



Academic Program Review 2017-18 Consultant Undergraduate Program Review

Program: **Advertising/Public Relations, B.A.**

Reviewer(s) Name(s): Hardin, Gonzalez, Ulmer

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Instructions: Please offer your assessment of each item below, considering when appropriate, your knowledge of other public research institutions. While a few items solicit an open-ended response, most ask you to rate a particular characteristic of the program under review as exemplary, appropriate, or needing improvement. At the end of each section, please elaborate on any items in that section identified as exemplary or needing improvement. Additional comments are optional. You may offer recommendations for improvement on the topics covered in each section at the end of the respective section and/or you may provide all recommendations for program improvement in item 8.3 at the end of this document.

Section 1 - Program Goals and Planned Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Please evaluate the following:

- 1.1 Program goals and objectives, including those related to planned student learning outcomes (In addition to the program self-study, you may wish to consult the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* section in the UCF APR Web site.)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified item 1.1 as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

An observation: The assessment document for the AD/PR program states that learning goals "are designed to measure student understanding and mastery of the values and competencies outlined by our disciplines leading accrediting body," the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The learning goals, however, do not seem to align. For instance, there is no mention of an appreciation and ability to work with diverse/global publics or an understanding of the history of the professions. (These could be somehow implicit in the stated goals, but are difficult to parse if they are.) This is not a judgment of the learning goals, merely an observation of their fit with ACEJMC values and competencies.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program goals and planned student learning outcomes:

Section 2 - Program Coordination, Administration, and Student Support

Please evaluate the following:

- 2.1 Program administrative and management structures to effectively run program (e.g., effectiveness of program coordination, process for monitoring students' progress to degree, program handbooks, process for selecting preceptors /research mentors/clinical supervisors)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 2.2 Student access to resources to support student success (e.g., advising, faculty members, appropriate technology)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 2.3 Evaluate the composition of the current program advisory board (if applicable) to be able to benefit student preparation to meet industry needs

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (2.1- 2.3) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The advisory board composition is a positive resource for AD/PR as well as the rest of the School.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program coordination and administration:

Section 3 – Contributing Faculty

- 3.1 Quality of faculty member instruction

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.2 Faculty member involvement of undergraduate students in research or other creative activity

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☒ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.4 Minimum faculty member qualifications required for teaching in the discipline(s) (The state and our regional accrediting body require UCF to review the qualifications of our faculty members. To inform related reviews, the department/unit has developed a statement articulating the minimum qualifications necessary to teach the discipline(s) it houses. Qualifications beyond the minimum may also be sought when hiring faculty members. We would appreciate your assessment as to whether or not the minimum qualifications identified by the unit appear consistent with common practices in the field. Please refer to the document labeled *Faculty Teaching Qualifications – Statement of Good Practices in Discipline*, located in the *Faculty Information* library in the UCF APR Web site.

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (3.1- 3.4) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Few students in AD/PR are involved in undergraduate research, according to information we received. If undergraduate research activity is a priority for the institution, it will require an investment in the faculty resources required in the AD/PR major (tenure-line; active researcher) and incentives for the faculty members in this major to engage students in such activity.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of contributing faculty:

The credentials of the faculty in this major are appropriate, in that on the whole, the faculty listed as being part of AD/PR are a mix of professionally-oriented and more research-focused faculty.

The number of tenure-line to non-tenure-line faculty is out of balance, however, in relationship to UCF's research-intensive mission, for the AD/PR major. A close look at the faculty listed for the major indicates that one, for instance, is program director for another major (Human Communication); it is safe to assume this individual and others who are teaching in the master's program have little interaction with AD/PR majors (part of the reason for the paucity of undergraduate research in AD/PR). It looks as though there is just one tenure-line faculty member teaching in AD/PR. Although there seems to be a strong need for faculty who can staff the many skills-oriented courses in the major – a rationale to continue to hire non-tenure-line faculty – the School's location in a major media market would indicate a very healthy and highly qualified adjunct pool to help staff those courses, and add some much-needed diversity to a group of instructors teaching a diverse student population. (Furthermore, hiring a faculty member with industry experience or with a Ph.D. isn't an either/or proposition. There are faculty members with both.)

Section 4 - Program Demand and Productivity

Please evaluate the following:

4.1 Program's ability to meet student demand for the major

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☒ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

4.2 Enrollment levels relative to faculty size and composition

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☒ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

4.3 Program's ability and responsiveness to meet the needs of other disciplines (e.g., program offerings that support other programs)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☒ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

4.4 Program's ability and responsiveness to meet local, regional, and national talent needs

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

4.5 Student time-to-degree in the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (4.1- 4.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The major is controlled for the number of students it can accommodate, clearly indicating that it cannot meet student demand. Because faculty are stretched thin and students who want the major are turned away, the major may fail, over time, to be able to compete nationally or to gain the attention of employers at the national level. Many AD/PR programs have in-house student agencies and very strong service-learning components (with small classes) that give them a positive presence in the community and favorable profile at the university in which they're situated. These kinds of features are really standard and go beyond the student clubs, but they require faculty resources to succeed.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program demand and productivity:

Section 5 - Program Quality

Please evaluate the following:

5.1 Quality and rigor of student learning outcome targets (Refer to student learning outcomes assessment plans located in the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* section of the APR Web site.)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.2 Evidence of student learning consistent with stated program goals (including planned student learning outcomes) and discipline standards

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.3 Student licensure pass rates (if applicable)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.4 Placement rates for graduates relative to disciplinary trends at other public research universities

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 5.5 Quality and rigor of any affiliated combination programs (if applicable, see self-study addendum); e.g., accelerated baccalaureate-to-master's degrees, combination dual degrees, graduate degrees with external departments

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☒ Not Applicable

Student Perceptions of their Overall Experience

Based upon your interactions with students in the program, please indicate how you believe students in the program view the program in the following areas:

- 5.6 Students' perception of the overall administration of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 5.7 Students' perception of advising and mentoring

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☒ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 5.8 Students' perception of program quality and rigor

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 5.9 Students' perceptions of the academic and collegial atmosphere of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (5.1- 5.9) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The APR certification program, which had a 100% pass rate when it was administered in 2015, is a strong feature that we hope will continue after what appears to be a hiatus involving the accrediting agency. The small number of students we were able to interview complained about advising and availability of courses when they needed them. We caution that the number of students who participated in the group interview was small, and this comment should be understood in that light. The students were highly complimentary of the faculty and of the overall ethos in the program – one that is student-centered.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program quality:

Section 6 - Student Characteristics and Quality

Please evaluate the following:

6.1 Program's ability to attract high quality students

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

6.2 Incoming students' credentials (e.g., GPA)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

6.3 Student diversity

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

6.4 Quality of student accomplishments compared to similar programs at other public research universities (e.g., theses, dissertations, creative works, papers presented; awards won; quality of subsequent graduate and professional programs entered; employment) (Refer to student works located in the *Student Works* section of the APR Web site as well as any additional student works you may have reviewed during your site visit.)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

6.5 Program relationship with alumni

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☒ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (6.1- 6.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

While we could not locate student work samples, the list of awards and opportunities for students, such as through Quotes, are appropriate. Accolades for students in competitions such as AAF or Bateman can help bring positive attention to the program.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of student characteristics and quality:

Section 7 - Curriculum, Course Offerings, and Student Engagement Opportunities

Please evaluate the following:

7.1 Current curriculum's alignment with program goals

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.2 Design of core courses' to provide students a solid foundation in the discipline

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.3 Availability and timeliness of required courses

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☒ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.4 Adequacy of student professional development opportunities (e.g., research, clinical experience)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.5 Balance between coursework and research, practica, independent study, etc., (e.g., too many or too few courses)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.6 Overall quality and rigor of current curriculum

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.7 Degree to which the program's course/activity/experiences sequence is appropriate to achieve the program's outcomes and student learning objectives.

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (7.1- 7.7) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

An observation: It seems that the mix of fundamental and "advanced core courses" may be overly broad, given the limited faculty resources available in the major. Although some of the core courses are obviously taught outside the School, the list seems to promise courses that may be very difficult to offer with regularity. Also, what is considered "fundamental" and "advanced" seems puzzling. (e.g., a required internship can be completed before officially being admitted to the program and before taking such basic courses as writing for PR or Advertising.)

Please use the space below to provide recommendations, if any, in the area of curriculum, course offerings, and student engagement opportunities. Please offer any specific suggestions to further enhance the curriculum (e.g., internationalize curriculum, add interdisciplinary components, expand high impact practices)

Section 8 - Comparative Advantage

- 8.1 If applicable, please identify features that distinguish the program from similar programs at other institutions (e.g., curriculum, faculty member expertise, student engagement opportunities)

APR certification – this is a feature not offered by many programs that might compete with this one.

- 8.2 Does the program fit a disciplinary niche? If so, please elaborate.

No

- 8.3 Please discuss the program's potential for achieving discipline (re-)accreditation or (re-)certification, if available.

The program could pursue ACEJMC accreditation. This would require it to address several standards required by the accrediting council, including those having to do with diversity, faculty, research and creative activity as it relates to UCF's mission, and public service, among others. The program would also need to avoid the temptation to increase the number of students in its skills courses, which ACEJMC caps at 20.

Section 9 - Analysis and Recommendations

- 9.1 Please identify up to five areas of greatest program strength.

APR certification; student-centered faculty in a collegial student-faculty culture; active student organizations; demonstrable student learning on learning goals, as indicated by its assessment results; diverse student population of interest to employers.

- 9.2 Please identify up to five areas of greatest concern for the program (e.g., program weaknesses, barriers, threats, unique vulnerabilities).

The program doesn't seem to be offering some "value-added" features that would help it attract, retain and graduate the most competitive students. Does it regularly field Bateman or AAF teams in its region? Does it have a strong service-learning campaigns component that can draw the attention of the community and become a strong bragging point for the School? Does it have plans, especially when it moves downtown, to launch a "student agency" that could serve small business and non-profits? None of these initiatives are particularly innovative; they are standard features of strong AD/PR programs. But with the faculty resources currently available and the array of classes this program has on the books, it is difficult to see how these kinds of initiatives can be developed.

- 9.3 Please reflect on program centrality, cost, comparative advantage, demand, and quality. Keeping these factors in mind, please offer your recommendations for program improvement considering each of the following, as appropriate:
- improvements necessary for successful continuation of program operation (if applicable)

- improvements that are not resource intensive, but that are likely to enhance program quality
- improvements that, if resources permit, could help take the program to the next level of prominence (including program rankings) and/or help enhance performance key metrics identified in the university's collective impact strategic plan

Please see the above. The program should make a priority to develop further “hands-on” opportunities for its students. Adjuncts can be helpful for some of these possibilities.

Also: Does the Hispanic/Latino Media Project integrate AD/PR students at all? If not, is there a way to expand that project to do so, helping AD/PR develop a powerful and appropriate niche for itself in this market?

Section 10 - Executive Summary

In one to two pages, please provide your overall impression of the program, emphasizing key aspects of the review. As appropriate, contextualize your assessment in relation to best practices in the discipline of study, graduate education, the broader higher education landscape, and/or industry trends within the field.

Mass communications programs at universities across the country are seeing explosive growth in their AD/PR programs, driven in great part by strong growth projections in this job sector (especially public relations). It is no surprise that demand outstrips supply in this program, and a question worth asking is where students who don't get into the major go. Is there such data available? If they are leaving the Nicholson School, that is regrettable, even they are remaining at UCF. (If they are choosing another major in the School, we assume that major has excess faculty capacity to be able to accommodate students whose first choice is AD/PR.)

From the program's assessment activities and results, it is clear that the faculty put a high premium on ensuring that it meets its promise for student learning of the basics in advertising and public relations. Its student organizations are also active; its students are enthusiastic about the possibilities in their career fields. It's MAIP placement, Ad Club success, and AAF designations are not surprising, given the quality of instruction and the diverse student population here – an outstanding combination that should make employers take notice. The more this can be highlighted and strengthened, the better.

It is likely that for the foreseeable future, this major will continue to have strong demand, especially for students who want to study in a major metropolitan area or in Orlando in particular. However, without the creative, strategic deployment of highly qualified adjuncts or additional hiring, the program will struggle to provide additional programs that would make it nationally competitive or to take full advantage of its anticipated move downtown. These observations have not, to this point, taken into account the need of this program to ensure that it has the expertise to ensure that its curriculum is sufficiently addressing data analytics and the increasing role of video/immersive storytelling in strategic communications. We assume the faculty and School is thinking about these “next up” issues if they have not already been incorporated into coursework. This kind of expertise and curricular updating can be met a number of ways including with smart partnerships with programs in the School and across UCF.