquire disciplinary knowledge of public relations theories, concepts, and practices."

## APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

“How, when and where assessed” – Due to restructuring of the university’s assessment plan, assessment reports were put on hold during the AY 2018/19. We still assessed our students’ progress on disciplinary knowledge, writing, quantitative reasoning, speaking and critical thinking. Responsible citizenship, communication flexibility, professional ethics, and multicultural sensitivity are assessed centrally across all majors in the School of Communication and Journalism, and the data for public relations majors is forwarded to the director of the B.A. in public relations. During the AY 2018/19 those items were not assessed.

Expectations: We have added a more specific expectation for the disciplinary knowledge pre-test (“below 60%”).

### **PART THREE**

Summarize changes and improvements in **curriculum, instruction, and learning** that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?

Because this has only been the second year of data collection, we have not made significant changes to the curriculum. We have, however, identified concepts that need to be taught in more depth in our classes based on the results of the disciplinary knowledge assessment (see part TWO).

Results on other measures show that while students are competent on most measures, performance fell slightly short on quantitative reasoning and students don’t make large improvements across the course of the program. We suspect that intercoder reliability contributes to those results. Currently, instructors choose an assignment from their class to apply the rubrics. This means that different instructors often complete the rubrics for different assignments at different class levels for the same measure. We are currently revisiting those methods of assessment and aim to implement more rigorous methods to improve intercoder reliability and the reliability of the overall assessment results, so that we can have higher confidence in the findings before making changes based on them.



***STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM***

***SUMMARY FORM AY 2017-2018***

**Degree and**

**Program Name: B.A. in Public Relations**

**Submitted By: Matthew Gill**

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**PART ONE**

What are the learning objectives?	How, where, and when are they assessed?	What are the expectations?	What are the results?	Committee/ person responsible? How are results shared?
1. Students will acquire disciplinary knowledge of public relations.	Student disciplinary knowledge enables students to explain major theoretical public relations perspectives and principles, discuss major contexts of public relations	Since students take the pre-tests before they have received any disciplinary knowledge we expect those scores to be very low. However, they set a	For the Public Relations option the pre-test resulted in a student average of 55.47% and a median score of 56. The post-test resulted in a	Individual faculty members distribute the tests in their classes.

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>practice, and understand how to communicate strategically on behalf of another.</p> <p>In order to assess and measure disciplinary knowledge, students complete a pre-test/post-test exam to determine the change in students' knowledge over time. Public relations faculty members wrote the exam questions and they are based on topics and content areas covered by the Public Relations Society of America Accredited Public Relations exam.</p> <p>The pre-test is given to students at the beginning of semester in CMN 2920: Introduction to Public Relations, the first public relations content class in the major. The post-test is given to students at the end of the semester in CMN 4921: Seminar in Public Relations, the senior capstone experience. This ensures that students have completed as</p>	<p>baseline for analysis as students move through the major. They also allow us to determine which theoretical perspectives and principles demonstrated adequate levels of student learning and which areas need to be addressed more in classes, potentially in different ways.</p> <p>We expect that our students would reach the level of competent (an average of 70%) on the post-test.</p>	<p>student average of 72.55% and a median score of 80.</p> <p>The post-test average demonstrates that the average student reached the level of competence on the post-test exam. The higher median score demonstrates that most students significantly exceeded the competency level and that a few students who scored very low on the post-test negatively skewed the average.</p> <p>The item-analysis demonstrated three questions that the students really struggled with. Therefore the public relations faculty will make sure the questions are clear and then determine ways to enhance our teaching of those concepts.</p>	<p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>much of their public relations specific education as possible between the two times the test is administered.</p>			
<p>2. Students will enhance their critical thinking skills.</p>	<p>Students will improve the quality of their thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. With these critical thinking skills, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Articulate an argument/thesis statement relevant to the assignment.</li> <li>b) Use relevant evidence to support claims related to the argument/thesis statement.</li> <li>c) Synthesize evidence in order to draw a conclusion.</li> <li>d) Express ideas with precision and clarity.</li> <li>e) Differentiate her or his knowledge and thought processes from other sources and/or class content.</li> </ul>	<p>Expectations are that students are able to identify problems, apply and synthesize relevant evidence, express ideas clearly, and are aware of their own assumptions.</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their critical thinking skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Critical</p>	<p>The Critical Thinking Rubric had an overall student average of 3.33, exceeding expectations and 92.86% of the students were at least minimally competent.</p> <p>50% of rubrics were rated as highly competent, 42.86% were rated as competent and 0% were rated as minimally competent. Unfortunately, 7.14% of the rubrics were rated as not competent.</p> <p>Out of the classes assessed, no rubrics for a 2000 level class were available. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes (3.19)</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>f) Apply and identify relevant course concepts appropriate to the assignment.</p> <p>In order to assess students' critical thinking skills, instructors will utilize the critical thinking assessment rubric. Classes across the major will be used to evaluate assignments that focus on the use of critical thinking skills.</p> <p>The Public Relations Major Coordinator will select courses to be evaluated and communicate this to the faculty members teaching the courses. Courses are strategically chosen in order to assess students at different points throughout the major. Faculty members will identify the specific course assignment that fits best and use the critical thinking rubric to evaluate the assignment.</p>	<p>Thinking Assessment rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric).</p> <p>Additionally we expect that across all of the classes students, on average, are deemed to be at least "competent" in their critical thinking (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on the Critical Thinking Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>exceeded the level of competent. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes (3.47) fell within the competent category as well, just below the level of highly competent (3.5).</p> <p>The results demonstrate that scores were higher in more advanced classes but did not achieve the level we hoped.</p>	<p>fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

<p>3. Students will cultivate a sense of responsible citizenship through social and ethical responsibility</p>	<p>Students will cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility as well as multicultural sensitivity. They will enhance their understanding and concern for the conditions of contemporary society and be aware of the factors that affect ethical behavior. Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Understand the role of the individual in society.</li> <li>b) Evaluate and develop constructive communication approaches to addressing social and ethical issues.</li> <li>c) Demonstrate a sophisticated sense of responsibility and be engaged in community activities.</li> <li>d) Understand the value of multicultural sensitivity.</li> </ul> <p>In order to assess social and ethical responsibility, each year public relations students will complete the</p>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to understand the role of the individual in society, evaluate and develop constructive communication approaches to addressing social and ethical issues, demonstrate a more sophisticated sense of responsibility and be more engaged in community activities. We expect that students will be above average on each scale (a score above of 3.0 on the Social Responsibility and Ethics scales, a score below 3.0 on the Multicultural Sensitivity scale).</p>	<p>Students completed a survey containing the scales, plus additional demographic items.</p> <p>Social Responsibility: The mean score of all students was 3.66.</p> <p>Professional Ethics: The mean score of all students was 4.13.</p> <p>Multicultural Sensitivity: The mean score of all students was 2.38.</p> <p>Each of the scores exceeded out expectations for the students.</p>	<p>The MSS, SR, and PE scales are completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chaise of the Department of Communication Studies. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>Multicultural Sensitivity Scale (MSS), the Social Responsibility measure (SR), and Professional Ethics measure (PE) in an online survey during the spring semester.</p>			<p>at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>4. Students will be able to create and implement written message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>Students will understand how to strategically create written messages in various media environments and across multiple communication channels. Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Identify different message strategies and their strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>b) Analyze rhetorical situations.</li> <li>c) Identify appropriate content, tone, channel, and structure of messages.</li> <li>d) Create messages to accomplish strategic outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to create a variety of written messages in various contexts. We expect that students will score above average on the Communication Flexibility scale (a score of 3.0).</p> <p>Given that the creation of messages strategies in public relations is a critical skill, we would expect our students to be at least competent in these skills (a score of at least 2.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>The mean score on the Communication Flexibility scale was 3.54.</p> <p>The Writing Assessment Rubric had an overall student average of 3.54, exceeding expectations and 100% of the students were at least minimally competent.</p> <p>52.38% of rubrics were rated as highly competent, 47.62% were rated as competent and 0% were rated as minimally competent or not</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>The Communication Flexibility scale is completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chaise of the Department of Communication Studies. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>All data is reviewed by the Public Relations</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>In order to assess students' ability to create and implement diverse message strategies, students will complete the Communication Flexibility measure in an online survey. In addition, classes across the major will be used to evaluate previously planned, assigned, and completed written assignments using the Writing Assessment Rubric.</p>	<p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 2000 level classes to be at least minimally competent (a score of at least 1.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric), students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (a score above 3.5 on the Writing Assessment rubric).</p>	<p>competent.</p> <p>Out of the classes assessed, no rubrics for a 2000 level class were available. The average rubric score in our 3000 level classes (3.79) exceeded the level of competent and in fact reached highly competent. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes (3.30) fell within the competent category, but did not reach the level of highly competent.</p>	<p>Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>5. Students will be able to create and implement oral message strategies in a diverse range of contexts.</p>	<p>Students will understand how to strategically create oral messages in various media environments and across multiple communication channels. Students will be able to:</p> <p>a) Identify different oral message strategies and their strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Expectations are that students will be able to create a variety of oral messages in various contexts. We expect that students will score above average on the Communication Flexibility scale (a score of 3.0).</p>	<p>Students completed a survey containing the Communication Flexibility scale, plus additional demographic items.</p> <p>The mean score on the Communication</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in their specific classes.</p> <p>The Communication Flexibility scale is completed via online survey that is administered by assistant chaise of the</p>

APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>b) Analyze rhetorical situations.</p> <p>c) Identify appropriate content, tone, and structure of messages.</p> <p>d) Create messages to accomplish strategic outcomes.</p> <p>e) Demonstrate communication competency and speaking ability.</p> <p>In order to assess students' ability to create and implement diverse message strategies, students will complete the Communication Flexibility measure in an online survey. In addition, 3000 and 4000 classes across the major will be used to evaluate previously planned, assigned, and completed oral presentations using the Oral Presentation Rubric. There are no 2000 level PR classes with planned oral presentations.</p>	<p>Given that the creation of messages strategies in public relations is a critical skill, we would expect our students to be at least competent in these skills (a score of at least 2.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric) and we expect students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (a score above 3.5 on the Oral Presentation rubric).</p>	<p>Flexibility scale was 3.54.</p> <p>The Oral Presentation Rubric had an overall student average of 3.6 exceeding expectations, and 100% of the students were at least minimally competent.</p> <p>57.14% of rubrics were rated as highly competent, 42.86% were rated as competent and 0% were rated as minimally competent or not competent.</p> <p>Rubrics were only returned for 4000 classes. The average rubric score in our 4000 level classes (3.60) exceeded the level of highly.</p>	<p>Department of Communication Studies. The survey is provided to all public relations students.</p> <p>All data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
<p>6. Students will be able to use quantitative data to</p>	<p>Students are evaluated from classes across the major on</p>	<p>In cases where quantitative reasoning is peripheral to</p>	<p>No rubrics were returned that assessed quantitative</p>	<p>Rubrics are completed by individual faculty in</p>



APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

<p>analyze, interpret, and evaluate material in an effort to inform strategic decision-making processes.</p>	<p>assignments where quantitative reasoning is central or peripheral to the assignment.</p> <p>When quantitative reasoning is peripheral to the assignment (there are potential uses of numbers to provide useful detail, enrich descriptions, present background, or establish frames of reference but quantitative reasoning is not the central purpose of the assignment) instructors utilize part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the students' overall ability to quantitatively reason.</p> <p>When quantitative reasoning is central to the assignment (there are potential uses of numbers to address a central question, issue, or theme) instructors utilize part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the students' overall ability to quantitatively reason and part 3 assess various elements of</p>	<p>the assignment we expect that students, on average, are deemed to be at least "competent" in their quantitative reasoning (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on Part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their quantitative reasoning skills improve. Students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p> <p>In cases where quantitative reasoning is central to the assignment we expect that students, on average, are deemed to be at least</p>	<p>reasoning as peripheral.</p> <p>Rubrics that identified quantitative reasoning as central had an overall student average of 3.75 on part 2 of the rubric. This exceeded our expectations and the average student was able to reach the level of highly competent on the rubric.</p> <p>On part 3 of the rubric had an overall student average of 3.67, exceeding our expectations.</p> <p>Unfortunately we only have data from 4000 level classes for this rubric. But the rubric averages exceeded our expectations for that class level.</p>	<p>their specific classes.</p> <p>Data is reviewed by the Public Relations Coordinator and a summary is provided for the assessment report.</p> <p>The assessment report is posted on our departmental intranet site and discussed at departmental planning retreat in August of the following year.</p> <p>The public relations faculty will then meet at the beginning of the fall semester to discuss the finding in depth and determine what can be done to increase student learning.</p>
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APPENDIX/B.A. in Public Relations/IBHE Short Progress Report

	<p>quantitative reasoning.</p> <p>The Public Relations Major Coordinator will select courses to be evaluated and communicate this to the faculty members teaching the courses. Courses are strategically chosen in order to assess students at different points throughout the major but only focus on courses at the 3000 and 4000 level since no quantitative reasoning happens in major class on the 200 level. Faculty members will identify the specific course assignment that fits best and use the Quantitative Reasoning rubric to evaluate the assignment.</p>	<p>“competent” in their quantitative reasoning (consistent with a score 2.5 or above on Part 2 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric). We also expect our students to be at least competent in the skills found in part 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric (score of at least 2.5).</p> <p>We expect that as students move from lower level classes to upper level classes their quantitative reasoning skills improve. Therefore, we expect students in 3000 level classes to be at least competent (a score of at least 2.5 on parts 2 and 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric) and students in upper level classes (4000) to be highly competent (above 3.5 on parts 2 and 3 of the Quantitative Reasoning rubric).</p>		
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(Continue objectives as needed. Cells will expand to accommodate your text.)

## **PART TWO**

This is the first assessment report for the Public Relations major.

## **PART THREE**

The Public Relations major curriculum was created, in part, by using assessment data from the prior public relations option in the Communication Studies major. The new public relations coursework allows us to devote more time to the major theoretical concepts and practical applications relevant to the field. This has resulted in a positive disciplinary knowledge post-test. We are also able to devote more classwork to written and oral messages (a second writing and production course and a campaigns course were added to the curriculum) and can now deal directly with the use of data (quantitative and qualitative) in public relations to make strategic decisions through the new PR research, measurement and evaluation course as well as in the campaigns class. We hope this increased depth across the major will enhance student learning and help us meet our learning objectives.