



PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY TO ESTABLISH OR MODIFY AN UNDERGRADUATE MINOR

Title of the proposed minor: Undergraduate minor in Public Relations (PR) offered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, College of Media

Sponsoring unit(s):

Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising, College of Media
Dr. Jacqueline Hitchon, Professor and Head, 217.333.1602, hitchon@illinois.edu
Dr. John G. Wirtz, Assistant Professor, 217.300.0368, jwirtz@illinois.edu

Brief description of the program of study: The Public Relations (PR) minor combines theoretical and practical approaches to the study of public relations that will prepare students to assist organizations as they manage relationships with their internal and external stakeholders and publics. The curriculum is designed to provide students with an understanding of basic and advanced principles of public relations, as well as more-specialized skills in topics, such as public relations writing, relationship management, media relations, corporate social responsibility, and crisis communication.

The PR minor requires a minimum of 18 credit hours: nine required credit hours cover basic and advanced principles of public relations and journalism; three or four credit hours train students in writing for public relations and media; and six credit hours of electives address advanced topics in public relations, such as media relations, crisis communication, persuasion, digital public relations, sports public relations, and investor and donor relations. For the electives, students will choose from a list of courses that are part of the regular course rotations in the departments offering the courses. (See Appendix A)

Justification: Whether an undergraduate student intends to pursue a job with the words "public relations" or "media relations" in the title or a career in a related field, such as advertising, communications, or marketing, organizations value workers who understand how to develop and maintain positive relationships with publics and stakeholders, such as media, employees, investors, donors, and geographical or virtual communities relevant to the organization.

Evidence of the demand for skills associated with managing organization-public relationships can be seen in the job growth projections produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For example, the number of jobs for public relations specialists and

managers is projected to increase by 12% by 2020; by 21% for social media and online community managers, and by 33% for event planners and organizers. Graduates who pursue these types of jobs will find that the knowledge and skills gained in the PR minor will be an asset when they apply for internships and later when they apply for their first jobs after graduation.

Undergraduate students already recognize the value of training in public relations, which is evidenced by their interest in the public relations certificate currently offered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising. For the last three years, the department has offered a 15-credit public relations certificate. Because demand greatly outstrips the department's ability to offer seats in courses, there is an admissions process to ensure that students pursuing the certificate can get the required courses. On average 160 students apply each year for the approximately 90 spaces in the PR certificate classes.

While the public relations certificate allows students to learn more about public relations, it does not appear on their official university transcripts. A PR minor would provide students with additional knowledge through the advanced topics courses, and it would also appear on their transcripts as a minor recognized by the university.

Budgetary and Staff Implications:

a. Additional staff and dollars needed.

None anticipated. The PR minor relies on existing courses already taught by tenure-track faculty and adjunct professors with relevant professional experience. Advising and recordkeeping will be managed by current academic advising staff in the College of Media Student Services Center.

b. Internal reallocations (e.g. change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.).

The current capacity for courses within the College of Media is sufficient to meet demand for the implementation of the minor. (See Expected Enrollment.) Additional capacity in the PR minor could be added, but that would be dependent on student demand and on department and College of Media plans to allocate additional resources to accommodate more students in the minor.

c. Effect on course enrollment in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments

Prior to finalizing the proposal for the PR minor, representatives of the Department of Advertising met with Rich Martin, head of the Department of Journalism and Dave Tewksbury, head of the Department of Communication. These meetings included discussions about courses to be included in the PR minor, as well as current capacity in selected courses and

strategies to meet anticipated student demand. The joint conclusion was that demand for any single course outside the college is expected to be minimal. Further, there are multiple options through which students can meet the writing requirement and advanced topics course requirements for the PR minor. All of these courses are offered regularly and with current capacity for additional students. Cooperating agreements from the two departments controlling courses outside the department are attached. (Please see attachment 1, attachment 2.)

d. Impact on library, computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.

No additional impact on university resources is anticipated.

Requirements: Please see attached Public Relations minor program description.

Prerequisites for the minor: There are no prerequisites for the PR minor, as the minor is designed to be self-contained. While we anticipate that there will be interest from students not enrolled in majors housed in the College of Media, the courses are arranged so that a student enrolled in any undergraduate major could pursue the minor.

Expected enrollment in the minor: Initially 180 with anticipated growth to 300. As noted earlier, about 90 students are admitted each fall into the public relations certificate offered by the Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising. Because it takes students approximately two academic years to complete the 15-credit public relations certificate, there are approximately 180 students taking courses counted toward the certificate in any given semester. With current staffing levels and the cooperative agreements, we can accommodate the same number of students in the minor and manage growth. Faculty and staff would be added and/or reassigned to accommodate additional students if sufficient demand is demonstrated.

Admission to the minor: We anticipate that student demand will be the same or greater than what we already experience with the public relations certificate, so there would be an application for admission into the minor. Applications would be accepted once each academic year in the fall semester. An admissions committee consisting of representatives from the Advertising, Journalism, and Communication departments will review applications and make admission decisions. Admissions criteria will include cumulative grade point average, interest in public relations as outlined in an admissions essay, and public relations experience, such as internships, jobs and/or volunteer experience. Accepted students will be notified prior to spring registration, and a confirmation of admittance to the minor will be sent to the student's academic adviser.

Minor advisor: Students who are enrolled in majors within the College of Media will be advised by the current advising staff in the Student Services Center. Students enrolled in other majors will be advised by their current college advisers. The Student Services Center in the College of Media will appoint a liaison to coordinate communication with non-College of Media advisers about the minor.

Certification of successful completion: The student's college of enrollment will add the PR minor to the students' Banner record and certify that the minor has been earned when all required and elective courses have been completed. Requests for modification or course replacement will be handled by the College of Media Student Services Center and the faculty director of the PR minor.

Proposed Effective Date: Fall semester 2016

Statement for the Programs of Study Catalog:

The Public Relations minor is designed to provide undergraduate students with a foundational understanding of how public relations practitioners manage relationships between organizations and their stakeholders and manage the reputations of those organizations. Courses within the PR minor will help students develop skills in writing, research, strategic planning, relationship management, and crisis communication that can be applied in business, nonprofit, or government contexts.

Students who plan to pursue careers in public relations, advertising, communications, marketing, or other related fields will find that the PR minor serves as a valuable complement to the courses in their majors. Students from other majors who wish to have a better understanding of the role public relations plays in organizations and who wish to sharpen skills in writing, persuasion, strategic planning, and public communication will also benefit from the minor.

The minor requires a minimum of 18 credit hours. Students majoring in Advertising or Journalism must complete at least six hours of advanced course work for the minor distinct from credits earned for their major.

CLEARANCES:

J.C. Hickson 02.29.16
Head/chair of the sponsoring department or unit:

Jan Slater 2.29.16
Dean of the college of the sponsoring department or unit:

Council of Teacher Education:
(for minors that affect teacher certification)

Chair, Senate Educational Policy Committee:

**Appendix A:
Proposed Curriculum for Minor in Public Relations**

Hours	Requirements	Prerequisites
9	<p>Foundations of public relations</p> <p><i>Core courses all students must complete:</i> JOUR 200 Introduction to Journalism ADV 310 Introduction to Public Relations ADV 410 Public Relations Strategies</p>	<p>None None ADV 310</p>
3-4	<p>Writing for public relations and media</p> <p><i>Students must select one course from:</i> ADV 350 Writing for Public Relations JOUR 210 News Gathering Across Platforms CMN 220 Communicating Public Policy</p>	<p>ADV 310 JOUR 200 None</p>
6	<p>Advanced topics in public relations</p> <p><i>Students must select two courses from:</i> ADV 393 Advertising and Society ADV 490 Special Topics*† ADV 494 Persuasion Consumer Response JOUR 360 Media and You JOUR 453 Crisis Communication JOUR 460*† Special Topics CMN 321 Strategies of Persuasion CMN 377 Propaganda and Modern Society CMN 464 Health Communication Campaigns</p> <p>*Will be announced in course description as "Eligible for PR minor."</p>	<p>None None None None None None CMN 101 None None</p>
18-19	Total required hours	

†An example of a recent special topics courses that would help to meet the "Advance topics in public relations" requirement is ADV 490: Sports and Public Relations (offered fall 2015, spring 2016).

Notes: Students must earn at least a grade of B- or better for a course to count toward the minor. Courses in the minor may not be taken Credit/No Credit. At least six hours of advanced coursework must be distinct from credits earned toward the student's major or another minor.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Journalism

College of Media
119 Gregory Hall, MC-462
810 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801



December 11, 2015

To: Dr. Jacqueline Hitchon, Head, Department of Advertising

The Senate Educational Policy Committee

Re: Proposal to Establish a Public Relations Minor

The Department of Journalism supports the creation of a Public Relations Minor. We look forward to working with our colleagues in the Department of Advertising on this important endeavor.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Martin".

Rich Martin
Head, Department of Journalism
The College of Media
richmart@illinois.edu
217-333-0709

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Communication
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
3001 Lincoln Hall
702 South Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801



December 11, 2015

Professor Jacqueline Hitchon
Charles H. Sandage Department of Advertising
College of Media
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
119 Gregory Hall
810 S. Wright St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Dear Jackie,

Thank you for taking the time recently to discuss your proposal for a minor in Public Relations. The proposed minor is a natural development from your very successful Public Relations Certificate program. The public relations industry is a growing one, and it is of interest to students from several different departments on campus. Undergraduate students in Communication, in particular, should benefit from the research, critical thinking, and writing skills they will develop in the minor. This will be quite beneficial for students considering a career in public relations and related fields. What is more, we will welcome PR minor students to Communication courses.

In sum, the Department of Communication supports the creation of an undergraduate minor in Public Relations. Again, thank you for talking with me about this. If we may be of any assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



David Tewksbury
Professor and Department Head
Department of Communication

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

EP.16.48

Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs

Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820



December 15, 2015

Bettina Francis, Chair
Senate Committee on Educational Policy
Office of the Senate
228 English Building, MC-461

Dear Professor Francis:

Enclosed is a copy of a proposal from the College of Media to establish an undergraduate minor in Public Relations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kathryn A. Martensen'.

Kathryn A. Martensen
Assistant Provost

Enclosures

c: J. Parrott
J. Hitchon
J. Wirtz