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PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULA: A STUDY OF EMPLOYER
PREFERENCES AND HIRING PRACTICES

By

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ABSTRACT

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULA: A STUDY OF EMPLOYER PREFERENCES AND HIRING PRACTICES

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The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of graduates of undergraduate public relations curricula and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. The qualification factors included knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activity participation, work experience, and academic situation/status.

Eight research questions were answered based on the responses provided by employment decision makers at 214 Michigan organizations, including corporations, public relations firms, health care institutions, education institutions, and nonprofit organizations. On a direct mail survey, respondents (84% of the sample) rated the importance of 140 items on five-point Likert-type scales.

Analysis procedures for examining differences between types of organizations included MANOVAs, repeated measures ANOVAs, and the Tukey-HSD procedure. Repeated measures ANOVAs and paired t-tests were used to analyze the importance of hiring factors. All analyses were conducted at the .05 significance level.

Elizabeth Tidwell

Analyses revealed statistically significant differences in the value organizations attributed to 15 knowledge items, the skill of negotiating, three academic situation/status items, and five hiring factors that might affect further consideration of an applicant. There were no significant differences in the overall importance attributed to the five job applicant qualification factors, and only skills/attributes was rated important to very important. In the knowledge category, the highest ratings were given to writing subjects, ethics courses, principles of public relations and mass communication, and the people-oriented business courses of advertising, marketing, and consumer behavior.

Four general hiring factors--job/applicant match, work experience, applicant's future in the organization, and employer recommendations--were rated important to very important, and the ratings were significantly different from other factors in that category. Under factors that might cause further consideration of an applicant, three factors--computer literacy, desktop publishing skills, and additional internships--rated high and statistically different from others.

Two of the 140 items specifically addressed the value of accreditation/certification of a public relations major/emphasis in respect to its effect on employability of a graduate. Neither item ranked important to very important.

Dissertation chair: Dr. Louis Stamatakos

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To my public relations colleagues and fellow educators, who continue to spark my interest in the role that education plays in developing the public relations profession.

And to my students, who are the daily inspiration for my efforts.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Public relations practitioners and educators have made decisions about what constitutes the best public relations curriculum since Edward L. Bernays taught the first public relations course at New York University in 1923 and Boston University established the first degree program in 1947 (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985). In 1982, a survey of postsecondary institutions found that, of the 256 United States universities and colleges that offered public relations courses, 73 had complete sequences or degree programs ("End-of-the-Decade," 1982). In informal debates about the appropriate emphasis for public relations curricula, three areas, and approximate percentages of programs in each, often are mentioned: journalism and mass communication (77% to 82%), speech communications (10% to 15%), and business and others (8%). The only formal survey of public relations curriculum locations provided unreliable data in these areas because of nonresponse from institutions, inspecific designation of curriculum emphasis, and a survey population that did not include institutions outside of the liberal arts tradition (Kendall, Terhume, & Hesse, 1990).

Statement of the Problem

Formal interest in public relations curricula began in 1956 with the formation of the Council on Public Relations Education at a meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (AEJ) (Cutlip et al., 1985, p. 50). By 1991, 330 public relations educators were members of the Public Relations Division of AEJ's successor, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). A public relations curriculum with AEJMC affiliation may be part of an accredited department, school, or college of journalism or mass communications, but it may not be recognized separately by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), a member agency of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA).

Public relations curricula not eligible for accreditation under ACEJMC had no means of formal recognition until 1989, when the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) began its Certified in Education for Public Relations (CEPR) program. The program

does not presume any official, governmental authority for review of public relations programs. Rather, it seeks to be responsible and responsive to those schools with which it has an established connection and which wish an objective review of their public relations programs by the foremost professional organization of public relations practitioners and educators in the U.S. (Public Relations Society of America, 1990, p. 2)

At this time, the CEPR review is open to all institutions that sponsor chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America, regardless of where the public relations curriculum is located within the academic structure.

Membership rosters for four other professional associations list more than 864 public relations educators, including 136 in the Public Relations Division of the International Communication Association (ICA), 325 in the Public Relations Council of the Speech Communication Association (SCA), 321 in the Educators Section of PRSA, and 84 in the Educators Academy of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). The membership numbers in the five associations (including AEJMC) do not reflect the true number of public relations educators; some educators are members of more than one association, and some are members of none.

At meetings of AEJMC, SCA, ICA, PRSA, and IABC, public relations educators present papers, hold workshops and seminars, and exchange ideas about curricula, course content, teaching techniques, student organizations, and general research in the area of public relations. In recent years, public relations practitioners who are not educators have become increasingly involved in these meetings and related committees and activities.

Public relations curricula also have been discussed in a number of formal studies. These include reports by commissions on undergraduate public relations education in 1975, 1981, and 1987 (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987) and a paper of the International Public Relations Association (1982). A major recent influence on public relations curricula was the passage of new course and internship requirements for educational institutions that sponsor chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America (Public Relations Society of America, 1988b).

Whereas the formal public relations curriculum studies have espoused the traditional journalism-liberal arts curricular structure, public relations literature is replete with articles by practitioners and educators advocating changes in curricula. Educators have criticized major studies for biased sampling, analyses, and implementation suggestions (Brody, 1984; Wakefield & Cottone, 1987); have claimed that curricula fail to cover important areas of study, especially management (Grunig, 1989; Turk, 1989) and nonprint communications (Curtis, Winsor, & Stephens, 1988; Gibson, 1985); and have disparaged the pervasive influence of journalism (Culbertson, 1986; Kalupa & Allen, 1982; Toran, 1978). Practitioners, also, are apprehensive about too much emphasis on journalism (MacMillan, 1969; Proctor, 1983; "Revamped PR Education Programs," 1989). But they are more concerned about students who are unable to understand and interpret business to key audiences or to counsel management (Baxter, 1980; "The Business Connection," 1986; Williams, 1986). Baskin and Aronoff (1983) said that universities may be

graduating, in unprecedented numbers, public relations students who will be unqualified for jobs that await them. Unqualified not because they lack the necessary communications, but because they don't understand how to apply their skills in organizational settings. (p. 1)

New urgency has been added to the public relations curriculum debate by an extensive exploration of the public relations field and specific attempts to make public relations practice more professional during the past six years. Beginning with a meeting in

Itasca, Illinois, in September 1986, and continuing in annual assemblies and several special sessions through November 1990, the leadership of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) not only developed its own professional progression program but led related efforts of the North American Public Relations Council, the membership of which includes 12 public-relations-oriented associations (Turk, 1987). Among the attributes of professionalism that have been considered are a body of knowledge and the nature of public relations training.

In this environment of intensified research and debate, public relations educators are initiating curriculum reforms at their educational institutions and attempting to position their types of curricula as the best for the emerging public relations profession. Augmenting the curriculum-type competition are several factors. First, the public relations associations repeatedly have failed to define expectations regarding educational background. Even formal requirements for accreditation, certification, and sponsorship of student public relations chapters remain general concerning course and whole-curriculum subject content. Second, a review of literature revealed inconsistencies among studies regarding practitioner expectations. And the methods, analyses, and conclusions of major studies have been criticized. Third, the issue of employability of public relations graduates has intensified, not only for graduates, their families, and educational institutions, but for organizations that need qualified entry-level practitioners.

Problem. After decades of research and debate, there is no consensus about the kinds of knowledge, skills, and experience employers expect of public relations graduates and little information about what criteria organizations use to hire entry-level public relations practitioners. In this study, the factors that affect the likelihood of public relations graduates being employed in public relations positions within one year of graduation were examined. Two categories of factors were included: job applicant qualifications and organizational employment decision making. The primary assumption underlying the research was that the factors, when carefully defined, could be applied to planning a curriculum and related cocurricular activities that will increase a graduate's success in finding employment. A secondary assumption was that a curriculum planned on the basis of the factors would more accurately correspond with expectations of the emerging public relations profession.

Purpose of the Study

The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of graduates of undergraduate public relations curricula and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. (2) A secondary purpose was to determine whether certification of a public relations curriculum by the Public Relations Society of America would affect the employability of an institution's public relations graduates. The findings of this

investigation have direct utility to the Public Relations faculty at Ferris State University (in Big Rapids, Michigan) in revising the curriculum and contents of courses in the undergraduate public relations program, enhancing student advising regarding studies and career preparation, reorganizing curriculum-related cocurricular activities, and deciding whether to apply for certification of the public relations major.

Research Questions

To respond to the purpose of this study, eight questions were developed. The first six questions evaluated five categories of qualifications that may be possessed by recent public relations graduates. The seventh research question appraised the relative importance of nine organizational employment decision factors. The eighth research question assessed the likely effect of additional graduate qualifications and organizational standards on employability. Certification was one of the organizational employment decision factors included in Research Questions 5 and 8. In all the questions, the recent public relations graduate was referred to as the applicant. Because graduates seek employment in a variety of organizations, which differ in the kinds of public relations techniques utilized, responses were examined according to organization type.

The research questions were:

Question 1: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's knowledge differ according to type of employing organization?

Question 2: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's skills and attributes differ according to type of employing organization?

Question 3: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities differ according to type of employing organization?

Question 4: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's work experience differ according to type of employing organization?

Question 5: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's academic situation and status differ according to type of employing organization?

Question 6: Across different types of organizations, are certain job applicant qualification factors rated more important than others?

Question 7: What organizational employment decision factors are most important in hiring recent public relations graduates?

Question 8: What additional applicant qualifications and organizational standards, if present, are most likely to affect further consideration of the applicant for employment?

Context of the Study

The context for the study was the information needs of the public relations faculty at a four-year undergraduate institution; professors sought to increase graduates' success in finding employment by revising the curriculum and related cocurricular

activities. Although recent increased emphasis on educational standards in the deliberations of public relations professional associations had motivated a number of educational institutions to initiate curriculum reforms, this study--from the perspective of Ferris State University (Big Rapids, Michigan)--provided a new perspective in two ways.

First, location of the Ferris public relations major in the College of Business liberated curriculum considerations from the strictures of the traditional liberal arts viewpoint. Although the traditional requirements could not be ignored, public relations practitioners had been requesting more emphasis in business. The Ferris curriculum is unique in public relations education because it has a five-point emphasis in public relations, advertising, journalism, marketing, and management, as well as a full sequence of business courses. Most other public relations curricula combine a public relations emphasis with another communications area (e.g., print or broadcast journalism, speech communications, or advertising), and students may elect to take a business minor.

Second, as a program within a polytechnical institution, the Ferris public relations curriculum has a strong vocational component and thus a continuing need to assure that the program is congruent with the demands of the job market. Previous public relations curriculum studies examined practitioners' preferences primarily in knowledge areas, emphasizing academic-structure considerations. This investigation also explored nonclassroom educational activities and organization employment decision-making factors in order to

assist faculty members in revising curriculum-related cocurricular activities and student advising procedures.

This researcher sought to determine--in a survey of public relations employers in Michigan--what job applicant qualification factors affect the employability of public relations graduates and what employment decision factors are used by organizations when they hire recent graduates. Study participants were a randomly selected sample of organizations that employ at least one public relations practitioner who maintains a membership in a Michigan chapter of any of the 12 member associations of the North American Public Relations Council. The sample contained all organization types, including corporations, public relations agencies, health care facilities, government agencies, educational systems, and nonprofit agencies.

Need for the Study

Academic programs that have a strong vocational component, such as Ferris's public relations curriculum, have a continuing need to assure that the program is congruent with the demands of the job market. And as the emphasis on professionalism of the public relations practice increases, academic programs must seek to meet educational standards advocated by practitioners in the public relations associations.

Formal education requirements of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) and the Public Relations Society of America's Certified for Education in Public Relations program are not specific, allowing curriculum and

assist faculty members in revising curriculum-related cocurricular activities and student advising procedures.

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Formal education requirements of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) and the Public Relations Society of America's Certified for Education in Public Relations program are not specific, allowing curriculum and

course content flexibility within broad academic discipline areas. Therefore, educators who are planning or revising public relations curricula might also rely on information from research studies on employer preferences.

However, previous studies have not always provided consistent guidelines concerning curriculum choices. They have revealed a variety of preferences for public relations curriculum content and location of curricula in academic areas. Although the results of the commission's own research base and several other studies indicated a need for more emphasis on business, the curriculum structure suggested by The Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education retains a strong journalism-liberal arts bent (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987; Grunig, 1989; Turk, 1989). A study by Toran (1978) confirmed a preference for journalism as the academic department or school for public relations; however, public relations practitioners participating in other studies have expressed concerns about too much emphasis on journalism (Kalupa & Allen, 1982; Wakefield & Cottone, 1986). Researchers studying preferred communication skills from speech communications and business organization perspectives discovered greater practitioner support for oral communication, written business communication (e.g., memos, letters, and reports), and interpersonal skills (Curtis et al., 1988; DiSalvo, 1970; DiSalvo, Larsen, & Seiber, 1976).

To provide advice that will help public relations students obtain the most benefit from their academic programs and related activities, faculty need information on employing organizations' expectations and on the importance of a variety of curriculum factors. However, in a review of literature, no studies were found that analyzed organizational employment decision factors, and only three considered factors such as specific degree held, grade point average, and school attended (Curtis et al., 1988; Fraser, 1966; Norback, 1989).

This researcher attempted to provide information to assist public relations curriculum planning and to define more clearly the educational standards expected by public relations practitioners. An attempt also was made to provide insight into the value of certification (and accreditation) in establishing or maintaining the reputation of public relations curricula. Also, the researcher explored new concepts for studies in the practical realm of increasing graduate job placement (particularly because this is the first study examining the employability of public relations graduates from the perspective of business-based curricula).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the dissertation and are defined to ensure clarity and continuity for the reader.

Accreditation: "A process by which an institution of post-secondary education evaluates its educational activities, in whole or in part, and seeks an independent judgment to confirm that it

substantially achieves its objectives and is generally equal in quality to comparable institutions or specialized units" (Young, Chambers, Kells, & Associates, 1983, p. 21). For public relations curricula in departments, schools, and colleges of journalism or mass communications, the accrediting agency is the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC, 1990).

Applicant's academic situation/status: Educational choice and achievement factors, including attendance at a specific institution, selection of a preferred curriculum, and the quality of academic performance in the curriculum (Curtis et al., 1988).

Applicant's attributes and skills: Personal qualities and abilities that are important for successful job performance (Curtis et al., 1988).

Applicant's knowledge areas: Academic categories and specific courses that may be included in public relations curricula.

Applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities: Membership and leadership in cocurricular activities as defined below. Fraternity/sorority participation also is included.

Applicant's work experience: Use of knowledge and skills in full-time or part-time employment situations, volunteer activities, and internships.

Certification: A Public Relations Society of America program that reviews public relations curricula in postsecondary educational institutions. The certification process closely parallels the ACEJMC accreditation process.

Cocurricular activities: "All the educational offerings of the institution that do not receive credit in the curriculum or are not required for graduation" (Miller & Jones, 1988, p. 657). For this study, activities were limited to those related to public relations (career interest groups, student-run agencies, and student media) and fraternities and sororities.

Desktop publishing: The use of computer hardware and software (e.g., PageMaker) to produce camera-ready copy for printed documents such as brochures, reports, and advertisements, thus expediting the functions of typesetting, publication design, and often art and photography.

Employability: Four factors are the requirements of the function to be filled, the skills and personality of the candidate, the skills and personality of the people to whom the employee will report, and the nature of the organization (Cantor, 1989, pp. 283-284). For this study, employability was more concisely defined as the extent to which one qualifies to be hired to work.

Job applicant qualification factors: An applicant's knowledge, skills and attributes, participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities, work experience, and academic situation/status.

Organization: A social unit or group of people deliberately constructed and reconstructed to strive for specific goals (Etzioni, 1964). For this study, an organization was defined more specifically as a unified, consolidated group, business structure, or enterprise capable of offering employment to a public relations practitioner. Organizations include, but are not limited to,

corporations, public relations agencies, health care facilities, government agencies, educational systems, and nonprofit agencies.

Organizational employment decision factors: General hiring criteria used by an organization to determine applicant fit for a work position, including applicant qualification guidelines, the natures of the positions themselves, and assessments of the job market (Meyer & Donaho, 1979; Norback, 1989; Schein, 1980).

Public relations: "The management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance" (Cutlip et al., 1985, p. 3).

Public relations curriculum(a): An academic plan that includes (a) a selection of subject matter within which educational activities are designed to help students acquire specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes; (b) a selection of materials, sources, tools, and settings to be used in the learning; (c) a consideration of the previous backgrounds and skills of the learners; and (d) a method for evaluating the learning (Taylor & Morris, 1978). For this study, the curriculum was a series of courses that must be satisfactorily completed, as well as a selection of related activities and experiences in which a student may participate, while pursuing a bachelor's degree with a major or emphasis in public relations, with expectations of qualifying for employment in that occupational area.

Public relations practitioner: One who completes work assignments to achieve the purposes of public relations as defined above.

These assignments may employ technical skills such as writing, editing, speechmaking or speechwriting, managing events, researching public opinions, and producing publications, videos, and institutional advertising (more common at the entry level) and counseling skills such as advising management on policy, participating in policy decisions, planning public relations programs, and selling programs to top management (Wilcox, Ault, & Agee, 1990, pp. 7-8).

Recent graduate: One who has completed baccalaureate degree requirements within the previous 12 months; also referred to as "applicant."

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

Major limitations of the study included reliance on self-reported data from survey participants, the response rate, and the extent to which the survey instrument adequately addressed the areas of concern in public relations curricula.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991), those who participate in research projects are eager to provide the information the researcher requests. However, there are two difficulties to consider: (1) Respondents will answer any question, even if it is not completely understood. (2) Most people are hesitant to exhibit behavior that differs from the norm and may seek to give a "correct" answer. In a direct mail survey, where contact with respondents is limited, it is difficult to determine the extent of such self-reported data problems. A pilot study, evaluated by Cronbach's

coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1947), helped determine the consistency of this study's instrument; the results are discussed in Chapter III, page 65. A major problem with missing responses to certain categories of items is discussed in detail under Manipulation of Responses, pages 69-72.

Yu and Cooper (1983) found that mail surveys had an average completion rate of 47%. Reported responses to communications research studies on curricula have ranged from 82.5% (Baxter, 1986) to 23% (Turk, 1989). In this study, the maximum sample size recommended by Kregcie and Morgan (1970, p. 608) was expanded 70% to allow for subject mortality, to assure better response across the organization types, and to give sufficient data for performing multivariate analysis. Two hundred fourteen usable surveys were returned, of a possible 256 (83.59%). By type of organization, the responses were corporate, 46 (92%); health, 59 (81.94%); education, 56 (83.58%); nonprofit, 34 (80.95%); and counseling, 16 (64%). If solo practitioner respondents (3) are added to the counseling total, total response in that category rises to 76%.

In an attempt to adequately address public relations curriculum concerns, a review of literature in communications and personnel management was conducted, through which 25 research studies and 19 opinion pieces were found that discussed various curriculum, experience, and organizational decision-making factors. Many of the factors were included as items on the survey for this study. However, not all previous factors could be included. And because of the nature of the emerging public relations profession, other

factors may now be pertinent. However, only three additional items were written in by respondents: "production" and "inventory control" under business subjects and "listening" as a personality item.

Delimitations

Participants in the study were representatives of a sample of organizations that employ at least one public relations practitioner who maintains membership in a Michigan chapter of any of the 12 member associations of the North American Public Relations Council. Furthermore, the investigator collected data to address practical curriculum concerns (job applicant qualification factors and organizational employment decision factors) from the potential employer population of one public, polytechnical university in Michigan.

Methodology

The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of public relations graduates and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. A secondary purpose was to determine whether certification of a public relations curriculum by the Public Relations Society of America would affect employability of an institution's public relations graduates.

The design of the study used a direct mail survey to potential employers in order to obtain information that could guide public relations faculty members as they revise curriculum and course

content, adjust student advising practices, restructure public-relations-related cocurricular activities, and decide whether to apply for PRSA certification. The population for the study was organizations in Michigan that employ at least one public relations practitioner who maintains membership in a Michigan chapter of any of the 12 member associations of the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC).

The survey instrument explored respondents' perceptions of the importance of five categories of job applicant qualification factors (knowledge, skills/attributes, public-relations-oriented cocurricular activities, work experience, and academic situation/status) and actual hiring practices. Limited demographic information also was collected. Respondents indicated the importance of various items on a five-point Likert-type scale.

Correlation matrices, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), repeated measures ANOVAs, and the Tukey-HSD procedure were used to test for and locate significant differences in job applicant expectations and in hiring practices across types of employing organizations. The one-way Tukey-HSD procedure was used rather than multiple *t* tests in order to establish more control over Type I errors. In the hiring practices section, after the factors were ranked by means, paired *t*-tests were performed to determine whether there were significant differences in the relative importance of factors indicated by the rankings.

Organization of the Study

There are five chapters in the dissertation. Chapter I included an introduction to the study, a statement of the problem, the context of the study, the purposes of the study, the need for the study, the research questions, a definition of terms, an identification of the limitations and delimitations, and an introduction to the methodology of the study.

Chapter II includes a review of the literature that illustrates the nature and general demographics of public relations practices, the current status of public relations education, educator and practitioner attitudes toward needed changes in public relations education, general employment guidelines and factors used specifically in public relations hiring, and purposes and expectations of accreditation in general and public relations accreditation/certification specifically.

Chapter III includes a presentation of the design and methodology of the study. The population surveyed, the instruments employed, and the methods of analysis are stated and explained.

In Chapter IV, the findings of the study are presented. Correlation matrices, multivariate analysis of variance, repeated measures ANOVAs, the Tukey-HSD procedure, and paired t-tests were used to test for significance at the .05 level.

The summary of the study, major findings, conclusions and discussion, implications for the field, recommendations for further research, and reflections on the study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of public relations graduates and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. A secondary purpose was to determine whether certification of a public relations curriculum by the Public Relations Society of America would affect the employability of an institution's public relations graduates.

This literature review was conducted to identify the nature and demographics of public relations practice, current public relations education standards, educator and practitioner preferences for changes in public relations education, general employment decision guidelines, public relations hiring factors, and the purposes of accreditation and certification. The review also included an examination of research methodology used in previous communications studies and additional references on mail survey research. The literature search included leading professional and research journals in the fields of public relations and journalism, the University Microfilms International (UMI) Dissertation Abstracts

data base, ERIC, and the computerized library system at Michigan State University.

The Nature and Demographics of Public Relations

Information on the nature of public relations practice and current demographics in the field was important in determining categories of organizations and supplying examples of public relations roles and functions. Although there are numerous definitions of public relations, including two official statements from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), one of the most widely used definitions originated in Public Relations News:

Public relations is the management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. (Cutlip et al., 1985, p. 3)

Public relations roles include public relations management/administration, institutional/corporate advertising, government relations, environmental teaching, financial public relations, employee relations, media relations, community relations, consumer affairs, editing publications, public relations teaching, public relations counseling, special events, and publicity (PRSA, 1988a).

Participants in PRSA's sixth annual salary survey numbered 2,606; total membership of the association was 14,100. Of the respondents, 563 worked in public relations counseling, 248 in health care, 244 in industry/manufacturing, 132 in finance/insurance, 131 in government, 125 in utilities, 123 in advertising

agencies, 107 in miscellaneous services, 103 in media/communications, 92 in transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment, 91 in religion/charity, 59 in science/technology, 29 in miscellaneous nonprofits/museums, and 79 as solo practitioners. Primary activities of the responding practitioners were media relations (81%), publicity (71%), special events (71%), community relations (60%), corporate communication (57%), marketing (55%), crisis communication (47%), public affairs/government relations (45%), and employee relations (41%). Only a few respondents listed publications/brochures (3%), public relations education (2%), and fund-raising/philanthropy (1%) as activities (Jacobson & Tortorello, 1991).

Results of a survey of public affairs functions in Fortune 400 organizations differed from the PRSA findings. Baskin (1989) reported that 84% of the organizations had community relations and government relations functions. Other functions included corporate contributions (71.4%), media relations (70.2%), stockholder relations (48.2%), advertising (40.1%), consumer affairs (39.3%), graphics (33.7%), and institutional investor relations (33.4%).

The 1990 survey of the profession by pr reporter found men employed predominantly in finance, industrials, utilities, transportation, and federal government. Women respondents worked mainly in health, travel/tourism, social agencies, telecommunications, and local government ("26th Annual Survey," 1990).

A survey conducted by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) (1989) found most practitioners in corporations

(46.4%), associations/nonprofits (11.8%), and finance (7.6%). Almost two-thirds of the respondents worked in employee communication.

Respondents to a survey of PRSA members in the mid-Atlantic region reported eclectic professional and academic backgrounds. The most common previous career fields were journalism (27.1%), public administration (20.4%), and teaching (14.9%). Most of the survey participants had academic training in journalism and in liberal arts (23% each), and the third largest category was public relations (9.1%) (Selnow & Wilson, 1985).

Respondents to the IABC survey had different work experience and academic backgrounds. Before their first public relations positions, IABC members were students (27.4%), worked for newspapers (18.6%), taught (8%), and were employed in a variety of other positions, including secretarial/clerical, marketing, advertising, magazines, radio/TV, personnel, and the military (46%). Academic backgrounds included journalism (35.1%), English/speech (19.7%), and communication/public relations (16.1%).

The literature review in the Nature and Demographics of Public Relations area provided a definition of the components of public relations practice, numbers of practitioners in 14 kinds of organizations (public relations counseling, health care, industry/manufacturing, and so on), a list of 12 public relations roles (management/administration, government relations, consumer affairs, and so on), and information on the diversified academic majors

(e.g., journalism, liberal arts, public relations) and backgrounds of public relations practitioners (e.g., journalism, public administration, teaching).

Current Public Relations Education Standards

The survey that was developed specifically for this study included a major section on the importance of various kinds of knowledge and several questions concerning preferred academic majors and minors. The literature review provided lists of possible subject areas, information on practitioner preferences for courses and public-relations-oriented cocurricular activities, and several recommended curriculum structures.

One of the earliest curriculum studies reported that public relations practitioners considered courses in schools of journalism extremely useful (55%) or of some use (19.7%). Writing and reporting classes were the most useful (82.7%); other suggestions included magazines, advertising, public relations, communications, photography, television/radio/audio-visuals, typography, and public opinion (Ripton, 1963).

Whereas a 1975 report of the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education included many of these areas as minimums, the Commission's 1981 report listed them as additions to the minimums of introduction to mass communications, principles of public relations, public relations media, public relations programs, introduction to research methodology, public relations case studies, and public relations research (Brody, 1984).

The Commission's 1987 recommendations included the 1963 elements under technical communication studies along with suggested courses in historical/institutional and communication process/structure categories. Its recommendations for public relations studies adopted many of the 1981 features, adding ethics, message dissemination, media networks, and the use of research for planning and evaluation and for strategy and implementation. Its suggestions included a traditional series of courses in the liberal arts and sciences but mentioned other areas for advanced studies, including marketing, employee relations, finance, international affairs, consumer behavior, community relations, and public affairs (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987).

A 1983 survey of public relations curricula revealed increased interest in courses in communication theory. And there was greater support for development of skills and techniques through projects, active participation in the Public Relations Student Society of America and student-run public relations agencies, professional-amateur mentoring experiences, and internships. There was also a perceived deficiency in management education (Walker, 1984).

One of the official PRSA definitions of public relations included the knowledge areas of communication arts, psychology, sociology, social psychology, political science, economics, management, and ethics. Among the technical areas were opinion research, public issue analysis, media relations, direct mail, institutional advertising, publications, film/video productions, special events, speeches, and presentations (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 63).

Recommendations by the International Public Relations Association (1982) generally paralleled the Commission's 1987 study in the core and second levels of its education model but placed an emphasis on management in the third level, where recommendations included economics, business administration, organization and behavior, statistics, personnel management, and management science in addition to political science, natural sciences, social services, humanities, public administration, and government organization.

A report of the Michigan Occupational Information Systems stated that persons seeking public relations specialist positions should select business or communication arts as the area of concentration (Public Relations Specialist, 1990). Recommended courses were journalism, history, communications, economics, political science, advertising copy and layout, psychology, marketing, consumer behavior, sociology, advertising, advertising media and campaigns, marketing research and analysis, advertising theory, and ethics.

The literature review in the Current Public Relations Education Standards area provided suggested curriculum designs; lists of traditional courses in communication arts and social sciences and in technical areas such as opinion research, publications, and special events; and recommendations for more courses in marketing and management. One survey also revealed an increased emphasis on participation in student professional organizations, student-run

agencies, professional-amateur mentoring experiences, and internships.

Educator and Practitioner Preferences for Changes
in Public Relations Education

Although most official reports found in the literature review contained many similar recommendations, particularly in the communications and liberal arts areas, other public relations literature was replete with suggestions for changes. Three major areas of concern were a lack of courses in business and management, too much emphasis on journalism, and the exclusion of training in speech communications and interpersonal relations.

Ninety-five percent of the respondents to a survey at the 33rd national PRSA conference in 1980 said changes and improvements were needed in public relations education in the 1980s to meet the needs of the profession (Wakefield & Cottone, 1986). Greater emphases on business and research courses were most frequently cited. Individual write-in comments provided several suggestions: separate public relations from mass communication; move public relations to the college of business; put the sequence in the business school or a school of its own; put less emphasis on journalism, newspaper journalism, and journalism skills and more on management skills; and make public relations a first-line profession, not an afterthought of journalism.

Chester Burger (1976), pioneer leader in PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), cited a need for a broader knowledge of the world and understanding of

social, economic, technological, political, and geographic forces through courses in history, economics, foreign languages, and arts, among others. He also noted that appreciation for and use of the written word will remain fundamental.

Studies showed a definite backlash against journalism. Even educators who supported the journalism tradition (primarily for the writing skills relationship) felt stifled in journalism schools where journalism professors are suspicious of "propaganda" by public relations practitioners (Toran, 1978). Culbertson (1986) recommended the separation of public relations from other journalism sequences because journalism restricted advocacy and was not oriented toward audience segmentation. And, whereas advertising emphasized audience segmentation, its persuasive efforts were largely tied to profits through sales and promotions. Half of the respondents to MacMillan's (1969) survey preferred a public relations degree to either journalism or liberal arts. And 46% of the chief executive officers of counseling firms who trained as journalists did not recommend that background for those entering the field today (Proctor, 1983).

In a survey by Kalupa and Allen (1982), 18.1% strongly agreed and 38.5% agreed that most schools are too journalistic to meet the future needs of public relations education; 22% had no opinion. The respondents ranked management skills training ahead of electronic media, research techniques, internal communications, and new technology. Only writing and English had higher priorities. And

there was a strong preference for more business courses and emphasis on social science research.

In a survey of 173 educational institutions, 56% of the respondents confirmed agreement with the standards of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), but the standards statement on the survey also elicited more disagreement than any other statement (15%) (McCarthy, 1983). Sixty-one percent said public relations should be part of journalism, but others had interests in communication (15%), speech communication (4%), interdepartmental (2%), and business and mass media arts (1 respondent each).

Gibson (1985), an advocate of the speech communications approach to public relations education, said that most programs are in newspaper communication, not journalism, and advocated training in other public relations areas: speechmaking, speechwriting, television, film, and other nonprint media, as well as in persuasion, small-group communications, and interpersonal relations. He also said that journalism programs have too many tenured journalism professors without the qualifications or desire to teach public relations.

Studying the need for management skills in public relations, Turk (1989) found large discrepancies between perceived need for skills and self-rated abilities in the areas of marketing, strategic planning, and general leadership (planning/organizing, problem solving/decision making, goal setting/prioritizing, and time management). The respondents in higher positions of responsibility

were more likely to emphasize written communication and social responsibility; those in lower positions stressed goal setting, time management, and technological developments. The oldest practitioners valued ethics instruction, and the youngest were most interested in negotiating skills. Educators advocated more emphasis on financial and budgeting skills and on ethics.

A leading textbook author, educator, and public relations researcher suggested that undergraduate public relations students be trained for entry-level jobs as communications technicians but that they should also be introduced to the management of public relations, communication theory, and ethics (Grunig, 1989). Other suggestions of Grunig were a wide range of specialized electives in employee, media, community, financial, and educational relations and advanced courses in campaigns, public affairs, marketing communication, history and law of public relations, ethics, and gender issues and perspectives.

Greyser (1981) recommended a strong grounding in liberal arts, serious training in social science methods, and solid foundations in business administration. And Grunig (1989) proposed that public relations educators work with management, organization, marketing, personnel, and policy specialists in business schools; professors in sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, and political science; and philosophers, writers, lawyers, and historians.

Whereas Greyser and Grunig advocated the all-around effort, other writers have emphasized the need for training in business. Japer and Gitter (1982) defined the situation:

If public relations is a management function and a public relations education intends to prepare students for the practice of public relations as a management function, then the conclusion is evident: students are unprepared. How can practitioners function as positive members of the management team, providing guidance, counsel and input into policy, if they are unfamiliar with the principles, language and techniques of their management teammates? (p. 16)

Students who want to go into public relations should know about business to be able to relate; they should be familiar with how business works and with how to read an annual report or a business sheet, according to Plank, a long-time proponent of liberal arts education but one who knows the needs in business from her many years with Illinois Bell ("The Business Connection," 1986).

Twenty top corporate public relations executives at Fortune 500 companies stressed the need for business education (Baxter, 1980). Seventy percent said business subjects were nearly as important as writing and speaking. Theodore Mecke (Ford Motor Company) recommended economics and business theory for a grasp of the subtleties and complexities of corporate practice. Kerryn King (public relations counselor) said journalism was basic and that students should get the extras--in economics, marketing, sociology, psychology, and social science.

In a 1978 survey, 91% of the corporate practitioners responding expressed a need for business training: 27% preferred liberal arts with business administration, and 11% favored business administration education over journalism (Baxter, 1980). Even media representatives expressed frustration with public relations practitioners who were unable to properly explain and interpret

their companies to reporters because of poor understanding of business economic theory and practice.

PRSA respondents to another Baxter (1986) survey espoused journalism and mass communications degrees (47%) at the undergraduate level but a master's degree in business administration rather than a master of arts degree in either journalism or public relations. At the bachelor's level, 16% favored business degrees and 9% chose mass communication/business combinations. Only one respondent encouraged a speech communication emphasis. Survey participants also were asked to rate a variety of academic choices on a five-point Likert-type scale (where 5 was "very important" and 1 was "unimportant"). The most popular selections (ranked according to means) were journalism--reporting, editing, and photography (4.68); public relations--theory, technique, and case studies (4.25); internships (4.15); speech communication (4.02); marketing (3.85); and management (3.73). Others (in order of priority) were video techniques, economics, finance, computer usage, research techniques, advertising, government/political science, accounting, business law, statistics, and foreign language.

The literature review in the Educator and Practitioner Preferences for Changes in Public Relations Education area provided more information on course and curriculum selections. It also revealed meaningful differences between the recommendations made in official reports (which emphasized communications and the liberal arts, largely to the exclusion of business) and the findings of

other research studies and the preferences expressed in opinion pieces. Those nonofficial reports stressed the need for training in business, and several revealed a strong backlash against journalism.

General Employment Decision Guidelines

The literature search revealed that most organizations have certain general employment guidelines in common. These include performance factors, an applicant's personal qualities, general skills, and factors in the academic experience.

Schein (1980) said that all organizations have policies designed to get the best performance out of employees and that strategies often fall into one of two categories: finding the right person to fit the job or redesigning the job and physical environment to fit the limitations of the person. He also explained that potential employees bring one of five primary career anchors to the employment arena: technical/functional competence (challenging work around skills), managerial competence (climbing the organizational ladder), creativity, security/stability, or autonomy.

Goodale (1982) reported that there are certain performance factors common to all jobs, which may be divided into four categories: (1) the technical area of applying technical knowledge and skills; (2) the relational area of communicating; working with people; and managing, training, and developing employees; (3) the administrative area of using time, equipment, or people; controlling costs; and planning and organizing; and (4) the innovative area of dealing with unexpected circumstances and developing new ideas and

methods. Fraser (1966) stated that applicants may be viewed from five perspectives: (1) their effect on others--appearance, speech, manner, and self-confidence; (2) acquired knowledge/qualities--general education, specialized training, and experiences; (3) innate abilities--quickness on the uptake and facility for acquiring skills; (4) motivation--how hard they work and how effective they are in action; and (5) adjustment--steadiness, reliability, and sense of responsibility.

Employers appeared to agree on 16 general skills: learning to learn, reading, writing, computation, oral communication, listening, problem solving, creative thinking, self-esteem, motivation and goal setting, employability and career development, interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation, organizational effectiveness, and leadership (Carnevale, 1990). Tyree (1990) added working with diverse groups and integrating the whole meaning of life to the list. And Gaedeke and Tootelian (1990) suggested that maturity, entrepreneurship, ambition, and enthusiasm/motivation were important characteristics.

Other researchers considered the dimensions of degrees and experience. Oral and written communication skills were most important for business school graduates, followed by work experience, energy level, technical competence, and persistence/determination; least important factors were specific degree, grade point average, and accreditation of the institution or program (Benson, 1983). Another survey of business school graduates revealed more factors and their relative importance: (a) job references--having jobs and doing them well--were very important;

(b) duties with important responsibilities that are visible to the employer were important even in the first and second years of school; (c) the grade point average (GPA) in the major was important, but the overall GPA was not; and (d) participation in clubs and organizations and volunteer experience (even when leadership was demonstrated) were not important (Marshall, 1985). Goddard (1986) suggested that the best way to get good employees is to seek applicants with solid academic and extracurricular achievement, consider all technical qualities as valid, and encourage technical people to broaden their knowledge base.

In a study of Fortune 500 companies, it was found that personnel administrators now want less personal information on résumés and more evidence of achievements and accomplishments in college and on the job (Harcourt & Krizan, 1989). Another survey of personnel managers revealed that the most important factors in employment decisions were oral communication, listening, enthusiasm, written communication, and technical competence. Those employment factors of median importance were appearance, poise, work experience, and résumé. Employment factors given the least consideration were specific degree, grade point average, part-time/summer employment, accreditation of academic program, leadership and participation in campus and community activities, recommendations, and school attended (Curtis et al., 1989). The same respondents suggested that courses in written communication, interpersonal skills, management,

and public speaking were most important in preparing for entry-level management.

The literature review in the General Employment-Decision Guidelines area provided lists of general factors that organizations consider when making employment decisions. Although studies displayed a variety of emphases, there was general agreement about performance factors (e.g., oral and written communication, planning, and organizing), an applicant's personal qualities (e.g., appearance, speech), and general skills (e.g., delegating, supervising). The research study findings differed most in their assessment of the importance of job experience and extracurricular activities.

Public Relations Hiring Guidelines

In the literature review a number of studies that dealt with perceptions of public relations roles and function were uncovered. Factors used by public relations employers when evaluating job applicants were also disclosed.

In a 1985 survey, it was found that public relations roles and functions may be divided into six categories: (1) large-scale events and (2) management (which are equally important to public relations agencies and corporations); (3) communication with publics (which is more important to corporations); and (4) media/community relations, (5) logistics, and (6) client relations (which are more important to agencies (Cottone, Wakefield, Cottone, & North, 1985). Public relations work also can be divided into specific activities.

Corporations attributed more importance to the knowledge and skill areas of employee/labor relations and school relations. Agencies put more emphasis on the more technical roles of writing news releases, collateral pieces, direct mail materials, corporate publications, speeches, slide show/filmstrip scripts, promotional and training films/videos, graphic design, account sales and service, media relations, and fund-raising and development. Both agencies and corporations placed more importance on interpersonal and management skills and knowledge than on news release writing and media relations (Wakefield & Cottone, 1987).

An attempt to develop an activity-specific system for categorizing practitioners yielded 16 public relations procedures. They include writing press releases; conducting formal and informal research, before and after projects; preparing house organs and publications; making informal contacts with newsmen; holding press conferences; making informal contacts with publics; making contacts with thought leaders; staging events, tours, and open houses; preparing tapes and films; preparing institutional advertisements; counseling management on public opinion; writing speeches; and contacting government officials (Brownell & Niebauer, 1988).

In a study of PRSA and International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) members, White (1987) found numerous skill and knowledge areas in which discrepancies existed between the practitioners' self-assessed competencies and the perceived importance of those areas. Thirty-four attributes were included under the categories of communication, consulting, project management,

interpersonal skills, and management. Seventy-one key concepts and principles were grouped under writing, public relations, graphics/publications, interpersonal relations, economics, accounting/finance, political science/government, marketing and advertising, and management.

According to a Dow Chemical publication about finding the first public relations job, applicants will be evaluated in four areas: (1) writing experience--working on student newspaper, stringing for the local paper, and doing volunteer publicity work; (2) course selection--some exposure to business administration, sociology, and political science; (3) conceptualizing--ability to understand what needs to be done and in what manner without having management spell it out; and (4) teachability--versatile and flexible, willing to accept constructive criticism and adjust style accordingly, and able to learn from and build on mistakes (Long, 1985). Among the qualities evaluated are confidence, self-motivation, drive, enthusiasm, verbal skills, listening and comprehension, persuasiveness, human relations skills, credibility, technical competence, conceptual skills, organizational skills, growth potential, functional interests, geographical preferences/limitations, and overall job match.

Lesly (1982) provided a summary of the applicant qualities needed for the future. Public relations applicants must be exceptionally broad-gauged in perspective, interests, intelligence

and skills; multidimensional; practical and intuitive; and masters of all kinds of communicating, especially writing.

The literature review in the Public Relations Hiring Guidelines area revealed several studies that provided lists of public relations roles and functions (e.g., writing press releases, conducting formal and informal research). They also reported differences between the public relations needs of corporations and agencies in the areas of management, communication with publics, client relations, and others. Another finding was a discrepancy between practitioners' competencies and the perceived importance of specific knowledge and skills. Two publications provided more information on expectations for public relations job applicants.

Purposes of Accreditation and Certification

One of the researcher's purposes in this study was to decide whether a university should seek certification for its public relations curriculum. It was important to obtain information about the components, advantages, and criticisms of the accreditation process.

Accreditation, which may evaluate the whole institution or be program/curriculum specific, is

a voluntary process conducted by peers via nongovernmental agencies to accomplish at least two things--to attempt on a periodic basis to hold one another accountable to achieve stated, appropriate institutional or program goals; and to assess the extent to which the institution or program meets established standards. (Kells, 1983b, p. 9)

Purposes include fostering excellence through criteria and guidelines for educational effectiveness, encouraging program

improvement through continuous self-study and planning, assuring external organizations and agencies of the program's appropriate objectives and accomplishments, providing counsel and assistance to established and developing programs, encouraging diversity and allowing programs to achieve their objectives and goals, and endeavoring to protect institutions against encroachments on their educational effectiveness or academic freedom (Young, 1983).

An extensive self-study (internal evaluation of a program) usually precedes peer review in the accreditation process. The purposes include helping programs improve; providing the foundation for all planning; stimulating review of policies, practices, procedures, and records; enhancing openness; and providing staff development (Kells, 1983a, p. 124).

Accreditation often is linked with credentialing in the professions, providing an academic base for acquiring the preferred attitudes, competencies, knowledge, or skills to be certified. But it poses problems for departments or institutions that struggle with the purposes of education versus the training needs of the professions, the demands of professionals, and the nonacademic uses of accreditation (Larson, 1983). Larson suggested that the system should

be one that educators can use in developing curricula that allow for maximum personal growth of students without channeling students into rigid, largely irrelevant course requirements. . . . Ideally, scopes of practice should be based on objective determinations of competence rather than on political demarcations of competing jurisdictions. (p. 334)

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) requires accrediting agencies to establish processes that determine whether programs being evaluated offer learning opportunities and performance criteria that assure student achievement that can be independently recognized by external scholars and that ensure competence in the field (Andrews, 1983, p. 349).

There are several advantages of the accreditation process for the professions and their practitioners. The process contributes to the unity of the professions by bringing practitioners, teachers, and students together in activities directed at improving professional preparation and professional practice ("Resource D," 1983). It also acts as one source of criteria for professional certification and licensure and serves as a lever to gain increased support for a desired program (Selden, 1977). In a study of selected professional fields, Hagerty and Stark (1988) concluded that each profession emphasizes certain intended outcomes, educational processes, and administrative and financial support bases relevant to the culture of that profession.

Hagerty and Stark (1988) criticized the only official accrediting agency for public relations, ACEJMC, as one of the weakest in program dimensions and as in the mid-range of student outcomes (p. 13). Other authors also offered criticism. An educator from an accredited institution noted the difficulty of providing sufficient public relations courses within the ACEJMC 75-25% rule and reproved the 1981 design for undergraduate public relations education for its endorsement of the rule while promoting

avoidance of it (Brody, 1984, p. 33). The 75-25% rule states that 75% of the undergraduate public relations major's academic work must be outside of professional (communications) education. Educators at a non-ACEJMC-eligible institution pointed to the slowness of the accreditation process in responding to changing needs of the field and employers. They espoused a decreased emphasis on journalism and more attention to public relations, business, speech communication, organizational communication, marketing, advertising, management, graphic arts, and research courses (Wakefield & Cottone, 1987).

According to the preamble of the ACEJMC's (1990) booklet on applying for ACEJMC recognition,

Accreditation serves students, parents, faculty, employers, universities, and the public at large. It seeks to ensure continued improvement in the quality of instruction in journalism and mass communications. . . . Further, accreditation provides administrators and faculty with the stimulation that comes from exchanging viewpoints with persons outside their own institution and outside the academy. . . . Finally, it ensures that journalism and mass communications education continues to provide both breadth and depth of exposure to the liberal arts and sciences. (p. 1)

The ACEJMC certification process offers an extensive review of the educational program. Components include specified sequences, budgets, faculty background, library resources, internships, alumni strength, professional relationships, class monitoring, and private interviews with faculty and students (Plank, 1984). Teams evaluate professional journalism and mass communication education by examining the entire administrative unit in which control of the education is centered. Individual programs within the unit are not evaluated separately.

The traditional arts and sciences remain the solid basis of professional education for all journalism and mass communications, "although the Council recognizes that fields like advertising and public relations require additional work in marketing and business administration" (ACEJMC, 1990, p. 5). Perhaps the most controversial principle is the aforementioned 75-25% rule. According to ACEJMC (1990):

The spirit of liberal education has been expressed through a formula--that students take a minimum of 90 semester hours (of 120) in courses outside the major area of journalism and mass communications, with no fewer than 65 semester hours in the liberal arts and sciences. (p. 7)

The Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987) and Public Relations Student Society of America (1988b) requirements specify that 15 of the 30 hours in journalism and mass communication must be in public relations.

Ninety-three institutional units are accredited by ACEJMC. But records are not kept on individual sequences such as public relations (Suzanne Shaw, executive director, ACEJMC, personal communication, May 28, 1991).

The PRSA alternative, Certified in Education for Public Relations (CEPR), is offered for undergraduate public relations programs in schools that have PRSA charters for PRSA student organizations (PRSA, 1990). The CEPR program offers public relations sequences that fall outside the ACEJMC accrediting process (speech communication, arts and sciences, and business) an opportunity for

review and recognition by an objective third party. It also specifically certifies the public relations sequence; ACEJMC accredits the whole journalism/mass communication unit ("Sequence at Brigham Young," 1990).

In establishing the CEPR program, PRSA also was responding to complaints from working professionals who warned that the future of the profession was threatened by an alarming number of students graduating from college public relations sequences (often those in community colleges or proprietary schools) who do not have entry-level skills ("Sequence at Brigham Young," 1990). Using The Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987), the PRSA process attempts to standardize what is taught in public relations. That design's commitment to the liberal arts emphasis and 75-25% rule means that PRSA's certification process is fundamentally the same as ACEJMC's accreditation program. However, the first CEPR review team suggested that Brigham Young University provide more opportunities for practical work and explore the possibility of adding marketing and management courses ("Sequence at Brigham Young," 1990).

Brigham Young, also ACEJMC-accredited, was the first institution certified by PRSA. Three other programs had earned the distinction by mid-1991 (Elaine Averick, PRSA Office of Educational Affairs, personal communication, May 28, 1991). The chairman of Brigham Young's Department of Communications believes "PRSA's stamp of approval will improve the university's visibility and

credibility with public relations firms and practitioners" ("Sequence at Brigham Young," 1990, p. 9).

The literature review in the Purposes of Accreditation and Certification area provided information on the advantages of accreditation, including providing guidelines for educational effectiveness, encouraging program improvement, and providing an academic base for acquiring the preferred attitudes, competencies, knowledge, or skills to certify professionals. Disadvantages also were noted. Two disadvantages in the accrediting program for communications included the difficulty of providing sufficient public relations courses within the accrediting agency's guidelines and the inability of the process to respond to the changing needs of the field and employers. The review also revealed that public relations programs that do not qualify for accreditation can apply for similar recognition, certification, offered by the PRSA.

PROS

CONS

Research Methodology

The review of literature in this area revealed not only the information included in the preceding sections but several examples of methodology used in previous communications research. Useful information was amassed on populations, samples, response, types of questions, and reporting techniques. Research-methods books and studies provided information on mail survey techniques and response rates.

Benson (1983) surveyed the 175 largest employers in Wyoming and received 59 replies (33.7%). Respondents were asked to rate a

series of courses and a variety of job applicant qualification factors on a seven-point Likert-type scale where 7 was "very important" and 1 was "not very important." Results were given in ordered rankings (by means) in the two areas. Curtis et al. (1989) used the Benson courses, factors, scale, and reporting methods in their survey of 1,000 personnel directors and 192 business majors. The return rates were 42.8% and 75.5%, respectively.

In a survey of 200 members of the Corporate Section of the PRSA, Baxter (1986) achieved an 82.5% return rate. Respondents ranked the importance of four categories of courses (journalism, public relations, business, and speech communications) and of individual business subjects and stated their preferences for the department/school location of public relations curricula. The results were given as a rank-order listing of the four categories and the business subjects. Curriculum locations were listed by percentage of respondents who favored each.

Kalupa and Allen (1982) placed a survey in the conference packets of 784 practitioners who preregistered for the 33rd national PRSA conference. A random sample of nonrespondents received a follow-up mailing. Total response was 32%. Survey participants expressed agreement/disagreement with 13 statements about public relations education on a five-point Likert-type scale. Results were reported by percentage of those responding in each Likert category. In addition, rank-ordered lists were provided, by means and by percentages.

The International Association of Business Communicators' (1989) biennial profile survey, on which participants indicated their employment situations and professional status by checking appropriate categories, had a response rate of 53.3%. Respondents to the survey by Cottone et al. (1985) rated kinds of public relations knowledge and skills on a four-point scale. The return rate was 50.95%.

The research survey for The Design for Undergraduate Public Relations Education (Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987) required respondents to rate 134 courses on a seven-point scale. The return rate was 36.29%. Response to Turk's (1989) survey on leadership and people-management skills, which used a five-point scale, had a 23% return rate.

A review of surveys also revealed categories of organization type and practitioner specializations (Jacobson & Tortorello, 1990); lists of courses (Baxter, 1980, 1986; Benson, 1983; Curtis et al., 1989; Kalupa & Allen, 1982; McCarthy, 1983; White, 1987); and factors of personality, leadership, and experience (Benson, 1983; Carneval, 1990; Curtis et al., 1989; DiSalvo, 1970; DiSalvo et al., 1976; Fraser, 1966; Gaedeke & Tootelian, 1990; Long, 1985; White, 1987).

Mail Surveys

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991), mail surveys have several advantages: wide geographic coverage; selective sampling through specialized mailing lists; respondent anonymity, privacy,

opportunity to check past information, and freedom to set own pace; lack of interviewer bias; and low cost. Disadvantages include lack of opportunity to clarify instructions and questions, slow form of data collection, no control over who completes the survey, and a low response rate.

Fox, Crask, and Kim (1989) offered several ways to increase the response rate. These included, in descending order of effectiveness, university sponsorship, stamped return postage (rather than business reply), written prenotification of the survey sent to the respondent, postcard follow-up, first-class outgoing postage, and green paper (rather than white). The Total Design Method (Dillman, 1985) also offered methods to enhance the return rate, including placing materials in personally addressed standard business envelopes, a brief cover letter asking for the addressees' cooperation in the study, the survey in booklet form, a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey, and a follow-up postcard.

Yu and Cooper (1983) found that response rates could be increased through monetary and nonmonetary incentives, preliminary notification, personalization of the questionnaire, and a follow-up letter. They also found that techniques such as including a cover letter, assuring respondents of anonymity, stating a deadline, stressing the social utility of the study, and appealing to the respondent to help the researcher did not significantly increase the response rate.

According to Yu and Cooper (1983), mail surveys had an average completion rate of approximately 47%, compared with 82% and 72% for

personal interviews and telephone surveys, respectively. However, Dillman (1985) stated that completion rates for personal interviews had dropped from 80-85% in the 1960s to 60-65% in the 1980s.

Although mail surveys have disadvantages (primarily low rate of response), the literature review in the Research Methodology area revealed that mail survey is the method of choice in public relations research, even though response rates varied widely, from 23% to 82.5%. Suggestions were provided for improving the response rate, including incentives, preliminary mailing to respondents, personalized questionnaires, and follow-up postcards.

Summary

This literature review was conducted to identify the nature and demographics of public relations practice, current public relations education standards, educator and practitioner preferences for changes in public relations education, general employment-decision guidelines, public relations hiring factors, and the purposes of accreditation and certification. The review also included an examination of research methodology used in previous communications studies and additional references on mail survey research.

Using information from the Nature and Demographics of Public Relations area of the literature review, the 14 kinds of organizations were grouped into five categories, which served as independent variables in the analysis of data. Also, information on roles was used in establishing the survey's demographic categories, which may be used for additional analysis of employers' preferences

for job applicant qualifications and use of hiring practices. The findings on work experience and academic background indicated that public relations curriculum considerations should not be limited to traditional liberal arts emphases with heavy concentrations in journalism.

Many of the courses found in the Current Public Relations Education Standards area of the literature review were included as items in the knowledge section of the survey. Information on participation possibilities was used in the survey's curriculum-related cocurricular activities and work experience categories.

The literature review in the Educator and Practitioner Preferences for Changes in Public Relations Education area provided additional information on course and curriculum selections. The discrepancies in findings between curriculum emphases advocated by official reports and those stressed by other research studies and opinion pieces suggested a need for more research and for a study that includes not only choices among courses but measurement of the importance of curriculum choices. Items in the academic situation/status and the hiring practices sections of the survey were developed in response to this need.

Performance factors, personal qualities, and skills found in the General Employment-Decision Guidelines area of the literature review were used in the skills and attributes section of the survey. Discrepancies in findings concerning the importance of experience and participation in clubs and activities led to survey items in

curriculum-related cocurricular activities, work experience, and hiring practices sections.

The differences between agency and corporate needs revealed in the Public Relations Hiring Guidelines area of the literature review suggested the use of multivariate analysis of variance to analyze job applicant qualification preferences and hiring practices across organization types. Other studies contributed survey items in the knowledge and the skills and attributes categories.

The literature review in the Purposes of Accreditation and Certification area provided information on the advantages and disadvantages of accreditation and certification. Although the chairman of one university's communications department believed that PRSA certification would improve the institution's visibility and credibility, this researcher sought to explore the validity of that assumption by having respondents rate the importance of certification in the survey's hiring practices section.

The literature review in the Research Methodology area revealed several advantages to the mail survey approach. Particularly important to this study were the advantages of geographic coverage (throughout the state of Michigan), respondents' ability to set their own pace (for the large number of items to be considered), and low cost (mailing costs only and the ability of one person to gather and tabulate data).

The diversity of findings in the literature review reinforced the need for a survey of employers that covers both job applicant qualification factors and hiring practices of the employing

organization. Although employability is not the only consideration in developing a curriculum and related activities, universities are placing more emphasis on helping graduates find positions in their career fields and on meeting the needs of organizations for qualified public relations personnel.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

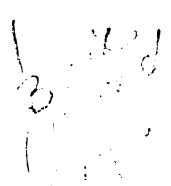
The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of public relations graduates and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. A secondary purpose was to determine whether certification of a public relations curriculum by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) would affect employability of an institution's public relations graduates. The design of the study used a direct mail survey to potential employers to obtain information that can guide public relations faculty members when they revise curriculum and course content, adjust student advising practices, restructure cocurricular activities, and decide whether to apply for PRSA certification. The findings of this investigation had direct utility to the Public Relations faculty at Ferris State University (Big Rapids, Michigan).

Population for the Study

The population for the study was organizations in Michigan that employ at least one public relations practitioner who maintains membership in a Michigan chapter of any of the 12 member

associations of the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC). Council membership includes representatives from the two largest public-relations-oriented professional associations, the PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), and from associations representing specific kinds of organizations, such as the American Society for Health Care Marketing and Public Relations (ASHCM/PR) and the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA). Also, NAPRC is the primary venue for discussions concerning efforts to make public relations practice more professional.

Membership rosters of the 12 associations revealed that 851 Michigan organizations were represented by at least one practitioner in six of the associations, including PRSA (268), IABC (103), ASHCM/PR (199), NSPRA (205), the Religious Public Relations Council (RPRC) (5), and Women in Communications Inc. (WICI) (71). Approximately 21% were corporate organizations; 28%, health care institutions; 9%, counseling agencies, 26%, educational institutions; 10%, nonprofit organizations (including religious and government); and 6%, unknown (not all WICI members were identified by organization). The corporate category included those organizations described in survey demographic information as industrial/manufacturing, scientific, technical, transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment, utility, media/communication, and financial/insurance.



Sampling Procedure

Because the design of this study used a mail survey, the sample had to be selected very carefully to assure that the most appropriate persons received and completed the survey and that the rate of response was adequate for multivariate analysis.

Personal and telephone interviews have some advantages over mail surveys, such as interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, more control over who answers the survey, and better response rate (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991). This study, however, used the mail survey for three reasons:

1. The target population was dispersed throughout Michigan, making personal interviews impractical and telephone surveys costly. Also, because of the nature of their positions, it would have been difficult to reach the respondents by telephone.

2. The large number of items (140) included on the survey dictated that respondents have the ability to set their own pace in completing the instrument.

3. Costs were limited to printing the surveys, mailing surveys and follow-ups, and providing return postage. Also, the data were gathered and tabulated by one person. This was much less expensive than hiring and training a team of interviewers.

Drawing a sample that assured adequate response required several steps:

1. A list of all organizations represented in the six Michigan chapters of the North American Public Relations Association was compiled from the groups' membership rosters. From this list, a

sample of 450 organizations was selected, using a computer-generated list of random numbers. Previous communications research had used the maximum sample size recommended by Kregcie and Morgan (1970, p. 608). In this study, a sample of 265 ordinarily would be sufficient for a significance level of .05. However, expecting subject mortality in a two-tiered sample, the original sample size was expanded 70%, to 450, to assure sufficient data across the five types of organizations for performing multivariate analysis. Table 3.1 reveals frequencies and percentages for the population and sample by professional organization and by organization type. It also reveals the consistency in proportion of frequencies and percentages between the original population and the sample.

According to Rowntree (1981), a finding that is significant at the .05 level is "often called 'significant,' while a difference significant at the .01 level is 'highly significant'" (p. 118). However, he also pointed out that, although the researcher using the .01 level is more confident of the differences he recognizes, "he may miss many promising possibilities" (p. 121). For research projects where the costs of making an error are great (cancer research, a multimillion-dollar marketing project, and so on), a greater level of confidence is necessary. However, because the costs are not as great in social science research, the .05 level of significance is a common probability level for communications and educational research, according to Wimmer and Dominick (1991).

Table 3.1.--Comparison of population and original sample frequencies and percentages by professional organizations and types of organizations.

	Number in Population	% of Population	Number in Sample	% of Sample
PRSA	268	31.49	145	32.23
IABC	103	12.10	53	11.73
ASHCM/PR	199	23.39	112	24.89
NSPRA	205	24.09	95	21.15
RPRC	5	.59	1	.22
WICI	71	8.33	44	9.78
Total	851	100.00	450	100.00
Corporate	179	21.03	104	23.11
Health	238	27.97	124	27.55
Counseling	76	8.93	37	8.23
Education	221	25.97	108	24.01
Nonprofit	86	10.11	52	11.55
Unknown ^a	51	5.99	25	5.55
Total	851	100.00	450	100.00

^aNot all WICI members were identified by organization.

2. For each organization in the sample, the top public relations practitioner was identified. Because some organizations have more than one public relations practitioner on the membership rosters, and because of the diversity of location for public relations functions within organizations, the following criteria were used to select the top public relations practitioner: (a) by location in a specific department/division (listed in order of priority): public relations, corporate communications, other communications, marketing, advertising, employee relations, human

resource development, personnel; (b) by seniority of title (listed in order of priority): chief executive officer/owner, senior vice president, vice president/senior account supervisor, manager/director/account supervisor, specialist/account executive; and (c) by association membership (listed in order of priority): PRSA, IABC, ASHCM/PR, NSPRA, RPRC, WICI.

3. Each of the practitioners, so identified, received a letter explaining the proposed survey (Appendix A) and asking that an enclosed stamped, self-addressed card (Appendix B) be returned with the name, title, address, and telephone number of the most appropriate person to receive the survey instrument (Appendix C). The public relations practitioner was told that the recipient of the survey should be the one who makes the actual hiring decision, whatever his or her position (in the public relations department, personnel office, and so on). The respondent also received a salmon-colored postcard (Appendix B), which was to be retained by the survey recipient-to-be as a reminder to watch for and promptly return the survey in January.

4. The names provided on the return postcards comprised the actual sample for the study, and the information included on the postcard returned to the researcher was used to personalize all mailings and to follow up by telephone when necessary. There were 282 respondents (62.66% of the sample). Of these, 2 duplicated organizations already represented, 22 chose not to participate because they were solo practitioners or did not hire entry-level

public relations employees, and 2 chose not to participate for unspecified reasons. Two mailings were returned by the post office as undeliverable. Thus, there were 256 usable responses; these comprised the survey sample. Table 3.2 reveals frequencies and percentages of those responding to the mailing and the percentages included in the survey sample by professional organization and organization type. A comparison of these figures with those in Table 3.1 confirms continuing consistency in proportion.

Table 3.2.--Summary of responses to original mailing and inclusions in survey sample by professional organizations and types of organizations.

	Number Responding Orig. Mailing	% Responding Orig. Mailing	% Included in Survey Sample
PRSA	87	60.00	33.98
IABC	26	49.05	10.16
ASHCM/PR	63	56.25	24.61
NSPRA	61	64.21	23.82
RPRC	1	100.00	.39
WICI	18	40.90	7.04
Total	256	--	100.00
Corporate	50	48.07	19.53
Health	72	58.06	28.12
Counseling	25	67.56	9.77
Education	67	62.03	26.17
Nonprofit	42	80.76	16.41
Total	256	--	100.00

Also worth noting is the extent to which the persons designated to receive the survey (as indicated on the postcards) changed from

the original contacts. Some change was expected because the original mailing was sent to the top public relations official but the requested survey contact was the person who actually hired entry-level public relations employees. Changes included 18 in corporate organizations, 17 in health institutions, 3 in counseling agencies, 18 in educational institutions, and 12 in nonprofit organizations.

The Survey Instrument

The survey instrument (Appendix C) was developed specifically to address the research questions of the study, based primarily on items used in previous research (Baxter, 1986; Benson, 1983; Curtis et al., 1989; White, 1987). The instrument explored the respondents' perceptions of the importance of five categories of job applicant qualification factors (knowledge, skills/attributes, curriculum-related cocurricular activities, work experience, and academic situation/status) and actual hiring practices. Limited demographic information also was collected.

Job Applicant Qualification Factors

In the first major section of the survey, the respondents were requested to indicate the importance of various items on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was "very important" and 5 was "unimportant." The purpose of the Likert-type scale was to have respondents indicate their intensity of agreement or disagreement with sets of attitude items. The five-point scale provides a

greater variance along the continuum of attitude than with a two- or three-point scale (e.g., agree, disagree, no opinion) (Kerlinger, 1973). Five job applicant qualification factors were evaluated: applicant's knowledge, applicant's skills/attributes, applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities, applicant's work experience, and applicant's academic situation/status.

Applicant's knowledge. Respondents rated the importance of the category overall, of the five global academic subject areas, and of the individual courses in each area. The global areas were journalism, public relations, other communications courses, liberal arts and sciences, and business.

Applicant's skills/attributes. Respondents rated the importance of the category overall; of the three global areas of personality, general leadership, and people management; and of the specific skills and attributes related to each global area.

Applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities. Respondents rated the importance of the category overall and of both membership and leadership in five categories: Public Relations Student Society of America, student-run public relations agency, student media, other career-oriented student activities, and fraternity/sorority.

Applicant's experience. Respondents rated the importance of the category overall and of both public relations and non-public-relations experience in full-time employment, part-time/summer employment, volunteer activities, and internships.

Applicant's academic situation/status. Respondents rated the importance of the category overall and of six global factors: graduation from a specific school, kind of major/emphasis, kind of minor, accreditation/certification of the major/emphasis, overall grade point average, and grade point average in the major/emphasis. Under kind of major/emphasis and kind of minor, respondents rated the importance of six specific academic areas.

Organizational Employment Decision-Making Factors

In the second major section of the survey, respondents provided information in two areas.

Influence of entry-level public relations hiring practices. Respondents rated nine factors that might influence hiring practices on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was "very important" and 5 was "unimportant." Factors included number of degrees, baccalaureate student qualifications, work experience, employer recommendations, personal recommendations, job market, timing, job specifications/applicant qualification match, and perceived applicant future in the organization.

Likelihood of further consideration of an applicant. Respondents rated the effect of 12 factors that might, if present, lead to further consideration of the applicant for employment. The ratings were on a five-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was "almost always true" and 5 was "almost never true." The factors included more curriculum-related cocurricular experience, more internships, a

variety of specific skills, several specific courses, higher grade point average, and accreditation/certification of the academic major/emphasis.

Demographics

In this section of the survey, respondents marked their status in seven areas: age, highest level of education, job title, department/division, type of employing organization, primary focus of the organization's public relations work, and professional certification/accreditation.

Voluntary comments. Survey participants were given an opportunity to make additional comments about public relations curricula and the employability of public relations graduates.

Request for summary of results. The participants had an opportunity to request a summary of the results of the survey while maintaining confidentiality of their responses to the questionnaire. Each survey packet included a separate postcard (Appendix E) to be returned by the respondent, indicating that the survey had been completed and returned. On the card was a place for the participant to request survey results and provide his or her name and address.

Endorsement

In an attempt to obtain the maximum response rate, endorsement for the study was obtained from the dean of the College of Business and the president of Ferris State University. Fox et al. (1989, p. 123) found that university sponsorship was the most important factor in increasing mail survey responses. Permission also was obtained

to use letterhead stationery and envelopes. And the university provided further support by permitting use of the copy center and access to the mainframe computer for statistical analysis.

Reliability and Validity

According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991), a survey instrument must have reliability (the ability to consistently give the same answer) and validity (the power to measure what it is supposed to measure). The survey instrument for this study was presented to 15 West Michigan members of the PRSA and 15 West Michigan members of the American Marketing Association (AMA) at their November 1991 chapter meetings. To gather more responses, surveys were mailed to 10 other members of the AMA. Ten PRSA members and 11 AMA members returned the surveys. The respondents were encouraged to make comments about the content and the design of the instrument.

Reliability was calculated on the dependent variables to determine consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's (1947) coefficient alpha. Reliability figures ranged from .3515 to .9376. For areas with figures below .6500, correlation matrices revealed that one cause could be a high degree of clustering among items. However, it was determined that the items should remain on the survey because they represented areas of interest to professionals and researchers, according to the literature review. Changes in the survey design and instructions were made to improve the reliability in the job applicant factors and knowledge areas. The face validity of the survey was supported by its use of items included in previous

studies that sought to define public relations education content or to test the importance of specific hiring practices.

The pretest of the survey and subsequent discussions with PRSA and AMA members provided independent judgment by several experts regarding the relevance of given measurements (Wimmer & Dominick, 1991). These pilot studies also helped test the clarity of instructions and wording of the questions and the appropriateness of job applicant qualification categories and organizational employment decision factors. Pretesting the instrument with the AMA members helped assure that the survey was appropriate for non-public-relations employment decision makers.

As a result of the feedback, minor changes were made in the survey instrument. These included separating the "law and ethics" subject items into two items, rewording two course items, clarifying major category designations, and rewriting the job applicant qualification section instructions for brevity and to stress the emphasis on entry-level employees as evaluated by the respondent's organization.

Data Collection

The basis of this study was a direct mail survey to public relations employment decision makers in randomly selected organizations as described in the sampling section. The Total Design Method (Dillman, 1985) was used to enhance the return rate of the mailed surveys so that adequate representation from the population was secured. The method emphasizes the inclusion of

certain elements and efficient design to assist the respondent in completing and returning the instrument in a complete and timely manner. The mailing included:

1. A brief cover letter asking for the respondent's cooperation in the conduct of the study, summarizing the details of the project, and explaining how participation in the survey would enhance a model public relations curriculum project (Appendix D).

2. The survey instrument (Appendix C).

3. A postage-paid, self-addressed reply envelope to be used to return the survey.

4. A stamped, self-addressed reply postcard to maintain the anonymity of respondents while receiving information about whether the survey had been returned (Appendix E). Respondents signed and dated the card to indicate when the survey was completed and mailed. Also, a space was provided for the respondents to provide their addresses if they wanted a summary of the survey results.

One week after the first mailing, a postcard (Appendix F) was sent to all the original survey recipients. A paragraph was included to thank those who had already responded. But the primary purpose was to encourage nonrespondents to send back the survey.

Three weeks later, a follow-up mailing was sent to all nonrespondents, containing the same materials as the first packet, except the letter was revised to give more instructions on filling out the survey (Appendix G). The revision was made to correct an incomplete response problem, discussed in detail under Data Analysis, Manipulation of Responses, pages 69-72.

The first survey mailing resulted in 132 responses (51.56% of the total sample), 4 of which indicated the survey did not apply to their hiring practices. The follow-up postcard brought in 52 more responses (an additional 20.31% of the sample), 3 of which were not applicable. The third mailing resulted in 40 additional responses, 1 of which was not applicable. The total level of response was 87.5% of the sample. In addition to the not-applicable returns, four surveys were rejected for substantial areas of incomplete response. The total percentage of usable responses to the survey was 83.59%.

Table 3.3 contains, for usable responses, the frequency and percentage of response to the survey and the percentage of those surveyed responding, by organization type.

Table 3.3.--Summary of responses to survey by types of organizations.

	Number of Usable Responses	% of Usable Responses	% of Those Surveyed Responding
Corporate	46	21.42	92.00
Health	59	26.79	81.94
Counseling	19	8.48	76.00
Education	56	27.68	83.58
Nonprofit	34	15.63	80.95
Total	214	100.00	--

Data Analysis

All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data-processing program on the mainframe computer at Ferris State University.

Manipulation of Responses

Included in the survey items and planned analysis were three sets of global categories:

1. Under Research Question 1, the knowledge areas of public relations, liberal arts, journalism, other communications courses, and business.

2. Under Research Question 2, the skills/attributes areas of personality, general leadership, and people management.

3. Under Research Question 6, the job applicant qualification factors of knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experience, and academic situation/status.

Although the survey included independent ratings for each of these areas, two considerations suggested that an averaging technique be used to increase the reliability of these measures. The means of all items under a category were added and divided by the number of items to obtain an average for the global category. For example, the means of all journalism courses were used to obtain an overall mean for the importance of journalism studies. And after using the same averaging method to obtain overall ratings for kinds of majors/emphasis and for minors, the means of the six primary

items of academic situation/status were used to obtain an overall mean for the importance of that job applicant qualification factor.

The first consideration was a concern that one measure of a category might not be as reliable as multiple measures. The second consideration was the possibility of compensating for information not received on some surveys due to an apparent survey design problem.

Of the 214 usable surveys, 95 (44.39%) omitted ratings of most or all global categories despite specific instructions regarding those areas at the beginning of the job applicant qualification section of the survey (see Appendix C). The percentage of incomplete responses was relatively uniform across organization types, ranging from 47.09% in nonprofit to 60% in health. Responses in the global categories did not improve even when additional directions were added in the letter that accompanied the third mailing (Appendix G).

Originally, only 112 respondents submitted complete responses. However, although the surveys were designed for anonymity, nine respondents were identified because they signed the surveys, included business cards, sent response postcards in the envelope with the surveys, or returned the survey in an organization's envelope. Seven of these respondents were contacted by telephone (the other two could not be reached in six attempts) and agreed to complete the surveys.

As surveys were returned, data were entered in two separate files, complete (actual) and incomplete (actual). Two more files

were created using the averaging technique, complete averaged and incomplete averaged. The reliability of various approaches was tested using Cronbach's (1947) coefficient alpha. Table 3.4 contains the results of the tests, which indicate that the averaging technique was more reliable in all cases except in the two hiring practices sections where data were not averaged and in the job applicant factors and knowledge areas groupings.

Table 3.4.--Results of reliability tests conducted on actual and manipulated data.

Dependent Variables	Comp. Act.	Comp. Avg.	Incom. Act.	Incom. Avg.	Comb. Act.	Comb. Avg.
Job. app. factors ^a	.5507	.6653	.0747	.6419	<u>.8438</u>	<u>.6517</u>
Knowledge areas	.5109	.7465	.3124	.7187	<u>.9547</u>	<u>.7352</u>
Pub. rel. knowl.	.7421	.7681	.7769	.8293	.7459	.8033
Lib. arts knowl.	.8057	.8656	.8275	.8587	.8183	.8611
Journ. knowl.	.7760	.7831	.8376	.8730	.7954	.8433
Oth. com. knowl.	.8756	.8858	.7767	.8430	.8040	.8649
Business knowl.	.8686	.8708	.8944	.9163	.8707	.9003
Skills/attrib.	.9245	.9363	.8995	.9304	.9004	.9329
Personality	.8223	.8582	.7924	.8473	.7706	.8519
Gen. leadership	.8782	.8939	.8151	.8615	.8202	.8773
People skills	.8730	.9063	.8459	.9299	.8172	.9190
Cocur. activ.	.9111	.9149	.8118	.8575	.8481	.8892
Work experience	.7864	.8221	.7714	.8247	.7511	.8223
Acad. sit./status	.7335	.7914	.3183	.6863	.6593	.6739
Hiring practices	.8282	.8282	.7901	.7901	.8087	.8087
Further consid.	.8645	.8645	.7768	.7768	.8299	.8299

Key: Act. = Actual Avg. = Averaged
 Comp. = Data from fully completed surveys (n = 119)
 Incom. = Data from not fully completed surveys (n = 95)
 Comb. = Combined data from fully and not fully completed surveys

^aGlobal ratings--knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experience, academic situation/status.

To explore the unexpected difference in the latter two and to test further the advisability of using the averaging technique, MANOVAs were run using, first, the combined complete actual and incomplete averaged data (actual/averaged) and, second, the combined complete averaged and incomplete averaged data (averaged/averaged). ANOVAs also were examined where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$).

Table 3.5 reveals that the MANOVA areas of significance were the same with one exception: personality. Examination of the ANOVAs under the averaged/averaged group failed to pinpoint significant differences. Examining the significant differences suggested by other ANOVAs, only three items appeared under actual/averaged that were not included under averaged/averaged. And use of the Tukey-HSD procedure determined that there were no significant differences. Given the results of the reliability tests and the lack of differences in areas of significance, the averaged/averaged data base was used in the analysis.

Organization Types

The 14 types of organizations in the third demographic question were grouped into five categories (independent variables):

1. Corporate--industrial/manufacturing, scientific/technical, transportation/hotels/resorts/entertainment, utility, media/communication, finance/insurance.
2. Health (care).

3. Counseling--public relations counseling firm, advertising agency.

4. Education.

5. Nonprofit--association/foundation, government, religious/charitable.

Responses from solo practitioners were eliminated because they, by definition, were not employers of public relations graduates.

Table 3.5.--Results of MANOVAs conducted on two kinds of manipulated data.

Dependent Variables	Actual/ Averaged Data ^a (p)	Averaged/ Averaged Data ^b (p)
Job applicant factors	.430	.292
Knowledge areas	.651	.670
Public relations knowledge	.000	.000
Liberal arts knowledge	.116	.174
Journalism knowledge	.000	.000
Other communications knowledge	.000	.006
Business knowledge	.001	.000
Skills and attributes	.703	.727
Personality	.246	.030
General leadership	.628	.150
People skills	.004	.007
Cocurricular activities	.195	.054
Work experience	.082	.249
Academic situation/status	.002	.001
Hiring practices	.045	.031
Further consideration factors	.000	.000

^aActual completed survey data and averaged incomplete survey data.

^bAveraged complete survey data and averaged incomplete survey data.

Research Question 1

Regarding applicant's knowledge, the dependent variables were the five global academic subject areas and the specific courses under each. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference.

Research Question 2

Regarding applicant's skills and attributes, the dependent variables were the three global areas of personality, leadership, and management and the specific skills and attributes under each. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference.

Research Question 3

Regarding applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities, the dependent variables were membership and leadership in five kinds of activities. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference.

Research Question 4

Regarding applicant's work experience, there were eight dependent variables: public relations and non-public-relations employment in four kinds of work activities. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference.

Research Question 5

Regarding applicant's academic situation/status, the dependent variables were five categories of academic situation/status, the six

specific kinds of majors/emphases, and the six specific kinds of minors. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference.

Research Question 6

Regarding job applicant qualification factors, the dependent variables were the overall ratings of applicant's knowledge, applicant's skills and attributes, applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities, applicant's work experience, and applicant's academic situation/status. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference. Also, using data from all respondents, a repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine how much each job applicant qualification factor differed from the others.

Research Question 7

Regarding hiring practices, the dependent variables were the nine factors from number of degrees to perceived applicant future in the organization. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected. When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference. Also, all responses were grouped together to compile an ordered ranking of importance of the factors (according to the means). A repeated measures ANOVA and paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between the relative importance of factors indicated by the ranking.

Research Question 8

Regarding further consideration of a job applicant, the dependent variables were the 11 factors from classroom projects to accreditation/certification of a program. A correlation matrix was constructed to determine whether analyses of variance would be affected by items clustering together. MANOVA was used to test for significant differences between the means of five categories of organizations across the dependent variables. Where Wilks's lambda was significant ($< .05$), the ANOVA for each variable was inspected.

When significant F-values were found, the Tukey-HSD procedure was conducted to determine specific areas of significant difference. Also, all responses were grouped together to compile an ordered ranking of importance of the factors (according to the means). A repeated measures ANOVA and paired t-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between the relative importance of factors indicated by the ranking.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The results from surveying 256 Michigan employers of public relations practitioners revealed the importance they placed on seven areas--five job applicant qualification categories and two hiring practices categories--that affect their organizations' consideration of entry-level public relations applicants. Job applicant qualification categories were knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experience, and academic situation/status. Hiring practices categories included factors the organizations use to make employment decisions and additional factors that, if present, would cause further consideration of an applicant.

Analyses of the findings includes a profile of the average respondent, two sections of univariate analysis, and an overall summary of multivariate analysis. Eight research questions then are answered. A summary of the statistically significant findings is followed by a section on other findings.

In the first univariate section, examining all responses, the analysis focuses on the frequencies and percentages of response and the means and standard deviations for the overall ratings of the five knowledge areas, the three skills/attributes areas, and (by the

seven categories) individual items that had a rating of important to very important (means < 2.01). The second univariate analysis provides rankings of the variables overall and within the seven categories.

For the eight research questions, survey responses were grouped into five types of organizations: corporate, health, counseling, education, and nonprofit. MANOVAs and Tukey-HSD procedures were used to determine significant differences in the importance that respondents from the five types of organizations ascribed to: Research Question 1, knowledge; Research Question 2, skills/attributes; Research Question 3, cocurricular activities; Research Question 4, work experience; Research Question 5, academic situation/status; Research Question 6, the five job applicant qualification categories; Research Question 7, factors used in making hiring decisions; and Research Question 8, additional factors that would cause further consideration of an applicant. For Research Question 6, a repeated measures ANOVA was used to determine how much the five job applicant qualification factors differed from each other. For Research Questions 7 and 8, all responses were combined, and paired t-tests were used to confirm which factors were more likely to affect employment decisions.

Respondent Profile

Respondents included 22 chief executive officers, 13 senior vice presidents, 34 vice presidents, 132 managers/directors, and 13 specialists. The departments in which they worked included public

relations, 87; communications, 53; marketing communication, 26; corporate communication, 22; employee relations, 13; marketing, 12; and advertising, 1. There were 126 females and 88 males.

The average respondent was a 39-year-old female manager/director whose public relations department in an educational institution had primarily a community relations focus. Her education included some graduate-level work, and she was not accredited or certified by any professional public relations or communications organization.

Univariate Analysis I

This analysis examined the importance ascribed to items in the first two sections of the survey (Appendix C): overall ratings of the five knowledge areas, the three skills/attributes areas, and (by the five job applicant qualification and two hiring practices categories) individual variables that had a rating of important to very important (means < 2.01). Frequencies and percentages of response and the means and standard deviations of importance indicated on five-point Likert-type scales (where 1 = very important and 5 = unimportant) were the basis for drawing conclusions.

Under the knowledge category (Appendix C), respondents also were asked to rate the overall importance of five areas of subjects (public relations, liberal arts and sciences, journalism, other communications courses, business). None of the five knowledge areas were ranked important to very important. Table 4.1 reveals that more than two-thirds of the respondents ranked journalism, other

communications courses, and public relations from important to very important. But liberal arts and sciences received high rankings from only 27.6%. A perusal of the standard deviations revealed little difference in the variability of respondents' ratings. A repeated measures ANOVA analysis revealed possible differences in variances within categories: public relations-journalism, F-value = .001; public relations-other communications courses, F-value = .001; journalism-other communication courses, F-value = .002; journalism-liberal arts, F-value = .000; and liberal arts/sciences-business, F-value = .000. However, paired t-tests revealed no statistically significant differences.

Table 4.1.--Univariate statistics for responses in knowledge areas.

Area	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Journalism	166	77.5	2.05	.74
Other communications	153	71.5	2.11	.79
Public relations	149	69.6	2.22	.63
Business	103	52.8	2.46	.77
Liberal arts	59	27.6	2.80	.67

Maximum n = 214.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Overall ratings for three areas in the skills/attributes category (Appendix C) are revealed in Table 4.2. Personality and general leadership received important to very important rankings from 99.6% and 96.3% of the respondents, respectively, for means of

1.31 and 1.51. However, people management was rated high by fewer than two-thirds of the respondents, producing a mean of 2.27. The higher standard deviation of the people management area suggested that, despite its low rating, the area or some of its variables (Appendix C) might be more important to some respondents.

Table 4.2.--Univariate statistics for responses in skills/attributes areas.

Area	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Personality	213	99.6	1.37	.49
General leadership	206	96.3	1.51	.57
People management	131	61.2	2.27	.92

Maximum n = 214.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Fifty individual subjects were included under the five knowledge areas (Appendix C). Table 4.3 reveals that 13 of the 50 subjects (26%) received rankings of important to very important. Of these, the most important was public relations writing (mean = 1.29). By knowledge area, other courses receiving high ratings were ethics and principles (public relations); editing, reporting, mass communications, and ethics (journalism); marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior (business); speech presentation and speech writing (other communication courses); and English composition (liberal arts and sciences). Three of the subjects (PR writing, English

composition, and journalism editing) were rated high by more than 90% of the respondents.

Table 4.3.--Univariate statistics for responses in knowledge category ranked important to very important: mean < 2.01 (Knowledge area)

Variable	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Writing (PR)	202	94.4	1.29	.61
English composition (LA)	205	95.8	1.31	.57
Editing (J)	194	90.7	1.48	.74
Ethics (PR)	187	87.4	1.62	.74
Reporting (J)	185	86.4	1.64	.84
Marketing (B)	186	86.9	1.66	.74
Principles (PR)	177	82.8	1.72	.84
Mass communication (J)	179	83.7	1.76	.84
Ethics (J)	172	80.4	1.79	.86
Speech presentation (OCC)	167	78.1	1.91	.86
Advertising (B)	161	75.3	1.92	.84
Consumer behavior (B)	162	75.7	2.00	.87
Speech writing (OCC)	158	73.8	2.00	.89

Maximum n = 214.

Key: B = business, J = journalism, LA = liberal arts and sciences, OCC = other communications courses, PR = public relations.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Six other subjects received important to very important ratings from more than 80%. They were PR ethics, journalism reporting, marketing, PR principles, mass communications, and journalism ethics. A study of the standard deviations uncovered little difference in the variability of respondents' ratings, although variation increased as the importance of the variables decreased

(e.g., PR writing, mean = 1.29, SD = .61; reporting, mean = 1.64, SD = .84; speech writing, mean = 2.00, SD = .89). A repeated measures ANOVA analysis revealed possible differences in variances between 11 items (all but reporting and mass communication, in Table 4.3). And paired t-tests confirmed that all but one of the differences were statistically significant.

Respondents were asked to rate 20 variables under the skills/attributes areas (Appendix C). The 16 that were ranked important to very important (Table 4.4) included all items under personality, all but finance/budgeting under general leadership, and one under people management. Five variables (written communication, motivation, responsibility, creativity, personality) were ranked high by more than 99% of the respondents, and five more received important to very important ratings from more than 90% (planning/organizing, oral communication, speech, manner, self-confidence). An examination of the standard deviations revealed an increase in variability as the importance of the variables decreased (e.g., written communication, mean = 1.14, SD = .36; oral communication, mean = 1.39, SD = .58; group activities, mean = 2.00, SD = .89). None of the individual items in the cocurricular activities category were ranked important to very important. A repeated measures ANOVA analysis revealed two possible differences in variances, but neither was confirmed as statistically significant by paired t-tests.

Table 4.4.--Univariate statistics for responses in skills/attributes category ranked important to very important: mean < 2.01. (Skills/attributes area)

Variable	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Written communication (GL)	213	99.5	1.14	.36
Motivation (P)	212	99.0	1.14	.38
Responsibility (P)	214	100.0	1.18	.38
Creativity (P)	213	99.5	1.35	.49
Planning/organizing (GL)	206	96.2	1.38	.56
Oral communication (GL)	206	96.2	1.39	.58
Speech (P)	208	97.2	1.39	.54
Manner (P)	206	96.3	1.42	.57
Self-confidence (P)	204	95.3	1.42	.58
Goal orientation (P)	199	93.0	1.43	.61
Time management (GL)	201	93.9	1.51	.63
Goal setting (GL)	200	93.5	1.55	.64
Problem solving (GL)	195	91.1	1.56	.69
Appearance (P)	186	87.0	1.71	.73
Analytical skills (GL)	179	83.6	1.79	.76
Group activities (PM)	155	72.4	2.00	.89

Maximum n = 214.

Key: GL = general leadership, P = personality, PM = people management.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Under the academic situation/status category (Appendix C), respondents rated the importance of six variables (graduation from a specific school, kind of major/emphasis, kind of minor, special accreditation/certification of major emphasis, overall grade point average, grade point average in major emphasis, as well as six kinds of majors/emphases and minors). Although three of the items (grade point average in major, public relations major, print journalism major) were ranked important to very important (Table 4.5), fewer

than 80% of the respondents gave those ratings, and the means were close to the cutoff point of 2.01. A study of the standard deviations showed little difference in the variability in the ratings.

Table 4.5.--Univariate statistics for responses in academic situation/status category ranked important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Variable	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Grade point average/major	171	79.9	1.95	.73
Public relations major	171	79.9	1.88	.90
Print journalism major	161	75.2	1.95	.88

Maximum n = 214.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

In the work experience category (Appendix C), respondents rated the importance of public-relations-related and non-public-relations-related practices in four areas (full-time employment, part-time employment, volunteer activities, internship). Table 4.6 reveals that the four kinds of public-relations-related experience ranked important to very important, whereas the same types of experience with non-public-relations responsibilities did not. Internships received the highest ranking (mean = 1.57) as more than 91% of the respondents rated that experience high. The other three items received high rankings from more than 81% of survey participants. A

perusal of the standard deviations revealed little difference in the variability of ratings.

Table 4.6.--Univariate statistics for responses in work experience category ranked important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Variable	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Internship	195	91.1	1.57	.69
Part-time employment	177	82.8	1.79	.77
Full-time employment	174	81.3	1.79	.86
Volunteer activity	175	81.8	1.81	.78

Maximum n = 214.

Note: All of the variables in this table were public-relations-oriented.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

In the hiring practices section of the survey (Appendix C), respondents rated the importance of 9 factors in influencing hiring practices and the likelihood that the presence of 12 factors would cause further consideration of a candidate. Only 7 of the 20 variables were ranked important to very important (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7.--Univariate statistics for responses in hiring practices categories ranked important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Variable	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
<u>Hiring Factors</u>				
Job/applicant match	192	89.7	1.48	.74
Work experience	191	89.3	1.53	.77
Future in organization	160	74.8	1.82	.94
Employer recommendation	157	73.4	1.94	.94
<u>Further Consideration</u>				
Computer literacy	185	86.5	1.71	.76
Additional internship	176	82.3	1.78	.78
Desktop publishing	168	78.6	1.85	.86

Maximum n = 214.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important: mean < 2.01.

Almost 90% of the responses in the hiring factors area rated job/applicant match and work experience variables high, producing means of 1.48 and 1.53, respectively. Applicant's future in the organization (mean = 1.82) and employer recommendations (mean = 1.94) received high rankings from 74.8% and 73.4% of the respondents, respectively. Under the factors that cause further consideration of an applicant, three variables were rated high by 78% to 86% of the respondents. The means included computer literacy, 1.71; additional internship, 1.78; and desktop publishing, 1.85. An examination of the standard deviations indicated little difference in the variability of the ratings.

Univariate Analysis II

This analysis provided rankings of the importance of the 140 variables overall and within the five job applicant qualification and two hiring practices categories. The rankings were based on the means of the responses from all survey participants.

Of the 10 items that received the highest rankings overall (Table 4.8), 8 were from the skills/attributes category. Written communication and motivation both had means of 1.14; the mean for the responsibility variable was 1.18. The fourth and fifth items were from the knowledge category: public relations writing (mean = 1.29) and English composition (mean = 1.31). The other five top-rated variables were creativity, personality, planning/organizing, speech, and oral communication. An examination of the standard deviations revealed little difference in variability in the ratings of the variables.

Table 4.8.--Ten most important variables in job applicant qualification and hiring practices categories. (Category)

Variable	Mean	SD
Written communication (S/A)	1.14	.36
Motivation (S/A)	1.14	.38
Responsibility (S/A)	1.18	.38
Public relations writing (K)	1.29	.61
English composition (K)	1.31	.57
Creativity (S/A)	1.35	.49
Personality (S/A)	1.37	.49
Planning/organizing (S/A)	1.38	.56
Speech (S/A)	1.39	.54
Oral communication (S/A)	1.39	.58

Key: K = knowledge, S/A = skills/attributes.

Half of the 10 variables receiving the least important rankings overall (Table 4.9) were liberal arts subjects: lab science (139th of 140, mean = 3.75), anthropology, foreign language, music/art, and philosophy). Two of the three lowest ratings were for cocurricular experience in fraternities/sororities (leadership, mean = 3.89; membership, mean = 3.73). The 1.05 standard deviation for number of degrees possessed by a job applicant indicated that some types of public relations positions may require more education. The higher standard deviation for fraternity/sorority membership (1.11) suggested that, despite the variable's low rating, some respondents believed that students benefited from belonging to Greek organizations.

Table 4.9.--Ten least important variables in job applicant qualifications and hiring practices categories/area.
(Category/area)

Variable	Mean	SD
Fraternity leadership (C)	3.89	.98
Lab science (LA)	3.75	.92
Fraternity membership (C)	3.73	1.11
Second language proficiency (HFC)	3.61	.97
Anthropology (LA)	3.60	.90
Foreign language (LA)	3.28	.98
Business law (B)	3.21	.89
Number of degrees (HF)	3.17	1.05
Music/art (LA)	3.15	.87
Philosophy (LA)	3.14	.88

Note: Letters in parentheses indicate category/area.

Key: B = business (knowledge); C = cocurricular activity; HF = hiring factor; HFC = hiring, further consideration; LA = liberal arts and sciences (knowledge).

The ranges of means in the five knowledge areas (Appendix C) also were examined. Means in public relations ranged from 1.29 for writing to 2.94 for video production (Table 4.10) and, in liberal arts, from 1.31 for English composition to 3.75 for lab science (Table 4.11). In journalism, means ranged from 1.48 for editing to 2.83 for law (Table 4.12); in other communications courses, from 1.91 for speech presentation to 2.46 for meeting planning (Table 4.13); and, in business, from 1.66 for marketing to 3.21 for law (Table 4.14).

Table 4.10.--Ranking of importance of public relations subjects
(1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Subject	Mean	SD
Writing	1.29	.61
Ethics	1.62	.74
Principles	1.72	.84
Campaigns	2.36	.96
Research	2.41	.91
Theory	2.57	.94
Cases	2.66	.90
Law	2.78	1.02
Video production	2.94	.98

Table 4.11.--Ranking of importance of liberal arts and sciences subjects (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Subject	Mean	SD
English composition	1.31	.57
Literature	2.36	.91
Psychology	2.40	.99
Sociology	2.47	.97
Political science	2.51	.93
History	2.84	.88
Geography	2.95	1.00
Philosophy	3.14	.88
Music/art	3.15	.87
Foreign language	3.28	.98
Anthropology	3.60	.90
Lab science	3.75	.92

Table 4.12.--Ranking of importance of journalism subjects (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Subject	Mean	SD
Editing	1.48	.74
Reporting	1.64	.79
Mass communications	1.76	.84
Ethics	1.79	.86
Computer graphics	2.04	.96
Radio-TV	2.12	1.02
Communication theory	2.30	.95
Traditional graphics	2.33	.97
Photojournalism	2.35	.95
Law	2.83	.94

Table 4.13.--Ranking of importance of other communications courses
(1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Subject	Mean	SD
Speech presentation	1.91	.86
Speech writing	2.00	.89
Persuasion	2.01	.82
Public opinion	2.08	.81
Small-group communication	2.08	.81
Organizational behavior	2.27	.98
Meeting planning	2.46	1.12

Table 4.14.--Ranking of importance of business subjects (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Subject	Mean	SD
Marketing	1.66	.74
Advertising	1.92	.84
Consumer behavior	2.00	.87
Ethics	2.08	1.03
Management	2.22	.97
Economics	2.59	.82
Sales	2.60	1.03
Finance	2.77	.89
Statistics	2.86	.95
Personnel	2.88	1.06
Accounting	3.10	.95
Law	3.21	.89

A study of the standard deviations revealed that all of the writing subjects except speech had lower standard deviations (.57 to .79) than the other subjects except marketing (.74) and public relations ethics (.74). This degree of unity reinforced the

importance of written communication (the number one variable overall). It was interesting to note that business ethics had the third highest standard deviation (1.03), indicating that respondents attributed more importance to professional concerns (public relations ethics, .74) than to a variable over which the respondents had less control. However, the fifth highest standard deviation was public relations law (1.02), contrasted with business law (.89). This finding seemed to indicate that the legal ramifications of an organization's activities may have more importance than ethical concerns. The highest standard deviation, for meeting planning (1.12), suggested either that organizations had varying degrees of need for meeting planning or that the function was handled by a variety of departments.

Means in the skills/attributes areas (Appendix C) ranged, in personality, from 1.14 for motivation to 1.71 for appearance (Table 4.15); in general leadership, from 1.14 in written communication to 2.34 in finance and budgeting (Table 4.16); and, in people management, from 2.00 for group activities to 2.49 for supervising (Table 4.17). Variability in responses, as indicated by standard deviations, increased consistently within personality and general leadership areas as the importance of the variables decreased. In personality variables, for example, motivation's mean = 1.14, SD = .38; speech's mean = 1.39, SD = .54; and appearance's mean = 1.71, SD = .73. For general leadership variables, written communication's mean = 1.14, SD = .36; oral communication's mean = 1.39, SD = .58;

and finance/budget's mean = 2.47, SD = .90. There was little variability in the people management items.

Table 4.15.--Ranking of importance of personality variables (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Variable	Mean	SD
Motivation	1.14	.38
Responsibility	1.18	.38
Creativity	1.35	.49
Speech	1.39	.54
Manner	1.42	.57
Self-confidence	1.42	.58
Goal orientation	1.43	.61
Appearance	1.71	.73

Table 4.16.--Ranking of importance of general leadership variables (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Variable	Mean	SD
Written communication	1.14	.36
Planning/organizing	1.38	.56
Oral communication	1.39	.58
Time management	1.51	.63
Goal setting	1.55	.64
Problem solving	1.56	.69
Analytical skills	1.79	.76
Finance/budget	2.47	.90

Table 4.17.--Ranking of importance of people management variables
(1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Variable	Mean	SD
Group activities	2.00	.89
Negotiating	2.28	.98
Delegating	2.35	.95
Supervising	2.49	1.05

Table 4.18 reveals the means for cocurricular activities (Appendix C). Student media experience (newspaper, radio, and so on) was most important (management, 2.14; staff, 2.15), and fraternity/sorority activities were the least important (leadership, 3.73; member, 3.89). The three higher standard deviations were for management/leadership positions. The leadership in a fraternity/sorority figure (1.11) suggested that, despite the variable's low rating, some respondents thought that students benefited from participating in Greek organizations. Higher standard deviations for student agency membership and PRSSA leadership figures (1.03 and 1.16, respectively) may have reflected a variety of respondent familiarity with the agency concept and the PRSSA organization.

Table 4.18.--Ranking of importance of cocurricular activities variables (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Activity	Mean	SD
Student media management	2.14	.85
Student media staff	2.15	.83
Student agency management	2.57	1.03
Career club leadership	2.60	.86
Student agency staff	2.62	.89
Career club member	2.63	.81
PRSSA membership	2.64	.98
PRSSA leadership	2.68	1.16
Fraternity leadership	3.73	1.11
Fraternity member	3.89	.98

Under the academic situation/status category (Appendix C), means ranged from 1.95 for grade point average in the major to 2.84 for graduation from a specific school (Table 4.19). The higher standard deviations for accreditation of major (1.12) and graduation from a specific school (1.32) suggested that respondents assessed the importance of specific programs differently from the more general areas of kind of major (.74) and grade point averages (.73 and .74).

Table 4.19.--Ranking of importance of academic situation/status variables (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Variable	Mean	SD
Grade point average/major	1.95	.73
Grade point average/overall	2.21	.74
Kind of major	2.34	.74
Accreditation of major	2.37	1.12
Kind of minor	2.49	.77
Graduation from specific school	2.84	1.32

Further examination of the academic situation/status category included a study of the means for types of majors and minors. Table 4.20 reveals that public relations and print journalism studies were most important (means from 1.88 to 2.11), whereas liberal arts and business emphases were least important (means from 2.65 to 2.77). A study of the standard deviation revealed little difference in the variability of respondents' ratings.

Table 4.20.--Ranking of importance of majors and minors (1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Variable	Mean	SD
Public relations major	1.88	.90
Print journalism major	1.95	.88
Public relations minor	2.02	.95
Print journalism minor	2.11	.93
Speech major	2.47	.98
Speech minor	2.53	1.00
Broadcast journalism minor	2.63	.99
Broadcast journalism major	2.64	.91
Liberal arts major	2.65	.95
Business minor	2.69	1.01
Liberal arts minor	2.71	1.00
Business major	2.77	.92

Under work experience (Appendix C), means ranged from 1.57 for public-relations-related internships to 2.96 for internships without public relations experience (Table 4.21). It was interesting to note that the order of importance for non-public-relations-related work was the reverse of the public-relations-related work. Although most of the standard deviations increased as the importance of the

variables decreased (PR internship, mean = 1.57, SD = .69; nonPR internship, mean = 2.96, SD = 1.01), there was more variation in the emphasis placed on public-relations-related full-time experience (.86) than on public-relations-related part-time experience (.77), which had the same mean (1.79).

Table 4.21.--Ranking of importance of work experience variables
(1 = very important, 5 = unimportant).

Experience	Mean	SD
Internship/PR-related	1.57	.69
Part-time job/PR-related	1.79	.77
Full-time job/PR-related	1.79	.86
Volunteer/PR-related	1.81	.78
Volunteer/non-PR	2.62	.90
Full-time job/non-PR	2.72	.91
Part-time job/non-PR	2.75	.95
Internship/non-PR	2.96	1.01

Multivariate Analysis

Correlation matrices were constructed with data for each research question to determine whether analyses would be affected by items clustering together. According to Hair, Anderson, and Tatham (1987), correlations above .4 are important and those above .5 are very significant. Table 4.22 lists the statistically significant correlation figures > .4000. All were significant at the .01 level, better than the .05 significance level more commonly used for communications and educational research, according to Wimmer and Dominick (1991).

Table 4.22.--Significant correlations between variables, by research questions (only those > .4000 are listed).

Research Question/Variable	r	p
<u>Research Question 1</u>		
PR campaigns to PR cases	.4484	.01
Other communication overall to business overall	.4879	.01
Radio/television to mass communications	.6001	.01
Speech presentation to speech writing	.6527	.01
Finance to accounting	.6725	.01
Computer graphics to traditional graphics	.7157	.01
Psychology to sociology	.7535	.01
<u>Research Question 6</u>		
Skills/attributes to knowledge	.4349	.01
<u>Research Question 7</u>		
Employer recommendations to personal recommendations	.5825	.01
<u>Research Question 8</u>		
Business minor to speech minor	.4880	.01
Computer literacy to desktop publishing	.6456	.01
Class projects to cocurricular projects	.6784	.01

Note: No significant correlation figures were found for Research Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5.

The figures for Research Question 1 (examining the job applicant qualification category of knowledge areas, Appendix C) ranged from .0501 to .7535. Correlations > .4000 included public relations campaigns to public relations cases (.4844), other communications courses overall to business courses overall (.4879),

radio/television to mass communications (.6001), speech presentation to speech writing (.6527), finance to accounting (.6725), computer graphics to traditional graphics (.7157), and psychology to sociology (.7535). All the pairings except radio/television to mass communication were expected, and only one variable (computer graphics) was statistically significant in an ANOVA.

No statistically significant correlations (even at the .05 level) were found for Research Questions 2, 3, 4, and 5 (examining the job applicant qualification categories of skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, academic situation/status, work experience, Appendix C). The statistically significant correlation figures for Research Question 6 (regarding overall ratings of the five job applicant qualification categories) ranged from .1711 to .4349. The latter (the only one $> .4000$) was for skills to knowledge. Neither factor was statistically significant in an ANOVA. (See Appendix H for more details.)

For Research Question 7 (examining factors organizations use in hiring practices, Appendix C), statistically significant correlations ranged from .1658 to .5825. The latter (the only one $> .4000$) was an expected relationship between employer recommendations and personal recommendations. The employer recommendations variable was statistically significant in an ANOVA.

Statistically significant figures for Research Question 8 (examining factors that, if present, would cause further consideration of an applicant, Appendix C) ranged from .0630 to

.6784. The three correlations $> .4000$ were expected. They were business minor to speech minor (.4844), computer literacy to desktop publishing (.6456), and class project to curriculum project (.6784). Desktop publishing was significant in an ANOVA.

All but two of the significant correlations found were expected, and correlations did not appear to affect the analyses of variance. Only three variables of all those involved in statistically significant correlations were statistically significant in ANOVAs. And, in each case, the paired-variables rankings were significantly different statistically.

Multivariate analysis of variance and the Tukey-HSD procedure were used to determine statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) in the ways that types of organizations (independent variables) rated the importance of variables in the seven categories (dependent variables) (Appendix C). The Tukey-HSD procedure is a multiple-contrast method that reduces the likelihood of making a Type I error (Glass & Hopkins, 1984, p. 373). A significance level of .05 was used in all analyses.

Statistically significant differences were found in responses to 24 variables, including 15 in the knowledge category, 1 in the skills/attributes category, 3 in the academic situation/status category, and 5 in the hiring practices, further consideration category. Table 4.23 lists these differences and the number of pairs of organization types in which differences were found.

Table 4.23.--Variables for which significant differences were found between types of organizations. (Number of pairs of organizations)

In Knowledge Category--

Public relations:	Overall (1) Case studies (1) Ethics (2)
Journalism:	Radio/TV (1) Computer graphics (3) Communications theory (1) Ethics (3) Photojournalism (2)
Other communication courses:	Organizational behavior (1) Meeting planning (2)
Business:	Management (2) Economics (3) Law (1) Ethics (1) Personnel (2)

In Skills/Attributes Category--

People management:	Negotiating (2)
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In Academic Situation/Status Category--

Broadcast journalism major (1) Business minor (1) Graduation from a specific school (2)

In Further Consideration Category--

Desktop publishing (5) Photography (1) Video production (1) Business minor (4) Proficiency in a second language (1)

Counseling agencies rated more variables higher than other types of organizations (11). Education institutions gave 9 variables higher ratings; health institutions, 7; corporate organizations, 5; and nonprofit organizations, 3. Table 4.24 reveals the statistically significant differences by pairs of organization types.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's knowledge differ according to type of employing organization?

A MANOVA was executed for each knowledge area (public relations, liberal arts and sciences, journalism, other communications courses, business) using the overall rating and individual subjects under the area as dependent variables (Appendix C) and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Table 4.25 reveals that statistically significant differences were found in all areas except liberal arts. Probability levels = public relations, .000; journalism, .000; other communications courses, .006; and business, .000. Although an examination of the ANOVAs (Table 4.25) uncovered 18 variables that were statistically significant, use of the Tukey-HSD procedure revealed no statistically significant differences between organizations for public relations law and business overall. Also, although 26 statistically significant differences were found, only 16 involved variables that either type of organization rated important to very important (< 2.01).

Table 4.24.--Statistically significant differences in ratings of variables, by paired organization types.

Type of Organization	Variables Rated Higher
Corporate Health	Second language, desktop publishing, business minor (further consideration) Radio/TV, computer graphics, photojournalism
Corporate Counseling	None Management, broadcast journalism major
Corporate Education	Journalism ethics, desktop publishing, business minor (further consideration) Public relations ethics, computer graphics, meeting planning, organizational behavior, personnel
Corporate Nonprofit	Negotiating, business minor (further consideration) Meeting planning
Health Counseling	Computer graphics, photojournalism, photography, desktop publishing Economics, graduation from specific school
Health Education	Journalism ethics Public relations overall, public relations ethics
Health Nonprofit	Negotiating None
Counseling Education	Communications theory, economics, graduation from specific school, business minor (further consideration) Desktop publishing, video production
Counseling Nonprofit	Public relations case studies, management, economics, business law, business minor (academic) Desktop publishing
Education Nonprofit	Business ethics, personnel Journalism ethics

Table 4.25.--MANOVA statistics for knowledge areas.

	Wilks's Lambda Value	F-Value	Prob. Level
Public relations	.62959	2.42960	.000
Liberal arts	.73573	1.19486	.169
Journalism	.58593	2.56222	.000
Other communications	.75957	1.77676	.000
Business	.62259	1.88589	.000
Public relations--Overall		2.81573	.026
Case studies		2.62460	.036
Law		2.66406	.034
Ethics		4.44684	.002
Journalism--Radio/TV		.92566	.042
Computer graphics		6.94994	.000
Communications theory		3.27021	.024
Law		2.88521	.024
Ethics		5.83988	.000
Photojournalism		3.66060	.007
Other Communications--Organizational behavior		3.47840	.009
Meeting planning		3.34773	.011
Business--Overall		2.82730	.026
Management		3.79499	.005
Economics		2.76070	.029
Law		2.55981	.040
Ethics		3.12874	.016
Personnel		5.72025	.000

Note: Only statistically significant figures ($p < .05$) are included in the subject ANOVAs.

Of those 16 differences, 6 of the higher ratings were attributed to Counseling, 6 to Education, and 4 to Health. Table 4.26 reveals the means for the statistically significant differences. Counseling rated management higher than Corporate and Nonprofit and economics higher than Health, Education, and Nonprofit.

Education rated public relations studies overall higher than Health; public relations ethics higher than Corporate and Health; computer graphics and organizational behavior higher than Corporate; and business ethics higher than Nonprofit. Health rated computer graphics higher than Corporate and Counseling; public relations cases higher than Corporate; and journalism ethics higher than Education.

Among the factors that did not receive high ratings, Corporate rated journalism ethics higher than Education, and Health rated photojournalism higher than Corporate and Counseling. Counseling rated public relations cases higher than Nonprofit; Education rated communication theory higher than Nonprofit, meeting planning higher than Corporate, and personnel higher than Corporate and Nonprofit; and Nonprofit rated journalism ethics higher than Education and meeting planning higher than Corporate.

Health institutions appeared to be more interested in journalism subjects, whereas counseling agencies ascribed more importance to business courses. Education institutions placed some emphasis in all four knowledge areas. (For more details, see Appendix I.)

Table 4.26.--Means for statistically significant differences in ratings of knowledge variables by pairs of organizations.

	High Rank Organiz.	Mean	Low Rank Organiz.	Mean
<u>Important Variables^a</u>				
Communication theory	Counseling	2.0000	Education	2.8125
Management		1.6875	Corporate	2.5000
		1.6875	Nonprofit	2.5294
Economics		2.0000	Health	2.6411
		2.0000	Education	2.6607
		2.0000	Nonprofit	2.7647
Public rel. overall	Education	2.0000	Health	2.3200
Public rel. ethics		1.3214	Corporate	1.8261
		1.3214	Health	1.7288
Computer graphics		1.8929	Corporate	2.4565
Organiz. behavior		1.9464	Corporate	2.6304
Business ethics		1.7143	Nonprofit	2.4118
Radio/TV	Health	1.9513	Corporate	2.4565
Computer graphics		1.6441	Corporate	2.4565
		1.6411	Counseling	2.5000
Journalism ethics		1.8814	Education	3.3571
<u>Other Variables^b</u>				
Journalism ethics	Corporate	2.0217	Education	3.3571
Photojournalism	Health	2.1017	Corporate	2.6304
		2.1017	Counseling	2.8125
Public rel. cases	Counseling	2.1875	Nonprofit	3.0000
Communication theory	Education	2.8125	Nonprofit	3.5588
Meeting planning		2.3214	Corporate	2.9565
Personnel		2.4464	Corporate	3.1739
		2.4464	Nonprofit	3.1739
Journalism ethics	Nonprofit	2.0588	Education	3.3571
Meeting planning		2.1471	Corporate	2.9565

Note: More details are included in Appendix I.

^aAt least one mean < 2.01.

^bNeither mean < 2.01.

Research Question 2

Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's skills and attributes differ according to type of employing organization?

A MANOVA was executed for each skills/attributes area (personality, general leadership, people management), using the overall rating and individual items under the area as dependent variables (Appendix C) and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Table 4.27 indicates that statistically significant differences occurred in the personality and people management areas (probability levels of .030 and .007, respectively). However, examination of the ANOVAs uncovered no indications of statistical significance under personality and only one under people management (.005). Use of the Tukey-HSD procedure determined two significant differences: both Health and Corporate rated negotiating higher than Nonprofit (means = Health, 2.0399; Corporate, 2.1522; and Nonprofit, 2.7941).

Research Question 3

Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities differ according to type of employing organization?

A MANOVA was executed using the 10 variables in the cocurricular activities category (Appendix C) as dependent variables and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Because Wilks's lambda was so close to the

.05 probability level (Wilks's lambda value = .74286, F-value = 1.38048, probability level = .054), an examination of the ANOVAs was made. However, no statistically significant differences were found in employer expectations regarding cocurricular activities.

Table 4.27.--MANOVA statistics for skills/attributes areas.

	Wilks's Lambda Value	F-Value	Prob. Level
Personality	.76189	1.50854	.030
General leadership	.80200	1.25296	.150
People management	.82758	1.96975	.007
Personality--None			
People management--Negotiating		3.80145	.005

Note: Only statistically significant figures ($p < .05$) are included in the ANOVAs.

Research Question 4

Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's work experience differ according to type of employing organization?

A MANOVA was executed using the eight variables in the work experience category (Appendix C) as dependent variables and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Because Wilks's lambda was $> .05$ (Wilks's lambda value = .81575, F-value = 1.15373, probability level = .249),

it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in employer expectations regarding areas of work experience.

Research Question 5

Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's academic situation and status differ according to type of employing organization?

A MANOVA was executed using the 18 variables in the academic situation/status category (Appendix C) as dependent variables and the organization-type independent variables. Wilks's lambda was statistically significant (.001), and examination of the ANOVAs pinpointed three variables where there might be statistically significant differences: graduation from a specific school (.021), broadcast journalism major (.027), and business minor (.012). Table 4.28 contains a summary of the results. Use of the Tukey-HSD procedure determined that Counseling rated graduation from a specific school higher than Health and Corporate, a broadcast journalism major higher than Corporate, and a business minor higher than Nonprofit. Table 4.29 contains the means for the statistically significant differences. (For more details, see Appendix J.)

Table 4.28.--MANOVA statistics for academic situation/status category.

	Wilks's Lambda Value	F-Value	Prob. Level
	.57169	1.68438	.001
Graduation from specific school		2.96918	.021
Broadcast journalism major		2.81038	.027
Business minor		3.32277	.012

Note: Only statistically significant figures ($p < .05$) are included.

Table 4.29.--Means for statistically significant differences in ratings of academic situation/status variables by pairs of organizations.

Variable	High Rank Organiz.	Mean	Low Rank Organiz.	Mean
Graduation/specific school	Counseling	1.9375	Education	3.0893
		1.9375	Health	2.9831
Broadcast journalism major	Counseling	2.1250	Corporate	2.9565
Business minor	Counseling	2.1250	Nonprofit	3.0000

Note: More details are included in Appendix J.

Research Question 6

Across different types of organizations, are certain job applicant qualification factors rated more important than others?

A MANOVA was executed using the five job applicant qualification variables (knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experience, academic situation/status) as dependent variables and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Because Wilks's lambda was $> .05$ (Wilks's lambda value = .89416, F-value = 1.15075, probability level = .292), it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in the magnitude of importance employers gave to five areas of job applicant qualifications.

Data from all respondents were combined to determine the frequencies and percentages of response and the means and standard deviations of importance for the five categories across all organization types (Table 4.30). Skills/attributes was the only category that ranked important to very important (mean < 2.01); 208 respondents, more than 97%, gave that rating. In contrast, only 70 (less than one-third of the respondents) ranked the cocurricular activity category as important to very important (mean = 2.75). A study of the standard deviations uncovered little difference in the variability of respondents' ratings. The lack of variance within subject categories was revealed by a repeated measures ANOVA analysis where F-values ranged from .066 for work-academic situation/status to .755 for knowledge-academic situation/status.

Table 4.30.--Univariate statistics for responses in job qualification categories.

Category	n ^a	% ^a	Mean	SD
Skills/attributes	208	97.2	1.59	.55
Work experience	156	72.9	2.14	.65
Knowledge	197	93.0	2.30	.59
Academic situation/status	125	58.4	2.38	.69
Cocurricular activity	70	32.7	2.75	.73

Maximum n = 214.

^aOf respondents ranking category important to very important:
mean < 2.01.

Research Question 7

What organizational employment decision factors are most important in hiring recent public relations graduates?

A MANOVA was executed using the nine hiring decision factors (Appendix C) as dependent variables and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Wilks's lambda was statistically significant (Wilks's lambda value = .76851, F-value = 1.50380, probability level = .031). However, examination of the ANOVAs revealed no statistically significant differences in the hiring factors used by the five types of organizations.

A repeated measures ANOVA and paired t-tests performed on combined data from all respondents were used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in the importance of the nine hiring decision factors as they were ranked by means. (See Table 4.31.)

Table 4.31.--Ranking by means for hiring decision factors.

Variable	Mean
Applicant/job match ^a	1.4813
Work experience ^a	1.5327
Future in organization ^a	1.8178
Employer recommendations ^a	1.9393
Timing of application ^b	2.1729
Job market ^b	2.2523
Baccalaureate qualifications ^b	2.3551
Personal recommendations ^c	2.5467
Number of degrees ^d	3.1729

1 = very important, 5 = unimportant

Note: Different superscripts indicate significant differences in importance.

There were no statistically significant differences between the importance given to the first four factors and the importance given to the next three variables. However, the ratings for the last two variables varied in a statistically significant way. Therefore, the most important decision factors in hiring entry-level public relations employees were job/applicant match, work experience, applicant's future in the organization, and employer recommendations, all of which had means < 2.00 (on a five-point scale where 1 = very important and 5 = unimportant). The least important factor was number of degrees held by the applicant (mean = 3.1729). Although its mean was closer to the middle-importance-factor group of timing of application, the job market, and the applicant's baccalaureate

qualifications, the personal recommendations variable was significantly less important statistically.

Research Question 8

What additional applicant qualifications and organizational standards, if present, are most likely to affect further consideration of the applicant for employment?

A MANOVA was executed using the 12 items in the hiring practices, further consideration category (Appendix C) as dependent variables and the respondent data (grouped by five types of organizations) as independent variables. Wilks's lambda was statistically significant (.000), and examination of the ANOVAs indicated six variables where there might be statistically significant differences--computer literacy, desktop publishing, business minor, second language proficiency, photography, and video production (Table 4.32).

Means of the statistically significant differences by pairs of organization types, as uncovered by use of the Tukey-HSD procedure, are revealed in Table 4.33. (The procedure did not find any statistically significant differences in the importance respondents attributed to computer literacy.) Although 12 statistically significant differences were found, only 4 involved variables that either type of organization rated important to very important (< 2.01). Corporate rated desktop publishing higher than Health and Education. Both Education and Nonprofit rated desktop publishing higher than Counseling.

Table 4.32.--MANOVA statistics for hiring practices, further consideration category.

	Wilks's Lambda Value	F-Value	Prob. Level
	.55218	2.61560	.000
Computer literacy		2.62639	.036
Desktop publishing		8.62501	.000
Photography		3.42084	.010
Video production		3.50746	.009
Second language proficiency		3.05268	.018
Business minor		6.90610	.000

Note: Only statistically significant figures ($p < .05$) are included.

For the factors that did not receive high ratings, Health rated desktop publishing and photography higher than Counseling; Education rated video production higher than Counseling; and Corporate rated second language proficiency higher than Health and a business minor higher than Health, Education, and Nonprofit. Counseling also rated a business minor higher than Education.

Skill in desktop publishing and a business minor appeared to be more important factors for entry-level applicants seeking public relations positions in corporations than for those applying to other types of organizations. Desktop publishing skill was least important as a job qualification in counseling agencies. (For more details, see Appendix K.)

Table 4.33.--Means for statistically significant differences in ratings of hiring, further consideration variables by pairs of organizations.

Variable	High Rank Organiz.	Mean	Low Rank Organiz.	Mean
<u>Important Variables^a</u>				
Desktop publishing	Corporate	1.5254	Health	2.1957
		1.5254	Education	1.7143
	Education Nonprofit	1.7143	Counseling	2.6250
		1.8529	Counseling	2.6250
<u>Other Variables^b</u>				
Business minor	Corporate	2.4783	Health	3.2712
		2.4783	Education	3.3393
		2.4783	Nonprofit	3.2647
	Counseling	2.5000	Education	3.3393
Second language	Corporate	3.3043	Health	3.8475
Desktop publishing	Health	2.1957	Counseling	2.6250
Photography	Health	2.2712	Counseling	3.0625
Video production	Education	2.4643	Counseling	3.2500

Note: More details are included in Appendix K.

^aAt least one mean < 2.01.

^bNeither mean < 2.01.

A repeated measures ANOVA and paired t-tests performed on combined data from all respondents were used to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between organization types concerning whether the presence of any of the 12 variables would cause further consideration of a job applicant. Table 4.34 contains the ranking of the variables by means.

Table 4.34.--Ranking by means for hiring, further consideration variables.

Variable	Mean
Computer literacy ^a	1.7056
Additional internships ^a	1.7804
Desktop publishing ^a	1.8505
Cocurricular projects ^b	2.1682
Class projects ^c	2.3785
Higher grade point average ^c	2.4195
Photography ^c	2.4907
Certification of program ^c	2.5421
Video production ^c	2.7804
Business minor ^d	3.0607
Speech minor ^d	3.0701
Second language proficiency ^e	3.6075

1 = very important, 5 = unimportant

Note: Different superscripts indicate significant differences in importance.

No significant differences were found between the first three variables, between the fifth through ninth variables, or between the tenth and eleventh variables. Therefore, the qualifications most likely to cause further consideration of an applicant were computer literacy, additional internships, and desktop publishing skill, all

of which had means < 2.01 (on a five-point scale where 1 = almost always true and 5 = almost never true). The variable least likely to influence further consideration of a candidate was proficiency in a second language (mean = 3.6075). More experience in cocurricular projects was more important than the cluster of more class projects, higher grade point average, video and photography skills, and special accreditation/certification of the academic program. And variables in that cluster were more important than either a business or a speech minor.

Summary of Statistically Significant Findings

The analysis failed to show significant differences between types of organizations in the overall ratings of the five job applicant qualification categories (knowledge, skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experience, academic situation/status). Organizations differed in the importance they placed on 15 knowledge variables, the skill of negotiating, graduation from a specific school, and the choice of a broadcast journalism major or a business minor. In the hiring practices categories, there were no significant differences in hiring factors, but organizations differed in their ratings of five factors that cause further consideration of an applicant (desktop publishing, still photography, video production, a business minor, and proficiency in a foreign language). Therefore, among the seven categories, it appears that decisions related to knowledge and further considerations factors can be tailored to organizations; others cannot.

When the data from all respondents were combined, four of nine hiring factors (job/applicant match, work experience, future in the organization, employer recommendations) were important to very important (means < 2.01). Three of 12 factors (computer literacy, additional internships, desktop publishing skill) were usually or almost always true (means < 2.01) as factors in further consideration of an applicant.

Other Findings

The back of the survey instrument (Appendix C) provided a place for respondents to make additional comments about public relations curricula, educational activities, and the employability of public relations graduates. Of the 214 survey respondents, 109 (50.93%) wrote comments. Table 4.35 provides a summary of the comments grouped into 16 categories by key words. Six categories were mentioned by at least 10 people: writing skills (33), experience (20), knowledge of business (16), internship (13), being resourceful (13), and people skills (10).

More than 30% of those making additional comments included remarks in two areas: writing skills and a combination of the experience and internship categories. A corporate vice president wrote:

Clear thinking is prerequisite to clear writing. The ability to write well (and to identify strong and weak writing) distinguishes people in this field--and overrides academic, professional affiliation/certification and personality factors. Ethics and credibility plus energy and commitment to "organizational" (not just personal) goals are important.

Table 4.35.--Written comments from survey respondents, categorized by key words.

Quality/Skill/Knowledge/ Activity Advocated	Number Mentioning	Percent Mentioning
Writing	33	30.27
Experience	20	18.34
Business	16	14.67
Internship	13	11.92
Resourceful	13	11.92
People skills	10	9.17
Speaking	7	6.42
Planning	6	5.50
Broad interests	4	3.66
Creativity	4	3.66
Generalist	4	3.66
Professional enthusiasm	4	3.66
Advanced journalism	2	1.83
Computer	2	1.83
Reading	2	1.83
Leadership	1	.91

Note: The total number of respondents who made comments = 109.
Some comments included more than one category.

And a director of communication for a health care institution explained the importance of experience:

If the applicant has a portfolio of work, outside of classroom assignments, this is a clear advantage in the interview process. If the applicant has already participated in a pr internship, it shows motivation. Writing for the school paper also demonstrates initiative as well as responsibility to meet deadlines. The more computer-literate, the better. Desktop publishing will give the applicant the edge over another candidate.

Other comments are included in Appendix L.

The number of written comments suggested that the respondents manifested a high level of interest in the public relations

education and experience of entry-level job applicants. A further indication of interest was that 147 survey respondents (68.69%) requested a summary of the study's results. The requests included 86% of the corporate representatives; 68.75%, health; 72.41%, counseling, 80%, education; and 63.63%, nonprofit.

The summary of the study, major findings, conclusions and discussion, implications for the field, recommendations for further research, and reflections on the study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF STUDY, MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As public relations educators initiate curriculum reforms at their educational institutions, they need information that will help their graduates meet the expectations of the emerging public relations profession and the needs of the organizations that will employ them. Although numerous studies have been conducted in the past 30 years, a review of the literature (Chapter II) revealed many inconsistencies in findings regarding public relations practitioner expectations, and no public-relations-related studies dealt with the employment decision factors used by organizations when they hire entry-level people. Through this study the investigator sought to provide a more balanced exploration of practitioner expectations by soliciting response from a wider variety of potential employers and by including categories of response on the importance of skills/attributes, cocurricular activities, work experiences, and academic situation/status, as well as the traditional research area of kinds of knowledge. Survey participants also were asked to indicate the influence of 20 hiring decision factors upon their employment decisions.

The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to examine job applicant qualification factors that affect the employability of public relations graduates and to determine which organizational employment decision factors are used in hiring recent graduates. A secondary purpose was to determine whether certification of a public relations curriculum by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) would affect employability of an institution's public relations graduates.

The design of the study used a direct mail survey to potential employers to obtain information that could guide public relations faculty members as they revise curriculum and course content, adjust student advising practices, restructure public-relations-related cocurricular activities, and decide whether to apply for PRSA certification. The population for the study was organizations in Michigan that employ at least one public relations practitioner who maintains membership in a Michigan chapter of any of the 12 member associations of the North American Public Relations Council (NAPRC). Most previous studies were limited to members in the two largest NAPRC organizations: PRSA and the International Association of Business Communicators. This study also included substantial response from health care organizations and educational institutions (Table 3.2).

A two-tiered approach to selecting the sample generated a response rate well above the 47% average cited by Yu and Cooper (1983). Representatives of 450 organizations (of 851 identified from NAPRC memberships) were asked to participate in the survey.

More than 62% (282) responded. After 26 were eliminated due to duplications and nonapplicability to the study, 256 organization representatives were included in the actual survey sample. Of these, 214 (83.59%) returned usable surveys; 10 surveys were rejected for lack of completeness. Tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 revealed the consistency in representation by professional affiliation and organization type throughout the sampling and response processes.

Questions of the Study

To respond to the purpose of this study, eight questions were developed. The first six questions evaluated five categories of qualifications that may be possessed by recent public relations graduates. The seventh research question appraised the relative importance of nine organizational employment decision factors. The eighth research question assessed the likely effect of additional graduate qualifications and organizational standards on employability. Certification was one of the academic situation/status variables under Research Question 5 and one of the organizational employment decision factors included in Research Question 8. Correlation matrices, MANOVA, ANOVA, repeated measures ANOVAs, and the Tukey-HSD procedure were used to determine statistically significant differences across types of employing organizations. For Research Questions 7 and 8, repeated measures ANOVAs and paired t-tests were conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in the relative importance of factors

indicated by the rankings of their means. All analyses were conducted at the .05 significance level. Percentages of high ratings, by variable and organization type, are revealed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1.--Percentages of respondents rating variables important to very important (mean < 2.0) by organization type.

Variable	Corp. (%)	Health (%)	Counsel. (%)	Educ. (%)	Nonprofit (%)
<u>Job Qualification Categories</u>					
Knowledge	56.5	62.9	81.3	69.6	61.7
Skills/attributes	100.0	95.0	93.8	98.2	97.0
Cocur. activities	32.6	22.0	25.1	42.9	38.2
Acad. sit./status	61.8	54.2	68.8	60.7	55.9
Work experience	71.7	66.1	75.0	75.0	82.3
<u>Knowledge Areas</u>					
Public relations	63.0	66.1	81.3	80.4	64.7
Lib. arts/scien.	17.4	25.4	37.5	39.3	20.6
Journalism	63.0	81.5	81.3	78.6	76.5
Other communic.	58.7	74.6	75.0	74.8	70.6
Business	39.1	42.6	81.3	62.5	38.2
<u>Majors</u>					
Public relations	71.7	91.5	75.1	78.6	78.4
Journalism	65.0	81.3	100.0	71.5	76.5
Speech	37.0	59.4	37.5	58.9	52.9
Business	39.1	39.0	72.1	32.2	35.3
<u>Accreditation/Certification</u>					
Acad. category	39.1	42.4	43.8	62.5	47.1
Hiring category	41.3	42.4	37.5	60.7	41.2

Question 1: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's knowledge differ according to type of employing organization? ← ANSW.

Each type of employing organization rated at least one course significantly higher statistically than another organization type. Education respondents rated overall public relations knowledge and seven courses higher (public relations ethics, business ethics, computer graphics, organizational behavior, meeting planning, personnel, communication theory). Four courses were rated higher by counseling representatives (communication theory, management, economics, public relations cases) and by health representatives (radio/TV, computer graphics, journalism ethics, photojournalism). Respondents from nonprofit organizations rated two courses (journalism ethics, meeting planning) more highly, and those from corporations gave one course (journalism ethics) a higher rating. See Table 4.26 and Appendix I for details on statistically significant differences.

Question 2: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's skills and attributes differ according to type of employing organization? ← A 119

Among responses to the 23 variables in the skills/attributes category, only two statistically significant differences were revealed. Both health (mean = 2.04) and corporate (mean = 2.15) rated negotiating higher than nonprofit (mean = 2.79).

Question 3: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities differ according to type of employing organization?

No statistically significant differences were revealed in employer expectations regarding a job applicant's participation in curriculum-related cocurricular activities. ← AN

Question 4: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's work experience differ according to type of employing organization? ← AN

No statistically significant differences were revealed in employer expectations regarding a job applicant's work experience.

Question 5: Do employer expectations concerning a public relations applicant's academic situation and status differ according to type of employing organization? ← AN

Only one difference was revealed in employer expectations regarding a job applicant's academic situation/status that was both statistically significant and rated important to very important (mean < 2.01) by either organization type. Counseling representatives rated graduation from a specific school higher (mean = 1.94) than respondents from both health (mean = 2.98) and education (mean = 3.09). ← AN

Question 6: Across different types of organizations, are certain job applicant qualification factors rated more important than others? ← AN

No statistically significant differences were revealed in the magnitude of importance given to the five job applicant qualification factors. ← AN

Question 7: What organizational employment decision factors are most important in hiring recent public relations graduates? ← AN

Four organizational employment decision factors were significantly more important statistically than the other five when the responses of all respondents were analyzed. The factors were ← AN

the match between the applicant's qualifications and the requirements of the job, the applicant's work experience, the applicant's future in the organization, and employer recommendations. There were no statistically significant differences in the way the five types of organizations used the employment decision factors.

Question 8: What additional applicant qualifications and organizational standards, if present, are most likely to affect further consideration of the applicant for employment?

Three additional qualification/standard factors were significantly more important statistically than the other nine when the responses of all respondents were analyzed. The factors were computer literacy, additional internships, and desktop publishing skills. Twelve statistically significant differences were revealed regarding the ratings of factors by the five types of organizations.

Only desktop publishing skills were rated important to very important by at least one of the organizations. Analysis revealed (means in Table 4.33) that corporate representatives valued desktop publishing more highly than those from health and education. And respondents from both education and nonprofit attributed more importance to the skills than did those from counseling.

Among other statistically significant further consideration variables (means < 2.01, included in Table 4.33), corporate rated a business minor higher than health, education, and nonprofit; counseling also rated the minor higher than education. Corporate gave a higher rating to proficiency in a second language than did

health. Counseling rated desktop publishing and photography lower than health and video production lower than education.

Findings Regarding the Importance of Categories and Variables as Rated by All Respondents

To revise curriculum and course content, restructure curriculum-related cocurricular activities, and prepare general advising guidelines and materials, it was important to determine how all respondents ranked the job applicant qualification categories and their variables. Variables were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale on which 1 = very important and 5 = unimportant.

Five Job Applicant Categories and Five Knowledge Areas

Skills/attributes, with a mean of 1.59, was the only category rated high (important to very important, means < 2.01). Although 97.2% of the respondents rated skills/attributes high, fewer than one-third gave that importance to cocurricular activities. Although none of the knowledge areas were rated high, more than two-thirds of the respondents gave high ratings to journalism (77.5%), other communications courses (71.5%), and public relations (69.6%). Only 27.6% of the respondents rated liberal arts high.

Knowledge. Public relations writing and English composition were the fourth and fifth highest-rated of the 140 variables overall. Other subjects (by category) that ranked important to very important (means < 2.01) were public relations--ethics and principles; journalism--editing, reporting, mass communications, and ethics; other communications--speech presentation and speech

writing; and business--marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior.

Means for subjects within the four other knowledge areas had ranges at least twice as high as other communications courses (.55): journalism, 1.35; business, 1.55; public relations, 1.65; and liberal arts, 2.44. See Tables 4.10 to 4.14 for subject rankings within categories.

Table 5.2 reveals the ranking of subjects in the most important and least important levels. Appendix M contains the ranking of subjects at the moderate importance level. Of the 13 subjects in the most important level (means < 2.01), 4 were in journalism, 3 in public relations, 3 in business, 2 in other communication, and 1 in liberal arts. All but two courses in the least important level (means > 3.00) were liberal arts subjects; accounting and business law were the exceptions.

More than 90% of the respondents rated public relations writing, English composition (liberal arts), and journalism editing important to very important (means < 2.01). The importance of writing also was emphasized when more than 86% of the respondents rated reporting high and more than 73% gave high ratings to speech writing. Also, the importance of writing was mentioned on 33 of the 109 surveys that contained written comments. The importance of ethics was revealed by the percentage of respondents who rated the subject high in three areas: public relations, 87.4%; journalism, 80.4%; and business, 67.8%.

Table 5.2.--Ranking of individual knowledge subjects by importance.

Subject (Knowledge Area)	Mean
<u>Most Important (Means < 2.01)</u>	
Writing (PR)	1.29
English composition (LA)	1.31
Editing (J)	1.48
Ethics (PR)	1.62
Reporting (J)	1.64
Marketing (B)	1.66
Principles (PR)	1.72
Mass communications (J)	1.76
Ethics (J)	1.79
Speech presentation (OCC)	1.91
Advertising (B)	1.92
Speech writing (OCC)	2.00
Consumer behavior (B)	2.00
<u>Least Important (Means 3.01-4.00)</u>	
Accounting (B)	3.10
Philosophy (LA)	3.14
Music/art (LA)	3.15
Law (B)	3.21
Foreign language (LA)	3.28
Anthropology (LA)	3.60
Lab science (LA)	3.75

Key: B = business, J = journalism, LA = liberal arts and sciences,
OCC = other communications courses, PR = public relations.

Note: For subjects of moderate importance, see Appendix M.

Skills and attributes. Eight of the 10 highest-rated variables in the study were from the skills/attributes category. Written communication and motivation (means = 1.14) were the highest two. Written communication, motivation, responsibility, and creativity were rated important to very important (means < 2.01) by 99% of the respondents.

All but one respondent gave the personality area a high rating, and all but eight rated the general leadership area highly. All variables under personality and all but one under general leadership (finance/budgeting) were rated important to very important. Only one variable under people management (group activities) was rated high, but 10 written comments were included on the surveys regarding the importance of people skills. Showing responsibility was mentioned in 13 written comments.

Cocurricular Activities

Involvement in student media (college newspaper, radio, and so on) received the highest ratings (means of 2.14 for management and 2.15 for staff) in the cocurricular activities category. However, only two-thirds of the respondents rated participation in student media important to very important. Fraternity/sorority leadership and fraternity/sorority membership were the 138th and 140th variables (of 140 overall). They were rated high by only 13.5% and 9.8% of the respondents, respectively. High standard deviations for participation in PRSSA activities and student-run public relations agencies indicated that respondents possessed a varying degree of familiarity with these activities.

Academic situation/status. Three variables in the academic situation/status category were rated important to very important (means < 2.01): public relations major (1.88), print journalism major (1.95), and grade point average in the major (1.95). Of the respondents, 79.9% rated both the public relations major and grade

point average in the major high, and 75.3% gave print journalism a high rating. The overall grade point average variable was rated high by only 68.2%. Graduation from a specific school received a high ranking from only 22.5% of the respondents.

Public relations minor (mean = 2.02) ranked third, and print journalism minor ranked fourth among the majors and minors. Speech major and minor ranked fifth and sixth, and broadcast journalism minor and major ranked seventh and eighth. The business major ranked last (2.77), below the liberal arts major (2.65), business minor (2.69), and the liberal arts minor (2.71). However, both the business major and minor received important to very important ratings (38.8% and 39.2%, respectively) from more respondents than the liberal arts major (37.4%) and liberal arts minor (35.6%). The need for an understanding of business was mentioned in written comments on 16 surveys.

Work experience. All types of public-relations-related work experience were rated important to very important (means < 2.01). Percentages of respondents rating the experiences high were, for internships, 91%; part-time work, 83%; volunteer activities, 82%; and full-time work, 81%. The four kinds of non-public-relations-related work experience received high rankings from only 39.9% (volunteer activity) to 34.5% (internship) of the respondents.

Accreditation or certification of the major/emphasis. Accreditation of a program (mean = 2.37) received a rating of important to very important from 102 respondents (47.7%). It was ranked fourth

of six primary factors under academic situation/status and was 78th of 140 variables overall.

Ninety-nine respondents (46.3%) said that special certification of a program (mean = 2.54) would usually or almost always cause further consideration of an applicant. (Certification of public relations programs is offered by the PRSA.) The variable was ranked 8th of 12 in the hiring, further consideration category and was 94th of 140 variables overall.

Respondents from education institutions gave the greatest percentage of important to very important ratings (means < 2.01) to accreditation/certification of major/emphasis under academic situation/status (62.5%) and to accreditation/certification of an academic program as a hiring factor (60.7%). Other percentages for the variable ranged from 39.1% (corporate) to 47.1% (nonprofit) and for the hiring variable, from 37.5% (counseling) to 42.4% (health).

Conclusions and Discussion

Because of the disparity of information given in earlier research and opinion pieces (cited in the literature review of Chapter II), it was not surprising that the findings of this study paralleled some of those conclusions and refuted others.

Emphasis on Writing

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that employers expect job applicants for entry-level public relations positions to have excellent writing skills. Written communication (mean = 1.14) was the highest-rated variable of the 140 in the

survey. Public relations writing (1.29) was 4th; English composition (1.31), 5th; journalism editing (1.48), 14th; reporting (1.64), 24th; and speech writing (2.00), 44th. Thirty-three respondents (of 109 including written comments on the surveys) specifically mentioned the importance of writing skills. This finding paralleled the results of many studies over the past 29 years (e.g., Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987; Ripton, 1963).

Interest in Ethics

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that employers want job applicants for entry-level public relations positions to have a knowledge of ethical issues. Three courses on ethics were rated important to very important (means < 2.01) by at least two-thirds of the respondents. Percentages included 87.4% for public relations ethics; 80.4%, journalism ethics; and 67.8%, business ethics. This study confirmed the suggestion of several recent studies (e.g., Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1987; Grunig, 1989; Turk, 1989) that more emphasis should be placed on ethics.

Influence of Journalism

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that employers of entry-level public relations practitioners attribute a high degree of importance to journalism studies. Journalism received the highest rating of the five areas of knowledge (mean =

2.05), and 77.5% of the survey respondents rated the variable important to very important (mean < 2.01). The traditional print journalism major ranked second among the six kinds of majors with a mean of 1.95; the public relations major was first with a mean of 1.88. All types of employing organizations rated the journalism major either first or second. The results of this study did not support the concerns of earlier studies (e.g., Culbertson, 1986; Kalupa & Allen, 1982; Toran, 1978) that there was too much emphasis on journalism in public relations curricula.

Importance of Business, Speech, and Other Nonprint Communication Studies

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that employers highly value knowledge and skills in only a few business, speech, and other nonprint communications areas. These include marketing (mean = 1.66), advertising (1.92), consumer behavior (2.00), speech presentation (1.91), speech writing (2.00), people management in group activities (2.00), and desktop publishing (1.85).

The results of this study did not support the concerns of Baxter (1980), Baskin and Aronoff (1983), Williams (1986), and others about the lack of training in business. Business ranked fourth among the five knowledge areas, with a mean of 2.46. Although 72.1% of the counseling agency respondents rated business knowledge important to very important (mean < 2.01), only 39.1% of the corporate representatives rated the variable high. While most communications- or people-related business subjects (marketing,

advertising, consumer behavior, management) had means between 1.66 and 2.22, traditional business courses (economics, finance, statistics, and accounting) had means between 2.59 and 3.10.

A business major (mean = 2.77) was the 12th and lowest-ranked option among six kinds of majors and minors. A business minor ranked 10th (2.69) among the major/minor options and was the third least important variable under hiring factors that cause further consideration of a job applicant.

The results of this study also did not support the suggestions of several studies (e.g., Curtis et al., 1988; Gibson, 1985; Grunig, 1989; Turk, 1989) that more emphasis needs to be placed on management skills and nonprint communications knowledge areas and skills. The people management area of the skills/attributes category, which included delegating, supervising, negotiating, and coordinating group activities, had a mean of 2.27. The group activities variable was the only one of the four with a high rating (mean = 2.00). It should be noted that high ratings were given to several management-related variables under general leadership (1.51), including planning/organizing (1.38), goal setting (1.55), problem solving (1.56), and analytical skills (1.79).

Courses in management and personnel rated only moderately important, 2.22 and 2.88, respectively. Nonprint communication variables and their means included speech presentation (1.91), small-group communication (2.08), radio-television (2.12), organizational behavior (2.27), meeting planning (2.46), speech

major (2.47), broadcast journalism major (2.64), video production--hiring factor (2.78), and video production course (2.94).

Liberal Arts/Sciences Emphasis
and the Value of Accreditation

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that employers of entry-level public relations practitioners attribute less importance to studies in the liberal arts/sciences than did the conclusions of several earlier major studies (e.g., Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education, 1981, 1987; International Public Relations Association, 1982) and the accreditation/certification guidelines of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (1990) and the Public Relations Society of America (1990). Studies in the liberal arts/sciences were ranked fifth in the five knowledge areas (mean = 2.80). Only 1 of 214 respondents rated the variable very important (mean = 1.0). The percentages of respondents ranking the variable important to very important (mean < 2.01) ranged from 17.4% in corporations to 39.3% in education institutions. Only English composition (1.31) was rated high. And only three other subjects had means < 2.50: literature, psychology, and sociology. Five subjects had means > 3.0, including philosophy, music/art, foreign language, anthropology, and lab science. Those five were among the 10 least important variables of the 140 on the survey. The liberal arts/sciences major and minor were ranked 9th and 11th (means = 2.65 and 2.71, respectively) among the six kinds of majors and minors.

It also can be concluded from the results of this study that employers attribute a lack of importance to accreditation/certification as a hiring factor. Under academic situation/status, the variable's mean was 2.37 (78th of 140 variables in the survey) and under hiring, further consideration factors the mean was 2.54 (95th of 140). Except for those from education institutions, fewer than half of the respondents gave the variables a high rating (means < 2.01). In the academic category, 62.5% of the education respondents rated accreditation/certification high, whereas other percentages ranged from corporate, 39.1%, to nonprofit, 47.1%. In the hiring category, 60.7% of the education representatives rated accreditation/certification high, whereas other percentages ranged from counseling, 37.5%, to health, 42.4%. The review of the literature (Chapter II) did not disclose any previous research studies or professional journal articles regarding employers' opinions about the value of accreditation/certification.

Importance of Skills/Attributes

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that personal attributes and general leadership skills are important factors in employers' consideration of applicants for entry-level public relations positions. The skills/attributes category ranked first among the job applicant qualification categories (mean = 1.59) and received important to very important rankings from 97.2% of the respondents. All variables in the personality areas and all but the finance/budget variable in the general leadership area were rated

important to very important (means < 2.01). See Tables 4.15 and 4.16 for details. Ten of the 16 factors in the two areas were among the 13 highest-rated variables of the 140 on the survey. Written communication, motivation, and responsibility received the three highest ratings. These findings concurred with earlier studies by Carnevale (1990), Gaedeke and Tootelian (1990), and Benson (1983).

Importance of Nonclassroom Experience

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that student work experience should be related to public relations. However, it cannot be concluded that participation in cocurricular activities, even if leadership positions are held, is an important advantage to those applying for entry-level public relations jobs.

All four kinds of public-relations-related work experience--internships, volunteer activities, and part-time and full-time employment--were rated important to very important (means < 2.01). The same four kinds of experience, non-public-relations-oriented, did not receive high ratings (Table 4.21).

Cocurricular activities were the fifth-rated of the five job applicant qualification factors (mean = 2.75), and only 32.7% of the respondents rated the variable important to very important (mean < 2.01). Participation in student media (newspaper, radio, and so on) received the highest ratings (means = 2.14, management; 2.15, staff). The lowest-rated curriculum-related cocurricular activities were Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) leadership, mean = 2.68; and PRSSA membership, mean = 2.64. In all but the

PRSSA case, leadership variables received higher ratings, but none of them were important to very important.

These findings generally paralleled those of Curtis et al. (1989), who found that leadership and participation in campus and community activities were among the least important employment factors. Those researchers also concluded that part-time employment was among the least important variables.

Implications for the Field

This study was designed to obtain information that could guide public relations faculty members as they revise curriculum and course content, adjust student advising practices, restructure public-relations-related cocurricular activities, and decide whether to apply for PRSA certification. Analysis of the data received from 214 Michigan employers suggested the following considerations for faculty who seek to design or redesign a public relations curriculum that will correspond with expectations of the emerging public relations profession and increase a graduate's success in finding employment.

Curriculum Content

Some content of public relations curricula will be dictated by the core courses and academic emphases of the individual institution and its need to meet institutional accreditation requirements. However, the following courses received important to very important (high) ratings (means < 2.01) and should be included in curricula: public relations--writing and principles; liberal arts--English

composition; journalism--editing, reporting, and mass communications; other communications courses--speech presentation and speech writing; and business--marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior. Public relations ethics and journalism ethics also received high ratings; however, these topics are usually included in other courses.

Respondents rated the following courses in the top 30 (of 50 courses), for means of < 2.52 . These should be considered for inclusion in the public relations curriculum: public relations--campaigns and research; liberal arts--literature, psychology, sociology, and political science; journalism--computer and traditional graphics, radio-TV, communication theory, and photojournalism; other communications courses--persuasion, public opinion, small-group communication, organizational behavior, and meeting planning; and business--management.

Course Content

Not all of the above-mentioned subjects can be included in most curricula. However, faculty should revise existing courses to include the high-rated subjects' major concepts and theories. Communication theory may be included in mass communications classes. Students may conduct research or even a simple campaign as part of a public relations writing class. Persuasion and public opinion may be included in a speech presentation class or a speech writing course, or public relations faculty members can work with their

colleagues in business to assure those topics' inclusion in consumer behavior.

The techniques and practice of written and oral communication (ranked first and ninth of 140 variables in the study) should be included in as many courses as possible. Computer techniques should be taught in existing courses because computer literacy and desktop publishing skills ranked first and third in the 12 factors that might cause further consideration of a job applicant. Although classroom projects rated only moderate in importance (mean = 2.38), they can be designed to assist students in developing the four skills mentioned above.

Restructuring Cocurricular Activities

The need to restructure cocurricular activities was emphasized by the lack of importance attributed to students' participation in them. Student media management and staff (means = 2.14 and 2.15) were the most highly rated, and fraternity leadership and membership (means = 3.73 and 3.89) were the least highly rated. The public relations faculty may have little control over these activities, but advisers should inform their students of the relative merits of participating in them.

Public relations faculty often act as sponsors and otherwise assist in the management and planning of activities for student-run agencies, PRSSA chapters, and other career-oriented organizations. An effective way to enhance the effect of cocurricular activities upon the student's academic experience is to plan activities and

member responsibilities that build personality and general leadership skills/attributes (means = 1.37 and 1.51, respectively) and to provide opportunities for volunteer activities (mean = 1.81) and part-time employment (mean = 1.79), when possible. See Tables 4.15 and 4.16 for means of individual skills and attributes.

Management of, participation in, and presentation of a successful activity or project requires all of the skills and attributes included under personality and general leadership. Faculty should help select activities and projects that will attract the interest of public relations employers and can encourage active student participation in them by showing how important the skills and attributes thus obtained are to employability and advancement.

In PRSSA and other career clubs, the activities are volunteer experience; in a student-run agency, the participation is part-time employment. A PRSSA chapter could be encouraged to invite a prominent public relations practitioner to campus, not only to speak to students but to present a workshop for local professionals. Students can make all the arrangements for the speaker and meeting facilities, introduce the speaker, handle media interviews, and so on. Participants in student-run agencies recruit fee-paying clients for whom they will perform many of the same functions as do practitioners who work for professional counseling firms (conducting and analyzing consumer surveys, producing printed and audio-visual materials, planning and managing special events, and so on).

Student Advising--General

Faculty members advise students in a variety of ways. The findings of this study suggested several career-affecting variables of which students should be aware. (Statistically significant differences by kinds of employing organization will be discussed in the next section.)

Skills/attributes was the most important category of job qualification factors. Students should be advised to enroll in specific classes and participate in certain activities for the purpose of developing positive attributes (e.g., responsibility, creativity, and self-confidence) and learning and practicing important professional skills (e.g., time management, goal setting, and problem solving).

The importance of work experience was demonstrated by its second-place ranking in both the five job applicant qualification categories and in the list of employment decision factors. Additional internships also rated second among the 12 factors that cause further consideration of a job applicant. It is clear from the results of this study that students should seek employment--whether internship, volunteer, part-time, or full-time--in public-relations-oriented activities. All four types of public-relations-related work experience were rated important to very important (means < 2.01), whereas the same types of employment, non-public-relations-oriented, were not.

Four findings of this study provide guidance to faculty advisers as they help students prepare job application materials

and for subsequent interviews. To enhance their chances of employment, students should make specific comments in their résumés, cover letters, and interviews that demonstrate the applicability of their knowledge, skills/attributes, and experience to specific items in a job description (job specifications/applicant qualifications match, mean = 1.48) and to advancement within the organization (perceived applicant future in the organization, mean = 1.82). And when references are requested, employer recommendations (mean = 1.94) have greater value than personal ones (mean = 2.55).

Student Advising--Types of Employing Organizations

When students decide relatively early in their academic experience what kinds of public relations careers they want to pursue, faculty advisers should help them tailor academic minors, elective courses, cocurricular activities, and work experiences to the expectations and preferences of that type of employing organization. In this study several constants were revealed in preferences across all organization types: Either public relations or print journalism was preferred as the type of major and minor, and all ranked skills/attributes as the top job qualification factors. However, a number of differences in preferences were found. (Ratings for job qualification categories, knowledge areas, and major and minor preferences were determined by means. Although an organization type may have rated many variables higher than another type, by means, only the statistically significant differences are included below.)

Corporations gave the highest rating of all organization types to skills/attributes and the lowest to liberal arts/sciences knowledge. They preferred a journalism major, and business was the third choice for a minor. Their higher ratings for six variables were statistically significant; other organization type(s) are in parentheses. The variables were journalism ethics (education), negotiating (nonprofit), desktop publishing (health, education), business minor as a hiring factor (health, education, nonprofit), and proficiency in a second language (health).

Health institutions gave the highest rating to cocurricular activities and to journalism knowledge. They preferred a journalism major and ranked speech third as a minor (and as a major). Their higher ratings for six variables were statistically significant: journalism ethics (counseling), public relations ethics (education), computer graphics (corporate, counseling, education), negotiating (nonprofit), desktop publishing (counseling), and photography (counseling).

Counseling agencies gave the highest ratings to knowledge, academic situation/status, public relations knowledge, and business knowledge and the second highest rating to liberal arts/sciences knowledge. They preferred a journalism major and ranked business third as a minor (and as a major). Their higher ratings for five variables were statistically significant: public relations ethics (health), communication theory (education), management (corporate, nonprofit), and business minor as a hiring factor (education).

Also, the counseling agency rating for desktop publishing was significantly lower statistically than all other organization types.

Education institutions gave the highest rating to other communications courses and liberal arts/sciences knowledge and the second highest rating to public relations knowledge. They preferred a public relations major and rated speech third as a minor (and as a major). Their higher ratings for three variables were statistically significant: business ethics (nonprofit), desktop publishing (counseling), and video production (counseling).

Nonprofit organizations gave the highest rating for work experience, the second highest for cocurricular activities, and the lowest for business knowledge. They preferred a public relations major, and they ranked speech third as a minor. Their higher ratings for two variables were statistically significant: journalism ethics (education) and desktop publishing (counseling).

Importance of Accreditation/ Certification

Public relations curriculum planners who seek to increase the employability of their graduates and meet the expectations of the emerging public relations profession should substitute highly rated business courses--marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior--for very-low-rated courses in the liberal arts/sciences. For some postsecondary institutions, the decision to make those substitutions will entail an evaluation of the value of accreditation/certification. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications' (1990, p. 7) requirements regarding percentages of

liberal arts/sciences, communications, and other courses make eliminating liberal arts/sciences courses and adding business subjects very difficult. And although the PRSA's Certified in Education for Public Relations guidelines are less strict, they also are heavily biased toward liberal arts/sciences.

Public relations faculty, therefore, should carefully define their goals in applying for accreditation or certification of a major/emphasis/program. There are several advantages to pursuing the process (as cited in the literature review). However, the ratings of the two applicable variables in the survey--2.37 in the academic situation/status section and 2.54 in the hiring, further considerations section--indicated that employers did not consider accreditation/certification of a major/emphasis/program an important factor in the employability of a graduate.

Implications for Ferris State University

The Ferris State University (FSU) public relations curriculum already includes all but five of the subjects with means < 2.52 as separate courses or as major emphases within courses. In a recent change to semesters (from quarter terms) and the accompanying reduction in the number of courses offered, the results of this study were used to eliminate television production as a required course but to include it, along with persuasion and public opinion, among electives. Organizational behavior is offered only at the graduate level at FSU, but public relations faculty members should work with management faculty to assure that important principles are

included in the required management course. The public relations faculty should continue efforts to obtain funding for equipment and technical support for integration of computer graphics into courses in the major.

Findings of this study should be used in persuading officers of the PRSSA chapter to plan better programs and projects, as suggested in the section on restructuring cocurricular activities (see pp. 146-147). The findings regarding the importance of skills/attributes and work experiences should be included in the public relations majors handbook and emphasized at orientation meetings. Advisers of public relations majors should emphasize those findings and use information about organization-type preferences in individual conferences with students.

The FSU public relations curriculum has undergone two comprehensive reviews by its advisory board during the past five years. Given the lack of importance attributed to the accreditation/certification process in affecting the employability of graduates, applying for certification by the PRSA should be delayed while more emphasis is placed on increasing faculty, computer, and library resources for the curriculum.

Recommendations for Further Research

As exploratory research into public relations job applicant qualification factors beyond knowledge areas and into hiring practices that affect employment of entry-level graduates, this study provided important information for curriculum considerations

at FSU. It revealed the relative importance of various factors and provided information on differences between the expectations of different organization types.

However, more research needs to be conducted regarding why factors were rated in certain ways. Among the questions that should be answered are: Why were business studies rated so low by corporate respondents? Why were business studies rated so low by representatives of health institutions when marketing techniques are being emphasized so much by those organizations? Why did foreign language, both as a course and as a hiring factor, rate so low when there is an increasing emphasis on international markets? Why were ratings for desktop publishing significantly lower statistically for counseling agencies than for all other organization types?

This study should be replicated on a national level to determine whether the findings from this limited geographic segment apply to the public relations profession as a whole. Until the geographic scope is expanded, the findings in these areas have limited value to educational institutions whose graduates seek employment outside of Michigan and to the general body of knowledge about public relations curricula.

Another perspective on the employment situation could be gained by sending surveys with the same basic range of variables to recently employed entry-level practitioners. Another study of this kind would provide information from the new practitioners regarding the importance of possessing various kinds of knowledge, skills, and

attributes and about the value of participating in cocurricular activities and pursuing different types of work experience.

Student-run public relations agencies are a relatively new activity. As public relations employers learn more about the agencies and have more opportunity to review the students' work, research should be conducted to reassess the relative merit of that kind of cocurricular activity, in relationship to the more traditional organizations and projects, and the reasons for the agency concept's success/demise.

Reflections

This study revealed important information on employer preferences regarding recent public relations graduates and expanded the scope of previous research in several ways. Most earlier efforts concentrated on the merits of various kinds of knowledge, and a few explored some skills/attributes and some academic situation/status factors. This study also included the job applicant factors of cocurricular activities and work experience and expanded the academic situation/status factors. An important addition was the section on employment decision factors and other factors that might cause further consideration of the applicant. Although these inclusions required a lengthy survey, the response rate was excellent, 83.6%.

Another area of innovation in this study was the survey participants. The two-tiered sample attempt to identify the actual employment decision makers was important to the responses and may

have positively affected the survey response rate. However, there are several reasons the method used to cover the broadest base of public relations employers should be reconsidered for geographically expanded research in entry-level employment: The percentage of applicable members of Women in Communications coupled with the difficulty of eliminating nonapplicable members may be prohibitive. The number of education institutions actually employing entry-level practitioners should be explored. The percentage of members of the Religious Public Relations Council was very low, although that may not be true on a national level.

One concern was an apparent flaw in the survey design, which resulted in the omission of ratings for overall job qualification factors and knowledge areas on 44.4% of the surveys. However, an averaging technique was used to supply the data, and reliability tests indicated the viability of the substitutions.

Finally, the findings supplied ratings of the variables and revealed a number of differences in the preferences by types of organization. However, more information is needed on why some variables were rated high or low (see Recommendations for Further Research). And although this study began an exploration of the value of accreditation/certification in positively affecting the employability of graduates, more information on the reasons behind employers' apparent lack of interest in accreditation/certification would help faculty members further evaluate the merits of pursuing that recognition.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO PRACTITIONERS EXPLAINING THE PROPOSED SURVEY

November 25, 1991

Dear

Eight universities in Michigan offer undergraduate majors or emphases in public relations. A variety of curricula and related educational activities are offered by these institutions.

In order to better prepare students for the rapidly changing practice of public relations, educational institutions need more information about employers' expectations concerning recent college graduates' educational backgrounds and experience. This information may be used to revise curricula and the content of courses, to reorganize curriculum-related cocurricular activities, and to enhance faculty members' ability to advise students about their elective studies and career preparation.

Your organization is one of 450 employers in Michigan that have been chosen at random to receive a survey which will seek to determine the qualifications that applicants for entry-level public relations positions should possess. The study also will examine organizational employment decision factors that are utilized in hiring recent graduates. The survey will be mailed on or before January 20, 1992.

As the top public relations official in your organization, you have been selected to see that the survey is sent to the appropriate person. The survey respondent should be the executive at your organization who actually makes decisions concerning the employment of recent college graduates who perform entry-level public relations tasks.

If you are that executive, please keep the salmon-colored postcard as a reminder to look forward to receiving and promptly completing the survey in January. If another executive should receive the survey, please fill out the salmon-colored postcard and pass it on to the appropriate person. Most important: Whoever is the correct recipient, please include the appropriate information on the self-addressed, stamped postcard and return it by December 9.

Thank you for fulfilling a crucial role in assuring the success of this important study on public relations education. If you have questions concerning the study, please do not hesitate to call me at (616) 592-2108.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC

APPENDIX B

POSTCARD ENCLOSED WITH LETTER TO PRACTITIONERS

The survey on public relations education
should be sent to:

Name _____
Organization _____
Address _____

Telephone _____

Thank you for participating in this
important study.

As the executive who makes decisions
concerning the employment of recent college
graduates who will perform entry-level public
relations tasks at

(Organization)

you will receive a survey on public relations
education from Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC, of
Ferris State University, on or before Jan. 15.
Please keep this card as a reminder to look
forward to receiving and promptly completing
this important study.

(referred by)

APPENDIX C

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

PUBLIC RELATIONS CURRICULA:

A STUDY OF EMPLOYER PREFERENCES AND HIRING PRACTICES

During their years in college, students who plan to enter the practice of public relations have opportunities to take an assortment of courses, develop and enhance a variety of skills, and participate in a number of cocurricular and work activities. Your response to every item on this survey will assist in planning educational activities that will benefit public relations graduates and their employers. Space is provided on the back page for you to make additional comments.

Thank you for your help.

Return this booklet to:
Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC
Ferris State University
College of Business
Big Rapids, MI 49307

SECTION I - JOB APPLICANT QUALIFICATION FACTORS

In this section--reflecting on the qualifications you seek in entry-level public relations employees--you will rate the importance of various experiences in preparing students for employment by your organization. The experiences are included under five major categories: Applicant's Knowledge, Applicant's Skills and Attributes, Applicant's Participation in Curriculum-related Cocurricular Activities, Applicant's Academic Situation/Status, and Applicant's Work Experience.

Looking at the survey, you will note that almost all items--including major categories (e.g., APPLICANT'S KNOWLEDGE, APPLICANT'S SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES), subcategories (e.g., Public Relations, Personality), and individual factors (e.g., introduction to public relations, appearance)--have rating scales. Each of these ratings is important to the study. PLEASE DO NOT OMIT A RATING FOR ANY ITEM.

CIRCLE the abbreviation which best describes your rating of the importance of each experience or area of experience:

VI = Very Important
 I = Important
 MI = Moderately Important
 LI = Little Importance
 U = Unimportant

Rate all items in this category including the importance of APPLICANT'S KNOWLEDGE, the five general academic areas (e.g., Public Relations), and individual courses which may be included in these areas (e.g., introduction to public relations).

APPLICANT'S KNOWLEDGE	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Public Relations</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
introduction to public relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
public relations writing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
case studies	VI	I	MI	LI	U
campaigns	VI	I	MI	LI	U
research	VI	I	MI	LI	U
law and ethics	VI	I	MI	LI	U
public relations theory	VI	I	MI	LI	U
film/video production	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U

<u>Liberal Arts and Sciences</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
psychology	VI	I	MI	LI	U
sociology	VI	I	MI	LI	U
anthropology	VI	I	MI	LI	U
history	VI	I	MI	LI	U
political science	VI	I	MI	LI	U
philosophy	VI	I	MI	LI	U
English composition	VI	I	MI	LI	U
literature	VI	I	MI	LI	U
music/art	VI	I	MI	LI	U
foreign language	VI	I	MI	LI	U
geography	VI	I	MI	LI	U
chemistry	VI	I	MI	LI	U
biology	VI	I	MI	LI	U
physical science	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Journalism</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
introduction to mass communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
reporting	VI	I	MI	LI	U
radio/television writing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
editing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
graphics (traditional)	VI	I	MI	LI	U
graphics (computer)	VI	I	MI	LI	U
communication theory	VI	I	MI	LI	U
law and ethics	VI	I	MI	LI	U
photojournalism	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U

(Continued on Next Page)

VI = Very Important
 I = Important
 MI = Moderately Important
 LI = Little Importance
 U = Unimportant

<u>Other Communications Courses</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
public opinion	VI	I	MI	LI	U
persuasion	VI	I	MI	LI	U
speech presentation	VI	I	MI	LI	U
speech writing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
small group communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
organizational structure/behavior	VI	I	MI	LI	U
meeting/convention planning	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Business</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
marketing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
management	VI	I	MI	LI	U
advertising	VI	I	MI	LI	U
economics	VI	I	MI	LI	U
finance	VI	I	MI	LI	U
accounting	VI	I	MI	LI	U
business law	VI	I	MI	LI	U
ethics	VI	I	MI	LI	U
consumer behavior	VI	I	MI	LI	U
statistics	VI	I	MI	LI	U
personnel	VI	I	MI	LI	U
sales	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U

Rate all items in this category, including the importance of APPLICANT'S SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES, the three general areas of skills (e.g., Personality), and individual attributes in those skills areas (e.g., appearance).

APPLICANT'S SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Personality</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
appearance	VI	I	MI	LI	U
speech	VI	I	MI	LI	U
manner	VI	I	MI	LI	U
self-confidence	VI	I	MI	LI	U
motivation	VI	I	MI	LI	U
responsibility	VI	I	MI	LI	U
goal orientation	VI	I	MI	LI	U
creativity	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>General Leadership</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
oral communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
written communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
planning and organizing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
problem solving/decision making	VI	I	MI	LI	U
goal setting/prioritizing	VI	I	MI	LI	U
time management	VI	I	MI	LI	U
analytical skills	VI	I	MI	LI	U
finance and budgeting	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>People Management</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
delegating	VI	I	MI	LI	U
supervising	VI	I	MI	LI	U
negotiating	VI	I	MI	LI	U
coordinating group activities	VI	I	MI	LI	U

(Continued on Next Page)

VI = Very Important
 I = Important
 MI = Moderately Important
 LI = Little Importance
 U = Unimportant

Rate all items in this category, including the importance of APPLICANT'S PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM-RELATED COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, the five kinds of activities (e.g., Public Relations Student Society of America), and both mere membership/staff work and leadership/management duties in each activity area. This category also includes participation in a fraternity/sorority.

APPLICANT'S PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM-RELATED COCURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Membership	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Leadership	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Student-run Public Relations Agency</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Staff	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Management	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Student Media (newspaper, radio, television, yearbook)</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Staff	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Editorial/Management	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Other career-oriented student activities including honor organizations</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Member	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Leadership	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Fraternity/Sorority</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Member	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Leadership	VI	I	MI	LI	U

This category includes items that may distinguish one institution's public relations major/emphasis from another type of academic program. Rate all items including APPLICANT'S ACADEMIC SITUATION/STATUS, the six areas of academic situation/status (e.g., Graduation from Specific School) and the specific kinds of major/emphasis and minor (e.g., print journalism).

APPLICANT'S ACADEMIC SITUATION/STATUS	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Graduation from a Specific School</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Kind of Major/Emphasis</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
print journalism	VI	I	MI	LI	U
broadcast journalism	VI	I	MI	LI	U
public relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
speech communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
liberal arts	VI	I	MI	LI	U
business	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Kind of Minor</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
print journalism	VI	I	MI	LI	U
broadcast journalism	VI	I	MI	LI	U
public relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
speech communication	VI	I	MI	LI	U
liberal arts	VI	I	MI	LI	U
business	VI	I	MI	LI	U
other (specify) _____	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Accreditation/Certification of Major/Emphasis</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Overall Grade Point Average</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U
<u>Grade Point Average in Major/Emphasis</u>	VI	I	MI	LI	U

(Continued on Next Page)

VI = Very Important
 I = Important
 MI = Moderately Important
 LI = Little Importance
 U = Unimportant

In this category, rate the importance of APPLICANT'S WORK EXPERIENCE and both public relations-oriented work and non-public relations-oriented work in four subcategories of work experience (e.g., Full-time Employment). It is not necessary to rate the four subcategories.

APPLICANT'S WORK EXPERIENCE	VI	I	MI	LI	U
-----------------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Full-time Employment

Public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Non-public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
----------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Part-time/Summer Employment

Public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Non-public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
----------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Volunteer Activities

Public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Non-public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
----------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Internship

Public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Non-public Relations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
----------------------	----	---	----	----	---

Section II - HIRING PRACTICES

In this section, you will give information about your decision-making practices when considering recent college graduates for entry-level public relations positions in your organization. There are two divisions: The first concerns the importance of job applicant qualification factors and the status of your employing situation (e.g., Number of Degrees, Job Market). The second assesses the likelihood that certain factors, if present, would cause further consideration of a recent graduate/job applicant (e.g., More Internships).

CIRCLE the abbreviation which best describes your rating of each experience:

VI = Very Important
 I = Important
 MI = Moderately Important
 LI = Little Importance
 U = Unimportant

How important were the following factors as they influenced your actual entry-level public relations hiring practices in the last three years?

Number of degrees	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Baccalaureate applicant qualifications	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Work experience	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Employer Recommendations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Personal Recommendations	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Job market (nature of applicant pool)	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Timing of application	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Job specifications/applicant qualifications match	VI	I	MI	LI	U
Perceived applicant future in your organization	VI	I	MI	LI	U

(Continued on Next Page)

AAT = Almost always true
 UT = Usually true
 IT = Infrequently true
 UNT = Usually never true
 ANT = Almost Never True

How likely is it that the following factors, if present, would cause further consideration of a recent baccalaureate graduate/applicant?

More experience in classroom public relations projects	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
More experience in cocurricular public relations projects	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
More internships	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Computer literacy	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Skill in desktop publishing	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Skill in still photography	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Skill in video production	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Proficiency in 2nd language	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Business minor	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Speech minor	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Higher grade point average	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT
Accreditation/certification of academic program	AAT	UT	IT	UNT	ANT

SECTION III - DEMOGRAPHICS

Which of the following best describes your present position?
 (CIRCLE ONLY ONE item in EACH column)

Chief Executive Officer	Public Relations
Senior Vice President	Corporate Communications
Senior Account Supervisor	Communications
Vice President	Employee Relations
Account Supervisor	Personnel
Manager/Director	Human Resource Development
Specialist	Marketing
Account Executive	Advertising
Other _____	Other _____

Which ONE of following best describes your organization?
(CIRCLE ONE only)

industrial/manufacturing
scientific/technical
PR counseling firm
association/foundation
government
religious/charitable
transportation/hotels/
resorts/entertainment

utility
media/communication
financial/insurance
education
health care
advertising agency
solo practitioner
other (specify) _____

Which ONE of the following best describes the PRIMARY focus of the public relations work in your organization?
(CIRCLE ONE only)

media relations
special events
marketing support
government/public affairs
instit./corp. advertising
financial public relations
consumer affairs

publicity
community relations
public relations counseling
employee relations
issues management
fund raising/development
editing publications/video

Which one of the following best describes your highest level of education? (CIRCLE ONE only)

high school diploma/equivalency certificate
technical certification
bachelors degree
some graduate work
specialist certificate
masters degree
some doctoral work
doctorate
post doctorate

Are you accredited/certified by any of the organizations below?
(CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Public Relations Society of America
International Association of Business Communicators
National School Public Relations Association
Other _____

Are you male ____
female ____

What is your age? _____

Do you have any additional comments to make about public relations curricula or educational activities? If so, please use this space for that purpose.

Also, any comments you wish to make about the employability of public relations graduates will be appreciated, either here or in a separate letter.

* * * * *

Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. When you have completed the survey and your comments, please return this booklet in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. Also, in order to preserve the anonymity of your response and to avoid receiving additional solicitations concerning this effort, please print your name and the date on the self-addressed, stamped postcard. If you would like a summary of the study results, please include your address on the postcard.

APPENDIX D

SURVEY COVER LETTER

February 1, 1992

Dear

In the past few years, there has been a lot of discussion about the kind of undergraduate education which is appropriate for students who are preparing for entry-level public relations positions. Should students concentrate their studies directly in public relations or journalism or another field of communication? Are courses in liberal arts more important than those in business? How important are internships or other kinds of work experience? Should students seek experience on campus newspaper staffs, in projects sponsored by career-interest organizations, or as employees of student-run public relations agencies? How important is attending a specific school or having a high grade point average?

The answers you provide in this booklet are important to educational institutions as they revise curricula and content of courses, restructure public relations cocurricular activities, and advise students about elective courses to take and how to enhance their career preparations. As an employer of entry-level public relations personnel, you will also benefit--from educational programs that provide graduates with the qualifications you seek.

As one of 450 Michigan employers that have been chosen at random to participate in this study, your responses are crucial to this effort to enhance the training of future public relations practitioners. Your answers to all items will provide information about which educational experiences are most important and about the criteria you use to make hiring decisions. This information will guide public relations curriculum planning at Ferris State University and will be shared with educators at other colleges and universities.

In order to preserve the anonymity of your response and to avoid receiving additional solicitations concerning this effort, please print your name and the date on the postcard. If you would like a summary of the study results, please include your address on the postcard. Mail the booklet in the envelope and the postcard separately. Both are self-addressed and postage is provided for your convenience.

Thank you for your timely assistance in this important study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC
Associate Professor

APPENDIX E

POSTCARD RETURNED BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

I have returned my survey on public relations education separately.

Date survey completed and mailed

Name (please print)

If you wish a copy of the study results,

Address: _____

Thanks again for your help with this important study.

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC
Ferris State University
College of Business
901 S. State St.
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2295

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD

Two weeks ago a survey seeking your opinion about public relations education was mailed to you. If you have already completed and returned the survey, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today.

Because the survey has been sent to only a small, but representative, sample of Michigan employers, it is very important that your response also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent opinions of Michigan employers.

If you did not receive the survey, or if it was misplaced, please call me right now (616-592-2108), and I will get another one in the mail to you soon.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC
Ferris State University
College of Business
901 S. State Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2295

APPENDIX G

FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO NONRESPONDENTS

February 26, 1992

Dear

Earlier this year you were designated as the representative from your organization to complete a survey on public relations education. If you have completed and returned the survey, mailed originally on February 1, please accept my sincerest thanks. If not, here's another opportunity.

As one of 450 Michigan employers that have been chosen at random to participate in this study, your responses are crucial to this effort to enhance the training of future public relations practitioners. Thank you for completing this survey booklet. Please answer ALL categories including the VI I MI LI U series in the single and double boxes. These are not headings but actual items. If you have any questions, please call me at 616-592-2108.

In order to preserve the anonymity of your response and to avoid receiving additional solicitations concerning this effort, please print your name and the date on the postcard. If you would like a summary of the study results, please include your address on the postcard. Mail the booklet in the envelope and the postcard separately. Both are self-addressed and postage is provided for your convenience.

Thank you for your timely assistance in this important study.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Tidwell, APR, ABC
Associate Professor

REMEMBER: Please answer ALL categories including the
VI I MI LI U series in the single and double boxes.

APPENDIX H

JOB APPLICANT QUALIFICATION FACTOR CORRELATIONS

Table H.1.--Correlation between job applicant qualification factors.

	Knowledge	Skills/ Attrib.	Cocurr. Activ.	Work Exper.	Academic Sit./Status
Knowledge	1.0000	.4349**	.3287**	.1711*	.2565**
Skills/ attrib.	.4349**	1.0000	.2607**	.2043**	.2146**
Cocurr. activ.	.3287**	.2607**	1.0000	.3342**	.3697**
Work exper.	.1711*	.2143**	.3342**	1.0000	.2241**
Academic sit./status	.2565**	.2146**	.3697**	.2241**	1.0000

*Significance level .05.

**Significance level .01.

APPENDIX I

KNOWLEDGE MEANS BY ORGANIZATION-TYPE

Table I.1.--Means of statistically significant knowledge variables
by organization-type.

	Corporate	Health	Agency	Education	Nonprofit
Communic. theory	2.4565	2.2203	2.8125 ^a	2.0000 ^a	2.3824
Management	2.5000 ^a	2.0339	1.6875 ^a	2.1786	2.5294 ^a
Economics	2.5217	2.6441 ^a	2.0000 ^a	2.6607 ^a	2.7647 ^a
Public rel. overall	2.2826	2.3228 ^a	2.1250	2.0000 ^a	2.3529
Public rel. ethics	1.8261 ^a	1.7288 ^a	1.3750	1.3214 ^a	1.7353
Computer graphics	2.4565 ^{ab}	1.6441 ^a	2.5000 ^a	1.8929 ^b	2.1471
Journalism ethics	2.0217 ^a	1.8814 ^a	1.8125	1.3571 ^a	2.0588 ^a
Photo- journalism	2.6304 ^a	2.1017 ^a	2.8125 ^a	2.1964	2.2647
Public rel. cases	2.5435	2.6441	2.1875 ^a	2.6964	3.0000 ^a
Meeting planning	2.9565 ^{ab}	2.4068	2.3125	2.3214 ^b	2.1471 ^a
Personnel	3.1739 ^a	2.7797	2.9375	2.4464 ^a	3.3924 ^a

Note: Means with matched superscripts are significantly different statistically at the $p < .05$ level (Tukey-HSD).

APPENDIX J

ACADEMIC SITUATION/STATUS MEANS BY ORGANIZATION-TYPE

Table J.1.--Means of statistically significant academic situation/
status variables by organization-type.

	Corporate	Health	Agency	Education	Nonprofit
Graduation, spec. school	2.6087	2.9831 ^a	1.9375 ^a	3.0893 ^a	2.8824
Broadcast journ. major	2.9565 ^a	2.6102	2.1250 ^a	2.5893	2.5882
Business minor	2.4130	2.7458	2.1250 ^a	2.8214	3.0000 ^a

Note: Means with matched superscripts are significantly different statistically at the $p < .05$ level (Tukey-HSD).

APPENDIX K

HIRING, FURTHER CONSIDERATION MEANS BY ORGANIZATION-TYPE

Table K.1.--Means of statistically significant hiring, further consideration variables by organization-type.

	Corporate	Health	Agency	Education	Nonprofit
Desktop publishing	2.19578 ^{ab}	1.5254 ^a	2.6250 ^{abc}	1.7143 ^b	1.8529 ^c
Business minor	2.4783 ^a	3.2712 ^a	2.5000 ^b	3.3393 ^{ab}	3.2647 ^a
Second language	3.3043 ^a	3.8475 ^a	3.8750	3.4286	3.7353
Photography	2.7826	2.2712 ^a	3.0625 ^a	2.4107	2.4412
Video production	2.9565	2.7119	3.2500 ^a	2.4643 ^a	3.0000

Note: Means with matched superscripts are significantly different statistically at the $p < .05$ level (Tukey-HSD).

APPENDIX L

COMMENTS WRITTEN ON SURVEYS

Comments Written on Survey Instruments

Encourage undergraduate students to seek work experience in pr/journalism following college graduation, even if the job market is soft. Four to five years' work experience is preferred prior to seeking graduate study. Being overqualified, with no work experience, can also prevent a graduate from getting a job.

--Manager, communication, association/foundation

More and more, the public relations profession requires a person to be a "jack of all trades"--i.e., p.r. communications, sales, marketing, journalism, photography, design, etc.--the more mix an applicant can bring to a position, the more interested I am. The importance of out-of-classroom experience and just plain "street sense" is high on my list.

--Manager, communication, association/foundation

Increasingly, the public relations specialist must possess a wide array of skills and be very open-minded. Intense market competition is demanding a type of manager that must be flexible and agile, ready to change short-term plans to adjust to changing market conditions. I (we) believe the public relations personnel must be a keen generalist [sic] being the person between the concern and the not-so-knowledgeable public.

--Manager, operations improvement, health care

I feel your efforts in improving the pr program is [sic] a wise choice. The most difficult obstacle I ran into in getting my first job upon graduation was my lack of job experience. I worked for almost one year after graduating for free as an intern. Case studies, field trips, guest speakers can greatly enhance the program, bringing the reality of "work" to the classroom. Also, I would encourage students to specialize in a minor, i.e., finance, computers, etc.

--Director, marketing, financial institution

Students interested in specific fields to practice public relations in should be sure to seek educational and cocurricular activity to support these interests. They should also research the demand for employees in their fields of interests to assure their academic experience will support their employability.

In today's rapidly changing world a well-rounded background in business marketing and public relations will prove most beneficial to new graduates.

--Specialist, public relations, health care

Someone who is generally bright and eager, who is resourceful and can problem solve and is willing to do anything asked (hard and uninteresting at times) is the kind of candidate I seek for an entry

level position. Job training and experience will take care of the rest.

--Manager/director, marketing, education

Pr graduates must convey enthusiasm and the willingness to work hard and to do such tasks as envelope stuffing and updating mailing lists.

In the final analysis, employees are selected because they are likable and appear to have the basic skills. Demonstrated and varied work experience is a plus in a competitive market.

And finally, graduates should have a portfolio showing their skills and versatility using, whenever possible, published or printed pieces.

--Manager/director, communications, association/foundation

To me, academic performance is less important than a broad range of "real world" experience and an ambitious, willing-to-learn attitude--plus an innate understanding of human behavior and communication.

--Manager/director, corporate communications, health care

This year (and last) we have had 25-30 qualified applicants for every available position. With this intense competition, internships have become an absolute essential in our hiring criteria. In the past three years, we have hired no one who has had less than 2 prior PR internships and/or some full-time work experience. Schools that require internships and assist their students in getting good on-the-job experiences do their students an essential service.

--Manager/director, corporate communication, industrial mfg.

Internships are important. They can provide leads to students and give an employer a chance to evaluate, over a period of time, an individual's capabilities and potential. I would like to hire many of our interns, if the budget allowed.

--Chief executive officer, religious/charitable

A positive attitude and the ability to cooperate with other employees are essential.

Students should be learning how to work cooperatively with groups of people.

Understanding group dynamics and how to be an effective group member is a skill many educators lack. More work needs to be done at the university level to teach students these skills.

--Manager/director, public relations, education

In all honesty, no matter how good the school or how high the grade point average, my first and foremost concern is practical work experience in the pr field and concrete work samples to prove ability. Too often classroom performance does not translate into workplace performance.

--Vice-president, communications, association/foundation

I think a student seeking a position in public relations should get all the first-hand experience they [sic] can get. Writing skills, speaking skills, and excellent understanding of correct grammar, spelling, etc. are very important. Computer literacy (preferably on the MAC and desktop publishing) would be important for anyone working for me. Photojournalism skills would be a bonus. Organizational skills a must. Examples of quality work performed and credited to individual important.

--Vice president, public relations, health care

Someone who is self-motivated and inspired by the profession--who has a continuous curiosity about the world around him or her.

- . free of fears--willing to make mistakes.

- . non-complacent

- . good character with sound values and tolerant of all types of people and views.

- . excellent education--enjoys learning and reading.

--Senior vice president, public relations, nonprofit

They need to train in interviewing. They need to articulate their goals better. They have "to translate" themselves into an added value for the company.

--Manager-director, public relations, health care

Anyone can be a member in an organization. However, the individual that takes on a leadership role will succeed.

Quantify your accomplishments, i.e., I increased sales 150% while working on the student newspaper.

The single most beneficial course in my college career was on presentations and the elimination of the "no-no" words . . . um, ah, like, ya know. Without that vocabulary you look, sound and act like an excellent communicator.

--Manager/director, marketing, industrial manufacturing

Perhaps the single most important factor I consider is the applicant's ability to write. I have found that the majority of other necessary skills can be acquired with ease providing the candidate already possesses a superlative ability to write. If that skill is lacking, there is little hope that the candidate can rise above "average." Average is unacceptable to me.

--Director, public relations, charitable

Because I work for a television station, many candidates who apply for a publicist/promotion position think they're getting into TV production. The candidate who is more likely to be hired expresses a clear desire to do publicity work. Candidates should be articulate, write well and have a good understanding of current events and how the media report on those events.

--Manager director, broadcast communications, media/communication

The worst hoax in academia today is the so-called "communications" degree--witness the fact that it is now the curriculum of choice for college athletes. As employers, we are inundated by job seekers with this worthless degree of speech and theory classes. Some have had only two writing courses in four years. None have the basic skills needed for an entry-level position. Those skills include the ability to write well and quickly a news release, radio spot, TV PSA, pamphlet/brochure, magazine article and business letter. We do not use beginners to give speeches, decide direction, resolve conflicts, etc. Give us beginners who know how to write and how to research and know what business is all about. Students should have a writing assignment due every week for all four years of college and should begin internships in their freshman year.

--Chief executive officer, pr counseling firm

Students who wish to excel in P.R. must know how to write!! I believe that this is the most important skill when determining candidate to be hired.

--Director, communications, consumer product marketing

Students who have worked in offices or have some understanding of the actual (not classroom) business world are far more employable than those who haven't. Also, writing samples (preferably printed) are a must. Currently, we have the worse job market I've seen in 20 years. Those who can be resourceful (working 2 part-time jobs, finding a particular niche for their skills, etc.) have the best chance of breaking in.

--Chief executive officer, marketing, graphic arts firm

The nature of some of the questions in this survey, especially those asking to identify only one description of present position or focus of job, is indicative, I believe, of the misconceptions of what a public relations job is all about--there is no one focus; there is not one description. You must be prepared to wear many hats and change them often. Most helpful employability skill, in my opinion, would be exceptional (or above average) writing skills. The graduating student can learn a "business," but he/she must be prepared to communicate that business to many audiences at many levels of understanding. They should WRITE, WRITE, WRITE--articles, feature stories, memos, letters, ad copy, brochure copy, radio spots, flyers, etc. Combined with highly developed people skills, those individuals, I believe, will be light years ahead of others who have the "theory" down pat. Thanks for the opportunity to respond.

--Manager/director, communications, health care

APPENDIX M

KNOWLEDGE SUBJECTS OF MODERATE IMPORTANCE

Table M.1.--Knowledge subjects of moderate importance (means = 2.01-3.00) (a continuation of Table 5.1).

Subject (Knowledge Area)	Mean
Persuasion (OCC)	2.01
Computer graphics (J)	2.04
Public opinion (OCC)	2.08
Small-group communication (OCC)	2.08
Ethics (B)	2.08
Radio-television (J)	2.12
Management (B)	2.22
Organizational behavior (OCC)	2.27
Communication theory (J)	2.30
Traditional graphics (J)	2.33
Photojournalism (J)	2.35
Campaigns (PR)	2.36
Literature (LA)	2.36
Psychology (LA)	2.40
Research (PR)	2.41
Meeting planning (OCC)	2.46
Sociology (LA)	2.47
Political science (LA)	2.51
Theory (PR)	2.57
Economics (B)	2.59
Sales (B)	2.60
Cases (PR)	2.66
Finance (B)	2.77
Law (PR)	2.78
Law (J)	2.83
History (LA)	2.84
Statistics (B)	2.86
Personnel (B)	2.88
Video production (PR)	2.94
Geography (LA)	2.95

Key: B = business, J = journalism, LA = liberal arts and sciences,
OCC = other communications courses, PR = public relations.

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