

**Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Department and Program Report**

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2011/2012 College: Arts and Humanities  
Department Communication Program: Public Relations

**1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?**

- a. Technical skills: to gather data, information processing, practice writing
- b. Consultant skills: to combine strategies, tactics, and planning in order to achieve goals
- c. Specialization: to know in-depth at least one of the public relations specialties
- d. Leadership skills: to know how to lead a project, be critical with others' work, and understand the ultimate objectives of organizations.
- e. Persuader skills: to learn how to influence and/or persuade audiences with solid and well-chosen arguments.

**2. How were they assessed?**

In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

Each competency was assessed through appropriate course work. All Public Relations students were evaluated on each of the competencies:

Technical skills were evaluated in COM 208 and COM 370.

Consultant skills were evaluated in COM 470 and COM 492.

Students specialized in COM 472, COM 371, and COM 487.

Leadership skills were evaluated in COM 270, COM 470, COM 475, and COM 492.

Persuader skills were evaluated in COM 345 and COM 350.

Furthermore, we used a collection of data from our COM 489 Portfolio Assessment Class that includes information from all the courses described above. In this class, we ask our students to provide class samples generated in all of these courses.

**3. What was learned?**

In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

In category 'a,' 10 percent of our PR students exceeded expectations, while 75 percent met expectations. There were 15 percent of students below expectations.

In category 'b,' our students achieved identical results as in category 'a.'

In category 'c,' 10 percent of PR students exceeded the current standards while 70 percent met the standards. There were 15 percent who did not show enough evidence of specialization in PR.

In competency 'd,' all our students demonstrated they have been working with satisfactory results in projects with other class peers.

Regarding competency 'e,' 15 percent of the students exceeded while 65 percent of our students met expectations. There was a 15 percent of them who got lower grades and 5 percent did not include any evidence in their portfolios.

Moreover, our internship reports indicate that overall there is a high level of satisfaction among the employees with regards to the quality of our public relations students. Most of them get jobs in a field-related position in less than 6 months.

However, some employees have shown concern about the quality of the writing of some students and their lack of initiative. Professional feedback indicates we need to be more rigorous about writing standards and emphasize proactivity in our classes as one of the key elements of leadership.

#### **4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?**

In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

We are initiating this year a two-cycle communication consulting agency. In the first level section (COM 481), students learn to manage accounts as account executives through the implementation of tactics. In the second level section (COM 483), the students learn how to handle and supervise teams. COM 483 contains management aspects that will help students to develop their capacity to take initiatives.

We are also evaluating the possibility of requiring all our students to take ENGLISH 101 prior to applying to the major.

#### **5. What did the department or program do in response to last year's assessment information?**

In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

Faculty in the three majors in our department address the results of assessment obtained primarily through the feedback gathered in COM 489 through a combination of in-class peer-review evaluations, course revision, assignment revision, and improved communication among the faculty.

#### **6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:**