

DATE: July 14, 2005

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Communications, major in Public Relations

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The University of Tennessee Knoxville has had a strong concentration in Public Relations for some time. It was under the Journalism major for a while and two years ago became a concentration in Advertising. Over the last several years, the public relations field has diverged both from advertising and from journalism to become a recognized discipline of study due to the demands of the profession and student requests. Students will graduate with the education and skills in public relations to serve in a variety of business and educational settings throughout the state, primarily entertainment, tourism, and healthcare.

PROPOSED START-UP DATE: Fall 2005

Commission staff has reviewed program proposals according to the academic standards adopted by the Commission on November 14, 2002. Each standard is referenced below.

1.1.20A MISSION: The proposed program is consistent with the role and scope of the mission to offer academic programs that reflect “current professional practice.”

1.1.20B CURRICULUM: The overall goals of the curriculum are designed in full compliance with all standards set by the discipline’s major accrediting body, the Accrediting Council for Education Journalism and Mass Communication and the Public Relations Society of America. The proposed program requires 120 semester hours to complete the curriculum. All courses are currently being offered in the concentration distributed as follows:

<u>Curriculum Components</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
General Education	66
Major Core Requirements	37
Electives	<u>27</u>
TOTAL	120

1.1.20C ACADEMIC STANDARDS: Students are admitted and matriculate based on the admission, retention, and graduation policy consistent with other baccalaureate degrees as published in the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

Student Projections	Projected Program Productivity		
	Full-time Enrollment	Part-time	Graduates
Year 1	10	0	0
Year 2	20	0	10
Year 3	35	0	15
Year 4	45	0	25
Year 5	55	0	30

1.1.20D FACULTY: Current faculty are adequate to support the proposed major.

1.1.20E LIBRARY RESOURCES: No additional are needed to implement the proposed program.

1.1.20F ADMINISTRATION/ORGANIZATION: The proposed program will be housed in the School of Advertising and Public Relations, administered by the current director.

1.1.20G SUPPORT RESOURCES: There are more that 100 organizations in Tennessee and the Southeast that will continue to support student internships.

1.1.20H FACILITIES/INSTRUCTIONAL EQUIPMENT: No additional instructional equipment or space renovations are required to implement the proposed program.

1.1.20I STUDENT/EMPLOYER DEMANDS: The concentration in public relations has been a popular option for students for several years. As a free standing degree, the popularity of the major is expected to significantly increase. Public Relations majors are prepared to work as communication professionals for public and not for profit organizations such as government relations, financial communication, corporate communication, employee communication, media relations, community relations, and political communication. These professionals prepare news releases, annual reports, and handbooks, write speeches, newsletters, and are skilled at data gathering and interpretation, writing, and public speaking. The Bureau of Labor Statistics identifies public relations as one of the fastest growing fields between 1998 and 2008 that does not require a graduate degree. A 2000 survey conducted by the Public Relations Society of America found that the median salary for PR professionals was \$53,000.

1.1.20J NO UNNECESSARY DUPLICATION: East Tennessee State University offers a major in mass communication with concentrations in advertising, publication relations, broadcasting and journalism. Middle Tennessee State University offers general PR, publications, and PR for recording industry. The University of Memphis offers courses in public relations. None of the three duplicate the curriculum offered in the proposed program

1.1.20K COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONS: None indicated.

1.1.20L DESEGREGATION: The program will not impede the state's effort to achieve racial diversity.

1.1.20M ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION: The program will be evaluated based on actual and projected enrollment, graduation rates, alumni follow-up surveys, student satisfaction surveys, local area employer satisfaction surveys. A review of the program also will be performed with an external reviewer.

1.1.20N ARTICULATION: N/A

1.1.20O EXTERNAL JUDGMENT (Graduate Programs): N/A

1.1.20P COST/BENEFIT/SOURCE: The proposed program has been a concentration for some time. The change to a free-standing degree involves adding general education courses and electives that are all currently being offered. There are no additional costs associated with the proposed program. The major in Public Relations will meet the demands of the profession for graduates with the degree designation and student demand. There are no associated costs to implement the proposed program. Current resources available to support the concentration will be used for the program. Other resources include seven externally funded accounts.

1.1.30 POST APPROVAL MONITORING: An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following approval. The review will be based on goals established in the approved program proposal. At the end of this period, campus, governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. These goals include, but are not limited to enrollment and graduation numbers, program costs, progress toward accreditation, library acquisitions, student performance and other goals set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. As a result of this evaluation, if the program is found to be deficient, the Commission may recommend that the governing board terminate the program. Copies of such recommendation will be forwarded to the Education Committees of the General Assembly. The Commission may also choose to extend this period if additional time is needed and requested by the governing board.