

## **2016-2017 Public Relations Program Review**

# Program Review Guidebook for Academic Departments 2016-2017

## Public Relations

### Overview

#### **PROGRAM REVIEW: INTRODUCTION**

A program review is a systematic process for evaluating and improving academic programs. It is conducted through self-evaluation and peer evaluation by external reviewers, with an emphasis on assessing the quality and degree of student learning within the program. The comprehensive analysis which the review provides and the resulting Memorandum of Understanding are used to stimulate curriculum and programmatic changes and to inform planning and budgeting processes at various levels. The program review cycle occurs every five years.

Program review is a required element in WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) accreditation and has been a part of Pepperdine's assessment cycle since 2003. While data provides the foundation for effective program review, assessment of student learning, and other quality improvement strategies, the data must be turned into evidence and communicated in useful formats. The program review does this.

When implemented effectively and followed up deliberately, program review is a powerful means for engaging faculty, staff, and administrators in evaluating and improving programs to enhance student learning. The review process is an opportunity to refine a program to meet the changing needs of student learning, retention, curriculum in various disciplines, and student support services. It is also a purposeful opportunity to link decision-making, planning, and budgeting with evidence.

This guidebook provides a framework and resources to help with the review.

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The process is intended to be meaningful, foremost, for the department and its enhancement of student learning. As a result, the process is flexible in order to serve the needs of both small and large programs as well as academic, co-curricular, and student support programs. The review should be a collaborative process involving faculty, staff, administrators, and students in order to align more effectively the college or department with institutional goals and objectives.

Two guiding principles are embedded in this Guidebook and are consistent with WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) standards:

**\* Ongoing Evaluation of What Students Learn:**

Evidence-based program review includes: a review of program learning outcomes; evaluation of the methods employed to assess achievement of the outcomes; and analysis and reflection on learning results, retention/graduation rates, core competencies, and other outcomes data over a multi-year period.

**\* Quality Assurance, Planning, and Budgeting Decisions Based on Evidence:**

The results of the program review are to be used for follow-up planning and budgeting at various decision-making levels.

### **PREPARATION FOR PROGRAM REVIEW**

The program chair is responsible for the planning of the review. An internal committee or working group should be developed to allocate responsibilities for writing the program review including data collection, writing, and use of resources. It is recommended that a meeting occur between the committee and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to review data needs.

### **PROGRAM ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY, MISSION, AND INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES**

Program reviews focus on the meaning, quality, and integrity of a program as it relates to student learning and the mission of Pepperdine:

Pepperdine University is a Christian university committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and Christian values, where students are strengthened for lives of purpose, service, and leadership.

Each department carries out the University mission and institutional learning outcomes (ILOs). The ILOs are formed by two components:

- \* Core commitments: knowledge and scholarship, faith and heritage, and community and global understanding
- \* Institutional values: purpose, service, and leadership

Each basic commitment is seen through the lens of three essential institutional values drawn from the University mission statement: purpose, service, and leadership. These basic commitments should link to measurable objectives as stated in the student learning outcomes (SLOs).

### **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM REVIEW COMPONENTS**

Program review at Pepperdine University is conducted on a five-year review cycle that involves three main components and six steps (see diagram below):

#### **SELF STUDY:**

- An in-depth, internal analysis written by program faculty/staff
- Department faculty or program staff (for co-curricular and student support services) conduct a departmental self-study within guidelines provided in the Guidebook. This portion of the review identifies program strengths and limitations, and suggests solutions to identified problems.

#### **EXTERNAL & INTERNAL REVIEWS:**

- An external review conducted by an outside expert in the field or discipline. The Guidebook describes how to secure qualified, objective external reviewers, including those with understanding and experience in addressing student learning outcomes assessment. Once the self-study is completed, the external review is organized.
- An internal review by the Advancement of Student Learning Council (ASLC)

#### **CLOSING THE LOOP:**

- A Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) developed by the department
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed by the dean

Closing the Loop is used to describe the act of making decisions based on evidence. The most important product of a program review is the advancement of student learning. Therefore, the program review cycle ends by identifying evidence-based changes in the

**QIP, and then the MOU explains how the plan will be supported and carried out over the next five years.**

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Please find the link below for the 'GLOSSARY OF TERMS'.  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6ufJTOgPx32TmZjU19JZ3FTM00>**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Reviews begin with an introduction that provides a context for the review. In contrast to the rest of the self-study report, this portion is primarily descriptive and should include:**

### **1. INTERNAL CONTEXT**

**This begins with an overview of the program describing (as appropriate).**

- a. where the program is situated (school/division),**
- b. degrees granted, concentrations available, programs offered**
- c. where is the program located (campus location)**
- d. Provide a brief history of the program**
- e. Describe the changes made to the program since the last review.**

The Public Relations program is within the Communication Division, which is one of the eight divisions in Seaver College at Pepperdine University, located on the Malibu campus. The Public Relations major is one of seven majors offered by the Communication Division, comprising about 20 % of the division's total student enrollment; there is no minor or concentration. The Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations is designed to give both theoretical and practical preparation in the varied areas in which the public relations professional should have expertise, focusing on strategic communication planning and writing skills, and including an overview of traditional, digital and social media, technology, speech, persuasion, and management courses.

The specific public relations courses are designed to be progressive in concept acquisition, skills development, strategic thinking paradigms and problem-solving complexities. In addition to the 45 required units, the public relations major requires that students successfully complete a minimum of 9-12 upper-division units in a concentration and a 1-unit internship. The outside concentration is chosen in consultation with an adviser to complement the public relations coursework. For instance, if students already are interested in a specific area of public relations work, such as corporate or government settings, that interest should be taken into consideration when choosing an outside concentration.

The public relations program is closely aligned and interdependent with the Communication Division majors in Integrated Marketing Communication, which requires eight units (PR 255, Public Relations Principles; MSCO 371, Communication Graphics) also required by public relations students; Advertising, which requires 12 units (MSCO 371, Communication Graphics; MSCO 380, Digital Strategy; COM 570, Media Law) also required by public relations students; Journalism, which requires 8 units (JOUR 241, Introduction to News Writing and Editing; COM 570, Media Law) also required by public relations students; and Sport Administration, which requires 4 units (PR 255, Public Relations Principles) also required by public relations students. All public relations students are required to complete the 9-unit core (COM 200, Communication Theory; COM 300, Introduction to Communication Research; COM 400, Communication Ethics) common to other communication majors. The remaining five courses required in the major are PR 380 (Public Relations Writing and Media), PR 455 (Public Relations Strategies and Techniques)

or PR 505 (Public Relations Management), PR 555 (Public Relations Campaigns and Cases (the capstone course), and PR 595 (Public Relations Internship).

One primary goal and distinctive of the Communication Division is to provide students with opportunities for experiential learning. The public relations major has a long and extensive record of experiential, and service, learning. During multiple required courses, students have opportunities for academic experiential and service learning that centers on researching, planning, executing, and evaluating strategic communication plans for Southern California nonprofit organizations and businesses as well as for Pepperdine departments and organizations. Experiential, service-learning projects that integrate both academic and service components in such a way that the academic learning prepares students for the service work they do, and the service work provides an experiential base for academic learning and discussion, have proven to be effective in achieving program learning outcomes, have positive effects on students' personal growth (see attached article), and are consistent with curricula in public relations programs at benchmark and aspirant institutions. In addition, service learning has been shown to be an effective tool that can help bridge the gap between universities and their civic missions, bringing about social change; the service learning that is incorporated into the public relations major supports Pepperdine's university mission in that way. More specifically, the service learning that is incorporated into the public relations major supports the university's Institutional Educational Objectives (IEOs) and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) related to Knowledge & Scholarship ("apply knowledge to real-world challenges"), Faith & Heritage ("respond to the call to serve others"), and Community & Global Understanding ("demonstrate commitment to service and civic engagement" and "use global and local leadership opportunities in pursuit of justice").

Another avenue for experiential learning is the internship. All public relations students are required to complete at least one 1-unit internship; many students complete several. These internships occur primarily in the United States; however, some are in international locations. The application of foundational knowledge and skills in experiential, service-learning projects equips Pepperdine public relations majors with the abilities necessary to land highly competitive and prestigious internships. In many cases, their demonstrated knowledge and skills, combined with the work ethic and service approach inculcated from the university mission and culture, result in Pepperdine public relations students being preferred for these internships over students from larger universities. The educational benefits of the internship are discussed in that section of the overall Communication Division Six-Year Program Review document.

In addition, the public relations major houses the Fred L. Casmir Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), which offers students leadership and management, service learning, strategic planning, event promotion and implementation, recruiting and fundraising, professional development, and networking experiences which may lead to internship and job opportunities.

In the late 1970s, Professor Emeritus Dr. Fred L. Casmir started one of the first public relations programs in the West Coast at Pepperdine University. Although its initial incarnation was as a sub-unit of the journalism major, student interest increased so much and so fast that the sub-unit became a sequence within the Bachelor of Arts in Communication. In an era when professional internships were not widely accepted, Pepperdine became one of the first universities in the country to develop a professional internship program for public relations students. The Pepperdine public relations program outgrew its journalism roots and became an independent major in 1986, with a balance of theory and practice throughout its progressive curriculum.

**CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM MADE BY DR. FERGUSON SINCE THE 2012 FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM REVIEW:**

1. Replaced MSCO 220 (Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication) with new course (previously in Seaver Academic Catalog) PR 255, Public Relations Principles. Based on assessment data that revealed that PR majors did not obtain competency in basic concepts, theories, applications, and other understanding of the field, the combined advertising-public relations course (MSCO 220) was dropped and replaced with PR 255, which focuses primarily on public relations and secondarily on other areas of strategic communication.
2. Added requirement for all majors to complete existing course JOUR 241, Introduction to News Writing and Editing. This course also was previously required, but dropped in the mid-2000s. Based on assessment data that revealed that students were not demonstrating competency in journalistic writing in PR 380, this requirement was added back into the public relations curriculum.
2. New course added: MSCO 380, Digital Strategy. This course was designed by advertising professor Ginger Rosenkrans with the public relations program review PI's collaboration. It brings together advertising, public relations, and IMC students in a junior-level course that provides learning and application in mobile app and website development in strategic communication contexts, through a major service-learning project.
3. Renamed PR 380 Public Relations Writing to Public Relations Writing and Media, to better reflect the subject matter.
4. Renamed PR 455 from Public Relations Techniques and Campaigns to Public Relations Strategies and Techniques, since the course focuses on learning and applying these concepts in preparation for PR 555, the senior capstone course, which focuses on strategic communication campaigns.
5. Renamed PR 555 from Advanced Cases in Public Relations to Public Relations Campaigns and Cases to better reflect the focus on both topics.

A student-run strategic communication firm, The Waves Effect, was launched in Fall 2013, and has been advised by this program review's PI, Dr. Denise Ferguson. Over nine students are involved each semester, meet weekly to plan, propose, and implement communication and promotion strategies and tactics for Pepperdine departments, programs, and student organizations. The Waves Effect directly supports the public relations program learning outcomes and follows best practices according to the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Student-Run Firms Handbook, which are followed by over 100 such affiliated firms at universities across the U.S. More information can be obtained at <http://prssa.prsa.org/student-run-firms/>.

## **2. THE EXTERNAL CONTEXT**

**This should explain how the program responds to the needs of the area in which it serves: this can include the community, region, field, or discipline.**

Public Relations is one of the fastest-growing majors in higher education, and continues to hold a promising career outlook. As of May 2016, the median pay for public relations professionals was \$58,000, and employment of public relations specialists is projected to grow 6 percent until 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Since becoming a full major, the public relations curriculum has been deliberately modeled after recommendations made by the 1987 Commission on Public Relations Education Report, the 1999 Public Relations Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Port of Entry, and the 2006 Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education, The Professional Bond. The reports are products of an appointed committee of leading international educators (including Pepperdine public relations

program director and this program review's principal investigator, Dr. Denise Ferguson) and practitioners representing a consortium of allied academic and professional communication organizations: the Public Relations Society of America and its Educators Academy; Institute for Public Relations, National Communication Association (which Dr. Ferguson represents); Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication; Global Alliance for PR; Canadian Public Relations Society; Council of Public Relations Firms, Center for Global Public Relations, Hispanic Public Relations Association; Association for Women in Communication, Black Public Relations Society, International Association of Business Communications, and International Communication Association.

All courses are fully in support of Seaver College's mission, and foster a through consideration of professional and personal responsibility development. Stated goals, concepts and competencies have been met consistently from introductory to capstone coursework. The public relations curriculum complements the liberal arts courses in the General Education program, which together provide a comprehensive foundation for a career in public relations. Pepperdine's PR major stands apart from other universities' programs because of the university's Christian mission, exceptional location and setting, unique liberal arts approach to PR education, and emphasis on experiential learning. The Pepperdine public relations major was originally designed to achieve both the liberal arts education goals of the college and division as well as to enact the proposed curriculum outlined by the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE). The Commission's *Public Relations Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Port of Entry* states:

*A strong traditional liberal arts and social science is a necessary foundation for public relations education. It also is requisite that a multicultural and global perspective pervades the curriculum, and that public relations be taught within the framework of ethical issues and behavior. ... As the practice of public relations becomes increasingly sophisticated, more institutions of higher learning will begin to define the majors, rather than just sequences or emphases of study, in public relations.*

Both the 1999 and 2006 Commission reports list the following courses as essential to a strong undergraduate education in public relations (see attachment). How the Pepperdine public relations major not only meets, and also exceeds, these recommendations, is presented below.

<b>CPRE Recommendations</b>	<b>Pepperdine Public Relations Major</b>
Introduction to Public Relations	PR 255 (Public Relations Principles) COM 200 (Communication Theory)
Public Relations Research, Measurement, and Evaluation	COM 300 (Communication Research)
Public Relations Writing and Technology	MSCO 371 (Communication Graphics) PR 380 (Public Relations Writing and Media) MSCO 380 (Digital Strategy)
Public Relations Strategic Planning and Management	PR 455 (Public Relations Strategies and Techniques) PR 505 (Public Relations Management)
Case Studies in Public Relations	PR 555 (Public Relations Campaigns and Cases)

Public Relations Law and Ethics	COM 400 (Communication Ethics) COM 570 (Mass Communication Law)
Supervised Internship Experience	PR 595 (Public Relations Internship)
Directed Electives	Outside concentration: 9-12 units in non-mass communication area

**Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

2006\_CPRE\_The\_Professional\_Bond.docx

**OUTCOMES****INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Identifier	Description
CA-PEP-ILO-16.L-1-KS	Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.L-2-FH	Demonstrate value centered leadership.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.L-3-CGU	Demonstrate global awareness.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.P-1-KS	Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.P-2-FH	Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning, and practice.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.P-3-CGU	Understand and value diversity.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.S-1-KS	Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.S-2-FH	Incorporate faith into service to others.
CA-PEP-ILO-16.S-3-CGU	Demonstrate commitment to service and civic engagement.

**Additional Standards/Outcomes**

Identifier	Description
CA-PEP-SVR-15.BAPUBREL	Public Relations
CA-PEP-SVR-15.BAPUBREL-1	Evaluate and analyze relevant theories, philosophies, and practices of communication and public relations.



<b>CA-PEP-SVR-15.BAPUBREL-2</b>	Communicate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and persuasively in textual, visual, and oral formats using appropriate style for the situation and medium involved.
<b>CA-PEP-SVR-15.BAPUBREL-3</b>	Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, clarity, appropriate style, grammatical correctness, and sensitivity.
<b>CA-PEP-SVR-15.BAPUBREL-4</b>	Demonstrate ethical research, planning and execution of public relations efforts that integrate faith with the responsibility to serve and engage communities and social justice globally.

## MISSION

### 3. MISSION, PURPOSES, GOALS, AND OUTCOMES

**A key component in providing the context for the review is a description of the program's mission, purpose, goals, and outcomes.**

- a. Mission - This should be a general explanation of why the program exists, what it hopes to achieve in the future, and the program's essential nature, its values, and its work.**
- b. Goals are general statements of what the program wants to achieve.**
- c. Outcomes are the specific results that should be observed if the goals are being met.**

**The program's purpose, goals, and outcomes should relate to and align with the mission and goals of the college and of the University.**

Public relations continues to grow as a field and offers numerous job opportunities in corporations, nonprofit organizations, agencies, government, education, healthcare, and political and social issue contexts, encompassing strategic planning and implementation, crisis communication, media relations, community relations, promotion, internal relations, and speech writing. The public relations major provides students with theoretical and historical knowledge and practical skills in research, analysis, planning, counseling, writing and emerging media usage necessary to facilitate ethical communication between organizations and their publics. Ethical communicators who facilitate purposeful interaction between organizations and publics are at the forefront of communicators who are both leaders and servants of society.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations is designed to give both theoretical and practical preparation in the varied areas in which the public relations professional should have expertise, focusing on strategic communication planning and writing skills, and including an overview of traditional, digital, and social media, technology, speech, persuasion, and management courses. The public relations curriculum complements the liberal arts courses in the General Education program, which together provide a comprehensive foundation for a career in public relations. Pepperdine's PR major stands apart from other universities' programs because of the university's Christian mission, exceptional location and setting, unique liberal arts approach to PR education, and emphasis on experiential learning.

The Pepperdine public relations major was originally designed and continues to to achieve both the liberal arts education goals of Seaver College and Communication Division as well as to enact the proposed curriculum outlined by the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE) in the Commission's 1999 Public Relations Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Port of Entry, and which was updated in the 2006 *The Professional Bond* report, which states:

*A strong traditional liberal arts and social science is a necessary foundation for public relations education. It also is requisite that a multicultural and global perspective pervades the curriculum, and that public relations be taught within the framework of ethical issues and behavior.*

*Goals:* It is the aim of the Pepperdine University public relations major to:

1. Provide a foundation of the basic theories, concepts, models, and history of study of human, persuasive, mediated, and mass communication.
2. Provide academic and scholarly insight in the processes of journalism, mass communication, organizational communication, public opinion, and legal constraints on such public communication as is relevant and appropriate for the study of public relations.
3. Provide an introduction to the function of language, symbols, and message effects on audiences.
4. Provide a foundation of the underlying scholarly principles and communication tools of contemporary public relations practice and management, and the trends shaping public relations practice.
5. Provide higher order training in appropriate written, oral, and mediated communication skills essential to a well-educated public relations practitioner.
6. Expose students to the origins and significance of public relations as both an academic discipline as well as a practical art within historic and hypothetical contexts.
7. Critically examine public relations as a process promoting complex, two-way communication; a process affecting the social responsibility and economic impact and survival of all types of organizations (global and domestic); and an influence on social conscience and public opinion.
8. Expose students to the ethics of communication, as well as the standards and responsibilities of the practice of PR.
9. Promote the ideal of social responsibility as a public relations role.
10. Provide opportunities for students to develop entry-level competency in varied areas in which the public relations practitioner should have expertise (e.g., mass media, writing, speech, persuasion, research, visual tactics, new technology, reputation management, strategic planning, and critical thinking).
11. Provide meaningful experiential opportunities in which students can exercise developing competencies, with particular focus on service-learning and ethics (professional and personal).
12. Instill the importance of professional and personal responsibility in the public relations work.
13. Engage in discussion of diversity and diversity issues and their relevance to public relations as vital to understanding and meeting the needs of special publics.

*Objectives:* Each public relations graduate will:

1. Identify and address public relations implications of mainstream problems, situations, challenges or trends (global and domestic) [Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10]

2. Apply critical-thinking, problem-solving and proactive action skills [Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 8, 9, 10]
3. Apply the four-step public relations process in developing or analyzing campaigns [Goals 2, 4]
4. Debate ethical ramifications of actions taken in the name of public relations [Goals 2, 4, 5, 6, 9]
5. Critically examine how professional necessity and personal values may collide, and how to manage possible collisions [Goals 4, 5, 6, 9]
6. Situationally determine what is acceptable, according to ethical standards of the profession [Goals 2, 4, 5]
7. Test problem-solving and analyzing ability with case analyses [Goals 1, 2, 4]
8. Anticipate and manage issues through environmental scanning, strategizing and optimizing persuasive efforts, and putting those efforts into action [Goals 2, 3, 4, 7]
9. Manage information- gather, organize, prioritize and disseminate information to mass or segmented audiences [Goals 1, 2, 7]
10. Compare and contrast the perspectives, goals and loyalties of public relations with its related areas (e.g., advertising, fundraising, marketing, journalism) [Goals 2, 4]
11. Produce the most important and most common public relations tools according to commonly accepted standards [Goals 2, 7]
12. Identify evident and potential public relations situations from current events, develop public relations campaigns, carry out a publicity campaign for a client, produce a press kit, produce a direct mail package, design a special event plan and accompanying publicity materials, and conduct a major analysis and develop a campaign for organization as the senior thesis [Goals 7, 8]
13. Present case analyses to colleagues in a professional setting and manage question-and-answer forums [Goals 3, 4, 7, 8]
14. Analyze situations, strategize and implement ideas with sensitivity to diverse audiences [Goals 3, 4, 10]
15. Quantitatively and qualitatively evaluate public relations efforts [Goals 2, 4, 7]
16. Research and write the senior thesis [Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]
17. Integrate technology into research and presentations [Goals 2, 4]
18. Be familiar with the job search process through research, interviews with professionals, and resume and portfolio development [Goals 7, 8, 9]

### Program Learning Outcomes - PLOs (revised after the 2012 Five-Year Program Review)

*A student who graduates with a major in Public Relations should be able to:*

<b>PLO #1</b>	Evaluate and analyze relevant theories, philosophies, and practices of communication and public relations.
<b>PLO #2</b>	Communicate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and persuasively, adapted to textual, visual, and oral formats using appropriate style for the situation and medium involved.
<b>PLO #3</b>	Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, clarity, appropriate style, grammatical correctness, and sensitivity.
<b>PLO #4</b>	Demonstrate ethical research, planning and execution of public relations efforts that integrate faith with the responsibility to serve and engage communities and social justice globally.

#### **Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

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## **CURRICULUM MAP**

I - Introduced  
D - Developed  
M - Mastered

#### **Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

PLO\_AND\_ILO\_CURRICULUM\_MAP\_AND\_DESCRIPTION.docx

## **ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE: Meaning**

### **Analysis of Direct Student Learning: Meaning Quality and Integrity**

The university is required to define and ensure a distinctive and coherent educational experience for each of its degree programs. The findings from the program assessment and analysis process should explain how effectively courses, curricula, the co-curriculum, and other experiences are structured, sequenced, and delivered so that students achieve

learning outcomes at the expected levels of performance in core competencies in their majors or fields of specialization, in general education, and in areas distinctive to the institution. It means ensuring alignment among all these elements, and maintaining an assessment infrastructure that enables the institution to diagnose problems and make improvements when needed. Direct student learning, an examination of how well students are meeting the program learning outcomes, should come from the past four years of annual assessments.

(2013 WSCUC Accreditation Handbook.)

**Meaning of the Degree:** Describe how the program ensures a holistic experience by answering the following questions about the coherence and alignment within the program:

4. What are the learning outcomes and how does the degree support the institutional mission and institutional learning outcomes? How does the degree embody the distinct values, basic commitment, and traditions of the institution?

**Program Learning Outcomes - PLOs**

*A student who graduates with a major in Public Relations should be able to:*

<b>PLO #1</b>	Evaluate and analyze relevant theories, philosophies, and practices of communication and public relations.
<b>PLO #2</b>	Communicate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and persuasively in textual, visual, and oral formats using appropriate style for the situation and medium involved.
<b>PLO #3</b>	Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, clarity, appropriate style, grammatical correctness, and sensitivity.
<b>PLO #4</b>	Demonstrate ethical research, planning and execution of public relations efforts that integrate faith with the responsibility to serve and engage communities and social justice global

**Alignment of PLOs with Institutional Learning Outcomes**

<b>Institutional Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>PLO #1</b>	<b>PLO #2</b>	<b>PLO #3</b>	<b>PLO #4</b>
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<b>ILO #1</b> Demonstrate expertise in an academic or professional discipline, display proficiency in the discipline, and engage in the process of academic discovery.	•	•	•	•
<b>ILO #2</b> Appreciate the complex relationship between faith, learning, and practice.	•		•	•
<b>ILO #3</b> Develop and enact a compelling personal and professional vision that values diversity.			•	•
<b>ILO #4</b> Apply knowledge to real-world challenges.	•	•		•
<b>ILO #5</b> Respond to the call to serve others.		•	•	•
<b>ILO #6</b> Demonstrate commitment to service and civic engagement.	•		•	•
<b>ILO #7</b> Think critically and creatively, communicate clearly, and act with integrity.			•	•
<b>ILO #8</b> Practice responsible conduct and allow decisions and directions to be informed by a value-centered life.	•	•	•	•
<b>ILO #9</b> Use global and local leadership opportunities in pursuit of justice.	•			•

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Relations is designed to give both theoretical and practical preparation in the varied areas in which the public relations professional should have expertise, focusing on strategic communication planning and writing skills, and including an overview of mass media, technology, speech, persuasion, and management courses. This learning occurs

through numerous opportunities for research, writing, oral presentation, and reflection. Pepperdine's Public Relations major stands apart from other universities' programs due to the university's Christian mission, exceptional location and setting, unique liberal arts approach to Public Relations education, and emphasis on experiential learning *and service*. In addition, many students complete internship assignments in nonprofit organizations, which provides opportunities for additional learning and practice related to ILO #1-9.

**5. Is there a coherent, aligned sequence of learning opportunities? Does the degree offer sufficient breadth and depth of learning for this particular major or program? Please explain.**

The Public Relations major is intentionally designed such that courses progressively introduce, develop, integrate, and apply skills, with the capstone course (PR 555) providing an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of knowledge through application in a "real-world" setting. The Public Relations program curriculum is intentionally designed to build on previous knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) such that in beginning courses (200-level) students gain introductory competency, in mid-level courses (300- and 400-level) gain additional development in KSAs, and in senior-level courses (500-level) students demonstrate mastery upon completion of their capstone course (PR 555) and through an exit survey.

The Public Relations major curriculum is designed to provide theoretical and practical preparation in order to meet the standards required for a career in public relations. The Communication Core courses, which emphasize communication theory (COM 200), rhetorical analysis and application (COM 180, GE), communication research (COM 300), media law (COM 570) and communication ethics (COMM 400), are required for the major. (These courses are assessed in other Communication Division assessment reports.) The theories studied in COM 200 are applied to the field of public relations in PR 255, PR 455, PR 505, and PR 555. No courses with the PR prefix are currently taught through International Programs; occasionally, if a visiting faculty member teaches COM 205 abroad (e.g., Prof. Chris Stivers did so in Lausanne), this public relations major requirement can be met during a semester studying abroad. COM 313/513 (Intercultural Communication) is often taught in the International Programs; while not a requirement for the public relations major, many public relations students do complete this course for their GE requirement.

In PR 255, students are introduced to the history, roles, functions, purposes, methods, responsibilities, and ethical issues of public relations in various contexts, including corporate, nonprofit, and agency environments. The four-step strategic planning process (research, planning, execution, and evaluation) is introduced, with the major project involving researching and developing and presenting a public relations campaign proposal for an on-campus department or student organization. This early introduction is essential so that students can then develop an understanding of and skills in applying the four-step process and working with clients in PR 455, and then demonstrate mastery of the strategic planning process by researching, planning, proposing the campaign to the client, executing the campaign, and evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign they develop and implement for a nonprofit client organization in PR 555. PR 380 introduces students to public relations writing, digital, and social media tools and skills used in projects and campaigns; understanding of and skills in public relations writing and media relations are essential for success in assignments and client projects in PR 455, PR 505, and PR 555. PR 505 allows students to develop competence in the realities of professional public relations practice, and readies them for working in agency teams and with clients in PR 555. Throughout the curriculum, guest speakers and professional site visits allow students to learn from public relations professionals and see the intersection and application between what they

are learning and doing in class with professional practice.

**6. How current is the program curriculum? How has the curriculum changed (if at all) over the last five years including the reasons for the change (e.g., the result of a learning outcome assessment) and evidence used as a basis for change?**

CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM SINCE THE 2012 FIVE-YEAR REVIEW:

1. COM 205 (Storytelling Through Media) was substituted for the previously required core course, COM 301 (Rhetoric and Social Influence), because COM 205 introduces researching, writing and distributing media stories across multiple media platforms.
2. Replaced MSCO 220 (Introduction to Integrated Marketing Communication) with new course (previously in catalog) PR 255, Public Relations Principles. Based on assessment data that revealed that PR majors did not obtain competency in basic concepts, theories, applications, and other understanding of the field, the combined advertising-public relations (MSCO 220) was dropped and replaced with PR 255, which would focus primarily on public relations and secondarily on other areas of strategic communication.
3. Added requirement for all majors to complete JOUR 241, Introduction to News Writing and Editing. This course was previously required, but dropped in the mid-2000s. Based on assessment data and benchmarking with other peer and aspirant programs that revealed a writing deficiency and that students were not gaining competency in journalistic writing in PR 380, this requirement was added back into the curriculum.
4. New course added: MSCO 380, Digital Strategy. This course was designed by advertising professor Ginger Rosenkrans with my collaboration. It brings together advertising, public relations, and IMC students in a junior-level course that provides learning and application in mobile app and website development in strategic communication contexts.
5. Renamed PR 380 Public Relations Writing to Public Relations Writing and Media, to better reflect the subject matter.
6. Renamed PR 455 from Public Relations Techniques and Campaigns to Public Relations Strategies and Techniques, since the course focuses on learning and applying these concepts in preparation for PR 555, which focuses on campaigns.
7. Renamed PR 555 from Advanced Cases in Public Relations to Public Relations Campaigns and Cases to better reflect the focus on both topics.
8. A student-run strategic communication firm, The Waves Effect, was launched in Fall 2013, and has been advised by this program review's PI, Dr. Denise Ferguson. Over nine students are involved each semester, meet weekly to plan, propose, and implement communication and promotion strategies and tactics for Pepperdine departments, programs, and student organizations. The Waves Effect directly supports the public relations program learning objectives and follows best practices according to the Public Relations Student Society of America Student-Run Firms Handbook, which are followed by over 100 such affiliated firms at universities across the U.S. More information can be obtained at <http://prssa.prsa.org/student-run-firms/>.



**7. Please present a curriculum comparison with at least three peer institutions and with national disciplinary or professional standards if available.**

Please see the curriculum comparisons with five peer and aspirant institutions--the first chart compared the Seaver College public relations major with other programs for the 2012 Five-Year Program Review; the second contains current data for each program, completed for the 2017 Six-Year Program Review. Note the changes (in bold) in the Pepperdine public relations program implemented since the 2012 review, which have strengthened our program and brought it closer to standards of other top programs.

Below are the current public relations curriculum recommendations as a result of a national study of educators and professionals, by the international Commission on Public Relations Education, on which the Principle Investigator, Dr. Denise Ferguson, serves. She was involved in writing and editing the curriculum guidelines, based on the data. The Pepperdine public relations major has been revised since the 2012 Program Review to more closely follow the former CPRE curriculum guidelines, and is in line with the new recommendations, with the exception of requiring a course in business literacy (although most public relations majors take a business concentration). I would recommend requiring such a course in business literacy as the public relations curriculum continues to be modified.

**Recommendations**

The Commission's recommendations for this current report are offered with the understanding that some universities may need to combine or otherwise reconfigure coursework to fit within the confines of their undergraduate communication programs. The intention here is to provide guidance on the key contemporary elements of public relations study, based on educator and practitioner input, rather than to prescribe a particular framework or course of study. The Commission encourages programs to follow these recommendations where feasible and to incorporate these areas of emphasis in a manner that fits within each university's approach to public relations education.

- **A five-course minimum**

Based on extensive educator and practitioner input, the Commission recommends inclusion, at a minimum, of a five-course sequence in undergraduate public relations programs, as described and updated below. In those cases where university-based requirements or other restrictions prohibit the offering of the five-course sequence, existing courses should be designed to cover these major topics widely considered to be essential academically and professionally for undergraduates entering the field.

- **Introduction to or Principles of Public Relations**, also taught as corporate communication, communication management, and strategic communication, among other titles, may include marketing, advertising, or other mass communication concepts, but should cover the scope, function, and contexts of the profession, basic theories, strategic planning, and other approaches and concepts specifically related to the practice of public relations. Public relations history, ethics, and career opportunities should also be included in this introductory course.
- **Research Methods**, also taught as communication research, quantitative methods, or market research, among other titles, should focus on the proper and ethical gathering, analysis, and reporting of primary and secondary data, including the use of interviews, focus groups, surveys, and analytic software.

- **Writing** may be taught as public relations writing, business communication, media writing, news writing, or other titles, but courses should include the fundamentals of grammar, style, and syntax for a variety of public relations applications and platforms including conventional, digital, and social media channels.
- **Campaigns and Case Studies**, also taught as a planning, management, programming, or capstone course, among other titles, should provide students with an opportunity for research, application, critique, and presentation of public relations recommendations based on primary and/or secondary research, coursework, and experience to a real client or as part of a case study analysis.
- **Supervised Work Experience or Internships**, also taught as practice, co-op, field, or practicum courses, or through a student-run public relations or strategic communication firm, among other titles, should place students in program-approved positions to gain career-related experience and establish professional contacts under the supervision of an experienced communication or public relations professional.
- **Five essential topics.** Whether part of public relations coursework or obtained outside of a student's major curriculum, the Commission recommends that students have at least minimal exposure to the following areas that both educators and practitioners consider essential to effective public relations education.
  - **Business literacy**, providing students with a working knowledge of the fundamentals of corporate accounting and finance, economic thinking, capitalism, markets, and financial communications. Related to business literacy is the ability to measure, evaluate, and report public relations outcomes that support business objectives.
  - **Content creation**, including writing, audio/video production, and design competence for social, print, and broadcast applications.
  - **Ethics**, not only associated with professional associations, but also through an exploration and refinement of one's personal compass for working as a professional communicator who on behalf of an organization interacts with its social environment, shares information used by publics for decision-making, and serves as the conduit between publics and organizations, often playing an ethical counsel role.
  - **Analytics** training that provides students with the ability to gather, assess, and analyze data used for trend-spotting, policy recommendations, and forward-looking communication strategy.
  - **Digital technology** familiarity, use, and experience that enable students to recommend applications, channels, and management practices to support organizational objectives and best serve client needs.

CERTIFICATION IN EDUCATION FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS (CEPR) is a voluntary program of quality-assurance endorsement for studies in public relations at colleges and universities worldwide. Established by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 1989, CEPR is a program with standards based on recommendations of the Commission on Public Relations Education ([www.commpred.org](http://www.commpred.org)). This is an institutional certification; Pepperdine's public relations program is not certified, but followed CEPR's curriculum guidelines (see attached).

Additionally, PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) and PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) have developed an individual certification for public relations students who are members of PRSSA; individuals are eligible within their six months (before or after) graduating (see attached). More information is available at <http://prssa.prsa.org/internships-jobs/career-tools/certificate-in-principles-of-public-relations/>

**Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

Benchmarked\_PR\_Programs.docx

Benchmark\_Belmont\_University\_Public\_Relations\_Major\_\_.docx

Benchmark\_BYU\_PR\_curriculum\_5\_2017.pdf

Benchmark\_UCSD\_PR\_major\_Journalism\_and\_Media\_Studies.pdf

CEPR2016.pdf

Certificate\_Principles\_PR\_StudyGuide.pdf

**PEDAGOGY**

**8. Please present measures of teaching effectiveness (e.g., course evaluations, peer evaluations of teaching or implementing, scholarship on issues of teaching and learning, formative discussions of pedagogy among faculty, survey measures, participation rates, and student satisfaction surveys).**

Course evaluations are provided by the Seaver Dean or Communication Divisional Dean. Peer evaluations conducted as a part of the rank, tenure, and promotion process are confidential, and may be obtained by the Seaver Dean's Office.

In previous years when there was a stable group of adjunct professors in addition to the one full-time public relations faculty member (Denise Ferguson, this program review's PI), there was an annual program meeting and discussion of changes that may be needed in the curriculum. After Dr. Satchel was hired for the second public relations position and began teaching in January 2014, she and Dr. Ferguson discussed the courses she would teach (PR 380 and PR 455), and Dr. Satchel asked for, used, and modified Dr. Ferguson's course syllabi and teaching materials. Dr. Ferguson periodically served as a "judge" for Dr. Satchel's PR 380 (Public Relations Writing) courses. Dr. Satchel's move from teaching public relations three semesters later has resulted in reliance on two new adjuncts who taught PR 255 (Michelle Truelson in fall 2016 and Kamal Kapoor in spring 2017) and PR 380 (Michelle Truelson, fall and spring) for the first time in 2016-2017. Dr. Ferguson and Prof. Truelson taught PR 255 during the same semester and coordinated their sections for maximum consistency, sharing teaching materials and modifying the major campaign project. Dr. Ferguson, as the program director, has had regular in-person, phone, and email discussions with both Prof. Truelson and Prof. Kapoor, sharing course syllabi and teaching materials, discussing their courses and the modifications they made to maximum the goal of fulfilling the program and course learning outcomes, and observing their classes and serving as "judge" for student campaign or other project presentations. George Drucker was hired to teach PR 505 in fall 2014, and since then has taught that course or PR 455 each semester. Since 2014 Dr. Ferguson has had regular in-person, phone, and email discussions with Prof. Drucker, sharing course syllabi and teaching materials, discussing his courses and the modifications he made to maximize the goal of fulfilling the program and course learning outcomes, and observing his classes and serving as "judge" for student campaign or other project presentations.

At the conclusion of the senior capstone (PR 555) in the spring of each year (which Dr. Ferguson teaches), students complete a PR Major Exit Survey (see attached), which constitutes "INDIRECT EVIDENCE FROM MEASURES OF PERCEIVED VALUE" (see Annual Report on

Program, VIII. Assessment Plan). This survey asks students to rank the program's courses from 0="completely useless" to 10="most helpful" and includes open-ended questions to elicit additional feedback to inform ongoing curriculum development. The 33 students enrolled in the Spring 2017 senior capstone course (PR 555, Public Relations Campaigns and Cases) completed the survey during the final exam period. The data (see attachment) revealed that graduating seniors perceived the most helpful program experience to be the required internship (most students completed multiple internships). Of the courses delivered by faculty at the Pepperdine campus, graduating seniors ranked them in the following order, from least-most helpful:

- MSCO 371
- PR 555
- PR 255
- PR 380
- PR 455
- JOUR 241
- PR 505
- COM 205

For the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning completely unprepared and 10 meaning ready to tackle whatever they throw at you, how prepared do you feel for the PR field?" the average score for public relations graduating seniors was 8. This score is well above the mid-point yet shows room for improvement. Student feedback on what courses should be changed or added is provided under tab item #16, Quality Improvement.

The rankings by graduating public relations seniors in spring 2016 were as follows, from least to most helpful:

- PR 555
- PR 595/GSGS 595 (Internship)
- MSCO 371
- PR 380
- PR 255
- PR 505
- COM 205
- JOUR 241
- MSCO 380
- PR 455

Some of the shift in ranking may be explained by instructor evaluations, changes in course design and, in the case of PR 555, an unusually challenging client during spring 2017, which brought down the course ranking from most valuable course in 2016 to second-most valuable course in 2017. Another factor that renders the rankings of PR 455 and 505 problematic is that students choose which ONE of these required courses to complete, so the sample size is not consistent (i.e., it may be large for PR 455 and large for PR 505 one year, and reversed another year). It is important to note that many of the rankings of within one data point of each other.

Unfortunately, the 2017 survey did not list MSCO 380, Digital Strategy, which has been a required course for the past two years.

Of even more interest are the results from the spring 2014 PR 555 graduating seniors, in terms of improvement from the data collected in spring 2012 for the Five-Year Program Review. An exit

survey of graduating Public Relations Majors in PR 555 reveals encouraging early results from program changes, as compared to responses in Spring 2012, with the greatest improvements in perceived helpfulness of MSCO 292/220 (now PR 255), PR 380, MSCO 371, PR 555, and professional preparation, and helpfulness of courses overall. It must be noted that the seniors who had completed PR 255 as their introductory public relations course (which Dr. Ferguson teaches) found the introductory course of much greater value than did students who had completed MSCO 220/292 with a professor other than Dr. Ferguson; PR 255 had been replaced by MSCO 292/220, but most graduating seniors had taken MSCO 292/220. When the 2014 data was collected JOUR 241 and COM 205 were not required, nor was MSCO 380 added to the curriculum.

Spring 2014 Average (least to most helpful); Spring 2012 Average Ranking:

- PR 380, 6.1; 4.2
- MSCO 292/220, 6.6; 4.5
- PR 455, 8.0; 8.4
- MSCO 371, 8.4; 6.9
- PR 555, 8.8; 7.8
- PR 505, 9.1; 9.1

More student satisfaction data is included in 9 (STUDENT SUCCESS DATA, STUDENT AND ALUMNI DATA)

### **Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

Public\_Relations\_Major\_Exit\_Survey.doc

2017\_PUBLIC\_RELATIONS\_MAJOR\_EXIT\_SURVEY\_DATA.docx

## **ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE: Quality**

**Quality of the Degree: In meaning of the degree student learning outcomes and curriculum matrixes were used to define the degree. Now please describe the processes used to ensure the quality of the program.**

**9. Describe the high impact practices which enrich the learning experiences (How are they integrated in the curriculum? Are they assessed?)**

- a. Service learning
- b. Research opportunities
- c. Internships
- d. Other high-impact practices

### **SERVICE LEARNING**

The public relation program has a long and extensive record of experiential, and service, learning which yields abundant authentic evidence for assessment. During multiple required courses in the public relations major and in the Communication Division, students have opportunities for

academic experiential, service learning that centers on researching, planning, executing, and evaluating strategic communication plans for Southern California nonprofit organizations and businesses as well as for Pepperdine departments and organizations. Experiential, service-learning projects that integrate both academic and service components in such a way that the academic learning prepares students for the service work they do, and the service work provides an experiential base for academic learning and discussion, have proven to be effective in achieving program learning outcomes, have positive effects on students' personal growth, and are consistent with curricula in public relations programs at benchmark and aspirant institutions. In addition, many students complete internship assignments in nonprofit organizations, which provides opportunities for additional learning and practice related to ILO #1-9.

Experiential learning involves carefully chosen experiences that are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis; in the Public

Relations major, this is accomplished through the internship requirement and some class projects that involve partnerships with on-campus

department and student organization and off-campus nonprofit organization "clients."

**Service learning is different from other forms of experiential learning** in that faculty, students, and community partners collaborate to help

shape both the service and learning experience. In addition, the goal of this collaboration goes beyond the technical or individual development

focus of most internships and class projects and, instead, is focused on a more engaged civic sector and lasting social change.

I have attached a document that I distribute to public relations students enrolled in PR 255 and PR 555, which they read before beginning their

service-learning partnerships. PR 555 graduating seniors also read a chapter from Gordon Smith's *Courage and Calling*, and are asked to

respond to these question prompts when writing a 3-5 page reflection paper at the conclusion of the semester, students write a 3-5 page

reflection paper.

"The Reflection Paper is listed on the syllabus as a required element of the campaign project, and I explained from the beginning of the semester that the Weekly Journals will provide material and jog your memory for your paper. I always look forward to reading them, and regularly hear from students that writing their reflections about the entire semester's campaign work is a valuable learning experience. Below are the areas to address, in 3-5 pages; assessment data (student comments) and conclusions will be provided in tab #10.

1. Your role and activities
2. How your agency worked throughout the campaign (strengths and weaknesses)
3. What was enjoyable and gratifying, and what was challenging

4. How this campaign execution integrated previous public relations coursework, citing specific classes, concepts, and skills
5. What you learned from working with an agency, and with your client--both challenges and what you enjoyed--and what you learned about yourself (see *Courage and Calling* reading in Courses)
6. How this kind of application of public relations knowledge and skills intersects with Pepperdine's mission of faith-based service, purpose, and leadership, and applying that to your personal sense of vocational calling (see *Courage and Calling* reading in Courses)."

Also attached is the rubric used by nonprofit client representatives to evaluate their student agency's performance.

## RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Public relations majors conduct extensive research in several classes. For example, in each class project that involves developing a strategic

communication campaign that will be implemented and/or proposed, students conduct thorough secondary research, often including

communication audits of the client's digital and print materials. Often campaign research includes primary research such as interviews, focus

groups, and surveys. Each student agency team writes and submits a comprehensive Research Brief (see attached rubric).

As part of the senior capstone, PR 555, students conduct comprehensive secondary research for their case study analysis of an organization's

management of an issue or crisis. I have attached the instructions and rubric for this assignment.

## INTERNSHIPS

One unit of internship credit is required for all Communication Division students. Internship programs permit public relations majors to work in a

professional capacity in media, corporate, nonprofit advertising and public relations agencies, and other professional settings. Students gain field

experience at the same time as, and as a part of their academic training. Graduating public relations students regularly report that their internship

experiences are the most valuable during their academic career. The public relations curriculum is designed such that Pepperdine students are

excellently prepared and equipped to land and perform well in prestigious internships in a variety of settings. Between 70 and 80 percent of

Communication Division students receive full-time job offers after their internships are completed, and this holds true for public relations students.

The Communication Internship is an opportunity for students to move from the study of liberal arts to their application as practical arts, specifically by improving students' essential skills in interpersonal communication, leadership, team participation, and time management through a cooperative learning environment, while recognizing and evaluating ethical dilemmas and the concept of vocation by observing professionals.

To be eligible for an internship, the student must have:

- Completed 75 units
- Completed all pre-requisite courses required by the major (see your major advisor if you have any questions)
- Completed all supplemental forms (3) required by the Communication Division

A student must complete the registration process to be enrolled in an internship. Description of the process and required forms is available on the internship pages at Career Services. In addition to hours worked, a student must meet each of these criteria in order to obtain an internship for credit. Students:

- must maintain a daily work journal at the internship site.
- must complete a final Student Evaluation form by the Wednesday before finals.
- must have internship supervisor complete the Internship Supervisor Evaluation by the Wednesday before finals.
- need to attend and complete assignments for each mandatory internship class meetings held throughout the semester.
- must submit a written reflection paper (paper length determined by credit hours).
- need to maintain work samples to demonstrate their application of skills.

Students may take up to four units of internship credit, and may spread the units across two or more terms. One unit equals 45 contact hours of work during the semester. Work hours should neither be sporadic over a term, nor intensive over a few days. Ideally, for every one unit, the student should work at least three hours for at least 15 weeks (or at least eight hours per week in a full summer block). Retroactive or advance "credit" is not granted for hours worked outside a term's timeframe.

- 1 Unit = 45 Contact Hours (3 Hours/Week for 15 Weeks)
- 2 Units = 90 Contact Hours (6 Hours/Week for 15 Weeks)
- 3 Units = 135 Contact Hours (9 Hours/Week for 15 Weeks)
- 4 Units = 180 Contact Hours (12 Hours/Week for 15 Weeks)

Denise Ferguson supervised all public relations student internships, with rare exceptions. Student data are provided in the

attachment. During Summer 2015-Fall 2016, Public relations students reported these average ratings on the following

assessed areas, using a 4-point scale:

Critical Thinking Skills: 3.56

Creative Thinking: 3.74

Literacy: 3.70

Communication Skills: 3.67

Problem Solving: 3.60



Knowledge & Competence: 3.26

Ethics: 3.49

Leadership Skills: 3.52

Knowledge of Personal Strengths and Weaknesses: 3.73

Time Management Skills: 3.81

Vocational Direction: 3.30

The raw data and comments are provided in the attached document.

#### **OTHER HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES:**

A student-run strategic communication firm, The Waves Effect, was launched in Fall 2013 and has been advised by this program review's PI,

Prof. Denise Ferguson and Prof. Chris Stivers. Over nine undergraduate students (Public Relations Director, Advertising Director, Media Director,

two Public Relations Coordinators, two Advertising Directors, two Media Directors, plus 1-3 Project Associates) are involved each semester, and

meet weekly to plan, propose, and implement communication and promotion strategies and tactics for Pepperdine departments, programs, and

student organizations; much of their work is also done virtually. All students are chosen through a professional application and interviewing

process conducted by current Directors and Coordinators and by the Faculty Adviser(s), as well as by the two graduate student Executive

Directors, who are responsible for much of the administration of TWE. Undergraduate Directors receive a \$1,000 annual scholarship;

Coordinators receive a \$500 annual scholarship. Graduate student Executive Directors have received between 6-12 units tuition waiver. With the

ending of the MA in Strategic Communication, if The Waves Effect is continued undergraduates will need to assume more leadership responsibilities.

The Waves Effect directly supports the public relations program learning objectives and follows best practices according to the Public Relations

Student Society of America Student-Run Firms Handbook, which are followed by over 100 such affiliated firms at universities across the U.S.

More information can be obtained at <http://prssa.prsa.org/student-run-firms/>. I've attached representative essays from students who have held positions of Coordinator and Director.

**10. Co-Curricular : How intentional are the co-curricular experiences which are provided and how are they integrated into the curricular plan?**

- a. Academic and career advising programs and resources**
- b. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and teaching assistants**
- c. Orientation and transition programs**
- d. Financial support for obtaining scholarships, fellowships, teaching assistantships, etc.**
- e. Support for engagement in the campus community**
- f. Support for emotional and psychological variables of success**
- g. Spiritual development programs and opportunities**
- h. Multicultural opportunities which support diversity**
- i. Plays, musicals, art exhibits, and lectures**
- j. the Sophomore Experience**
- k. Study Abroad**

**a. Academic and career advising programs and resources**

Since the 2012 public relations program review, Denise Ferguson (PI) has provided academic and career advising to nearly all of the public relations majors; While teaching in the major from Spring 2014-Fall 2015, advised a small number of public relations majors. Other than occasional mass advising sessions, all advising by Dr. Ferguson was done individually. In addition, Dr. Ferguson regularly wrote letters of recommendations for students applying for scholarships, internships, full-time jobs, and graduate school. The Waves PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) chapter, which Dr. Ferguson advises, offered career development programs (e.g., interviewing, networking, resume and cover letter writing) each semester and invited many professionals (including Pepperdine alumni) to campus to share their career development advice. These meetings were promoted throughout campus and were open to students in all majors. In addition, Dr. Ferguson regularly accompanied public relations students to off-campus professional events (e.g., PRSA-LA meetings) and conferences (international PRSSA/PRSA annual conference).

**b. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and teaching assistants**

Tutoring and supplemental instruction are available through the Writing Center and Disability Services; no additional services are offered by the Communication Division. There are no teaching assistants for the public relations program, although each semester one graduate student in the MA in Strategic Communication (and previously, MA in Communication) occasionally facilitated exam review for PR 255.

**c. Orientation and transition programs**

Orientation to the public relations major involves meeting with Dr. Ferguson, reading the resources I provide (a magazine about being a public relations major, PRSSA membership materials), and taking PR 255, Public Relations Principles. It's unclear what "transition programs" refers to.

**d. Financial support for obtaining scholarships, fellowships, teaching assistantships, etc.**

These are provided by Seaver College, and not the Communication Division, with the exception of an internship scholarship. Directors in The Waves Effect receive \$1,000 annually; Coordinators receive \$500 annually.

**e. Support for engagement in the campus community**

Public relations majors are urged to be involved in student organizations across campus, and tend to be highly involved. In this way they supplement their classroom learning with hands-on application, such as promoting events sponsored by the student organizations they hold membership in. In addition, the major projects in PR 255 and PR 380 involve students working in teams to research, plan, and propose comprehensive communication plans for on-campus organizations. Public relations students are also urged to be active members of PRSSA and apply to The Waves Effect, and to write, design, and produce for Pepperdine Graphic Media, Newswaves, and the Good Morning, Malibu television program.

**f. Support for emotional and psychological variables of success**

Counseling Services resources are available to public relations students. Regular journal and reflection paper assignments provide mechanisms for the instructor to become aware of a variety of student stresses, followed by meeting with the student and encouraging him/her to access other needed resources.

g. Spiritual development programs and opportunities

Christian faith is integrated in varying degrees across the public relations curriculum, depending on the course content and the instructor. Dr. Ferguson approaches the courses she teaches (PR 255 and PR 555) from an explicitly Christian worldview (see section in attached syllabi), which she introduces at the beginning of each course. Discussions of ethics and professionalism in public relations are from the perspective of Christian values played out in practice and provide students with opportunities to reflect on their ethical decision making process and Pepperdine's Christian mission. For example, one of the question prompts in the PR 555 final reflection paper addresses the intersection of faith and practice (see above section 9): 6. How this kind of application of public relations knowledge and skills intersects with Pepperdine's mission of faith-based service, purpose, and leadership, and applying that to your personal sense of vocational calling (see *Courage and Calling* reading in Courses)."

h. Multicultural opportunities which support diversity

Public relations students have opportunities to enroll in courses taught by diverse faculty; for three semesters Dr. Roslyn Satchel taught public relations courses from a critical race theory perspective. In addition, in all public relations courses students learn from guest speakers from a variety of multicultural backgrounds. In addition, many of the PRSSA meetings and other on-campus events feature diverse guest speakers, in addition to off-campus events students are encouraged to attend (such as PRSA-LA meetings).

i. Plays, musicals, art exhibits, and lectures

There is no formal mechanism for integrating Pepperdine events of this nature into the public relations program assessment process.

j. the Sophomore Experience

There is no formal mechanism for integrating Sophomore Experience into the public relations program assessment process.

k. Study Abroad. There is no formal mechanism for integrating Pepperdine's International Programs into the public relations program assessment process. An overwhelming majority of public relations student study abroad; rarely is a course required for the public relations major (COM 205 or MSCO 371) taught during a semester abroad.

## **11. Please describe evidence of students' research and publications, awards and recognition, professional accomplishments.**

Public relations student accomplishments are most often measured by placement in prestigious internships and jobs, scholarships and awards received, and leadership positions, and less often by admission to graduate school, research and publication. For example, recent Pepperdine public relations graduates have landed highly competitive internships at top international public relations agencies (Burson-Marsteller, Fleischman Hillard) and in corporate and entertainment industry (e.g., Paramount, Warner Bros., Disney) settings. Several public relations alumni have gone on to graduate studies (often in law or communication).

### **Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

What\_is\_Academic\_Service\_Learning\_and\_Professional\_expectations.doc

PR\_555\_Research\_Brief\_Rubric.doc

PR\_555\_Client\_Evaluation\_of\_Student\_Agency\_form.doc

Case\_Study\_Analysis\_Instructions.docx  
 Case\_Study\_Analysis\_Rubric.doc  
 PR\_student\_internship\_evals.xlsx  
 ImportanceofTheWavesEffect.pdf  
 PR\_255\_Fall\_2016\_Syllabus.docx  
 Syllabus\_Spring\_2017.docx  
 PR\_student\_internship\_evals.xlsx

## STUDENT SUCCESS, ALUMNI, AND ASSESSMENT DATA

**12. What is the profile of students in the program and how does the profile relate to or enhance the purpose and goals of the program?**

**Please explain your student success data (enrollment and retention data). Evidence should include student retention and graduation rate trends (disaggregated by different demographic categories such as race, gender, first-generation students, etc.).**

**OIE provides this data annually and houses the reports on the OIE website and LiveText site.**

### **Student Success Data**

*Attached is the student success data for your program.*

Enrollment\_Data\_Public\_Relations\_Fall2011\_15.xlsx

The attached Excel spreadsheet lists the average SAT scores and high school GPA for public relations majors for fall 2011-fall 2015; fall 2016 is missing. Average GPA was the highest (3.47) for fall 2015 enrollees as compared to the previous years. Ave SAT Math scores have been the highest in the past two years (600 in fall 2014 and 599 in fall 2015); Ave SAT Read scores were highest in fall 2015 (589) as compared to previous years.

The attached Excel spreadsheet lists the gender data for enrollees from fall 2011-fall 2015. Number of enrollees has increased from 107 to 128 in fall 2014 and 127 in fall 2015, making public relations the major with the highest enrollment in the Communication Division. Majors consistently are comprised primarily of females. Since then, however, the number of public relations majors has declined slightly due to multiple factors: only one tenure-track professor and adviser to advise and mentor this high number of students; negative experiences in some classes. New adjuncts have been received positively by students and show promise of long-term teaching roles.

The attached Excel spreadsheet breaks down public relations students by ethnicity. The number of White, Non-Hispanic students has increased from fall 2011-fall 2015; the highest percentage of total public relations students--nearly 50 percent (60 of 127); in fall 2011, there was also a high percentage of White, Non-Hispanic students--50 of 107 students. The proportion of Church of Christ public relations students has declined.

### **Student and Alumni Data**

**13. Please present your student and alumni survey data examining student attitudes, satisfaction levels and dispositions. OIE will provide the data in tables and graphs in their Educational Effectiveness Report. Programs are responsible for explaining the survey results. Survey data includes: UCLA/CIRP satisfaction survey data, alumni data.**

#### **Student and alumni survey data**

*Attached is the student and alumni survey data for your program.*

Data\_Report\_\_\_COM\_Alumni\_\_2016\_\_FINAL\_08\_22\_16.pdf

At the conclusion of the senior capstone (PR 555) in the spring of each year (which Dr. Ferguson teaches), students complete a PR Major Exit Survey (see attached), which constitutes "INDIRECT EVIDENCE FROM MEASURES OF PERCEIVED VALUE" (see Annual Report on Program VIII. Assessment Plan). This survey asks students to rank the program's courses from 0="completely useless" to 10 ("most helpful), and includes open-ended questions to elicit additional feedback to inform ongoing curriculum development. The 33 students enrolled in the senior capstone course (PR 555, Public Relations Campaigns and Cases) completed the survey during the 2017 final exam period. The data (see attachment) revealed that graduating seniors perceived the most helpful program experience to be the required internship (most students completed multiple internships). Of the courses delivered by faculty at the Pepperdine campus, graduating seniors ranked them in the following order, from least-most helpful:

- MSCO 371
- PR 555
- PR 255
- PR 380
- PR 455
- JOUR 241
- PR 505
- COM 205

For the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning completely unprepared and 10 meaning ready to tackle whatever they throw at you, how prepared do you feel for the PR field?" the average score for public relations graduating seniors was 8. This score is well above the mid-point yet shows room for improvement. Student feedback on what courses should be changed or added is provided under tab item #16, Quality Improvement.

The rankings by graduating public relations seniors in spring 2016 were as follows, from least to most helpful:

- PR 555
- PR 595/GSGS 595 (Internship)
- MSCO 371
- PR 380
- PR 255
- PR 505
- COM 205
- JOUR 241
- MSCO 380
- PR 455

Some of the shift in ranking may be explained by instructor evaluations, changes in course design and, in the case of PR 555, an unusually challenging client during spring 2017, which brought down the course ranking from most valuable course in 2016 to second-most valuable course in 2017. Another factor that renders the rankings of PR 455 and 505 problematic is that students choose which ONE of these required courses to complete, so the sample size is not consistent (i.e., it may be large for PR 455 and large for PR 505 one year, and reversed another year). It is important to note that many of the rankings of within one data point of each other.

Unfortunately, the 2017 survey did not list MSCO 380, Digital Strategy, which has been a required course for the past two years.

Of even more interest are the results from the spring 2014 PR 555 graduating seniors, in terms of improvement from the data collected in spring 2012 for the Five-Year Program Review. An exit survey of graduating Public Relations Majors in PR 555 reveals encouraging early results from program changes, as compared to responses in Spring 2012, with the greatest improvements in perceived helpfulness of MSCO 292/220 (now PR 255), PR 380, MSCO 371, PR 555, and professional preparation, and helpfulness of courses overall. It must be noted that the seniors who had completed PR 255 as their introductory public relations course (which Denise Ferguson teaches) found the introductory course of much greater value than did students who had completed MSCO 220/292 with a professor other than Dr. Ferguson; PR 255 had been replaced by MSCO 292/220, but most graduating seniors had taken MSCO 292/220. When the 2014 data was collected JOUR 241 and COM 205 were not required, nor was MSCO 380 added to the curriculum.

Spring 2014 Average (least to most helpful); Spring 2012 Average Ranking:

- PR 380, 6.1; 4.2
- MSCO 292/220, 6.6; 4.5
- PR 455, 8.0; 8.4
- MSCO 371, 8.4; 6.9
- PR 555, 8.8; 7.8
- PR 505, 9.1; 9.1

The attached OIE data report indicates that public relations students score above the average (3) on preparation of Pepperdine education for primary activity: 3.24 (n=153), higher than the average for the Communication Division (3.18) and one of the highest of all majors. 92% of public relations students had secured employment within six months after graduation (n=152), higher than the average of 82% for the Communication Division, and one of the highest ratings for all majors. Since graduating from Pepperdine, 60.5% of public relations graduates have had employment in their field of study, compared to the 66% average for the Communication Division; PR prepares students with numerous transferrable skills so graduates often enter other professions (e.g., real estate, sales). 90% of PR grads entered full-time employment in their field in their first job (higher than the 85.5% average for Communication Division graduates) and 95% in their second job (higher than the average of 91.2% for all Communication Division majors), one of the highest percentages in the Communication Division, and represented one of the higher number of years employed. 77% of grads were satisfied or very satisfied in the courses in the public relations major, with a 4.00 average rating (as compared to 4.09 for all Com grads) and a 4.08 rating in core communication courses (higher than the 4.04 for all Com Division grads). The average rating for relevance of coursework to everyday life was 3.79 (84%) for PR grads, higher than the 3.77 average rating for All Com grads. The average rating for overall quality of instruction was 4.09 for PR grads, lower than the 4.20 average rating for All Com grads, possibly reflecting the challenges the PI has discussed previously. PR grads rated their academic advising at 3.51, very close to the 3.52 for All Com. PR grads rated their satisfaction with class size at

4.69, higher than the All Com average of 4.61. PR grads rated their amount of contact with faculty at 4.38, slightly lower than the 4.39 for All Com. 85% of PR grads completed an internship, higher than the 73.8% average of all Com Division grads, and 34.7% were offered internships; both metrics are among the highest in the Communication Division. PR grads were among the highest majors to participate in co-curricular programs (66.2%), significantly higher than the average for all Com Division grads (57.3%). PRSSA was the most common co-curricular (63%), and 80.9% reported that participation helped prepare them for their career.

All other items were within the range of the All Com average.

### Assessment Data

#### 14. Other relevant data. e.g. General education data, special reports.

##### Assessment Data

*Attached is the assessment data for your program.*

COM\_180\_LiveText\_Report\_\_Speech\_and\_Rhetoric.pdf

A sample of speeches from Com 180 - Public Speaking and Rhetorical Analysis (N = 220) was collected, and the assessment evaluated students in the categories of organization, language, delivery, use of supporting materials, and central message. Overall, students performed better in the categories pertaining to content (i.e, organization, supporting material and central message). More than 40% of the sample received either capstone or milestone 3 evaluations. The evaluations related to language and delivery were weaker, and larger percentages were seen at milestone 2 for these categories. A majority of students are demonstrating milestone 3 level work overall.

## ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE: Integrity

**In meaning of the degree (section four) student learning outcomes and curriculum matrixes were used to define the degree. Now please describe the processes used to ensure the rigor of the program.**

**15. Are the graduates achieving the student learning outcomes at the expected level? How was the threshold determined? How do you know your expectations are appropriate? Do you use comparisons based on national standards or benchmarking? How have your assessment findings supported this? Is there assurance that students consistently meet the standards of performance that the major has established? What happens to students that don't meet the standards?**

The aggregate data indicates that Public Relations graduates are meeting and exceeding program learning outcomes at the expected level of 80% (B) of 100%, determined by 40/50, 8 /10, or 3.5/4 if rubrics are based on different scales. 80% represents the lowest grade of B on a typical 100-pt. grading scale, representing "good" mastery of KSAs (knowledge, skills, abilities). There are no standard national or international tests required for or administered to undergraduate public relations students upon completion of their degree program. However, PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America) has recently developed a Certificate in

Public Relations that can be achieved by passing a comprehensive examination within six months of graduation; more information is available at <http://prssa.prsa.org/internships-jobs/career-tools/certificate-in-principles-of-public-relations/> and in the attached document. This website lists the colleges and universities where students are eligible to take the exam; these are leading programs in the U.S.

Although graduating public relations students at Pepperdine do not take a national standardized exam to demonstrate mastery upon completion of their academic program, the curriculum designed by program director Denise Ferguson follows the KSAs assessed in the Certificate of Public Relations exam and the curriculum guidelines of the Commission on Public Relations Education (see <http://www.commpred.org/>), on which Dr. Ferguson serves and was a writer of the curriculum guidelines.

There is no mechanism (other than failure to progress in their coursework or graduate) for Individual students who do fail to meet the standards.

**16. Please present an integrated analysis of the data collected from the assessment of direct learning and indirect learning ( survey data, focus group, alumni data, and authentic evidence). Please report on the findings from the last comprehensive program review. In summary please explain how the program has achieved a holistic evaluation of the students' educational experience.**

Aggregated data indicate that Public Relations graduates are meeting and exceeding program learning outcomes at the minimum expected level of 80% (B) of 100%, determined by 40/50, 8/10 or 4/4 if rubrics are based on different scales. 80% represents the lowest grade of B on a typical 100-pt. grading scale, representing "good" mastery of KSAs (knowledge, skills, abilities). Public Relations Program Learning Outcome Assessment Data Findings are summarized below, focusing on PR 255 as the foundation course which is assessed at the Introductory level and PR 555, the senior capstone class which is assessed for achieving Mastery; additional documents including rubrics and exams are attached.

**PLO #1: Evaluate and analyze relevant theories, philosophies, and practices of communication and public relations. PLO #1 was assessed in PR 255 and PR 555 during 2015-2016 (report in LiveText), and again in PR 555 in spring 2017.**

DIRECT, INDIRECT, and AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE provided in the 2016 Annual Assessment Report (see full report attached) and in Spring 2017 indicate that, to a great extent, students are meeting or exceeding PLO#1 above 80% in aggregate. The following DIRECT EVIDENCE is provided to support achievement of PLO#1:

IN FALL 2015, PR 255 EXAM 1 (PRE-TEST) AND EXAM III (POST-TEST) SCORES:  
All 31 students exceeded the previously established 80% standard of performance for Introductory competence. Interestingly, some question scores decreased on Exam III (i.e., RACE process, feedback and adjustment, and corporate social responsibility) and as compared to Exam I. Scores were highest (i.e., 100%) for questions assessing student understanding of the definition/description of public relations and advertising, and differences and relationship between PR, advertising, and marketing. Scores were lowest (i.e., 89%) on the question related to corporate ethics.

IN SPRING 2016, PR 555 FINAL EXAM SCORES:  
PR 555.02 mean scores exceeded the established 83% (Mean=4.4/5) standard of performance for Mastery competency for three of the four questions. A possible explanation for the failure to



meet the standard for question #4 (3.85/5) could be that many students neglected to provide two examples; thus, they demonstrated an understanding of content but lost up to 2 pts.

PR 555.01 mean scores exceeded the previously established 80% standard of performance for Mastery competency for one of the four questions. Students scored 4.3/5 and 4.025/5 for two remaining questions, and 3.85/5 on the fourth question, the same mean score as for students in PR 555.02, for likely the same reasons. Also, when some students in both sections took PR 255 it did not include the strategic planning process (#4) in the extensive detail as PR 255 has since the revised curriculum was implemented.

IN SPRING 2017, PR 555 AVERAGE FINAL EXAM SCORE: 43/50 (section .01; n=19); 44/50 (section .02; n=14)

**PLO #2: Communicate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and persuasively in textual, visual, and oral formats using appropriate style for the situation and medium involved.**

DIRECT, INDIRECT, and AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE provided in the 2013 Annual Assessment Report (see full report attached) indicate that, to a great extent, students are meeting or exceeding PLO#2 above 80% in aggregate. Data from assessing media kits indicate success in achieving Introductory writing skills competence in PR 380; data from assessing weekly management memos indicate success in achieving Developmental competence in PR 505; and data from assessing campaign final reports indicate success in achieving Mastery in PR 555.

PR 555 DIRECT EVIDENCE: The goals of the course are to equip students with the ability to critically examine situations faced by organizations and analyze how they handled them through public relations efforts, and to carry a public relations campaign through the entire process of research, program planning, implementation, and evaluation. As the capstone course in the Public Relations major, assessment of Mastery of student learning outcomes and program outcomes is conducted throughout the semester. The purpose of a capstone course is to apply and measure knowledge and skills gained throughout the undergraduate curriculum in an actual organization, thus, the emphasis is on practical application of knowledge and skills already acquired through classes and internships and the accompanying understandings gained through reflection on these activities, leadership, teamwork, and working with a client in a professional public relations setting.

More detailed assessment is provided in the attachment. Based on public relations faculty members' ratings, combined with the instructor's assessment, 100% of campaign final reports assessed met or exceeded the satisfactory level of Mastery competence (80%). PR 555 clearly supports Mastery of PLO#2, Communicate their thoughts clearly, succinctly, and persuasively in textual, visual, and oral formats using appropriate style for the situation and medium involved.

PR 555 INDIRECT EVIDENCE: PR 555 student reflection paper responses and instructor perceptions: This capstone focuses on the demonstration (rather than acquisition) of disciplinary and professional knowledge and skill, demonstration of group problem-solving and communication skills, and on gaining personal insights from working in an "agency" team setting and with "real" clients for the first time. The pervasive finding, mentioned in all of the reflection papers submitted, was that 99% of students recognize and appreciate the value of this culminating "first" experience in implementing the campaigns they created and planned, using their acquired skills and knowledge in producing tangible results and making a positive impact on the organization, and working in a professional setting with clients, just as a professional agency would. The additional assessment details for PR 555 provided in the attached 2013 Annual Assessment indicate students' reflections about this service-learning experience and clients' evaluations (see evaluation form attached) of student agency performance; client evaluation data are combined in attached documents. A representative client evaluation is excerpted here: *"All the students were professional and presented themselves very competently. I was highly*

*impressed with the entire process. With the primary purpose of moving public relations theory from the classroom to the hands-on, real world experience, I believe this was accomplished during our partnership."*

Client evaluations in PR 555 at the end of the spring 2017 semester supports this evidence and findings. Three of the five nonprofit client organizations that public relations student teams worked with completed an end-of-project evaluation. One client evaluated her student agency team's performance at the "5" (outstanding) level for all items; the other two clients evaluated their student agency teams' performance at the 4 or 5 level, with exceptions on three items. This is an excerpt from the first client's evaluation: *"The entire group was very professional and did an amazing job with all the tasks they set out to accomplish . . . This partnership has been extremely important in promoting NVCS' annual event. The students creating marketing materials that we used during the event and we can use in the future. . . it is wonderful to be able to count on a team of talented and dedicated students to help us accomplish promoting our work."*

PR 555 AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE: Because this capstone course in the Public Relations major involves planning and executing a public relations campaign and/or special event that is completed by the end of the semester, much of the assessment is conducted through direct, authentic evidence. This practical capstone experience is preferred by graduating seniors, is conventional in public relations education, and is impressive to professionals. At Pepperdine, this provides the first practical experience for students that encompasses the entire campaign process: research, planning, implementation, and evaluation. This practical application of knowledge and skills was accomplished through service-learning partnerships with seven Los-Angeles, Malibu, and Ventura County nonprofit organizations, and with one Seaver College academic division program.

**PLO #3: Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy, clarify, appropriate style, grammatical correctness and sensitivity.**

DIRECT and AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE provided in the 2015 Annual Assessment Report (see full report attached) indicate that, to a great extent, students are meeting or exceeding PLO#2 above 80% in aggregate.

AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE IN PR 380, PR WRITING: In PR 380, students conducted verbal in-class peer evaluations weekly of each other's work on a voluntary basis. Students also wrote anonymous peer evaluations using the attached rubric of each other's news releases, pitch letters, and fact sheets during the semester. As a part of the final projects, students also used a different rubric to evaluate each other's final projects. It should be noted that these are evaluations of group work. (See example rubric in Appendix).

PR 380 Final Project Grading Rubric: Ratings by each student of each student agency peer members (N=11). Mastery Standard: 80% rating of B or higher. Standard achieved, based on data below.

Example comments: *"Materials were all great quality; One thing I would suggest is reducing the words on the ad; it looked too busy."*

DIRECT EVIDENCE IN PR 555, PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGNS AND CASES: In PR 555, students conducted peer evaluations after their public relations agency campaign for their individual client organization was completed. It should be noted that these are evaluations of group work. (See attached rubric)

**PLO #4: Demonstrate ethical research, planning, and execution of public relations efforts that integrate faith with the responsibility to serve and engage communities and social justice globally.**

DIRECT, INDIRECT, and AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE provided in the 2014 Annual Assessment Report (see full report attached) and in Spring 2016 and 2017 indicate that students are meeting or exceeding above 80% in aggregate.

IN SPRING 2014, PR 555 ASSESSMENT: The class size was 17 students in spring 2014, and assessment data (individual and group) from all students is included in the attached report. Much of the assessment occurred through DIRECT and AUTHENTIC evidence for assessing the ethics component of PLOs #1-4 is based on cumulative evaluation of the completed 5 of 5 group project strategic campaign research memos (direct and authentic evidence), campaign proposals (direct and authentic evidence), and final reports (direct and authentic evidence), 5 client evaluations (indirect evidence), and 17 of 17 individual case study analysis papers (direct evidence). Each element incorporates ethics and professionalism. The 2014 Annual Assessment Report includes data and summarizing charts (Tables 16) that demonstrate that 100% of graduating public relations students achieved or exceeded the 80% Mastery threshold in all areas.

Indirect Evidence – 17 of 17 reflection papers (indirect evidence). An important aspect of the capstone experience is for students to gain personal insights from working in an “agency” team setting and with “real” clients for the first time, to grow in professionalism, and to have the opportunity to see ethics and ethical dilemmas operate in actual work situations. At the conclusion of their partnership with the nonprofit client organization (at the end of the semester), students write a reflection paper, with the prompts related to professionalism, ethics, and the university’s mission in bold. This representative student reflection provides evidence of achieving PLO #4:

*“Working with a nonprofit agency provided our agency the opportunity to work with an organization that aligns with Pepperdine’s mission of faith-based service, purpose, and leadership, and gave us a personal sense of vocational calling. In the reading, *Courage and Calling*, Smith writes that the first command is to “Know yourself.” He believes this is important because “vocational identity is found in discerning who we are within this mix” (Smith, 37). In PR because in order to be ethical in PR, one must know one’s own beliefs and moral code, which begins by knowing who you are within in order to act accordingly. PR can be an industry that challenges people to make decisions that may not always align with one’s own moral code, and this can be due to the nature of strategic communications. However, while working with Hats Off For Cancer it provided our agency the opportunity to strategically communicate for a non-profit in a classroom setting, which ultimately was a faith-based act of service that gave us the ability to show leadership and purpose in our job as PR professionals while utilizing our gifts and abilities. From the start, our agency had a strong sense of who we are, what we stand for, and our PR campaign was able to translate that in order to work with Hats Off For Cancer to provide the best campaign possible. Smith asks his audience to think critically in order to find one’s deepest desires through “identif[y]ing] our desires is to appreciate what it is that gives us the greatest joy” (Smith, 41). In relation to PR, the idea of discovering one’s own deepest desires can translate into discovering a client’s deepest desires and utilizing PR to help strategically communicate those desire’s to their publics. Working with Hats Off For Cancer, Passion PR was able to use PR in an environment while giving us a sense of purpose. Working with a client gave me the opportunity to reflect on what kind of clients I would feel comfortable working for in the future, and how to be strategic while communicating ethically.”*

IN SPRING 2016, PR 555 CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT:

The campaign proposal is formulated by an actual nonprofit organization “client” and is meant to follow professional standards and formatting, and to simulate professional quality. The proposal is submitted by a student agency team, consisting of 4-5 students, so conclusions about individual student competency are tentative at best. All six student agencies scores exceeded the previously established 80% standard of performance for Mastering competency: the mean score

for PR 555.01 proposals was 91.75%; the mean score for PR 555.02 proposals was 88.2% (with one agency receiving a score of 83).

IN SPRING 2017, PR 555 AVERAGE CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT: 93/100 (section .01; n=19); 88/100 (section .02; n=14)

As the capstone course in the Public Relations major, assessment of Mastery of student learning outcomes and program learning outcomes is conducted throughout the semester. DIRECT, INDIRECT AND AUTHENTIC EVIDENCE indicate achievement of Mastery in all PLOs in the Public Relations Major and in the other PR 555 SLOs. This capstone focuses on the demonstration (rather than acquisition) of disciplinary and professional knowledge and skill, demonstration of group problem-solving and communication skills, and on gaining personal insights from working in an "agency" team setting and with "real" clients for the first time. The pervasive finding, mentioned in all of the reflection papers submitted, was that 100% of students recognize and appreciate the value of this culminating "first" experience in implementing the campaigns they created and planned, using their acquired skills and knowledge in producing tangible results and making a positive impact on the organization, and working in a professional setting with clients, just as a professional agency would. Based on this evidence and student reflection paper responses, the major agency partnership with nonprofit client organizations is an effective learning strategy and should be continued. Sample student reflection papers are attached as evidence. These students' comments reflect achievement of some of the PLOs of this capstone course:

"In my perspective, PR 555 has been the perfect example of faith-based service. As we have devoted our semester to creating a campaign for a non-profit, we are able to see the thanks and the overall impact our work and our time had on their organization. . . my mindset on a fulfilling career has shifted. I am more open and willing to sacrifice a large paycheck and title at a huge corporation for a fulfilling career in serving others. . ."

". . . this sort of application of public relations knowledge and skills intersect with Pepperdine's mission of faith, purpose, and leadership through the fact that we were able to provide a sense of service to a non-profit that was in vital need of attention. . . PR 555 was a vital experience and course, which allowed me to gain further experience in the campaign proposal process and enhance my teamwork skills. . . I have an immense amount of appreciation towards this course and I am anxious to apply my newfound expertise to my future career."

### **Evidence**

*Please attach evidence.*

2013\_Public\_Relations\_Annual\_Assessment\_Report.pdf

2014\_Public\_Relations\_Annual\_Assessment\_Report.pdf

2015\_Public\_Relations\_Annual\_Assessment\_Report.pdf

PR\_255\_EXAM\_I\_AND\_EXAM\_III\_DIRECT\_EVIDENCE.docx

PR\_255\_Final\_Exam\_Fall\_2015.docx

PR\_555\_SPRING\_2016\_DIRECT\_EVIDENCE\_PUBLIC\_RELATIONS\_FINAL\_EXAM.docx

PR\_555\_Spring\_2016\_Final\_Exam.doc

PR\_555\_SPRING\_2016\_DIRECT\_EVIDENCE\_PUBLIC\_RELATIONS\_CAMPAIGN\_PROPOSAL.docx

PR\_555\_Campaign\_Proposal\_Evaluation\_Rubric.doc

Certificate\_Principles\_PR\_StudyGuide.pdf

PUBLIC\_RELATIONS\_MAJOR\_ASSESSMENT\_PLAN.docx

PR\_555\_Client\_Evaluation\_of\_Student\_Agency\_form.doc

PR\_555\_Client\_Evaluations\_Combined.doc  
 Abby\_Honeycutt\_23.docx  
 Jacqueline\_Gonzalez\_25.docx  
 Nicholas\_Costello\_25.docx  
 Anne\_Jackson\_25.docx

## WASC 5 CORE COMPETENCIES

**17. How does the program ensure that graduates meet the WASC FIVE CORE COMPETENCIES? Present your findings of measurements you have done of the core competencies.**

### Alignment of Public Relations PLOs with Core Competencies

	PLO#1	PLO#2	PLO#3	PLO#4
<b>Critical Thinking</b>			•	•
<b>Information Literacy</b>	•			•
<b>Oral Communication</b>	•	•		•
<b>Written Communication</b>		•	•	•
<b>Quantitative Skills</b>	•			•

The Public Relations curriculum complements the liberal arts courses in the General Education program, together providing a comprehensive foundation for a career in public relations. The Annual Assessment Reports attached to this program review (see tab #10) discuss in detail assessment of WASC CORE COMPETENCIES. Rubrics are attached below. Critical Thinking was assessed in 2014; Written Communication in 2015; Oral Communication in 2016 (see attached data tables and results). Quantitative Skills are assessed through the required Communication Research course (COM 300).

Core Competencies are developed in the following ways in the Public Relations major:

1. Critical Thinking—Critical analysis and strategic thinking are central to campaign planning, case study analysis, and reflection papers
2. Information Literacy—Each course includes a research component in every major assignment, which increases in scope and rigor as students progress in upper-level courses. Students also are expected to develop habits of media and information literacy,

and discuss in class current articles and events relevant to the profession and to global societies.

3. Oral Communication—Each course requires at least one and, in some cases, in advanced courses, multiple presentations, individually, in pairs, and in groups.
4. Written Communication—Writing skills are foundational in the profession of public relations. Students take one course devoted to public relations writing (PR 380), and in every course in the major with the PR prefix there are numerous writing assignments and instructions for writing format and development of skills, including journalistic writing, social and digital media writing, report writing, business communication, narrative writing, and critical analysis. Beginning in Fall 2013 all Public Relations students were required to take an additional writing class—JOUR 241, Introduction to News Writing and Editing
5. Quantitative skills—Skills are developed in two ways: 1. Research related to campaign planning; and 2. Budgets created for campaign proposals
6. **Curriculum Map**
7. *For each course, indicate whether students will be **Introduced** to the PLO (I); **Develop** their skills related to the PLO (D); or demonstrate **Mastery** of the PLO (M) by entering I, D, or M under the appropriate PLO.*

Course Number	Course Title	PLO# 1	PLO# 2	PLO# 3	PLO# 4
PR 255	Public Relations Principles	I	I	I	I
PR 380	Public Relations Writing	D	I	I	D
PR 455	Public Relations Strategies and Tactics	D	D	D	D
PR 505	Public Relations Management	D	D	D	D
PR 555	Public Relations Campaigns and Cases	M	M	M	M

#### Evidence

Critical\_Thinking\_Rubric\_revised.pdf

AACU\_Written\_Communication\_VALUE\_Rubric.pdf  
 Oral\_Communication\_Rubric.doc  
 PR555.01\_Oral\_Com\_Competyency\_2016.docx  
 PR555.02\_Oral\_Com\_Competyency.docx

## **SUSTAINABILITY: RESOURCES**

**18. With the rapid changes in the higher education environment, the University needs to demonstrate how financial viability and planning of their long-term stability are ensured.**

**In order to demonstrate this each program should address**

- a. questions about the level of student demand for the program and**
- b. the degree to which resources are allocated appropriately so they are sufficient to maintain program quality.**
- c. What is happening within the profession, local community, or society that identifies an anticipated need for this program in the future? (If appropriate include market research.)**

Based on enrollment data over the past six years and Occupational Outlook trends, there promises to be continued demand for the public relations major. A continued need, evidenced in the 2012 Five-Year Program Review, is a second full-time public relations professor. For most of the past six years, Dr. Ferguson has been the only FT tenure-track professor teaching public relations courses, advising nearly all students in the major, advising both the Waves PRSSA chapter and The Waves Effect, and responsible for program and curricular development and assessment. With Dr. Ferguson's departure and Dr. Klive Oh's arrival, this need will continue. After the past three years' implementation of curricular changes and with continued changes in technology and professional practice, a review of the curriculum is due.

### **19. FACILITIES**

**Please describe the adequacy of**

- a. Classroom space**
- b. Laboratories**
- c. Office space**
- d. Programming venues**
- e. Student study spaces**

### **FACULTY AND STAFF**

**20. What are the qualifications and achievements of the faculty/staff in the program in relation to the program purpose and goals? How do faculty/staff members' backgrounds, expertise, research, and other professional work contribute to the quality of the program?**

**Evidence in this category should include(this could be collected through faculty CVs) :**

- a. Proportion of faculty with terminal degrees**
- b. List of faculty/staff specialties within discipline (and how those specialties align with the program curriculum)**
- c. Record of scholarship for each faculty member, professional presentations for staff members**
- d. Faculty/staff participation in development opportunities related to teaching, learning,**

**and/or assessment****e. External funding awarded to faculty/staff**

Full-time faculty members in other related academic programs—Dr. Ginger Rosenkrans, Professor of Advertising; Christina Littlefield-Eng, Assistant Professor of Journalism; Debbie Wideroe, Visiting Professor and Director of Internship Programs; Matt McKissick, Visiting Professor of Graphic Arts; and Chris Stivers, Visiting Assistant Professor of Media—teach required courses in related disciplines and all hold terminal degrees, and does Dr. Ferguson, program director. The four required core Communication Division courses are taught by a variety of professors; their assessment is provided in the Communication Division overview. Dr. Denise Ferguson's appointment as Director of Graduate Programs in Communication carries a teaching reduction of one course over the academic year, or an annual teaching load of three public relations courses and one graduate course.

Dr. Ferguson's current CV is attached, and lists her record of scholarship.

**21. FACULTY/STAFF**

**Are there sufficient numbers of faculty/staff to maintain program quality? Do program faculty/staff have the support they need to do their work?**

**a. Distribution of faculty across ranks (or staff years at institution)**

**b. Diversity of faculty/staff**

**c. Number of full-time faculty (ratio of full-time faculty to part-time faculty)**

**d. Student-faculty ratio**

**e. Faculty workload**

**f. Faculty review and evaluation processes**

**g. Mentoring processes**

**h. Professional development opportunities and resources (including travel and research funds)**

**i. Sufficient time for research, program development**

There have been significant changes in public relations faculty and in the program since the 2011-2012 Program Review. The current sole full-time, tenure-track public relations professor is Dr. Denise Ferguson. She re-joined the public relations faculty, having been a full-time faculty member in the program during 2000-2002, and became program director in fall 2011 and wrote the 2011-2012 Five-Year Program Review. Long-time adjunct faculty members Kathy Shores, Michael Furtney, Jennifer Musselman and Kerry Miller, who were teaching in 2012, are no longer teaching at Pepperdine. Dr. Roslyn Satchel was hired for the second full-time tenure track public relations position and began teaching in Spring 2014; however, after three semesters she moved out of this faculty line into Communication Studies, and no longer teaches public relations courses. Over the past three years, three adjunct professors (George Drucker, Michelle Truelson, and Komal Kapoor) have taught four of the five public relations courses; Dr. Ferguson has taught the introductory and capstone courses. Dr. Denise Ferguson's appointment as Director of Graduate Programs in Communication carries a teaching reduction of one course over the academic year, or an annual teaching load of three public relations courses and one graduate course.

The program's previous pattern of instability has been alleviated with Dr. Ferguson's continued tenure, however, annual searches for a second faculty member before and after Dr. Satchel's vacation of that position, and reliance on adjunct instructors to deliver many required program courses has set this very large and demanding program back from the stability, student satisfaction, and increased growth and strength that was envisioned. It is important to note, however, that student demand for the public relations major has remained strong, although it has



declined due to these factors and other factors in the Communication Division, including the launching of the Sport Administration major, to which some PR majors changed (as well as to the IMC major).

#### **Evidence**

Denise\_P\_Ferguson\_CV\_7\_2017.docx

## **FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

### **22. Financial Resources:**

**Please describe your operational budget (revenues and expenditures) and trends over a 3-5 year period.**

Not applicable--no budget exists for the public relations program

## **EXTERNAL REVIEW**

**In summary please explain how, through the findings in the annual assessments, the program has achieved a holistic evaluation of the educational experience that is supported through benchmarking. (Has the program been reviewed by external stakeholders, such as practitioners in the field, or compared with other similar institutions, or national standards?)**

### **I. GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZING THE EXTERNAL REVIEW**

**The external review typically occurs after a program or department completes its self-study report, but the selection and invitation of external reviewers can occur during the self-study process to ensure the availability of the best reviewers. However, programs with concurrent accreditation (e.g., AACSB, APA, ABA) can use the visiting team for that discipline-specific accreditation as the external review. The report from the site visitors should be included in the final report. For an illustration of potential areas for the reviewers to consider, see Attachment below.**

### **II. CHOOSING REVIEWERS**

**The size and composition of the review team can vary, depending on the size of the program under review. Usually, the team involves one or two people. At the time a department or program is notified that it will be conducting a program review, appropriate individuals should submit a list of names of possible reviewers. These reviewers should be external to the school/University. External reviewers should be distinguished scholars/teachers/practitioners in the field and be familiar with campuses that are similar to Pepperdine University and the program undergoing review. It is also helpful for external reviewers to have had experience with program administration and with program assessment. At least one of the reviewers should be experienced with student learning outcomes assessment in order to review and analyze the program's assessment processes and results. The Dean of each School will have the final approval of the external**

reviewer.

### **III. MATERIALS FOR THE EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM**

At least 30 days prior to the scheduled department visit, the information from the program self-study and appropriate additional materials are sent to each member of the external review team. An identical information package should be provided to appropriate members of the administrators overseeing the program. The reviewers should compile a report that includes observations, strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations based on evidence. The attached External Review Report expectations outlines the guidelines for the external reviewers' site visit and report. Reviewers and Divisional Deans should also sign a consultant agreement. External Reviewers should also be given a schedule for their visit and a confirmation letter, and programs will submit a budget proposal for the site visit to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

### **IV. CATEGORIES FOR EVALUATION**

- Curriculum
- Faculty
- Resources
- Viability

### **V. EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM VISIT AND REPORT**

The review team visit typically lasts for two days, during which time the review committee members meet with department faculty, academic advisors, students, and select administrators. The review team typically takes part in an exit interview just prior to concluding its departmental visit.

The team is expected to submit its written evaluation to the campus program review committee no later than 4 weeks after the visit. The written evaluation should include a review of strengths and challenges, resource allocation, and program viability as well as suggestions for policy and resources. Upon submission of the report, off-campus reviewers receive a previously agreed upon stipend and travel expense reimbursement (to be determined by the department under review).

As soon as the program receives the report from the external review team, it is distributed to the appropriate individuals. The department is typically asked to review the report (within a brief time period) for factual inaccuracies and misperceptions. To maximize the effectiveness of program review, the findings and resulting decisions should be shared with all of the stakeholder groups. Such sharing of findings generates buy-in to the program's and/or institution's goals. To facilitate and track the implementation of improvement plans, each year the relevant faculty members should review the progress of programs reviewed in previous years. If the department/program was not successful in implementing all aspects of the plan, they may follow up with their appropriate administrative unit regarding resource allocation or other barriers involved in preventing successful implementation.

#### **External Reviewer Report Expectations**

Please find the link below for the "External Review Summary Sheet".  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Z835R7F>

#### **External Reviewer Report Expectations**

*Please attach the completed form.*

Pepperdine\_External\_Review\_Letter.pdf

PR\_ER\_Summary\_Survey.pdf

## FORMS

### QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

For the Quality Improvement Plan, the program should extract from the "preliminary quality improvement goals and action plan" of the self-study (section A.III) as well as from both the external and internal review recommendations.

The following prompts may be helpful in considering your QIP:

1. Are the curriculum, practices, processes, and resources properly aligned with the goals of the program?
2. Are department/program outcomes aligned with the institutional learning outcomes (ILOs)?
3. Is the level of program quality aligned with the school/University's acceptable level of program quality?
4. Is the level of program quality aligned with the constituents' acceptable level of quality?
5. Are program goals being achieved?
6. Are student learning outcomes being achieved at the established standard of achievement? What are you using for comparison/benchmarking?
7. How have the results of program review been used to inform decision-making and improve instruction and student learning outcomes?
8. What was identified in the process of examining the institution's program review process that may require deeper reflection, changes, and/or restructuring? What will be done as a result? What resources will be required?
9. What have the reviewers learned as they carried out assessments of student learning? How have assessment protocols, faculty development, choices of instruments, or other aspects of assessment changed as a result?

Many of the changes that occur following program review are related to curricular adjustments that are, in essence, resource neutral. Program faculty or staff should make note of the ways that they used data to make decisions. Changes that are outside the control of the program or need additional support should be noted and reviewed by the dean in the final section, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

#### QIP Form

Please find the link below for the "QIP Form".

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6ufJTOgPx32M3JiNTM3bV9KNVk/view?usp=sharing>

Please attach the QIP form

QIP\_\_PR\_.docx