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**TRENDS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS  
AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AT  
PEMBROKE STATE UNIVERSITY**

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**A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Chancellor's Scholars Council  
of Pembroke State University**

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**by  
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Public relations plays a key role in everyday life. Looking around at everyday activities brings about the realization that the use of public relations is very extensive. But, public relations is as hard to define as religion or education. Everyone agrees that both religion and education are important, yet no two people will define them in exactly the same way. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines public relations as both a way of looking at an organization's performance and a program of activities:

Public relations is policies and activities designed to convey information about, and improve the public's attitude toward, an individual, corporation, government agency, or other organization. Major responsibilities of public relations departments or agencies include issuing news releases; arranging press conferences; answering correspondence from the public; planning participation in community affairs; preparing films, pamphlets, employee magazines, reports to stockholders, and form letters; planning advertising programs; planning and publicizing exhibitions and tours; and undertaking research surveys to measure public opinion. (Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 285)

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) adopted a definition that states that public relations "helps our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions; it serves to bring private and public policies into harmony." (Newsom, p. 8)

The history of public relations is as old as the country itself. The leaders of the American Revolution were outstanding

public relations practitioners. They used written and oral methods of communications and persuasion extensively. The Declaration of Independence is an example of a written public relations technique. The revolution was not entirely accepted at first, and the early leaders had to master the art of persuasion. In addition to being an impressive political and legal document, the Declaration of Independence represented a stupendous public relations success. Among the early public relations artists were some of our best known and most respected historical figures: Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Abigail Adams, John Jay and Mary Katherine Goddard.

It was not until the 19th century that firm foundations were laid for public relations as we know it today. These bases were established just as the country saw a significant rise in the fortunes of the "great middle class." (M. Rotman, p. 5) This improvement in the "great middle class", in turn, was hastened by the fact that suddenly any male citizen could vote, regardless of whether he held property. Universal suffrage enabled the lower classes to take action toward issues which affected them. This improvement also resulted in the political and other leaders becoming more concerned with how to influence the masses.

President Andrew Jackson was one of the major influences in what is now called public relations. He was instrumental in devising techniques for communicating with and persuading the newly-franchised voters. Mechanical innovations such as the printing press paved the way for the fathers of public relations:

Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays. (M. Rotman, p. 6)

Ivy Lee became the first public relations counsel, although he evidently did not use the term public relations. Lee became the first full-time practitioner of the art, which set the stage for what public relations has grown to be today. Early public relations people like Lee set out to make the technical activities of business more understandable to everybody. He set out to make business more human. All businesses dealt in marketing something that somebody wanted. Lee emphasized the down-to-earth, common relationship between all Americans and the vast corporations expanding in the U.S. (M. Rotman, p. 9)

Edward Bernays, whose book Crystallizing Public Opinion was published in 1923, had a profound influence on the fledgling public relations field. In fact, Bernays' book was the first full-length book devoted to the workings of what was to become contemporary public relations. Bernays firmly believed in the art of psychology and in its application to public relations. He taught the first public relations course at New York University. Not only did Bernays play one of the key roles in the development of modern public relations, he also correctly predicted that during the last 40 years of the 20th century, it would become a major field in American business and communications. (M. Rotman, pp. 9-10)

Becoming recognized as a defined discipline in the United States in this century, public relations has gained its greatest acceptance here and in the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia -

countries whose legal and cultural traditions are based in English Common Law. In these countries, where the press acts as a "guardian of public interest" and exercises free speech and fair comment, the media's views (well-informed or not) and the goals and objectives of government, business and other institutions will always be somewhat in conflict. From this battle has emerged the true public relations professional, whose role is to bring rationality, reason and integrity to the process of delivering institutions' messages by way of the media. Public relations helps to keep both sides - the media and institutions - aware that each serves a higher master: the public. (Dowling, p. 6) Because of this awareness, the main theme of the profession is responsibility and responsiveness in policy and information to the best interests of both the institution and its various publics. In simpler terms, the public relations practitioner is the intermediary between the interests represented and all of the involved publics. (Newsom, p. 7) However, communicating is only one part of the job. The other is to influence the audience to accept the messages and respond according to the set design. The ultimate quality evaluation for any public relations campaign is the final performance. While the information conveyed through public relations is crucial, the final judge of a campaign's effectiveness is what the distribution of information helps to achieve. Public relations is goal-oriented, and the final test is whether or not it achieves what it set out to do. (M. Rotman, p. 22)

But, as with all facets of life, public relations has become

more complex and diverse. Because of life's increasing complexity, problems are no longer easily placed in separate compartments to be dealt with by individual specialists. (M. Rotman, p. 28) Immediate economic conditions may bring ups and downs, and feelings within particular areas may swing from favorable to unfavorable, but all the conditions which called public relations into being earlier in this century not only are continuing but are being constantly intensified. Populations are greater, communications are more widespread, and issues in dispute have increased in number. (Marston, p. 362)

In order for public relations specialists to be able to help both clients and the general public better decipher the tons of information which is made public everyday, they must be aware of the trends that are moving public relations full speed ahead into the future and be able to cope with them. Our performance in the 1990s, and into the 21st century, will depend on getting beyond the how-to tactics and logistical support considerations that have been a frequent topic in industry dialogue recently. It will depend on understanding and tackling the big social, economic and political issues in our communities, in the nation and around the globe. (Dilenschneider, p. 7) This Chancellor's Scholars Thesis examines the major trends of technology, globalization and environmentalism through research and interviews conducted with state and local public relations practitioners. Also examined through research and interviews are the criteria public relations students should be familiar with and knowledgeable about in order to enter the job market, and the



implications on the public relations instructional program at Pembroke State University.

Many trends will change public relations in the 1990s. First of all, there will be major shifts in macroeconomic and political factors. The wealth of the world has shifted decidedly from the West to the Pacific Rim, especially to Japan and the Asian giants - Taiwan, Singapore and Korea. Trade issues will be complicated, but it will be even more necessary to compete globally to achieve the necessary economics. The creation of new and improbable strategic alliances will require the development of new, multinational corporate cultures. (Dowling, p. 6) Secondly, the non-profit sector will experience big changes. New directions for existing programs, new organizations to respond to unmet needs, and the reduction or elimination of programs and organizations that no longer serve society's changing priorities will cause public relations professionals to rethink their strategies. Another trend involves aging and tolerance. During the '90s, the U.S. population will continue to increase. The nation will see a decline in the proportion of young adults. The age-65-and-over population - a more active, more affluent group than has existed in previous generations - will also grow. Major psychological, social and economic changes will inevitably accompany this aging of the population. Our nation is leaving an era obsessed with youth and moving into one that will be more realistic, more responsible, and more tolerant of diversity. (Overkamp, p. 22) In addition to a more mature population, rising levels of education, increased ethnic



diversity, more single-person households, and other diversity-related trends are moving us away from a "mass society" toward a "mosaic society." The major factor in the growth of the U.S. population will be immigration and, as a result, this increase will reflect a greater proportional growth of minorities. This will continue to have significant implications for some of America's most serious social problems - healthcare costs, illiteracy, drugs, AIDS, and the homeless. All of these trends will have a profound influence on the way public relations professionals practice in the 1990s, but the three trends that will gain major momentum in the '90s are in the areas of technology, globalization and environmentalism.

#### TECHNOLOGY

The first and foremost trend that has drastically changed not only the communications field but also every profession is the development of increasingly sophisticated technology. The demand for instant information has had a dramatic impact upon this profession in recent years. (Heatherly interview, November 3, 1989) Despite ups and downs in one segment or another as the high-technological field matures, the overall pace continues to be fast and furious. (Eilts, p.23) Richard E. Rotman, in his article entitled "Preparing for the Future of Public Relations," states that "computers and the new technology, of course, will do more of what they already do, just faster, better, quicker and cheaper." (R. Rotman, pp. 32-33) The Public Relations Journal has repeatedly documented the increasingly significant role of public

relations professionals to interpret, influence and capitalize on the profusion of new information being generated by - and beamed at - every segment of society. To survive and prosper in this Information Age, public relations practitioners and their managements and clients must know how to use the new information management tools - especially the tools that combine the power of the telephone and the computer. (Laurie, p. 21 ) "Technology is moving much, much faster than people's ability to absorb or use it," comments Martha Waters, vice president and general manager, Epley & Associates. "The companies that are going to prosper are those that are able to communicate how to use their technology and the benefits of that technology." (Waters interview, January 26, 1990) Ultimately, this new technology has the potential to give anyone, anywhere access to virtually any information instantly. For example, some milestones passed in the 1980's include the following:

1. The number of computers on Earth exceeded the number of people (and computers continued to be born faster than babies).
2. The first electronic novel was published and distributed nationwide 16 minutes after the author finished composing it on his word processor. (Laurie, p. 21)

Databases, facsimile machines, video-conferencing, and a host of other innovations of the '80s have made the mechanics of public relations a lot easier. When public relations practitioners need to communicate with clients, they can deliver documents and graphics almost at the speed of light. When they have a breaking story, they can instantly convey it to the media

worldwide. (Pharr, p. 35) Cahners Publishing Economics Department computed that the electronics industry, which includes computers, components, communications, instruments, and television and radio, earned \$266 billion in sales in 1989. (Eilts, p. 23) Thus, public relations professionals must make themselves familiar with state-of-the-art developments, such as computerized data banks, electronic mail, and word processors. The Price/McNabb Advertising Agency advises public relations professionals to "stay abreast of technological changes in order to meet the needs of your key audience, the media." (Price/McNabb notes, November 9, 1989) Nita Gregory Hill, executive director, I-95 Hospitality Corridor Association, adds that "although employees will be acclimated to individual computer systems and programs, public relations professionals should be familiarized with general computer programs and specific programs comparable to Word Perfect, Database and Desktop Publishing. Whether comprising proposals or letters, compiling media labels or laying out a newsletter, it is vital that public relations specialists feel comfortable with such programs." (Hill interview, October 25, 1989)

Three booming areas of this high-tech explosion are desktop publishing, computers and visual capabilities. The first technological boom is in the area of desktop publishing. Desktop publishing is exactly what the term implies: laying out publications with a desktop computer. Some of the leading desktop publishing programs are the Ventura Desktop Publishing System, Pagemaker and Macintosh system. Desktop publishing came

onto the scene in 1985 with a software package designed for the Apple Macintosh microcomputer. Since then, the number of page layout software packages has multiplied. Sales of these packages will more than double over the next five years.(Gordon, p. 24)

"Desktop publishing is a cheaper alternative, in both time and money," comments Joan Hodges, president, Hodges & Associates, "to sending copy to the printers for layout, having it returned for proofreading and editing, and returning it back to the printers for the finished product."(Hodges interview, November 7, 1989)

Sherry Jasiczek, publications coordinator for Biltmore Estates & Winery, says that "in the recent past, companies such as ours have become streamlined, using a great deal of outside services. Under such circumstances, company employees must become generalists, developing talents in many areas. We use desktop publishing in our marketing department, formatting our two newsletters, designing forms and numerous other uses."(Jasiczek interview, November 7, 1989)

Computers is the second technological boom area. When the home computer "revolution" began, it was predicted that there would soon be one computer in every home. It has not happened yet, but there will be a computer at every desk. Computers will be our banking, shopping, research, writing, home management and computational tools and will perform - as yet - unimagined labor-saving skills. At work, all computers will "talk" to each other; have access to gigantic, lightning-fast databases; will perhaps translate foreign languages automatically; produce graphics; and communicate with newsrooms, wire services and broadcast outlets.

It is the ultimate in portable offices. And now, with the mating of cellular telephone technology and the computer, a person can be reached or transmit data to or from virtually anywhere. As a result, the rejection or acceptance of public relations material will be ruthlessly efficient and perhaps immediate. "Whatever you can do to learn about, use and become expert in the art of computer creativity," says Richard E. Rotman, "will be of direct and immediate benefit."(R. Rotman, p. 33)

The third boom is in the area of visuals. Since public relations became a business in the early '50s, the dawn of the television era, it has undergone progressive visualization. Virtually everything connected with visual communication has changed: graphic and package design, television commercials, print ads, annual report designs and logos. In the early days of public relations, print dominated the field, and newspapers were the desired placements for advertisements. Today, more than half of American homes have VCR equipment, and the technology is so fast-paced that high school students can view video cassettes conveying information about college campuses instead of looking at a couple of color photographs in a handbook.(Washington conference, September 1984)

Videotape and its progressive miniaturization - MTV, cable television, satellite feeds, CNN, superstations and live news coverage from abroad - have changed how we see the world.(R. Rotman, p. 32) Visual sophistication characterizes the field today, and it - especially cable television - will cause

perceptive public relations executives to rethink, redesign, and restructure their communication programs. (Budd, p. 29) "As more people become increasingly selective about what they watch on television," agrees Charles E. Rixse, director of sales and marketing, Sea Mist Resort, "public relations professionals will have to shift gears if they are to properly use this medium for informing and persuading." (Rixse interview, October 23, 1989) The rapid expansion of the technological field, along with the far-reaching implications of new technology for all businesses and for our individual lifestyles, have made high-technology one of the most fertile and challenging specialties for public relations practitioners. When high-tech companies create or react to technology changes, the public relations practitioner must anticipate, define and communicate the implications of these changes. (Eilts, p. 23)

#### GLOBALIZATION

The information age has created what has been called the global village. Businesses today expect the same high standards of performance in Barcelona as they do in Buffalo; in Singapore as in Santa Cruz. Globalization is one of the most important trends in world economics today. As business continues to globalize, smart managers recognize the worldwide risks and opportunities. The public relations function will of necessity become a worldwide operation. As effects of international stock markets and the European common market intensify, one out of every three or four public relations professionals will make



business trips during the next decade to the Soviet Union, China, the Pacific Rim, Middle East and Africa. (Jackson, p. 1) What was once a very centralized insular department located at corporate headquarters became, over the last couple of decades, a very decentralized organization as many of America's largest companies established public relations operations in Europe and the Far East. (Wilkinson, p. 13) Because the roles of investor relations and other public relations functions will be more closely intertwined than ever before, management expects public relations practitioners to be strong both globally and locally. (Dilenschneider, p. 7) James H. Dowling, in his article entitled "Public Relations in the Year 2000," says that "though several trends, such as the new technology and the internationalization of environmental and health issues, steadily move public relations into the 1990s, the real challenge in the future will be to keep up with the demands made on us in an increasingly complex and global world - a world in which the public relations factor will spell the difference between success and failure." (Dowling, p. 6)

One just has to consume a croissant, lick gelato, drive a Japanese car, punch up the numbers on a Korean computer, wear shoes from Brazil, or drive a German-designed Volkswagen from that same fast-growing, Portuguese-speaking country, and one will wonder whatever happened to national boundaries. (R. Rotman, p. 33) "We are in one of the most fascinating times ever in communications worldwide," states Ellin Ginsburg, executive vice president, GCI International. "Barriers are being torn down -



communications, trade, economic and other barriers. 'Global' has finally become a word with meaning."(Pharr, p. 35) Global, 24-hours-per-day securities trading and the nearly instantaneous communication of voice and data worldwide characterize a business environment that never sleeps. American companies feel intense pressure to increase their penetration of international markets, in part because of eroding shares within their own markets.(Wilkinson, p. 12) The lowering of international trade barriers is creating the biggest opportunity of the '90s for public relations professionals.(Consensus, p. 9) The 1990s promise to advance public relations worldwide at a pace which only a few short months ago would have seemed impossible. There is a new awareness of the keen competitiveness of the fast-developing global market and the crucial need of public relations strategies in marketing to the consumer publics throughout the world.(Griswold, p. 1) The competition is getting tougher. The players are smarter. And the rules are changing.

Virtually every professional discipline will have to adapt to changes brought on by the increasingly global nature of business. Those in mid-level management positions and above will face issues unprecedented in complexity, for which they have received little or no formal training.(Wilkinson, p. 12) Highly competent public relations practitioners or staff of the 1980s may be ill-equipped to address the business issues of the 1990s. Public relations departments will be called upon to play a more strategic role in the '90s, as it is recognized that a company's worldwide reputation and image have bottomline implications.

They will be involved in developing and articulating their corporations' positions on international issues. Thus, public relations professionals will have to demonstrate an understanding of fundamental business issues, including finance, economics and marketing, as well as government affairs and current events. (Wilkinson, p. 13) "Be up to date on current affairs," agrees Martha Waters. "Speaking a foreign language and becoming familiar with business jargon is a must, but watching the news and being aware of what is going on in the international scene is absolutely essential." (Waters interview, January 26, 1990)

This global perspective places increasing demands on public relations professionals' creativity and their ability to understand the interests of their target audiences. It forces them to abandon any vestiges of parochialism while concentrating even more intensely on the specific traits of local communities. (Pharr, p. 35) For the public relations professional, this means having a global outlook and the imagination to look beyond national borders for communications programs that help achieve business goals. Globalization and increasing decentralization make it more important than ever for organizations to have strong internal communications systems that allow their diverse operations to speak with one voice. Technology now allows for global, instantaneous communication, but the voice will be heard in many tongues and through many methods, and its messages will be tailored to the specific interests of the audiences concerned. (Dowling, p. 36) "Corporations will find it essential to speak with one voice,"

says Charles E. Rixse. "Instantaneous transmission of news around the world by wire services and television will make it foolhardy to develop regional strategies that are inconsistent with one another. This is also true with business language. What is communicated in an American company must be communicated in equal terms to its European counterpart."(Rixse interview, October 23, 1989) In general, public relations professionals must be sure to understand each local market - its customs, culture, current events, business practices, and, of course, its language. "Make no mistake," warns Daniel W. Bellack, chairman, TFB/BBDO Business Communications Inc., "Europe is different. Be prepared. Be aggressive. And above all, be smart."(Bellack, p. 15)

#### **ENVIRONMENTALISM**

Our nation's industries are facing a must-win situation in the 1990s. Contrary to the expectations of many analysts, attention to environmental issues has not peaked; it is still gathering momentum. Environmental, health and safety issues are once again at the top of the public agenda. What is different is the internationalism of these issues, facilitated largely by the globalization of communications. These issues can no longer be contained in specific political venues, especially in the developed world, where activist movements are organized across political boundaries. Business faces a particular dilemma. Less-developed countries do not want to impair their economic development by adhering to costly global environmental standards

set by richer nations.(Dowling, p. 6 & 36) Public attitudes toward a wide variety of environmental issues today point to a steady growth in the power of environmental movements in coming years. And that growth in power could become an outright explosion if some spark - such as an incident like Chernobyl - ignites in this country.(Jackson, p. 7) Throughout the 1980s, environmental issues that directly affect business have been fought at local levels more than at the national level. But the general image of environmentalists today is highly favorable - and environmental issues will increasingly provide an attractive platform for political candidates.

In the future, more wide-ranging calls for tighter safeguards and for stricter standards will be heard. Public favor will be given to companies that demonstrate concern backed up by sound policies and programs.(Griswold, p. 1) Problems of toxic wastes and nuclear energy rank very high on the list of public priorities. People are distrustful of business in these areas, and they support greater government regulation and control. What is more, these environmental concerns are both broad and deep - profoundly held beliefs by a very wide cross-section of American society.(Jackson, p. 7) The introduction of new plants, the operation of old ones, and the products that are created from these plants will be evaluated on an environment-safe basis by this environmentally conscientious cross-section of society.

Our nation's industries are fighting to restore their

credibility with the public and demonstrate that they can carry out their activities without harm to the environment. Right now, the American people do not trust industry to be responsible with our country's air, water and land. (Silas, p. 10) Martha Waters agrees, "The environmental area is growing in importance. The public does not trust big industries and wants to know everything that is going on. Public relations professionals must be knowledgeable about environmental issues - chemicals, recycling, waste management - and interpret these issues in a form that the public can easily understand." (Waters interview, January 26, 1990) The record of our industry at home and abroad through the 1970s and 1980s shows that the public relations profession has been playing more like runners-up in the game of environmental protection. The mistakes of industries have not been numerous, but they have been visible and costly: toxic chemicals, oil spills and hazardous waste. In addition, a perception has grown that industrial activity is causing ominous changes in the global environment that increase the potential for ecological disaster. However, the reasons public relations professionals and the industries they represent do not have the public's trust are not entirely due to industry's poor performance. The rules of the game have changed, and they have not kept up.

Public relations practitioners are operating more and more in a society that demands the best of two disparate worlds. Our society wants ample, low-cost supplies of energy and products, but it has an increasingly lower tolerance for environmental risk - real or perceived. According to a public opinion survey

performed by The New York Times in July 1989, nearly 80 percent of the people believed protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high. They believe environmental improvements must be made regardless of the cost. In 1981, only 40 percent believed in that. (Silas, p. 10) The American people and the global world will not tolerate misinformation or getting by with only the minimum amount necessary to meet technical environmental requirements. There is no question that public relations specialists will have to be the champions of the environmental cause to have a chance of winning the public's trust.

This heightened environmental sensitivity has three implications. During this decade, public relations professionals will be subject to (1) unprecedented scrutiny (along with judgements about their performance, some of them unfair), (2) unprecedented governmental regulation, and (3) unmitigated cost.

In the first implication of unprecedented scrutiny, employees, shareholders, community members and consumers, with the aid of the media, will scrutinize the workplaces, products, financial performance, contribution to society - or lack of it - and the environmental impact of the big industries that public relations practitioners represent. These constituents will demand more visibility from company leaders. The performances of public relations professionals will be measured against higher standards, with little tolerance for error. Failure to stack up will cost them not only trust, but also the successful



representation of their industries to the public.(Silas, p. 10)  
"Consumers will boycott products of environmentally insensitive companies," comments Charles E. Rixse, "in much the same way that some people have refused to patronize companies doing business in South Africa. Public relations practitioners have to be allied with these consumers and keep them informed. If they are not, they will not succeed [in projecting a positive image for the industries they are representing]."(Rixse interview, October 23, 1989)

In the area of unprecedented governmental regulation - the second implication - U.S. and foreign industries can also count on increased governmental regulation. Tighter standards will be applied to the remaining sources of emissions into the air and water, helping to improve environmental conditions in our world's largest cities. The challenge for industry and government will be to balance the two good, but seemingly paradoxical, objectives of environmental protection and economic growth and development.(Silas, pp. 10 & 34)

Finally, heightened environmental consciousness will have a price tag. Response to scrutiny and compliance with governmental regulation will cost public relations firms and their respective industries a large sum of money and alter some aspects of the American lifestyle. For example, as a result of a sweeping, 20-year, antipollution plan adopted in early 1989, Los Angeles residents may have to stop using certain kinds of paint, household cleaners and dry cleaning fluids. They may have to



stop using gasoline-powered lawn mowers. They will probably pay millions of dollars to overhaul public transportation systems. And they may even be restricted in their driving habits. With environmental pressures increasing, it would not be surprising if every major city started applying a similar plan. With this in mind, consumers and shareholders must be willing to pay the price of increased environmental responsibility. (Silas, p. 34)

Right now, U.S. industry is on the defensive in terms of environmental responsibility. Yet, because the plants and factories are being operated by experienced and knowledgeable technicians and scientists, no one should know better than they about what can be done to protect and preserve our country's environment and win back the trust of the public. In order to regain this trust, public relations professionals must have a game plan composed of three components: (1) they must study and understand the implications of the public's increased environmental sensitivity, (2) they must take the environmental initiative, and (3) they must learn to communicate better. (Silas, pp. 10 & 34) While at the same time doing what is best environmentally for the industries they are representing, there is no reason why the public relations field cannot make the environmental issue its issue. If public relations practitioners wait to be told what to do - if they offer no initiatives of their own and react defensively - they are playing not to lose, and that is not good enough.

All of these trends - especially technology, globalization

and environmentalism - are important for public relations students, who are planning to graduate in the early '90s, to be knowledgeable about and up-to-date on in order to enter the job market, but in order to get that foot in the door of the vast field of public relations, students must know the basics. The basics consist of three important areas: (1) good communication skills, (2) a liberal arts education, and (3) experience.

No idea, no strategy, no tactic, no policy, no procedure can be effectively implemented unless it is properly positioned through communications with those affected, whether inside or outside the company or industry. The ability to help shape policy, therefore, is only half of the challenge facing public relations professionals. The ability to communicate effectively will be just as important. (Dowling, p. 36) To achieve success and stay on top, it will be more and more necessary for companies to "out-communicate" their competition. The only problem is that too many graduates are not communicating enough in college to be able to "out-communicate." In Handbook for Public Relations Writing, Thomas Bivins comments, "The problem is that too many graduates are leaving school today as poor writers and even poorer thinkers. Unfortunately, many of these students have been trained only minimally as public relations practitioners and few have taken writing courses specific to the discipline." (Bivins, p. 15) In order for public relations professionals to be able to "out-communicate" the competition, they should possess the following key communication skills: (1) strong writing, (2) the ability to be personable with people at all levels, (3) the

ability to listen and learn about organizational needs, and (4) good salesmanship - a good story will not get published or aired unless it is sold well. (Price/McNabb notes, November 9, 1989) Martha Waters summed up the number one requirement for success in the public relations field as stressed by all of the people interviewed: "Writing and communicating is still the base in public relations. At least 2-3 years of experience in a writing-oriented job, such as reporting for a newspaper, is absolutely required in any large public relations agency." (Waters interview, January 26, 1990)

The second important area deals with a liberal arts education. Liberal arts is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as "academic disciplines, such as languages, history, and philosophy, that provide information of general cultural concern, as distinguished from more narrowly practical training, as for a vocation or profession." (American Heritage Dictionary, p. 727) Basically, a liberal arts education enables a student to touch all the areas essential to becoming a well-rounded individual. The first nationally accepted standard for public relations education was developed in 1975 by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). In 1981, this initial report was updated into a universal agreement that states that the public relations practice demands expertise in all educational areas:

1. Planning: Ranges from counseling top management in other than public relations problems to dealing with the details of the public relations departments own organization and functioning. It incorporates the development of policy, procedure, action and the communication of these to

other departments.

2. Administration: Goes beyond administering the public relations departments itself to interpreting top management to the entire organization, participating in association activities, coordinating all outside agencies and activities, accumulating information about the organization and preparing and allocating the corporate public relations budget.
3. Advising: Implies doing the research into opinion, attitudes, and expectations necessary to provide authoritative counsel, as well as educational and informational materials, to stockholders, lobbyists and others.
4. Analyzing: Examining future trends and their consequences and preventing conflict and misunderstandings through promoting mutual respect and social responsibility.
5. Industry Relations: Helping to attract and retain good employees and working with personnel to improve employer-employee relations. It involves initiating communication systems with employees and suppliers, helping to improve labor relations by participating in meetings and conferences with labor representatives and working closely with labor negotiators in labor contracts and discussions.
6. Economic Relations: Maintaining relations with competitors, dealers, and distributors. It encompasses advertising and promotion, which often requires working closely with marketing and merchandising and harmonizing the public and private interest.
7. Social Relations: Being concerned with both human relations, including preservation of personal dignity and employee protection (security), and social welfare, incorporating recreational, medical and civic activities.
8. Political Activities: Being involved with the community's administrative, educational and religious groups, as well as with legislative bodies and international contracts. It implies an interest in the international affairs of the world community.
9. Communication: Knowing how to communicate through both mass and specialized media by ad-



vertising and publicity and setting up a system for a two-way flow of full information.

10. Educational Activities: Encompasses working with employees, the general public, schools, consumer groups and company representatives such as salespeople and dealers and arranging appearances and writing speeches for corporate executives. Also included are in-house educational activities such as employee training programs. (Newsom, p. 17)

Public relations encompasses every aspect of life. Public relations professionals are not just press agents and publicists. They are also counselors, teachers, politicians, artists. This is why a liberal arts education is so important. "Current [public relations] curriculum should not only over-emphasize journalism, but also over-emphasize necessary instruction in basic areas - especially social science theory and techniques as well as management training," says Nita Gregory Hill. "Many public relations students think math and science are not important in this field, but when it comes down to life, everything is important." (Hill interview, October 25, 1989)

The broad statement concerning public relations curriculum can further be broken down into the course work guidelines by the nationally accrediting Commission on Public Relations Education:

1. Copy Preparation and Editing: Including news and feature writing, advertising copy, and writing for the electronic media. Courses: Newswriting and reporting, copy editing, script writing, advertising principles and copy-writing.
2. Graphics Art and Typography: Generally addresses the origin, kinds, and uses of various printing and display procedures, typeface classification and design, copy fitting and layout, color reproduction and display of drawings, engravings, graphs, photographs, and other representations

in print and electronic media.

3. Still Photography: Including the techniques and processes utilized in the technologies that produce black and white and color prints or slides. Courses dealing with this area provide information about the origin, kinds, and uses of photographic equipment, photography techniques, and how the photographic products are integrated in a system of visual presentations. (Baxter, pp.43-45)

Richard E. Rotman further suggests "writing and journalism, history, literature, foreign languages - especially Japanese or Chinese, political science, economics, psychology, sociology, public speaking, computer science, math, accounting, and anything at all related to business. If these areas are not heavily touched upon, public relations students will not make it in the commercial business world." (R. Rotman, p. 32)

The last essential component of the basics for public relations students is experience. As with any type of job a person seeks, experience counts. "Succeeding in this field," comments Nita Gregory Hill, "means going out and gaining at least two years experience in reporting; creating and typesetting different kinds of layouts - brochures, newspapers, newsletters, advertisements; and sales. Public relations professionals must be aggressive, creative, experimental, curious, flexible, efficient, involved accustomed to working under pressure and meeting deadlines, and excited. These traits can come only from practical, hands-on, realistic situations and experience." (Hill interview, October 25, 1989) As this business becomes more competitive, those with experience - media experience - will have a real advantage over those who do not. The reason is simple.

Those with media experience have had to perform in the real world, under pressure. They know how to deal with the media in real-world situations. They know the importance of accuracy, timeliness, and all the other factors that play a huge part in putting together a daily newspaper or an evening television news broadcast. (Heatherly interview, November 3, 1989) There is no training like experience, and the sooner a person puts learning into practice, the better their prospects for high performance.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AT PEMBROKE STATE UNIVERSITY

The current curriculum for a contracted major in public relations here at Pembroke State University is as follows:

##### CORE

CMA 100	Interpersonal Communications
or	
CMA 101	Fundamentals of Speech
CMA 205	World Literature I
CMA 206	World Literature II
Six hours	Foreign Language
	French 131-132, Spanish 131-132, German 131-132 or equivalent
	= 15 hours

##### MAJOR

CMA 209	Public Relations
CMA 210	Introduction to Mass Communications
CMA 240	Newswriting and Reporting
CMA 305	Feature Writing
CMA 306	Newsediting and Typography
CMA 309	Editorial Writing
CMA 315	Voice and Diction
CMA 316	Television Production
CMA 350	Organizational Communication
CMA 407	Public Relations Media
CMA 409	Advanced Public Relations
CMA 455	Directed Studies Seminar

= 36 hours



## INTERNSHIP

Each public relations major will carry one semester of Internship in public relations - CMA 411 - for a minimum credit of three hours. CMA 411 may be carried for up to six hours credit.

= 3-6 hours

## BASIC STUDIES

51 semester hours as required by the University under the Basic Studies requirement.

= 51 hours

## ELECTIVES

26 semester hours of elective credit to be selected by the student in consultation with his advisor.

\*\*CMA 411, Internship in public relations fulfills as part of this requirement.

= 26 hours

TOTAL HOURS REQUIRED = 128

The current public relations curriculum was reviewed and the following suggestions are made to improve the current curriculum to meet with the knowledge and experience required - as stated by the the interviewees, research, and Pembroke State University public relations students and professors - to enter the public relations field:

### SUGGESTED COURSES TO BE INCLUDED UNDER "MAJOR" REQUIREMENTS

- Print Advertising: media consideration, creativity, visual perception
- Introduction to Word Processing and Basic Computer Skills
- Stronger and more Journalism classes: grammar and basic writing courses
- Foreign Languages: Japanese, Chinese, Russian
- More Business courses: statistics, polling and market research

- Political Science: political campaign techniques and lobbying
- Basic Advertising courses
- Direct Mail and Telemarketing courses
- Desktop Publishing and Design courses: brochure and newsletter design, layout and production
- Photography courses: darkroom techniques and practical applications

EXISTING COURSES THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN "MAJOR" REQUIREMENTS

- CMA 313 Broadcast Copywriting
- CMA 314 Broadcast Journalism
- CMA 358 Discussion and Debate
- CMA 390 Community Journalism
- CMA 416 Broadcast Advertising and Sales
- CMA 419 Advanced Television Production
- CMA 455-15 Computer Animation and Graphics
- BUS 303 Business Communications
- BUS 308 Organizational Theory and Behavior
- BUS 312 Principles of Marketing
- BUS 313-314 Statistics I and II
- BUS 412 Marketing Policy and Decisions
- MAT 210 Introduction to Statistics

IMPROVEMENTS ON EXISTING COURSES

- CMA 214 Public Relations Photography - more hands-on field work: actual photo shooting and print developing
- CMA 306 Newsediting and Typography - need facilities in which to experience hands-on layout procedures, such as cropping photos, setting copy, laying out advertisements
- CMA 314 Broadcast Journalism - more newscasts, preferably

- at least 3-4, should be produced instead of just one
- CMA 407 Public Relations Media - need more experience in writing speeches, scripts, and radio and television copy
  - CMA 411 Internship - this course could also include mandatory work for student publications, such as The Pine Needle and Indianhead
  - CMA 455-15 Computer Animation and Graphics - change from night class to regular schedule and have access to more computers for lab work

#### SUGGESTED SUPPLIES

- A computer lab for public relations, broadcasting and journalism students.
- More Commodore Amiga 2500 computer graphics machines. Only one exists for both public relations and broadcast majors.
- Some desktop publishing programs such as Xerox Venture Publisher, Pagemaker and Macintosh Publishing.
- Basic word processing programs such as Word Perfect and Wordstar 4.
- A darkroom facility separate from the yearbook's facility.
- A layout area or room with large tables and layout supplies: layout paper, rulers, grease pencils, and photo cropping materials.

If sufficient funds and teaching instructors were available to follow some of the suggestions on this list, the public relations program at Pembroke State University would be one of the best in the country.

The 1990s will provide public relations challenges that are sure to be both exciting and intimidating. How well public relations practitioners fulfill their promises as advocates of causes before the bar of public opinion depends in large part upon the courage, energy, wisdom, and honor of the men and women

who work in this exciting field. The response by our nation's industry and the students hoping to enter it must be as great as the future challenges they face. For those professionals and students with an appetite for information and new technology, and for those who are willing to make the personal investment of time and energy needed to equip themselves to face the issues of a global business environment, there will be no lack of personal reward. Those who prepare themselves are those who will prosper.

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