

# University of Louisiana at Lafayette

## Detailed Assessment Report 2015-2016 Public Relations BA

As of: 11/01/2016 03:20 PM CENTRAL

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request.*)

### Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

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#### **SLO 2: Intern evaluation by community supervisors**

Graduating seniors should have the skills and abilities needed for entry-level work in public relations professions, as judged by internship supervisors.

#### Related Measures

##### **M 2: Intern evaluation by community supervisors**

Public relations professionals who supervise interns fill out an evaluation form for each student. Supervisors are asked rate the overall competency of each student on a scale ranging from A+ to F. The collective GPA for all interns is calculated from these evaluation forms.

Source of Evidence: Field work, internship, or teaching evaluation

#### **Target:**

The department expects 75% of students to score at least a "C" average on the internship evaluations

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

A total of 20 public relations students completed internships in the Spring 2016 semester. On a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) 13 of the students received a rating of 5, four received a rating of 4, one received a rating of 3, and one was not rated. In other words, the entire group's average was 4.68 (93.6%, or a high B), which surpasses the target for this measure.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Revise target**

The public relations faculty will meet in the Fall 2014 semester to upgrade the target for this objective.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors |

**Outcome/Objective:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors

##### **Improve specific skills**

Faculty will meet in Fall 2015 to identify specific skills and competencies in which our students need further improvement.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors |

**Outcome/Objective:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors

### **Maintain course and develop relationships**

The satisfactory performance suggests that we maintain the current activities and requirements in regards to internships. In addition, the class will be further improved by strengthening relationships with current entities which offer internships and by establishing new relationships. Some improvements will be made to the class mechanics. For example, the current system used to evaluate both the interns and the internships uses paper documents. This system will be moved online.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors |

**Outcome/Objective:** Intern evaluation by community supervisors

### **SLO 3: AP Writing Style Mastery**

Students should master Associated Press writing style and be proficient in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

#### Related Measures

#### **M 3: Writing/Editing Exam.**

Students will be given a standard grammar/spelling/punctuation Associated Press style pre-post test during the newswriting course (CMCN 212), which is mandatory. The pre-test is used for benchmarking purposes. The results of the post-test, which reflect students' writing skills at the end of the class will constitute the usable data for this measure.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

#### **Target:**

At least 75% of the students must average at least a B (80% of the points) in the post-test to consider this objective met.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

A total of 17 public relations students were enrolled in the writing course in the Spring 2016 semester. Their scores on the writing test ranged from a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 98, with a mode of 88 (n = 3). Analyzing the top 75% of the scores revealed that the average grade was 82.46%, corresponding to a low-range B, which meets the objective and the target for this measure.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

**Fall pre-test**

Pre-test will be administered for the first time in Fall, 2010.

**Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

**New Comparison CMCN 212-CMCN 425**

The comparison between test scores in CMCN 212 versus the Public Relations capstone course, CMCN 425, should demonstrate students' continued development of writing and editing skills. We anticipate at least a letter-grade improvement (e.g., from, say, 75 to at least 85 percent correct). If this proves not to be the case, the test measures should guide us in altering pedagogy during the upper-division public relations courses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

**New Measure - CMCN 212 Comparison**

Second, because CMCN 212 is primarily taught by three or four adjunct professors, this new measure will allow comparison of different instructors' success in teaching writing skills, which in turn will suggest faculty development/training or altered pedagogy for any CMCN 212 instructors whose classes consistently score below the department average.

**Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

**New Writing Sequence and New Writing Course: CMCN 421**

Effective in the next catalog, we're adding an Advanced Writing course for public relations majors, which will provide them with a 9-hour writing sequence: CMCN 212, CMCN 321, and the forthcoming CMCN 421.

**Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

**Implementation Status:** In-Progress

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

**Improve writing for more students**

Although the objective was met, a large number of students (18 out of

47) scored below a B in the writing test. P. R. faculty will meet in the 2015 to explore strategies for improving writing skills for a larger number students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

#### **Change required courses**

The writing course will be replaced by more emphasis on public-relations specific writing in public relations courses. To this effect, the standards will be upped in the introductory public relations writing course, and in the advanced public relations writing course. The current writing course, which places heavy emphasis on journalistic writing, will be replaced by a course which will include a writing component for integrated communication.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Writing/Editing Exam. | **Outcome/Objective:** AP Writing Style Mastery

## **Other Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans**

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### **O/O 4: Mastery of Production Theory**

Graduating seniors should build specialized portfolios that reflect their ability to apply the knowledge obtained in the program.

#### **Related Measures**

#### **M 4: Portfolio Evaluation**

As they enter upper-division course work within the field, students take a "Principles of Public Relations" course (CMCN 320). They begin compiling a portfolio of professional work that will include products developed in all subsequent skills courses, including their internship. In the capstone course (CMCN 425), students' completed portfolios are evaluated by public relations professionals. The evaluators use a rubric that assesses whether student work meets the professional standards appropriate to entry-level employment within the field.

Number of students assessed = about 25

Source of Evidence: Portfolio, showing skill development or best work

#### **Connected Documents**

[Public Relations Portfolio evaluation rubric](#)

[Updated portfolio evaluation tool](#)

**Target:**

At least 80% of students will score a "B" or better on the portfolio review conducted by professional practitioners from the community.

#### **Connected Documents**

[Public Relations Portfolio evaluation rubric](#)

[Updated portfolio evaluation tool](#)

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Not Met**

The goal of at least 80% of students scoring a B or better on their public relations portfolios was not achieved in Spring 2016. Of the 32 portfolios submitted, only about half scored a B or better. The grading could have been influenced by a couple of factors, including the fact that students who took CMCN 337, a portfolio design course, as an elective scored much higher than those who did not. Also, students are now required to turn in the hard copy of a traditional portfolio, but also an electronic version on a portable drive and on the Internet. Some students failed to complete all three versions.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Formalizing professor review**

Effective spring 2011, all capstone professors will review and comment on student portfolios before they are sent to the outside reviewers. Having professors provide initial feedback and giving students an opportunity to better align their portfolios with expectations set should improve average scores and allow for more meaningful, directed feedback from reviewers.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**

Mastery of Production Theory

##### **Revise student portfolio guidelines**

In Spring 2011, outside reviewers suggested portfolio content be organized by topic rather than by class. Additionally, reviewers requested more job/internship-based materials be included, as well as an electronic copy of portfolio materials. As such, the public relations faculty will revise student guidelines and distribute them to students in Fall 2011. Students will also be given a copy of the evaluation criteria.

**Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**

Mastery of Production Theory

##### **Meet to discuss professional reviewers' suggestions for improvement**

Faculty in the public relations sequence will meet during early Fall 2013 semester to further analyze the results of the portfolio evaluations, in order to remedy the current deficiencies for the next evaluation cycle.

The suggestions for improvement included:

- more cohesive feel for the whole portfolio
- pay attention to details, including typos
- have someone else edit
- too many errors that could have been easily corrected
- too many spelling and grammar errors
- not much graphic work included
- more creativity needed
- typos, misused words and tense needs tweaking
- need more explanation of individual projects and what they are
- use dividers to separate types of work
- spend more time organizing
- be sure all writing is in AP style
- graphics work needs to be attention getting; don't include average work
- make sure all writing is tight and succinct; pay attention to details
- provide more evidence of creative and graphic skills
- make sure cover letters are outstanding
- all copy should be complete; never include rough drafts
- writing must be from the voice of the organization not the writer
- not certain of content; needs more organization

**Established in Cycle:** 2012-2013

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Mastery of Production Theory

### **Refine and improve the assessment plan**

Faculty in the public relations sequence will meet before the beginning of the Fall 2014 semester to refine and improve the assessment plan. New objectives will be added, together with their corresponding measures. In addition to the quantitative data, faculty will consider the optional qualitative comments/suggestions on what "improvements could be made" to individual portfolios to get a sense of further weaknesses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Mastery of Production Theory

### **Students to take portfolio class**

Students will be encouraged to take an elective course in portfolio design, CMCN 337, either the semester prior to or simultaneously with CMCN 425, the capstone course when the portfolio is submitted. Students who took CMCN 337 were all evaluated with "B" or better on the portfolio review.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Mastery of Production Theory

**Portfolio class to become mandatory**

To further improve portfolios, CMCN 337, a portfolio design course, will be a required course. Presently, portfolios are submitted during the capstone campaign management course, CMCN 425, and count as 25% of the student's overall grade. Additional instruction will be included in the course, including at least one portfolio workshop for those who are unable to take CMCN 337, as an elective. A computer will be set up during the portfolio review sessions so that professionals can access students' electronic portfolios.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Portfolio Evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Mastery of Production Theory

## **Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers**

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**How were assessment results shared and evaluated within the unit?**

By email to the program coordinator for sharing with faculty within each program.

**Identify which action plans [created in prior cycle(s)] were implemented in this current cycle. For each of these implemented plans, were there any measurable or perceivable effects? How, if at all, did the findings appear to be affected by the implemented action plan?**

Improving specific skills – writing, research – was very successful. Changes in the required classes were also successful. Making the portfolio class available to students was probably the most successful plan. Improved portfolios made the students more employable. We anticipate that making the class mandatory for all students will further improve the quality of education. Developing relationships with the professional community resulted in more and higher quality internships.

**What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle? What is working well, and what is working less well in achieving desired outcomes?**

1. A major learning was that perhaps our measurement goals and procedures for the university-wide SACS accreditation need to be more aligned with measurement goals and procedures for ACEJMC accreditation.
2. Related to this learning is the realization that many insights for the development of the program in general – meaning across the five undergraduate programs and the one graduate program – came from quantitative and qualitative data collected more traditionally, outside of this measurement process. Such data include student feedback, as well as input from portfolio reviewers, other professionals in the field, as well as the professional and academic development of individual faculty members. The suggestion here is that perhaps our concept of data should be refined to include qualitative and

indirect measures.

3. Another learning was that faculty buy-in needs to be improved.

Putting together learning 2. and 3. we conducted a faculty retreat where all the full-time faculty participated. The general result of the retreat is that two of our undergraduate programs are now merged (advertising and public relations), and the other three will undergo considerable updates and upgrades which should bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, digital media in general and social media in particular will place more prominently in the skills courses, and a new minor in social media will be offered to non-majors.