

# A FIRST LOOK: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION

*Public Relations Curriculum and Instructors from 20 Countries*

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## **A First Look:**

### **Analysis of Global Public Relations Education – Curriculum and Instructors**

#### **Executive Summary**

Public relations, now a global profession, has long merited research to document how it is being taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels in countries around the world. “Analysis of Global Public Relations – Curriculum and Instructors” is that study.

Building on valuable earlier studies, our analysis broadened the geographic scope of study and stressed in-depth qualitative discourse as a basis for its conclusions. The first phase of the study was an analysis of the web sites of 218 educational institutions in 39 countries on five continents (Appendix Table 1). Based on this array of data, researchers engaged in in-depth interviews with public relations educators in 20 of the countries (See *Key Questions* in the Introduction, page 5). The emerging narratives and details provided valuable insights as to how and why public relations education is generally based on several universals and yet is often combined with local variations.\*

The key findings of this study are:

- 1.) Public relations is generally defined as a strategic function for building and maintaining relationships.
- 2.) Undergraduate programs are basically designed to prepare future practitioners.

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\*“ Public relations is now arguably becoming a global profession in an increasingly interconnected world ...recognizing that public relations varies, understandably, with the society in which it is practiced ...” *The Professional Bond*”, November, 2006

3.) Curriculum frequently reflects the five-course standard suggested in the Commission of Public Relations Educations 2006 report, *“The Professional Bond.”*

4.) However, important cultural distinctions are often embedded within programs.

5.) Barriers to development of “the ideal public relations program” include resources, government, country culture, program structure, and inadequate or ineffective relationships with practicing professionals.

6.) Graduate programs emphasize advanced theory and strategic thinking.

Researchers also found “moderate” influence by U.S. and European educational standards in other parts of the world.

As a comprehensive recommendation based on the interviews, the researchers suggest the development of a virtual compendium of best practices in public relations education with continuous contributions from educators around the world. This electronic “Public Relations Education Development Depository” (PREDD), could be a valuable reference resource for case studies, test banks, uploaded interviews with professionals and other sources, campaigns and recommended and rated textbooks.

## INTRODUCTION

Clearly, today's public relations is a global profession, and multi-national agencies continue to close geographic gaps by utilizing social media, virtual conferences, and other innovations in technology and communication. To keep up with these global changes, and indeed, to initiate leadership for the global markets, public relations education and training must be structured along a global perspective: educators must meet the demands for skilled workers who are inter-culturally competent and technological savvy, and who hold a *world* view.

Yet, very little is known about the status of public relations education across the world. A significant gap exists in understanding the current initiatives in global public relations education. The overall goal of the research project reported here is to help close that gap and describe the status of public relations education globally. The project was exploratory, while also relying on precedence and previous work in public relations education. One point of reference was the Commission on Public Relations Education's *Professional Bond* (2006) report on undergraduate and graduate education in the United States. The publication's executive summary stated that "it was not meant to be prescriptive, but to present a set of objectives for excellence identified by a cadre of distinguished educators and practitioners." In the publication a set of minimum standards is presented for undergraduate public relations education. This five-course model comprised 1) introduction to public relations (including theory, origin and principles); 2) public relations research, measurement, and evaluation; 3) public relations writing and projection; 4) supervised work experience in public relations (internship); and 5) an additional public relations course in law and ethics, planning and management, case studies, or campaigns (p. 47). The *Professional Bond* also addresses issues of diversity, rapidly advancing communication technology, and global implications for public relations education.

The research detailed in this report is a second phase of a larger, comprehensive study of public relations curriculum, programming, and degree structures from international higher education institutions. The first phase of the study was an analysis of websites from 218 educational institutions in 39 countries. By continent, Phase I analysis included six countries from Africa, 15 countries from Eurasia, 11 countries from Europe, five from the Americas (excluding the United States), and two from Oceania.<sup>1</sup>

The second phase of the research study—described here--encompassed in-depth interviews with public relations educators from 20 countries. Instead of relying on static descriptors found on websites, this phase allowed for details and personal narratives that explained how public relations is taught across different regions of the global marketplace.

*Key Research Questions* were used to guide Phase II interview discussions and analysis:

1. What do interview participants consider essential knowledge and skills in public relations?
2. How do interview participants interpret and use the five course undergraduate standard reported in *The Professional Bond*?
3. How do interview participants perceive and use graduate level curricula in public relations?
4. How do interview participants describe the educational structures for their programs and why the programs exist? What suggestions are there for global public relations education in the future?

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<sup>1</sup> For details on method and findings of Phase I, please refer to: Toth, E. L. (2009). Phase I report: An exploration of global public relations program websites. Report to the Global Alliance, University of Maryland, College Park.

The educators who were interviewed shared their perspectives on the delivery of public relations education and offered their assessments on the possibility of creating global standards for public relations education. The in-depth nature of the interviews resulted in over 380 pages of single-spaced transcripts that were analyzed in order to answer the Research Questions and to ultimately make recommendations for advancing global public relations education.

Thus, this report begins with some background information on global public relations education and a description of former studies in the area. Following the background information is a summary of key findings, and at the conclusion we offer recommendations for addressing gaps that are revealed about global public relations education. A more detailed methodology for Phase II is offered in Appendix A.

## **BACKGROUND LITERATURE**

Prior research profiling public relations education was instructive for this study, albeit no comprehensive research was found that attempted to audit public relations education on a truly global scale. Educators have provided expert histories and commentary on the state of public relations education in their home countries (Azarova, 2003; Ferrari, 2009; Ferreira and Verwey, 2004; Gorpe, 2009; L'Etang, 1999; Pirozek and Heskova, 2003; Sriramesh, 2002; Zlateva, 2003; Zhang, 2009). Two major pieces included a 2008 assessment of the possibility of creating a global curriculum for public relations education done by faculty at Leeds University (2008) and a 2009 online survey of Euprera members and nonmembers profiling public relations undergraduate and graduate programs generally in Europe (Cotton & Tench). Also useful was a study of Eastern European university websites and qualitative interviews (Spacal, 2007) as well as studies of how public relations education is evolving in specific countries (Xifra, 2007; and Goncalves, 2009).

Leeds University's 2008 report to the Global Alliance of Public Relations and Communication Management provided an assessment of secondary literature to assess the possibility of creating a global curriculum for public relations education. The authors recommended building a global curriculum that respected potential cultural differences, the tension between uniformity and diversity of program elements, and the need for partnering with industry and other relevant bodies to create appropriate educational competencies (Leeds University, 2008, pp. 18-24). The authors noted the historical dominance of U.S. education (p. 24).

*Toward a Global Curriculum* (2008) provided six recommendations for shaping a global education curriculum: (1) Educators were urged to integrate cultural awareness into curricula;

(2) member associations were encouraged to debate tensions between unity and diversity of curricula; (3) curricula should be designed to represent the range of theoretical approaches available; (4) research projects conducted in the U.S., the U.K. and Europe to learn employer and academic priorities should be repeated in all member organizations; (5) the Global Alliance should hold a research conference to facilitate debate on a global curriculum; and (6) “such discourse could then be incorporated into a map reflecting the diversity and richness of public relations but built on shared core values” (pp. 24-5).

The European Public Relations Education and Research Association (Euprera) profiled the public relations undergraduate and graduate programs in Europe and elsewhere (Cotton & Tench, 2009). The authors used an online questionnaire sent to Euprera members and non members involved in public relations education. To obtain participation, authors posted the questionnaire on the Euprera and POpen Mic websites and in newsletters. Questions sought information on external characteristics (what, where, for how long, for whom) as well as internal characteristics (place in the institution’s structure, definition of public relations, place and weight of public relations in bachelor degree programs, elaboration of curriculum, books and sources, contact with practice, and balance of theory and practice in curricula). The survey participants reported being in university and college departments of Communication, Communication Management, Communication and Journalism, Media (Film and Journalism), Public Relations, Business-Economics-Marketing, and Other (Sociology). Among a number of benchmark findings were scaled items on ideal courses for the BA program. Courses most highly valued out of 27 listed were: Public Relations Theory, Public Relations Strategies, Communication models, strategies, and theories; Communication techniques (writing skills, media training); Public Relations Practice and Deontology/ethics. Next in ranking were



Professional Activities (case studies, seminars, and workshops) and Research Methods. Out of 20 courses listed to capture the “ideal” masters degree program, the first seven were Communication, models, strategies, theories; Public Relations Strategies; Public Relations Theory; Research Methods; Deontology/ethics; Communication Research; and Dissertation.

Spacal (2008) sought to identify and evaluate courses in public relations, marketing and communication in Eastern European countries. The research focused on countries that had quite recently freed themselves of communist-type regimes. His search relied on internet sites and requests of universities to provide information for the research project. Citing difficulties in finding and transmitting the information, translating the information into English and “lack-lustre feed-back in many instances,” the data relied on the internet. Starting with 20 countries, the author found a specialization or a major in public relations, as part of a BA Communications course in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia Moldova, Romania, and in two universities in Hungary. He found nine universities with postgraduate studies in public relations: Serbia, five universities in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Bulgaria. He found three universities with master’s studies: two in Lithuania and one in Estonia. Spacal urged continued efforts to “create an Internet archive of academic literature and research for students and academic staff alike.” To do this, he asked universities to collaborate, use a common language and find electronic support.

Others have provided in-depth assessments of how public relations education is evolving in their home countries. In 2007, Xifra warned that public relations education in Spain, offered as a degree in Advertising and Public Relations, was actually an “advertising major with public relations minor” (p. 212). He based his conclusion on an analysis of syllabi for all 32 Spanish universities with public relations education. He also conducted 29 qualitative interviews out of

the 38 public relations scholars and researchers listed in Spain's Association of Public Relations Academics. Using the Commission on Public Relations Education's *Professional Bond* (2006) five course standard, Xifra reported that all 32 universities had a public relations theory or principles course, 75 percent had a public relations planning and management course, 59 percent had a public relations writing course, and 50 percent had a public relations research course. He found only 9 percent had a public relations law and ethics course, about 16 percent had a public relations action and implementation course, and about 12 percent had specialized work experience in public relations. He concluded that in Spain, "the fundamental understanding of public relations was that of a marketing tool" (p. 211); and that "there was a technical vision of the field with no management function approach to it" (p. 210).

In 2009, Goncalves reported responses to a questionnaire on the *Professional Bond's* five-course standard. The author conducted a comparative analysis of 18 Portuguese universities and their three-year plans of studies; she found that 94 percent of universities offer courses related to public relations theory and history, all universities offered a writing and production course, almost 89 percent offered "public relations planning and management content," 83 percent offered a research methods course, and 50 percent offered supervised work experience (p. 329).

In sum, prior research on international public relations education has been country-specific for the most part, but taken together, the research articles point to a growing population of public relations programs in higher education. The Leeds University assessment on the possibility of a global public relations curriculum suggested the difficult tension between uniformity vs. diversity; the need for cultural awareness; the attention to language differences in meanings of public relations course titles and concepts; and the possible backlash against a

historical, United States dominance of education. The Euprera profiles study provided good benchmark information, including the most highly ranked curricula from most European academics. Studies of the evolution of public relations education in Eastern Europe, Spain, and Portugal were also instructive in the use of qualitative methods to test assumptions about the content and context of public relations education, particularly the five-course standard for undergraduate public relations education presented in the publication *The Professional Bond*.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Below we offer a summary of key findings derived from interviews with public relations educators in 20 different countries. The findings here reflect participant definitions and goals for public relations education, program structures and course content, cultural distinctions across programs, perceived barriers to better programming, and perceived influence from U.S. and European public relations models and perspectives for the discipline. For each of these themes we provide evidence through participant quotes and/or through tables of data found at the end of the report.

### **Public Relations Defined as Strategic and Relational**

In order to offer context for subsequent discussions of public relations education and curricula, interviews began by asking participants to define public relations and explain their philosophy behind public relations education. Most participants defined public relations as strategic management of relational communication. A few participants from non-democratic and early democratic societies described public relations a political activity that emphasized social networking and media relations and the business community. One participant defined public relations as: “composed of both management of relationships plus work to legitimize organizational activities and promote the visibility of the client, the governmental client or NGO.” A couple of participants used comparisons to marketing and advertising as bases for their definitions of public relations. One said that public relations was “an addition to marketing communication,” and another said it “overlaps with advertising.” One participant interestingly defined public relations in terms of ethics by suggesting that the profession has the responsibility to solve interpersonal and organizational conflicts.

Participants were similarly consistent in their educational philosophy. Most of them implied a social science frame for a management worldview about teaching public relations. One participant said: “The thing with public relations and communication management from a managerial perspective. You have to know something about the human behavior, you have to know something about psychology, sociology, politics, and economics. To me that is very important from a managerial perspective but we are really looking at our discipline from a managerial perspective.” Another participant described the social science framework in this way:” You should have all types of—yeah, science based courses like public relations theory, like history, like ethics, like strategic management, strategic planning and communication management. You should have of course methodological courses or oriented courses like content analysis, surveys, statistics, beta analysis and—so we have a mixture of all these.” Other interesting perspectives that were shared included a critical paradigm that emphasized critical thinking and media literacy, and a social change agenda, where public relations was the process by which change can occur.

### **Undergraduate Programs to Prepare Future Practitioners**

In terms of the structure of participant programs, public relations education is indeed being conducted in all 20 countries represented in the study (see Table 1 for demographics of participants). Some participants described strong, comprehensive programs with rigorous curricula and professional experiences. Other participants revealed burgeoning courses and ideas for public relations education. The number of students in the undergraduate programs ranged from 30 to 500.

The main purpose of the undergraduate programs in the countries represented was to prepare future public relations professionals and “cultivate a person who can assume technical

and managerial positions.” There were also comments about striving to increase student ability to “think critically and strategically as communication professionals.” A couple of participants described the goal of their undergraduate program more generally: to prepare students to meet the needs of the “industry” and to help students be more “well-rounded” public relations professionals.

### **Curricula Reflects Undergraduate Five-Course Standard**

One of the more striking findings was the large number of participants who reported undergraduate programs reflective of the five-course standard recommended in *The Professional Bond*. Almost three-quarters of the participants, from across various continents, expressed some version of the five-course standard (See Table 2 for list of course titles). These participants taught public relations principles; public relations writing; research methods; campaigns or cases courses; and offered a professional experience/internship. As one participant explained, her program already tried to match the five-course standard: “This was one of the factors that influenced the current make-up of our program.” In particular, participants were unanimous in their support for research methods courses and for internships and other types of professional experiences. A participant asserted that “research methods and mathematics are important because they help public relations practitioners to understand our reality.” Understanding research methods helps professionals show clients that they are not making results “appear by magic,” as one participant put it. Regarding internships, almost all the participants included them as part of the undergraduate curriculum in public relations. Those who did not have formal internships typically had some sort of professional or experiential component to a course. One participant explained, “We don’t have this especially because some of our students are already working, others are studying full-time, but we bring it in through a compulsory project that students do in groups.”

While most programs reflected similar courses as suggested by *The Professional Bond*, participants described a variety of models or formats that delivered their public relations curriculum. There were multiple approaches being applied to public relations education. For example, in Spain, Slovenia, and Germany, participants described a system they labeled the Bologna Process, which was initiated three years ago.<sup>2</sup> One participant questioned how this reform will affect their program. Another participant described its impact: “the reform for us meant, first of all, that we succeeded to introduce doctoral and master’s in public relations, which we didn’t have. As I said, this is going to be the first year we are teaching this. And in general I expect to see also on the undergraduate level to have a full public relations program implemented in five to seven years.”

### **Strategic Thinking and Advanced Theory in Graduate Programs**

About three-quarters of the programs represented by participants in this research included graduate degree programs as well as undergraduate degree programs. The purpose of most of the graduate degree programs was to provide working professionals with advanced understandings in theory and research in order to go back to the profession and gain higher-paying, higher status positions. One participant explained, “All graduates also work, so most are already prepared to go into public relations jobs.” A few participants also added that a goal of their master’s degree was to help students get initial jobs.

The graduate programs were described as reflecting more strategy and more creativity than undergraduate study. Graduate programs also provided a theoretical foundation that allowed

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<sup>2</sup> The Bologna Process unites 46 countries in developing comparable degrees organized in a three cycle structure (bachelor-master-doctorate). Countries are setting up national standards, learning outcomes and fair recognition of foreign degrees. For further information see Benelux Bologna Secretariat (2010). *About the Bologna process*, accessed at <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/>.

some students to then pursue Ph.D. degrees following graduation. The programs allowed for a greater use of expertise provided by instructors.

### **Cultural Distinctions Embedded within Programs**

In Table 3, cultural factors are listed that participants shared that they felt affected public relations education in their country. For example, in Nigeria there is a strong emphasis on relationships and politics, which is tied with the country's focus on health and development. In New Zealand there was a similar focus on development and solving social problems, while also looking globally for public relations strategies. In China, participants talked about Confucian traditions and the ongoing framework of harmony working within public relations and other professions in the country. Participants also expressed a negative reputation in the country for public relations, which is viewed as merely media relations and publicity. Finally, the European countries seemed to highlight social responsibility and ethics.

### **Several Barriers to the Perfect PR Program**

Table 4 lists the various barriers that participants expressed that limited their ability to successfully develop and implement an ideal public relations program. The barriers fall into five categories: people; resources; government; country culture; program structure; and relationship with professionals. Each of these categories holds a few barriers to creating an ideal program. For example, one barrier within the "people" category is that participants feel they do not have colleagues who understand public relations or legitimize their work. In the "resource" category, there is limited time, staff, and funding to implement what participants feel is necessary for effective public relations education. Several barriers were included from a government level of influence, such as sanctioned education reform; regulations, and lack of federal funding. With country culture, participants discussed economic and social norms that often guide student opinions toward thinking money is more important than broader educational goals.



### **Moderate Influence from Public Relations in U.S./Europe**

Most participants described courses and program structures that were framed within Western perspectives and theories for public relations. In general, participants found these to be useful for guiding course and curricular decisions. One participant from the United Arab Emirates even spoke of seeking out ACEJMC accreditation, a U.S.-based professional association who grants accreditation based on several academic criteria. Other evidence of a Western influence included participants using U.S.-published textbooks, partnering with U.S. universities for student initiatives, and of course, implementing the five-course model from the document written by U.S.-based public relations scholars.

While most participants suggested a moderate emphasis on Western ideals for public relations, some participants actively resisted known Western ideologies in their courses and programming. One participant claimed that public relations had a negative reputation due to its ties to assumed Western ideals and therefore, his program chose other labels for its public relations courses. Another participant spoke of a contrasting ideology in her country: “New Zealand is big on cultural, so, we have several courses on different types of communication and international which we—we have to, actually, and we are very appreciative of the level with respect to different cultures.”

## **RECOMMENDATION: THE GLOBAL TEACHING TOOL KIT**

Participants offered a number of recommendations for future global public relations education. Table 5 offers a more detailed list of recommendations of courses and content from individual participants. In general, the ideal program would include not only the public relations content courses, but also business, math, and applied sciences, in order for students to compete against integrated marketing communication and business marketing after graduation. One participant suggested adding into curriculum the topics of business etiquette and practical training for work behavior. Another participant recommended that all public relations students learn a second language. Other suggestions included ethics, advanced writing courses, social psychology, and critical inquiry. The reasoning behind all the suggested coursework was that students need to be competitive in global business and need to provide clients with whatever skills the client desires in building communicative relationships with stakeholders. The skills need to “get the job done,” as one participant said. Another one described the recommendations as creating “real communication managers.” To gain a greater global perspective, some participants also suggested moving away from cases and examples derived from the U.S. only.

Combined, the participant recommendations suggest the development of a “Basic Tool Kit” for public relations educators that simultaneously offer some global perspectives and understandings of today’s public relations, but also allows for local, cultural distinctions for teaching in the discipline.

Within this Tool Kit should be a link to access a virtual web site that can act as depository for educational materials, such as case studies, test banks, uploaded interviews with professionals, campaign ideas, and recommended and rated textbooks.

The Web Tool Kit could also allow for an educator blog and listserv where educators across the world can communicate with each other, connect and get information, share teaching ideas, and offer partnerships and travel opportunities.

The cost of developing a Tool Kit would be minimal if it were web-based and/or distributed via CD-Rom format. The development of the contents would derive from research and advice of educators around the world who can meet virtually to put ideas together.

Several variations in culture, politics, and social life could be highlighted according to country in the Tool Kit. At the same time, though, the Tool Kit itself can represent the future of global public relations education: a comprehensive, virtual model for cross cultural connections among public relations educators who can learn from each other rather than from just one part of the world.

## Table 1

### Demographics of Participants

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#### Countries by Continent

Africa: Nigeria, South Africa

Eurasia: China, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Korea

Europe: Spain, Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Great Britain, Russia

Americas: Canada, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Brazil

Oceania: Australia, New Zealand

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#### Degrees Conferred by Participants' Programs

Programs with BA, MA and Ph.D.Programs	4
Programs with BA and MA	9
Programs with BA Only	3
Programs with MA Only	2
Post Graduate Certificate	1
Unidentified	1

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#### Participant Gender

Female	11
Male	9

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#### Participant Education

Ph.D.	18
Law Degree	1
M.A.	1

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#### Participant Professional Experience in Public Relations

11 of 20

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## **Table 2**

### **List of Courses Taught**

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Advanced Public Relations  
Campaigns  
Capstone Projects  
Communication Management  
Communication Strategies and Campaigns  
Corporate Communication Strategies  
Corporate Governance and Stakeholder Analysis  
Crisis Communication  
Crisis Management  
Global Public Relations  
Government Relations  
Introduction to Public Relations  
Introduction to Public Relations and Advertising  
Management Theory  
Marketing Communication  
Public Relations Campaigns and Mass Media  
Public Relations English  
Public Relations Principles and Practices  
Public Relations Skills  
Public Relations Theory  
Public Relations Theory and History  
Public Relations and Organizational Communication  
Reputation Management  
Research Methods  
Strategic Planning in Public Relations  
Strategic Public Relations and Crisis Management  
Strategies and Tactics

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**Table 3**  
**Cultural Factors Influencing Public Relations Education by Continent**

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Africa

Law and ethics in Nigeria  
Democracy and freedom of speech is new in Nigeria  
Strong emphasis on relationships  
“There are various levels of development across Africa. One must deal with health, Development, politics, and relationships. Relationships are extremely important.”

Americas

Conscious of history, role of country in its region  
Roots in Spain’s colonization  
Licensing: Study public relations for 30 credits to obtain a license or have BA or MA

Eurasia

More attention to harmony as a principle, and tradition of the Chinese culture  
Emphasis on IMC (Integrated Marketing Communication)  
Target stakeholders are journalists and consumers  
Perceived lack of social acceptance of public relations; public relations = media relations  
Building relationships are important  
Size of the PR industry is still small  
Different media system

Europe

Social responsibility and ethics are important  
Finland emphasis on public sector and nonprofits  
Universities pay student education; competing against 100 other universities for students  
Lack of internship opportunities  
U.K. “Slightly more commercial, stronger emphasis on corporate enterprise”  
Strong regulation from the ministries of education

Oceania

Intercultural, international focus  
Development communication, poverty, solving social problems  
Globalized outlook

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## **Table 4**

### **Barriers to Successful Public Relations Programs**

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#### People

- Colleagues don't have wider perspective of communication science
- Colleagues don't have PR awareness
- Unqualified faculty members
- Lack of teachers

#### Resources

- Lack of Time
- Lack of Staffing
- Limited Funding

#### Government

- Need to have % of employment or risk elimination of program
- Bologna Process reform, but still unclear how it will affect programs and processes
- Political views in country
- Name changes by government away from "public relations" labeling
- Ministry of Education regulations

#### Country culture

- Students just want to make money
- Industry just prefers "integrated marketing communication" and not strategic management focus

#### Program structure

- Based in business school and have responsibilities to business
- No clear set of courses, such as introductory courses and prerequisites
- Lack of structure or strategic management of program
- University bureaucracy

#### Relationship with Professionals

- Education Commission
- Practitioners don't respect theory, academics don't have professional experience
- Practitioners don't have educational background
- Practitioner impression that public relations education is superficial
- Generation dependent

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## **Table 5**

### **Participant Recommendations for Public Relations Programs**

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#### Ideal Program Conceptualized by Subject Areas

- Combine management, psychology, sociology, and politics
- More social psychology perspective
- Broad focus in liberal arts and sciences, plus PR courses and etiquette and practical training
- Public relations theory, social methodology, management, social sciences, specialized courses
- Basic and advanced public relations courses, more specific topics
- Second language courses
- Ethics, strategy, management, methods, statistics (Graduate Level)
- Balance of critical inquiry and applied science
- Maintain writing, research, media skills, but in context of community, government, and economy
- Standardization of curriculum
- More courses in international public relations, communication, writing, and texts

#### Ideal Program Based on Industry and Academics

- Focused on the Marketplace: advertising, promotions, and corporate image
- Full set of public relations theoretical courses
- Add marketing, advertising electives, math
- Research methods, statistics
- Reduce the gap between expectations of practice and academia.
- More involvement of professionals
- Examples and cases from outside the U.S.



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## **APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY**

In-depth interviews were conducted with educators in various global regions who were known to be experienced in public relations and expert on the development of public relations education in their countries. The 20 participants represented different types of higher education institutions. The data provide “thick description” of public relations curricula, program structure, and educational philosophies, and findings lead to recommendations for how the Global Alliance can be a thought leader for public relations education. For purposes of this project, global public relations education was defined as the kinds of public relations educational programs, generally equivalents of undergraduate and graduate public relations and post-graduate diplomas, found across the world.

Phase II method grew out of the findings of Phase I content analysis. Researchers chose qualitative in-depth interviews, using a pre-tested guide of 25 open-ended questions. Many of the questions were formed as a result of analyzing Phase I websites. For example, the results of Phase I suggested that public relations education across the world was developing sophisticated curricula, including the presence of the five-course standard. Phase II interview questions permitted researchers to seek support for this finding by asking for deeper insight from educators. Time and expense limited the number of interviews that could be conducted.

Researchers worked with the Global Alliance and contacts made through Phase I to identify and invite through email invitations a total of 20 educator experts. After explaining the project purpose and requesting about an hour telephone interview time at their convenience, researchers also informed the participants that their comments would be strictly confidential, using the ethical standards of the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board. A

professional service provided typed transcriptions of the audio-recorded telephone interviews, which lasted between one and three hours in length.