

Developer comments on Professional reviews of the Proposal for a Master of Arts Degree in Public Relations at IUPUI

First, all reviews appear to be thorough and all have made a valuable contribution to this effort. We have examined each letter and the writer's observations and comments and have provided responses to each in detail below.

Letter Number 1

No comments necessary. This reviewer clearly sees significant value in the proposal as written and is fully supportive of this proposal.

Letter Number 2

This reviewer points out a valuable point: there is only one option in Indiana for an MA in PR: Ball State university. This proposal provides an additional option for all undergraduates in public relations in Indiana.

The reviewer also recognizes the importance of business components in any MA in public relations and supports the approach we have developed in conjunction with the Kelley School of Business.

In examining the Health Care and Life Sciences track, this reviewer accurately points out the volatility in that industry and suggests that this volatility needs to be addressed in the curriculum. It certainly will be as the developers of the coursework in this area both come from that industry with extensive experience and recognize that key element in the industry and will reflect that volatility in their coursework.

In addition, the coursework will reflect this reviewer's recommendations that coursework include addressing HIPPA and Stark regulations as well as grant writing and fund raising (also addressed in the not-for-profit coursework).

While we have presented a traditional curriculum track based on a two-year model, we also have created a three-year model designed specifically for the working professional with family responsibilities. The three-year model reflects 6 hours per semester and some summer work rather than the traditional 9 hours per semester. In addition, to properly support this population, almost all coursework will be offered at night.

It is also important to note that the reviewer values the collaborative effort and approach with this degree involving Journalism, Communication Studies and Business.

Letter Number 3

Clearly this reviewer sees the value of the degree and of the business emphasis of the proposal (the reviewer notes he or she has an MBA).

The reviewer also appreciates the dual approach with management and Health Care and Life Sciences and appreciates the connection with Indiana university and our IUPUI and Indiana University.

Other observations:

The reviewer both questions and then supports the visual publications design course in the curriculum. This course is an elective designed specifically for the professional who may not have direct experience in the principles of design yet might be required as a supervisor/manager to supervise public relations professional with these kinds of tasks. For those with these skills already fully developed, this class is inappropriate and those students will be encouraged to take other electives.

Public Relations for Not-for-Profits (NFP). This course has been well received over the years. The school has taught this course consistently every summer with excellent response from students. It focuses on managing public relations and communication functions in the very wide area of non-profit organizations. While most operate on business models today, they are NOT businesses and their goals, objectives and, in many cases, methodologies, are very different within a wide range of NFP types. In addition, public relations professionals need to understand the different forms of measurement and evaluation that are appropriate for non-profits that usually don't apply to for profit entities. Again, this course is an elective appropriate for those entertaining follow-on work in the not-for-profit arena.

Concentrations are normally declared upon entry into the program, but that can be delayed for up to a year on the three-year model and at least a semester on the two-year model. Specialty course work in the Health Care and Life Sciences track will have significant pre-requisite courses that will result in them being taken during the final year or so of the curriculum.

Degree Name: A constant point of discussion among educators is the name applied to such interdisciplinary approaches. However, we have examined like programs around the country, the industry itself, and common usage of the term Public Relations. It is clear that Public Relations is the dominant theme. Another option, Integrated Marketing Communications, has been experimented with, especially at the Medill School in Chicago, but has not received common acclaim as an appropriate name for a degree. In presenting the interdisciplinary approach to this degree program, the effort will require that to be accomplished in the details, not in the name. The industry is known as Public Relations and the dominant professional association is called the Public Relations Society of America.

We did consider including Advanced Organization Communications as a core course but determined that it was best positioned as an elective. We wanted to keep the core very focused on key subjects common to all and then allow students the freedom to explore and examine other areas, and add to their knowledge and skill sets as they identified their needs. We will certainly be encouraging that course.

Letter Number 4

The reviewer clearly understands with the selection and the value of the core courses.

While the reviewer disagrees with the business courses, we worked diligently with both our Public Relations Professional Advisory Committee and with the Kelley School of Business to identify just the right amount and just the right subject materials for the business courses we were going to require and offer. It should be remembered that this degree is NOT a substitute for an MBA.

The reviewer also did not have access to course syllabi to see course content, but many of the issues raised are addressed in courses like Public Relations Management (discussion of human resources issues and project management), in Public Relations Planning (extensive examination not just of strategic planning but also of tools such as enterprise-wide project management applications), and Public Relations Research and Evaluation (extensive examination of research tools, including marketing research).

We are confident with the input already received from other reviewers, our Public Relations Advisory Committee and from the business education professionals in the Kelley School of Business that we have the proper mix of coursework in business.