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Journal of Public Relations Education
Editorial Review Board

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Letter from the Editor

The 10-2 issue is all about the student experience. Following the Commission of Public Relations Education (CPRE) issue in 10-1, wherein we examined expectations of a complicated and growing field, we look at not just how students will succeed in the industry but rather their experience and perspective in getting to the finish line of the undergrad experience, using the classroom as a laboratory.

This issue addresses courageous methods with Madden & Guastaferro lending brave insight into the emotional toll that students endure when working with sensitive topics. In fact, their findings show us that students found this topic motivating and meaningful in providing support to victims. I'm grateful for Madden & Guastaferro bringing these issues and advice to light so as to help other PR professors understand how to more effectively integrate trauma-informed practices into campaign courses. We can't avoid commonly stigmatized issues for the sake of our own comfort in classrooms, we must remain vigilant and maybe even, comfortably uncomfortable in order to improve outcomes related to all matters of communication with all people. I hope you find this article as moving and helpful as I did.

Then, Weed & Nye reveal an additional aspect of student satisfaction using extracurricular activities through PRSSA as a model for maximizing leadership potential and their knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits (KSATs) - building upon the last two CPRE reports. They recommend to maximize these KSATs that PRSSA should be structured within a for-credit curricular design to enhance career preparedness in the student experience. This left me thinking about the potential that exists for high-impact practices and experiential learning crossovers in my own curriculum and asking the question, am I advocating enough for my own PRSSA chapter?

This takes us to the role of technology in this experience discussion, which Lim and Place address in the use of technological tools and responsible use in public relations with our final article and GIFT. In these final pieces, Lim reveals, that college students anticipate professors to incorporate ChatGPT into many course materials rather than prohibiting its use. This study highlights that ChatGPT is a powerful PR tool that can be used by colleges to improve their public relations efforts in a number of ways, from classroom to campus-wide innovation. I appreciated this article and timing as my own university and unit wrestle with policy-making and educational practices surrounding emerging tech in the classroom and campus.

As luck would have it, Place provides us with a solution to the implementation of this looming issue in our classrooms in her award-winning GIFT from the PRSA Educators Academy Summit in 2022. This assignment has miraculously stood the test of tech time and is structured to empower, enable, and embolden students to apply ethical and legal theory in PR to practice by way of a policy writing assignment. Really turning the student into an expert to engage as counsel and "ethical guardians" in the field; furthering a confident student through this classroom experience.

Our educators in this issue have effectively transformed wicked problems into practical and professional solutions. I'm so proud of the work we do at JPRE, and I hope our scholars inspire your own practice.

Adrienne A. Wallace
Editor-in-Chief

"Public Relations Isn't All Rainbows and Butterflies": Student Experiences in Developing a Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Campaign

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the experiences of one public relations capstone course to understand students' experiences in developing a child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention campaign. Findings from this research indicated positive changes related to issue salience, efficacy, and knowledge. Furthermore, the sensitive nature of this issue was a motivator for students, although there were concerns about not offending target audiences or triggering survivors. This article provides ways to integrate trauma-informed practices into a public relations campaigns course for instructors engaging with stigmatized issues.

Keywords: child sexual abuse prevention, public relations campaigns, service learning, stigmatized issues, trauma-informed pedagogy

Ample scholarship exists on the various pedagogical benefits of client-based service learning in the public relations campaign capstone course. Not only do students gain real-world experience in research, strategic planning, message design, and evaluation (e.g., Aldoory & Wrigley, 2000; Werder & Strand, 2011), but there can also be more value-added learning outcomes such as enhanced critical thinking, civic engagement, and ethical decision-making (e.g., Allison, 2008; McCollough, 2020; Place, 2018). In their research on student perceptions of service–learning, Muturi et al. (2013) found that the civic engagement element of service-learning was particularly salient for students who welcomed the experience to learn more about important issues facing their communities. As such, instructors in the public relations campaign capstone courses have a ripe opportunity to expose students to communicating about challenging and complex issues.

Willis (2016) argued that "PR has a wider role to play in helping others in society tackle 'wicked' dilemmas" (p. 306). This could include issues like homelessness (Place, 2022), mass incarceration (Pressgrove et al., 2020), HIV/AIDS communication (McKeever, 2021), mental health (Aghazadeh, 2022), and domestic violence and sexual assault (Madden, 2019). While these topics have been explored in public relations scholarship, there may be hesitancy to introduce these topics into the classroom because of the sensitive and potentially re-traumatizing nature of the content. As Madden and Del Rosso (2021) found in their research on trauma-informed public relations, public relations educators get little, if any, guidance on navigating difficult topics with their students. But ignoring hard issues does not make the issues go away, and not incorporating challenging topics into the capstone course does a disservice to the future public relations practitioners who can use the safety of the classroom space to grow as communicators and people. However, the integration of these topics must be approached with care and intentionality.

This paper explores the experiences of one public relations capstone course to understand students' experiences in developing a child sexual abuse (CSA) prevention campaign (Child Maltreatment Solutions Network, 2023). We were interested in understanding how salience, knowledge, and efficacy towards the stigmatized issue of CSA changed, or did not change, throughout the course of the semester. Additionally, we were interested in how students perceived working on the issue of CSA and any accompanying challenges. This was accomplished by using a combination of quantitative surveys timed with in-class reflections to assess salience, efficacy, and knowledge. Additionally, this article provides tangible ways to integrate trauma-informed practices into a course when working on difficult issues as a way to protect students, clients, and instructors without shying away from hard issues.

Literature Review

Service-Learning Pedagogy

Jacoby (1999) defined service learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (p. 20). Public relations capstone courses are frequently approached through service-learning pedagogy because of the students' ability to apply what they have learned through their coursework to a real-world context (Fraustino et al., 2019; McCollough, 2018, 2019). Not only can knowledge be applied and professional skills developed, but service-learning projects often help support community organizations and instill a sense of civic awareness in students. Research has found evidence for increased social responsibility, empathy, and community and personal involvement for students participating in service learning as opposed to other forms of assessment (Ryan, 2017).

There can be different goals and motivations behind utilizing

service-learning pedagogy. Britt (2012) outlined a typology of three approaches to service-learning pedagogy in communication: (1) skill-set practices and reflexivity– "developing competence and self-efficacy," (2) civic values and critical citizenship–raising "awareness and critical thinking about social issues and students' values and moral choices/ responsibilities as societal members," and (3) social justice activism– "working with others to transform systems of oppression" (p. 83). Within this typology, different aspects of student identities are "nurtured and called forth–learner, citizen, or social activist" (Britt, 2012, p. 82).

Yet in public relations, we may be missing opportunities to nurture identities beyond learner or future professional in our students. In research on public relations faculty perspectives on service learning, Witmer and colleagues (2009) found that learning outcomes were primarily focused on public relations concepts as opposed to service or community engagement. They wrote that "opportunities for reflection on community service and social responsibility are often not integrated into public relations service-learning courses" (p. 115). University education serves a larger purpose than simply job training, and academic institutions are also "institutions of community engagement" (Schatteman, 2014, p. 17). Universities, and public relations programs, must also maintain a loftier mission of developing informed, self-reflective, and civic-minded graduates (Giroux, 2010; Kuban et al., 2014). In this article, we focus on the opportunity for client-based service-learning courses in public relations to nurture students' identities around civic engagement and raise awareness and critical thinking about social issues.

Service Learning as an Opportunity for Civic Engagement

Civic engagement can be defined as "working to make a difference in the civic life of communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference" (Ehrlich, 2000, p. iv). In a longitudinal study, McCollough (2020) sought to

understand how service-learning coursework may have impacted students several years after graduation. Evidence from this research suggested that service-learning curriculum helps to "cultivate engaged citizens and community members" (McCollough, 2020, p. 13). For example, graduates found the coursework helped them to understand community problems, see how communication can provide solutions to these problems, and feel more empowered to solve them post-graduation.

Service learning may also provide access to populations that students had never considered before. Although not specifically in public relations, Motley and Sturgill (2014) conducted a case study of a multi-class service-learning initiative with a local food bank. In addition to the specific skill development component of each participating course, another goal of this effort "was to see whether direct contact with people in poverty could cause students to reflect on both the situation of the poor and their own responsibility to cover economic diversity accurately" (p. 167). The researchers of this study found that students' opinion of the poor did change positively over the course of the semester, and students showed a growing awareness and understanding of economic diversity.

We believe that client-based service learning within the public relations capstone course offers an additional opportunity to expose students to issues that are stigmatized as (1) a way to educate them about an issue they might not know much about and (2) recognize the challenges associated with communicating about stigmatized issues.

Engaging with Stigmatized Issues

Stigma is a label that attaches discrediting characteristics to a person's identity (Goffman, 1963). As such, it is frequently associated with negative occurrences like blame, shame, social exclusion, discrimination, secrecy, and isolation (Crowe & Murray, 2015). One challenge of stigma is silence and secrecy, causing issues to be perceived as a personal failing rather than symptoms of a systemic problem (Madden, 2019). While

many stigmatized issues are researched in the context of health and interpersonal communication (e.g., Campbell & Babrow, 2004; Corrigan et al., 2009; Murray et al., 2016; Smith & Cashwell, 2011), less work has been done related to stigmatized issues and public relations. Yet, there is a real opportunity within public relations to "break the silence" around stigmatized issues, and service learning is an opportunity to begin a ripple effect of educating our classroom of students about an issue. They in turn, through their personal and professional networks, may begin to educate others. We are interested not only in the transferable skills of campaign development, but the actual knowledge of the issue at the core of the partnering client organizations.

CSA as a Stigmatized Issue

CSA, a subtype of child maltreatment, is a global public health problem affecting 12% of children under 18 (Barth et al., 2013); in the United States it is conservatively estimated to be experienced by 60,000 children annually (DHHS, 2023). Defined as the completed or attempted sexual acts (contact and/or non-contact) by an adult or caregiver with a child under 18 (Mathews & Collin-Vezina, 2019), is associated with lifelong biopsychosocial consequences (Maniglio, 2009; Noll, 2021) and is estimated to confer a lifetime economic burden in excess of $9.3 billion (Letourneau et al., 2018). Also contributing to the burden, though not included in the economic estimate, is the stigma associated with CSA. Stigma is best evidenced by the delay in disclosures of CSA. Indeed, the majority of disclosures do not happen in childhood, when the abuse occurs – research indicates disclosures of CSA are likely up to 20 years post abuse (Hébert et al., 2009; London et al., 2005). For parents, there can also be social stigma around discussing sexual topics with children, even sexual abuse prevention (Prikhidko & Kenny, 2021). As such, the issue of CSA prevention presents a public relations challenge if discussion around the topic is stigmatized.

Research Questions

Based on the literature review, the following three research questions guided this study:

RQ1: How, if at all, did student issue salience, knowledge, and efficacy towards the issue of child sexual abuse prevention change over the course of the semester?

RQ2: How, if at all, did students' perceptions about working on the issue of CSA prevention change over the course of the semester?

RQ3: What, if any, challenges did students experience working on the issue of CSA prevention?

Methods

This study explored 23 senior PR major experiences in a public relations campaign capstone course at Penn State University. The location is important to disclose given the past crisis the university faced with the Jerry Sandusky scandal in 2012. In 2016, Penn State University and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency collaborated to develop and evaluate a comprehensive CSA prevention strategy, the Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative (SHCI; Child Maltreatment Solutions Network, 2023). In the current study, students were asked to develop a public relations campaign in partnership with this effort as part of a service-learning project.[1] Specifically, students were tasked with creating a campaign to increase participation in the community-based *Stewards of Children* program, developed and disseminated by Darkness to Light. Offered as a 2-hour in-person workshop or as a self-directed online course, Stewards of Children has demonstrated effectiveness in

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1   We recognize that as instructors we do not know all the experiences students bring into the classroom with them. Students would be provided with an alternative client to work with for the semester if unable to work on the topic of CSA for whatever reason. Because CSA would be discussed in class all semester, students were made aware of this class client at the start of the semester, giving them time to switch to a different section of the course if necessary.

significantly increasing participants' knowledge, attitudes, and awareness of protective behaviors (Rheingold et al., 2015). For the service-learning project, students developed campaigns in groups throughout the semester, participating in regular client meetings with the SHCI research director.

Qualitative Student Reflections

As an assignment in the course, students were required to write a one-to-two-page reflection paper at the beginning of the semester, the middle of the semester, and the end of the semester (see Appendix A for the specific reflection prompts) to see how their attitudes towards working on this issue changed over the course of the semester. In total, all students (N = 23) opted in to have their reflection prompts included in this study. However, one student did not submit a final reflection and another student submitted the same reflection twice. Therefore, a total of 67 reflection prompts were analyzed.

Reflections were analyzed by the lead researcher using the thematic analysis process adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify patterns and themes. The first phase involved reading through the reflection memos multiple times, which then led to generating initial codes from the data. Specifically, the lead researcher highlighted salient portions of the reflection in a Word document and used the comment feature to indicate a code. Next, initial codes were collapsed into broader themes in an Excel document, with representative quotes included from across the data set. To help see patterns across individual student reflections, a second Excel document was used with each row dedicated to one student and a column for each of the three reflections. Quotes that most encapsulated the student's feelings about the campaign project during that reflection time point were included. This allowed the researcher to note any changes in reflections over the course of the semester. Through analyzing both Excel documents, themes were then revised and further refined, resulting in the final themes detailed in the results section.

Quantitative Survey

To accompany the written reflections, students were invited to participate in an electronically administered survey distributed via email at the beginning of the semester (Baseline), mid-semester (Time 2) and at the end of the semester (Time 3). Participation in the reflection was noncontingent upon the survey and vice versa. A total of 13 students participated in the survey at Baseline; 11 participated at Time 2 and 8 participated at Time 3 (the same students participated at each time point, aside from attrition). Participants were asked to provide demographic information (i.e., age, gender, race) and if they or someone they knew had experienced child maltreatment. The survey focused on their prior experience with programs talking about the prevention of CSA and if they had previously completed mandated reporter training. Participants were asked to report the degree to which they agreed with statements regarding issue salience (i.e., "CSA is a serious issue in general"), efficacy (i.e., "I feel I can make a difference in preventing CSA"), and CSA-related knowledge (i.e., "Most sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they know"). These items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree) such that higher scores indicated more agreement (unless reverse coding is noted). Due to the small sample size and attrition between surveys, these data are presented descriptively. Items on the saliency, efficacy, and knowledge measures were averaged to provide an item-level mean for each item. All portions of this study received approval from the university IRB.

Results

Description of Survey Sample

Of the 13 students that participated in the online survey, 12 identified as female and none reported being a parent or caregiver. Participants were 92% White, 1 participant identified as Black. The average age of participants was 21.5 (SD = 0.52; Range: 21 - 22).

Approximately half (n = 7) of the students indicated that they or someone they know had been the victim of child maltreatment. Five of the participants reported previously participating in a program talking about the prevention of child maltreatment. Most responses indicated these programs were tied to employment at a summer camp or sports camp, as one participant shared:

> In high school I participated in a program called "Speak Up!" The idea behind this program is to encourage students to speak up about negative experiences they have experienced personally, or seen others experience. While it is not solely focused on sexual abuse, sexual abuse was a topic of discussion. The reason behind my participation was to become more active in trying to better the community.

Issue Salience, Efficacy, and Knowledge

Overall students' issue salience and efficacy nominally increased over the semester (see Table 1). Of particular note, the degree to which students felt CSA was an issue that could impact them increased from a mean score of 4.6 at Baseline to 5.8 at T3. A potential increase was also observed related to their agreement that CSA is an issue that could impact someone they know (6.2 at Baseline to 6.8 at T3). Students' reported self-efficacy in their ability to prevent CSA increased from a mean of 5.2 at Baseline to 6.0 at T3. This corresponds with nominal increases seen in their CSA-related knowledge (see Table 2). All items changed in the desired direction over time, with the exception of the item regarding background checks for new babysitters (Baseline = 6.54; T2 = 6.55; T3 = 6.38). The implication of this finding should be cautiously interpreted as sample size decreased over time as well. A greater potential increase between Baseline and T2 are observed- a small decline in item means is observed at T3. This is commonly seen in behavior change interventions: the students participated in CSA prevention training between Baseline and

T2, it is expected to see a decline in knowledge approximately 4-months post-intervention.

Table 1

Issue Salience & Efficacy

	Baseline	T2	T3
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*
Issue Salience			
CSA is a serious issue, in general.	6.9 (0.38)	6.5 (0.69)	7.0 (0)
CSA is a serious issue in my local community.	4.8 (1.59)	5.0 (1.10)	5.6 (1.19)
CSA is a serious issue in my state.	5.7 (0.95)	5.9 (1.04)	6.6 (0.52)
CSA is a serious issue in the U.S.	6.6 (0.51)	6.2 (1.54)	6.9 (0.35)
CSA is an issue that I think about regularly.	3.8 (0.99)	4.2 (1.40)	4.9 (1.72)
CSA is an issue that could impact me.	4.6 (1.56)	5.1 (1.45)	5.8 (1.49)
CSA is an issue that could impact someone I know.	6.2 (0.73)	6.1 (1.04)	6.8 (0.46)
Efficacy			
I feel like I can make a difference in preventing CSA.	5.6 (1.19)	6.2 (0.75)	6.3 (0.89)
I am confident in my ability to help prevent CSA.	5.5 (1.05)	5.1 (1.14)	5.9 (0.84)
I have the ability to prevent CSA.	5.2 (1.48)	5.1 (1.58)	6.0 (1.31)
It is my responsibility to prevent CSA.	5.7 (1.11)	5.3 (1.62)	6.1 (0.83)
It is up to me to prevent CSA.	4.5 (1.85)	4.4 (2.06)	4.8 (1.98)

Baseline N = 13; Time 2 N = 11; Time 3 N = 8

Table 2

Knowledge

	Baseline	T2	T3
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*
It is okay to ask for a background check for a new babysitter.	6.54 (0.78)	6.55 (0.69)	6.38 (5.00)
Child sexual abuse is a serious problem that only the police should handle. I do not need to be involved.*	2.85 (1.21)	2.91 (1.70)	3.00 (1.00)
Most sexual abuse victims are abused by someone they know.	6.15 (0.80)	5.73 (1.27)	6.5 (6.00)
If I suspect child sexual abuse, I should not do anything until I know for sure.*	2.85 (1.28)	1.82 (1.08)	2.75 (1.00)
Children who are sexually abused may blame themselves for the abuse.	5.61 (1.04)	6.09 (0.70)	5.75 (5.00)
By making the call to report child abuse, the child will be harmed more.*	2.85 (1.46)	2.73 (1.35)	2.50 (1.00)
In addition to the police, I know who to call to report child sexual abuse.	4.15 (1.28)	4.45 (1.44)	5.50 (2.00)
If a child discloses sexual abuse to you, you should ask, "Are you sure?"*	2.33 (1.61)	1.73 (1.19)	1.88 (1.00)
If I think a child has been sexually abused, I would confirm with another adult before reporting it.*	3.46 (1.56)	2.18 (1.47)	2.88 (1.00)

* item is reverse coded (i.e., lower score is better); Baseline N = 13; Time 2 N = 11; Time 3 N = 8

Findings from the reflection memo data added context to understandings of student baseline issue salience and knowledge. About a third of the students expressed some prior knowledge of the issue in their reflection memos because of their experiences as camp counselors, babysitting, having younger siblings, having a parent who was an educator, online trainings for work at the university, covering the topic in health and wellness classes, and even through their sorority's philanthropic partnership with CSA prevention. One student disclosed that

they personally knew people who had experienced CSA. Interestingly, one student mentioned COVID-19 as the catalyst for them knowing more about CSA because they had seen it talked about more in media coverage with schools being virtual. In the following sections, we focus on the qualitative feedback from the reflections.

Student Perceptions of Working on CSA

In analysis of the reflection memos over the course of the semester, four prominent themes were generated from the data. These were *issue seriousness as a motivator, learning to rely on client expertise, positive change over the course of the semester, and an opportunity for personal and professional growth.*

Issue Seriousness as a Motivator

In the initial reflections students completed at the beginning of the semester, it was clear there was some anxiety and nervousness about working on this topic. Much of this nervousness had to do with lack of familiarity with the issue and it feeling "pretty overwhelming in terms of really having a grasp on the scope of child sexual abuse and all the information about it" (Student 13, Reflection 1). Another student described this topic as "intimidating" but continued that "for me personally something that [is] intimidating is exciting and challenging" (Student 22, Reflection 1). A few students did comment on the "sensitive" and "taboo" nature of the topic, but much of the feelings of anxiety came from wanting "to do these individuals justice" (Student 6, Reflection 1).

Students seemed to appreciate and take to heart the weightiness of the issue, which made them view this as something more than just a class project. As one student wrote, "I didn't have the right mindset 8 weeks ago, I looked at it as more of a project, school work rather than a serious issue that I should continue working on helping even out of school" (Student 3, Reflection 2). The seriousness of the issue was motivating to students in this way. Interestingly, several students indicated that

their feelings toward the topic of CSA did not change over the course
of the semester but instead "magnified" (Student 11, Reflection 2) their
"motivation towards spreading awareness as a solution to prevention has
grown" as they became more aware about the topics, signs, and resources
available.

Learning to Rely on Client Issue Expertise

The meeting with the client at the beginning of the semester
seemed to assuage some concerns about working on this issue as it
"reinforced a sense of urgency for prevention methods" (Student 7,
Reflection 1). Students felt that the ability to speak "directly" with the
client would "allow us to get a better understanding of what, specifically,
she is expecting from these campaigns which will hopefully help us create
them successfully" (Student 5, Reflection 1). Regular interactions with the
client seemed to help students realize that they were not expected to be the
experts on the issue. In the mid-semester reflection, one student reflected
on their initial hesitancy towards the topic as being related to their lack of
knowledge. They said, "I did not have an extensive background in CSA
and when I am not prepared I tend to stress out" (Student 21, Reflection
2). Feedback from the client throughout the semester helped make "the
campaign that much more interesting and meaningful" (Student 20,
Reflection 3). In the final reflection, one student even explicitly stated that
"having the opportunity to speak with [the client] helped better position
myself as a PR specialist" (Student 14, Reflection 3).

Positive Change Over the Course of the Semester

Overwhelmingly, students indicated that their feelings about
working on CSA prevention became more positive "because of the
extensive time, effort, and training dedicated to this issue throughout the
semester" (Student 14, Reflection 3). Another student similarly indicated
the importance of this longer-term topic issue because "[a]t the beginning
of the semester, I was confused and overwhelmed about how to go about

the campaign but I think our ideas are more clear and concise" (Student 13, Reflection 2). Another student further reflected on this positive change:

> My feelings about working on child sexual abuse have changed since the middle and beginning of the semester. At first, I was very skeptical of the topic and how to learn alongside such a touchy topic. As I learned over the semester that child sexual abuse SHOULD be talked about, I realized there are many good ways to go about it. My feelings have definitely become more positive and I am very glad that I learned about child sexual abuse in [this class]. (Student 1, Reflection 3)

One student described the change they experienced as shifting "logically rather than morally," rather than getting too focused on the fact that "child sexual abuse is a terrible, tragic situation" instead "the best way to learn more is to really think about what you/anyone can do to help seek out the warning signs" (Student 2, Reflection 2). Another student described this change as feeling "more inspired to help" (Student 3, Reflection 2). While there was an overall positive shift in feelings toward the topic, it is also important to note that some students still felt "not fully comfortable with it" by the end of the semester and found it "challenging to work on such a sensitive topic" (Student 8, Reflection 2).

Opportunity for Personal and Professional Growth

Students found the topic of CSA an important reminder that "public relations isn't all rainbows and butterflies. Public relations is an extremely important tool in order to get the word out about important causes such as child sexual abuse" (Student 2, Reflection 2). Another student reflected that "I feel honored to have been in this class because if I wasn't, I never would have taken notice to the issue of preventing child sexual abuse" (Student 3, Reflection 3). Students were able to reflect on the limitations of their own lived experiences as "[t]his project made me realize that just because I'm not fully aware of the extent to

which something is happening doesn't mean it isn't a terrible, worldwide problem" (Student 4, Reflection 2).

Many students noted that working on this issue would help them "really grow as a public relations professional and a person" (Student 6, Reflection 1). For some students, this helped them assess if "there is a possibility for non-profit work in my future (Student 21, Reflection 1). Other students valued the opportunity to "diversify what target audiences I have worked with" (Student 20, Reflection 1). Another student reflected about this opportunity for growth in multiple areas:

> I also look at it as a chance to fine tune my PR skills and develop more empathy for the fellow human – who wouldn't benefit from that? I think the skills learned from this project and semester will stick with me throughout life, personally and professionally."
> (Student 9, Reflection 1)

> In their own personal lives, students indicated that they would more closely monitor the children in their lives as a result of this class and would remember this topic when they had their own children. Other students saw this campaign as an opportunity to have conversations with those close to them about a topic that might not otherwise ever come up. For example, one student said that "I think this campaign is a cool way to open up conversation with my own family and friends outside of class. I know that in the past, when I have worked on campaigns in the classroom, I bring the conversation outside of it" (Student 4, Reflection 1). Another student directly reflected on this "ripple effect" outcome:

> Darkness to Light's efforts are only growing, especially after this class. There were over twenty people in this … section. That is twenty more people educated than a year ago. These people can now educate their peers, family, and others to prevent CSA. It is interesting to see the ripple effect first hand and creating a PR campaign on CSA was a great way to see this effect first hand.
> (Student 12, Reflection 3)

Challenges of Working on the Issue of CSA

Five additional themes were generated from the reflection memos about challenges students indicated facing working on the issue of CSA. These were "people don't like to talk about hard things," personal emotions as impediments, balancing audience discomfort with reality of issue, "nervous our help might hurt," and language precision.

"People Don't Like to Talk about Hard Things"

One of the biggest challenges students reflected on from working on the issue of CSA can be summed up as "people don't like to talk about hard things" (Student 9, Reflection 1). This can lead to people trying "to ignore the issue and pretend it doesn't happen or pretend it doesn't happen to anyone they know" (Student 7, Reflection 1). Related to the public relations challenge of this, "it will be hard to reach and truly engage with the target market about something they don't want to think, hear, or see" (Student 16, Reflection 1). Even if people do talk about the issue, "people try to sugar coat this topic" (Student 12, Reflection 1). Students also reflected on the challenge of the topic more locally as "Penn State has such a stigma around it because of its previous affiliations with staff and employees" (Student 1, Reflection 1).

Personal Emotions as Impediments

Students indicated worrying "that personal emotions can get in the way of creating a successful campaign" (Student 4, Reflection 1). Although this did not happen, in the first reflection one student was concerned that "if a group member decides they do not wish to continue with this topic due to personal reasons. Will the group have to simply carry on while down a partner?" (Student 22, Reflection 1)

In later reflections, there were a handful of students who did discuss that they were struggling with the emotional weight of this topic. One student wrote:

I think the biggest problem that has come up so far for me is the

emotional side. I didn't realize how much of an impact it would

have on me. I am a fairly emotional person and this really pulls

at the heartstrings, if I'm being completely honest. (Student 4,

Reflection 2)

Similarly, another student wrote that "I still find it challenging to work on a sensitive topic. Even with completing the training myself, it still seems that it's a topic no one likes, or wants, to talk about" (Student 5, Reflection 2).

Balancing Audience Discomfort with the Reality of the Issue

Students frequently discussed "balancing," walking a "careful line," fear of "saying the wrong thing," "adding more stigma to the topic," and not wanting to "cross a line" on how to communicate about CSA. As one student wrote, the challenge is creating a campaign that "appeals to people's emotions and gets the point across while still being sensitive and cautious" (Student 19, Reflection 1). In a majority of reflection memos, students discussed not wanting to "offend" anyone with this campaign. Another student said that "[w]hen developing a PR campaign, it is always essential to word your message so that it is non-controversial" (Student 23, Reflection 1). One student explained this tension as follows:

I am struggling a bit with how to campaign the program in

a way that communicates the serious nature and necessity

CSA prevention requires without making the target audience

overwhelmed or uncomfortable. I think this is a careful line we

need to walk but I do think it is necessary that we invoke the

devastating effects of CSA in our campaign communications.

(Student 9, Reflection 2)

Similarly, another student indicated a challenge is "using terminology that is sensitive to the general public but still emphasizes the severity of the issue…and creating media that is influential without being graphic" (Student 7, Reflection 1).

"Nervous Our Help Might Hurt"

This theme is related to, but distinct from the previous theme because it goes beyond concern for making people uncomfortable with the content of the campaign to a concern that the content could be triggering to survivors. Related to the balancing act students described above, "if you cross boundaries then the campaign could do more harm than good" (Student 22, Reflection 2). As one student wrote, "[s]ome words that would sound great for the prevention might trigger a former victim of abuse. Our group ultimately wants to help with the prevention but we are sometimes nervous our help might hurt too" (Student 1, Reflection 2). Another student discussed making sure that "people who have experienced this…are the first priority" (Student 2, Reflection 1).

Students took great care to reflect on the messages and visuals for a campaign of this nature. As one student wrote, "[w]ord choice and vulgarity, such as explicit photos of CSA can be very damaging to an audience or viewer. It is imperative to have smart word choice and either a disclaimer before showing explicit photos, or not show them at all" (Student 10, Reflection 2). At the end of the semester, this same student further reflected on this challenge after the creating deliverables for the campaign pitch:

> I realized that even showing a picture of a child with the connotation of child sexual abuse in a visual may be too much for people to handle. Instead, [the client] recommended a picture of a teddy bear or balloons, so that the viewers don't have to specifically think about an actual child getting abused, but rather think about the topic in general. Working with such a sensitive topic, you also should consider who your viewers might be. Viewers may be victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and seeing such a graphic image or graphic statistic about child sexual abuse may hit home too hard. (Student 10, Reflection 3)

Language Precision

A common theme from the third student reflection is from an experience they had during the final pitch with the client. Students reflected that one group had used the language of "child sexual assault" instead of "child sexual abuse" when pitching their proposed campaign. This use of language was something that the client immediately highlighted as inaccurate, explaining that it is always abuse because children cannot consent. One student wrote that "I didn't know the big difference between the words 'assault' and 'abuse' so this was a huge takeaway for me. I often hear people using them interchangeably but I learned that that shouldn't be the case" (Student 4, Reflection 3). Many students reflected on this being a huge learning moment for them because that subtle difference in word choice to them had an entirely different meaning in this work. Here is how one student described this experience:

> After four years of Comm classes, I know that language matters; however, I had never even thought about using assault versus abuse when defining CSA. Realizing the ignorance in this statement now, I really appreciated [the client] taking the time to explain why it matters. I could see by her facial expression that the point of what I was saying was lost because of the language I had used. If I want the message to stick, it needs to use the correct terms and language, and there is not always room to correct yourself. This is a lesson I will take with me in everything I do post-graduation. (Student 9, Reflection 3)

Another student said "[w]hile we were crunched on time, [the client] commenting on this was so eye opening to me because wording in not just this campaign but any future campaign I might work on is so crucial and sensitive" (Student 6, Reflection 3).

Discussion

In line with previous service-learning pedagogy research (e.g.,

McCollough, 2020; Motley & Sturgill, 2014; Ryan, 2007), results from this study suggested that students felt more civically engaged and took more responsibility as members of a community for their role in CSA prevention as a result of this course. The findings from the survey data help to support this increased efficacy and issue salience for students that was also indicated in the reflection memos.

As highlighted in the literature review, Witmer and colleagues (2009) argued that opportunities for reflection on social responsibility were often not integrated into public relations service-learning courses. This study offered students multiple opportunities throughout the semester to reflect not only on the process of developing a public relations campaign, but their specific feelings and challenges of working on the issue of CSA. Because of the lack of research on approaching stigmatized issues in public relations (e.g., Madden, 2019), we were curious if there would be a negative reaction to the topic of CSA prevention for a semester-long campaign project. While students expressed some initial hesitation and nervousness about the issue, overwhelmingly students felt that engaging with this issue benefitted them both personally and professionally. In fact, the seriousness of the issue was motivating to students as most of the hesitation they felt towards working on the issue was related to "doing justice" to CSA survivors and not simply because the topic is unpleasant.

In terms of what this research can add to our understanding of stigmatized issues, there was an overwhelming desire to not offend anyone with their campaign. The concern about not offending one indicates a deeper discomfort with conflict and potentially the advocacy function of public relations. Given the strong record of activist public relations (e.g., Ciszek, 2015) and growing interest in corporate social advocacy (e.g., Waymer & Logan, 2021), it may be that our public relations courses are taking too neutral an approach to issues and training students that public relations should be dispassionate. If we do not challenge our students to address hard issues in our classrooms, we are not preparing them for the

reality they will face outside of the safety of the classroom. We also may be missing opportunities to integrate activist history and public interest communication topics more fully into our courses, which may help students see the passion that can be behind public relations.

To us, this concern about not offending anyone or making people uncomfortable with a CSA prevention campaign is a distinct concern from that of the campaign potentially triggering survivors of CSA. This concern indicated a sensitivity that students were attuned to with this project. Importantly, using the public relations campaigns course to expose students to stigmatized issues like CSA must be taken from a trauma-informed approach (Madden & Del Rosso, 2021). Trauma-informed approaches recognize the prevalence of trauma, in this case that a student in the class may have direct or indirect experience with CSA. A trauma-informed approach is not about providing therapy to students, but focuses on safety, building trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, voice, and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues (SAMHSA, 2014). Table 3 provides an overview of how these trauma-informed approaches, drawn from this study, are related to developing a public relations campaigns course involving a stigmatized topic.

Table 3

Trauma-Informed Principles for the Public Relations Campaigns Course

Safety	Throughout the semester, students, the clients, and instructor should feel physically and psychologically safe.
Trustworthiness and Transparency	It is clear from the start of the semester what issues will be covered in the course. Campaign and course decisions are made with transparency, and with the goal of building and maintaining trust among students, clients, and the instructor.
Peer Support	The campaign development is framed as co-learning and a growing process. Students work to build connections with each other and value the lived experiences each person brings.
Collaboration and Mutuality	Power differences are acknowledged to support shared decision-making. Everyone has a role to play in developing the campaign. Client feedback and interaction is a regular part of the process.
Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	Because it is impossible to know everyone's experience with an issue, students are supported in cultivating self-advocacy skills Students are given agency over the experience. Individual strengths are validated.
Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues	In developing a public relations campaign, biases and stereotypes that are based upon race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and/or geography, as well as historical trauma, are recognized and addressed. These issues are considered in all phases of the campaign development process and during interpersonal interactions.

In enacting a trauma-informed approach in the campaigns course, our first major takeaway from this research is that the client relationship is key for working on a stigmatized topic. Students indicated feeling overwhelmed by the issue because it was not one they were highly familiar with. Throughout the semester, though, students began to understand that they did not need to be the issue experts. Their expertise is in public relations and campaign development, and they are using these skills to help the client (the issue expert) meet their specific goals and objectives.

Collaboration with the client and regular feedback sessions were critical to build student confidence on the issue and to feel okay making mistakes. As such, the principles of collaboration and mutuality directly contributed to feelings of safety.

As discussed previously, one of the biggest learning moments for students was being corrected in their final client pitch about the distinction between "assault" and "abuse" when talking about CSA. Because there had been an established and on-going relationship with the client, there was trust and transparency to make this mistake and learn this lesson. As indicated by the reflection memos, this seems like a learning moment that many will carry forward and solidified to them why language is important in a way that previous coursework may have not. The group nature of this project allowed for peer support in these instances, where mistakes were not an individual failing but a collective learning opportunity.

Students developed a sense of empowerment towards working on this issue through the course of the semester and felt more confident they could be a voice of change on the issue. Students chose to view this project as more than a course requirement and saw it as a chance for personal growth. Although it did not figure prominently into student reflections, we took care with this project to recognize the historical trauma connected to Penn State and the topic of CSA. This also allowed for discussions of the issue of CSA across different cultures and genders and creating a campaign that considered this.

Limitations and Future Research

Although student names were removed from campaign memos and were analyzed several semesters after this course ended, students did submit their reflection memos as part of a class assignment and thus knew that their instructor (the lead researcher) would read these. As such, it is certainly possible that students self-censored any particularly negative attitudes about or experiences they may have had working on the

campaign out of their reflection memos. The anonymous survey served to help address this limitation, but of course nearly half the class did not complete the survey and there was attrition across the various time points. The decreasing sample size across surveys makes it difficult to assert meaningful behavior change; however, results suggest that change is feasible and examination may be warranted in a more robust study in the future.

In their reflection memos, students regularly mentioned a fear of triggering survivors of CSA with their campaign messages and images. Based on our review of literature, this is not something many, if any, scholars have studied. As such, we believe that future research could empirically seek to understand how CSA survivors perceive CSA prevention campaigns to provide evidence-based guidance on developing the most trauma-informed campaigns possible. Furthermore, future research should explore the integration of trauma-informed practices into different types of courses and at different types of universities.

Conclusion

This study provided strong evidence that the choice of campaign issues in the public relations capstone course may have ripple effects far beyond the course. As such, we have a real opportunity as educators to have students work to address hard, even stigmatized, issues in our courses. One of the most rewarding parts of this project was students reflecting on how this course not only impacted them professionally but personally. While so much emphasis is placed on skill development and career preparation in public relations courses, particularly the capstone course as students prepare to graduate, the role we play as educators in helping to shape empathetic, caring, and passionate humans cannot be underestimated. When done well, service-learning pedagogy is a natural complement to trauma-informed approaches in the public relations classroom.

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Appendix A: Class Reflection Prompts

First reflection

In 1-2 pages, I want you to reflect on the following questions:

- What are your feelings about working on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention? How familiar are you with this issue?
- What challenges do you anticipate in developing a public relations campaign on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention?
- What opportunities do you anticipate for developing a public relations campaign on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention?

Second reflection

In 1-2 pages, I want you to reflect on the following questions:

- Now that we are at the half point of the semester, have your feelings about working on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention changed (either positively or negatively)?
- What have you learned about the issue of child sexual abuse prevention that you didn't know at the start of the semester?
- What challenges have come up so far in developing a public relations campaign on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention?
- What ideas for a successful public relations campaign on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention do you have now that you didn't have 8 weeks ago?

Third reflection

In 1-2 pages, I want you to reflect on the following questions:

- Now that we are at the end of the semester, have your feelings about working on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention changed (either positively or negatively)?
- How do you feel about the public relations campaign on the issue of child sexual abuse prevention that your group developed?
- What was your biggest takeaway from the campaign pitch and feedback session?

- What, if anything, do you think you will do with your new knowledge about child sexual abuse and child sexual abuse prevention after this class ends?

Making PRSSA Leadership Work for Students: Role Satisfaction, Educational Success, and Career Readiness for the PR Profession

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ABSTRACT

Pre-professional student organizations are known to complement undergraduate university studies and propel students into their professional careers. The mission of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is to support students by enhancing education, broadening networks, and launching careers of students in the public relations industry. While PRSSA membership peaked at more than 10,000 members in 2018, membership has declined 41.6%, or more than 4,000 members, to a little more than 6,000 members in 2022. PRSSA student leaders can serve as the "canary in the coal mine" to pinpoint critical challenges in chapter recruitment, engagement, and day-to-day management. This study, through the theoretical lens of Self-Determination Theory, aims to measure how PRSSA student leadership satisfies needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness; and explores intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to serve as chapter leaders. From the study findings, the authors propose a PRSSA leadership strategy that integrates extrinsic motivation in the form of a class credit model that better aligns the PRSSA mission to the evolving needs of students.

Keywords: PRSSA, Public Relations Student Society of America, CPRE, self-determination theory, student leadership, student organizations, experiential learning

Pre-professional student organizations are known to complement undergraduate university studies and propel students into their professional careers. The mission of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) is "To provide exceptional service to our members by enhancing their education, broadening their professional network and helping launch their careers after graduation" (PRSSA, n.d.). Students commonly use PRSSA to leverage their public relations knowledge, leadership skills, and networking abilities to support career readiness. PRSSA chapters help students take a deeper dive into the public relations industry by inviting industry professionals to speak to student members at chapter meetings and events, hosting or sending students to industry conferences, and providing experiential learning for students (Andrews, 2007).

PRSSA has experienced a 41.6% reduction in membership over the past four years, from 10,348 members in 2018 (PRSSA, 2018) to 6,050 members in 2022 (PRSSA, 2022a). One study found that when PRSSA chapters largely shifted to online programming, due to COVID-19, executive board members felt that membership recruitment and retention were of deep concern (Weed et al., 2021a). As PRSSA chapters move forward, this research aims to measure how well PRSSA chapters currently meet the needs of student leaders and provide insight into how to motivate and satisfy the educational and professional development needs of PRSSA chapter leaders.

Literature Review

Student organizations come in many forms, such as pre-professional student organizations, extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, and more. These types of student organizations have been a part of the college experience for a long time, and tend to exercise consistent organizational values that are important to universities (Nadler, 1997). Pre-professional student organizations complement classroom education by creating an additional level of understanding around a certain profession

that allows the student to get further ahead in their desired career.

Needs Satisfaction in Organizational Leadership

The theoretical framework for this study is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT identifies three basic needs used to evaluate and determine human motivations, behaviors, and experiences. The three basic needs of SDT are competence, autonomy, and relatedness, (Davidson & Beck, 2019; Filak & Pritchard, 2007; Landry et al., 2022, Ryan & Deci, 2000; Weed et al., 2021a). Davidson and Beck (2019) break down these three basic needs, explaining that competency is what leads people to seek challenges and opportunities that maintain and enhance one's own capacities; autonomy as the feelings of freedom and independence that are the source of one's own actions; and relatedness as the feelings of belongingness and connecting with others. SDT is a useful lens for examining pre-professional student organizations because the theory can help explain why organization members are motivated, or even unmotivated, to actively participate, which is essential in helping pre-pre-professional organizations like PRSSA to achieve positive organizational outcomes (Filak & Pritchard, 2007; Pritchard et al., 2006; Weed et al., 2021a).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations to Serve in Organizational Leadership

With SDT in mind, it can be understood that PRSSA student leadership must successfully satisfy students' needs to be supported in their autonomy, competency, and relatedness. Needs can also be further classified into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation stems from the individual's pure enjoyment of the activity, while extrinsic motivations come from outside factors such as emotional-based coercion or tangible outcomes or rewards (Filak & Pritchard, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsic Motivations

Within the scope of intrinsic motivations, PRSSA is known to attract students by providing members with the opportunity to network with industry professionals, gain practical experience in the public relations field, develop their portfolio materials, apply for scholarships, and compete in regional and national award competitions (Pohl & Butler, 1994). When leadership experience is cultivated in an organization dedicated to a professional pathway, it can propel student leaders into their professional careers with an enhanced understanding of the industry. PRSSA and other student organizations can be stepping stones for all student members' professional development and leadership development. PRSSA student leaders likely have a greater advantage in honing important skills relative to the public relations industry when compared to general members of PRSSA chapters (Dadario & Sanner, 2022).

One study found that general student members of a professional organization, located within one university's business school, were more inclined to participate for two leading reasons: a) to network with industry professionals and b) to partake in professional development opportunities that could improve skills, further industry knowledge, and strengthen students' resumes (Munoz et al., 2016). Similarly, another study found that executive board members in academic clubs showed increased perceptions of emotional control and public speaking ability, in turn, increased their chances of getting an interview in their desired field as opposed to general members of academic clubs (Dadario & Sanner, 2022).

Extrinsic Motivations

Weed et al. (2021a) noted that the majority of PRSSA student leaders rarely receive tangible personal rewards or compensation (financial compensation and/or class credit) as forms of extrinsic motivation and, therefore, must find their sole motivation through intrinsic means such as

fulfilling the three basic needs outlined in SDT. Extrinsic motivations can increase the attractiveness of organizations (Vanderstukken et al., 2016) and, in turn, hold potential for improved recruitment of organizational leaders. The lack of extrinsic motivations and rewards can also place a barrier to poor and working-class students (Houze, 2021) who might need to prioritize other activities that offer extrinsic benefits (such as a part-time job), and can increase burnout for students with high intrinsic motivation who commit more personal resources to participation in voluntary activities (Fathepure, 2023; Kappelides et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022; Zhang & Jiang, 2023).

In some cases, student organizations, student-run agencies (SRAs), and internships may provide some form of compensation to student leaders. For example, in a study on SRAs that mirror public relations agencies, 43% of SRA faculty advisers indicated that some student workers received monetary compensation for work done at the firm (Ranta et al., 2021). Similarly, if PRSSA chapters seek to model leadership structures after workplace environments, it may be worth considering how workplaces utilize a variety of tangible and intangible rewards. One example of this could be providing incentives or bonuses such as gift cards (Landry et al., 2022) to show appreciation for student leadership efforts.

From another lens, one study asked student internship advisers how strongly they believe that academic credit is an appropriate substitute for monetary compensation, and 34.7% of participants believed that academic credit was appropriate in most cases for student internships (Senat et al., 2020). Though PRSSA is not an SRA or internship, it can be argued that PRSSA student leaders produce a comparable level of work, professionalism, and skills-based learning in chapter management. That posits a question as to whether PRSSA student leaders would be more motivated to serve if their roles were treated comparably to that of an SRA or internship, including similar compensation and/or incentives.

Satisfying Needs through Career Preparedness

Satisfaction of competence, autonomy, and relatedness needs play an important role in understanding the motivations and satisfactions of membership in PRSSA (Filak & Pritchard, 2008; Weed et al., 2021a), student organizations across university disciplines (Cletzer et al., 2023; Peltier et al., 2008; Rosch et al., 2023), related co-curricular experiences such as student-run agencies (Bush, 2009). These tangible outcomes can foster self-directed learning and peer-teaching in a flipped classroom model (Hodgson & Kwok, 2015) to enhance development of knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits that students carry with them into their future classes (Douglass & Morris, 2014) and meet the expectations for entry-level practitioners in the public relations industry (CPRE, 2018).

Career-specific skills are likely to be most important to pre-professional student organization leaders, as well as to hiring managers, and PRSSA "should be seen as an integral component for student development, with a particular focus on leadership skills" (CPRE, 2018, p. 20). One study suggests that co-curricular activities, which are similar in nature to pre-professional organizations, positively impact students' leadership development and multicultural competence by giving students the opportunity to lead through administrative, social, and creative tasks relative to the organization (Soria et al., 2019). Among other skills that pre-professional organizations such as PRSSA can offer students are communication skills, interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and self-awareness, which were identified as top qualities and skills that were crucial to securing a job after graduation (Clark et al., 2015).

There is some skepticism among industry professionals about how well the average PR education aligns with PR industry practices (Neill, 2007; Todd, 2009). The Commission on Public Relations Education "Fast Forward" report (2018) analyzed the knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits areas that public relations professionals and practitioners deemed

necessary for entry-level practitioners. The report identified 12 knowledge areas (p. 47), 13 skills (p. 47), five abilities (p. 47), and six traits (p. 52) that were most desired of entry-level PR practitioners (CPRE, 2018). However, based on educators' and practitioners' responses, there was "a striking lack of agreement about the 'ideal' preparation for an entry-level position in public relations" (CPRE, 2018, p. 25). PRSSA can offer the opportunity for universities to close the gap between the industry and academy related to the effectiveness of PR education. In 2006, the PRSA (Public Relations Society of American) organization updated the requirements for PRSSA chapter chartership to include a requirement that universities that hosted a PRSSA chapter must offer courses in five subject areas that aligned with recommendations from CPRE's "The Professional Bond" report (CPRE, 2018; CPRE, 2006).

> **RQ1:** How does the PRSSA chapter leadership experience satisfy student leaders' needs related to competence, autonomy, and relatedness?
>
> **RQ2:** Which intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are important to students when considering whether to serve in PRSSA leadership?

Method

Study Design

This study surveyed 2023 PRSSA student leaders—executive board and committee members—of PRSSA chapters at U.S. universities. PRSSA student leaders were selected as the focus of study as they were likely to be the most vested members of PRSSA chapters in terms of organizational management tasks, time commitment, adherence to chapter requirements, and professional development benefits. The study was approved by the authors' university IRB office.

Survey

The survey consisted of 38 multiple-choice and Likert scale questions and was created using Qualtrics. No personally identifying

information was collected in the study survey. Participants could voluntarily enter a $25 Amazon gift card drawing hosted through a separate survey link, with one winner selected for every 20 participants.

Qualifying questions. Participants were first required to answer qualifying questions that ensured participants a) were at least 18 years old, b) currently served as a PRSSA student leader, and c) were a member of a U.S. PRSSA chapter. If participants answered no to any qualifying questions, they were taken to the end of the survey. After completing three qualifying questions, 40 participants were eliminated, primarily due to not being a current PRSSA student leader (n = 34).

Demographics. Researchers collected personal demographic questions regarding participants' gender, class standing, number of classes enrolled in, hours per week spent on class tasks, hours spent per week in an internship, hours per week spent in a non-internship job. Chapter information. General information was collected about the participants' PRSSA chapter such as (but not limited to) chapter size, executive board size, how many members served on committees, and frequency of chapter events. Participants were asked questions about the personal leadership role comprised of their leadership position, months spent as a PRSSA leader, how they were selected as a leader, term length for their leadership position, how many hours per week spent in chapter meetings and on chapter tasks. In addition, general questions were asked about chapter leadership comprised of how easily the chapter can recruit executive board members and how easily the chapter can recruit committee members.

Needs Satisfactions. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with questions related to satisfaction needs met in competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

Competence. To measure competence, or the sense of personal effectiveness, participants were asked: a) how frequently used most-valued

knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits identified by CPRE (2018) and b) their level of agreement about how PRSSA leadership helped them prepare for a PR internship of entry-level job after graduation.

Autonomy. To measure autonomy, or the ability to self-direct one's contributions, participants were asked how strongly they agreed with whether they: a) personal control over their leadership responsibilities, and b) had input in how they contributed to their chapter.

Relatedness. To measure relatedness, or the need to feel personal connection with others in the organization, participants were asked how strongly they agreed with whether they: a) enjoyed serving as a PRSSA leader; b) received training for their role from a faculty adviser, other PRSSA chapter leaders, and PRSSA National representatives, and c) felt their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued by their faculty adviser and other chapter leaders

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations. To measure intrinsic motivations, participants were asked multiple-response questions to indicate why they were motivated to become a PRSSA leader, and a second question that asked if participants were asked what types of compensation they received for being a PRSSA leader and how the actual amount of work as a PRSSA leader compared to their expectations. To assess extrinsic motivations, participants were asked how their PRSSA work compared to class and internship (activities with extrinsic motivations to class credit or financial compensation). Participants were asked four Likert scale questions that rated their level of agreement for: a) whether PRSSA student leaders should receive compensation, and b) rating level of agreement for nine possible types of student compensation ranging from class credit to monetary payment. To bring in further connection with Self-Determination Theory, participants were also asked whether compensation would: a) improve chapter member recruitment (relatedness), or b) compensation would improve productivity of PRSSA

student leaders (competence and autonomy). In addition to motivations, demotivation was explored by asking participants their level of agreement with: a) a statement that they had considered resigning from their PRSSA leadership position, and b) four reasons why they considered resigning.

Participant Recruitment

To invite current PRSSA student leaders to participate in the study, the researchers sent study invitations plus two reminder emails to chapter faculty advisers as they were most likely to have an accurate roster of student leaders. Previously, the PRSSA National website included a chapter directory that contained contact information for faculty advisers and chapter leaders but, in early 2023, the format of the chapter directory changed to only provide links to a chapter website or a social media account. To have the greatest likelihood of reaching current faculty advisers, the research found a September 30, 2022, archived webpage of the chapter directory (PRSSA, 2022b) from the Wayback Machine. When faculty adviser contact information was not available in the archived directory, the researchers called the university department which hosted the PRSSA chapter to acquire the faculty adviser's name and email address.

Of 369 U.S. PRSSA chapters identified for this study, contact information could not be found for 10 faculty advisers, 16 email invitations to faculty advisers were returned, and three faculty advisers or university departments indicated their PRSSA chapter was inactive or disbanded. Two rounds of emails were sent to faculty advisers to request that they share the survey invitation with their PRSSA student leaders. Student leaders from at least 53 chapters participated in the study.

Sample Demographics

In total, 139 PRSSA student leaders met the qualifying conditions to participate in the study. Of the 137 participants who indicated their class rank, 49.6% (n = 68) were seniors, 32.8% (n = 45) were juniors, 10.9%

(n = 15) were sophomores, 3.6% (n = 5) were freshmen, and 2.9% (n = 4) were graduate students. Of the participants who indicated their gender (n = 137), 90.5% (n = 124) identified as female and 9.5% (n = 13) identified as male, and no students indicated a non-binary gender. Of the participants, 130 chose to indicate their leadership role for the Spring 2023 semester. The participants represented executive board positions that were noted in the PRSSA Chapter Handbook (PRSSA, 2023), comprised of president at 27.7% (n = 36), vice president at 16.9% (n = 22), secretary at 10.0% (n = 13), treasurer at 6.9% (n = 9), PR directors at 6.9% (n = 9), and one historian. The remaining participants represented other board positions that were unique to individual chapters but included leadership roles related to membership (n = 8), communication (n = 7), events (n = 6), and professional development (n = 6). Additionally, four participants indicated that they served as chapter committee members. Nine participants declined to provide their leadership position.

At the chapter level, 135 participants identified the size of their PRSSA chapter by the number of dues-paid members, with 17.8% (n = 24) representing micro-chapters of one to nine members, 25.2% (n = 34) for small chapters of 10 to 19 members, 25.2% (n = 34) for mid-size chapters of 20 to 49 members, 14.8% (n = 20) for large chapters of 50-99 members, 8.9% (n = 12) represented extra-large chapters of 100 members or more. The remaining 5.2% (n = 7) of participants reported that they did not know how many dues-paid members belonged to their PRSSA chapter.

Of participants who indicated how they were selected for the PRSSA leadership position (n = 129), most participants came into their PRSSA leadership role through appointment, with 37.2% (n = 48) appointed by their chapter's executive board and 20.2% (n = 26) appointed by their faculty adviser. Participants who indicated they were elected to their position accounted for 41.0% (n = 53). Most participants joined PRSSA leadership within the last year, with 37.7% (n = 49) serving 1-6

months, 33.1% (n = 43) serving 7-12 months, 20.0% (n = 26) serving 13-24 months, 6.9% (n = 9) serving 25-36 months, and 1.5% (n = 2) serving 36+ months. One respondent served less than one month. Participants most often serve on an executive board comprised of 6-10 members at 49.6% (n = 67), followed by 1-5 members at 44.4% (n = 60), 11-15 members at 5.2% (n = 7), and one respondent didn't know the size of their executive board. There was a positive correlation between chapter size and how many members served on the executive board, r(132) = .228, p = .008. The greatest percentage of participants indicated their PRSSA chapter did not have leadership committees at 43.7% (n = 53), followed by 1-5 members serving on committees at 24.4% (n = 33), 6-10 members at 17.8% (n = 24), and 11+ members at 14.1% (n = 19). Most participants indicated that their PRSSA chapter hosted events (meetings, socials, workshops, etc.) every two weeks at 57.8% (n = 78), followed by once per month at 20.7% (n = 28), once per week at 16.3% (n = 22), more than once per week at 2.2% (n = 3), and once per academic term at 2.2% (n = 3).

Results

Needs Satisfaction in PRSSA Leadership

Competence

Participants were asked about their level of agreement about whether they felt prepared to take on a PR internship or entry-level PR job because of their experience as a PRSSA leader (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Overall, students agreed that PRSSA leadership prepared them for a PR internship (M = 4.26, SD = 1.003) or entry-level job (M = 4.07, SD = 1. 038). A significant difference was found between PRSSA leadership roles and preparedness for an entry-level PR job [F(7, 115) = 2.386, p = .025), with presidents indicating the greatest agreement that their leadership role prepared them for an entry-level PR job (M = 4.42, SD = .806).

Further analysis was conducted to determine what factors of PRSSA leadership could positively influence participants' sense of preparedness to take on an entry-level PR job. In terms of role engagement, a positive correlation was found with how many hours per week were spent on PRSSA tasks, $r(121) = .242$, $p = .007$, and how the amount of work compared with a traditional class, $r(121) = .205$, $p = .023$. The perception of job preparedness was also positively correlated with training from the PRSSA faculty adviser, $r(120) = .455$, $p < .001$, other chapter leaders, $r(120) = .307$, $p < .001$, and PRSSA National representatives, $r(120) = .213$, $p = .018$.

Connection to Curricular Learning Objectives. Participants were asked how often they used highly ranked knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits (KSATs) from CPRE's "Fast Forward" report as part of their PRSSA leadership role ($1 = $ Never, $2 = $ 1-2 times per term, $3 = $ Once per month, $4 = $ Once per week, and $5 = $ More than once per week) (see Table 1).

Table 1

PRSSA leadership role and CPRE KSATs used at least once per week

	Knowledge used at least once per week	Skills used at least once per week	Abilities used at least once per week	Traits used at least once per week
President (n = 36)	None	Writing Communication Listening Networking SMM[b] Research & Analytics Editing Storytelling Speechwriting	Creative Thinking Problem Solving Analytical Thinking Strategic Planning Conflict Resolution	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management
Vice President (n = 18)	None	Communication Listening Networking	Creative Thinking Problem Solving Strategic Planning	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management
Public Relations Director (n = 9)	IEC[a]	Writing Communication Listening Networking SMM[b] Editing Graphic Design	Creative Thinking Analytical Thinking Critical Thinking Strategic Planning	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management
Secretary (n = 12)	None	Communication Listening	None	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Initiative Time Management
Treasurer (n = 9)	None	Communication Listening Networking	Creative Thinking Problem Solving Critical Thinking	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management
Committee Member (n = 4)	None	Communication Listening Networking SMMb Research & Analytics Media Relations	Creative Thinking Problem Solving Analytical Thinking Critical Thinking Strategic Planning Conflict Resolution	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management

	Knowledge used at least once per week	Skills used at least once per week	Abilities used at least once per week	Traits used at least once per week
Other (n = 33)	None	Writing Communication Listening	Creative Thinking Problem Solving Analytical Thinking Critical Thinking Strategic Planning	Curiosity/Desire to Learn Creativity Collaboration/Teamwork Hard Work Initiative Time Management

[a] *Internal or Employee Communication*
[b] *Social Media Management*

Knowledge. On average, participants indicated that they used several knowledge areas once per month, specifically ethics (M = 3.25, SD = 1.281), diversity & inclusion (M = 3.37, SD = 1.339), business acumen (M = 3.12, SD = 1.271), cultural perspective (M = 3.26, SD = 1.305), social issues (M = 3.22, SD = 1.327), internal/employee communication (M = 3.67, SD = 1.202), and management (M = 3.55, SD = 1.307). Other knowledge used less frequently were PR laws & regulation (M = 2.69, SD = 1.272), PR theory (M = 2.88, SD = 1.423), global perspectives (M = 2.91, SD = 1.299), crisis management (M = 2.89, SD = 1.291), and PR history (M = 2.33, SD = 1.252). No significant difference was found between the PRSSA leadership role and how often knowledge areas were used.

There was a positive correlation between participants feeling prepared for an entry-level PR job and how frequently they used almost all the knowledge areas. The strongest correlation was found with business acumen, $r(121) = .422$, $p < .001$, followed by ethics, $r(120) = .278$, $p = .002$, and PR laws & regulation, $r(119) = .270$, $p = .003$ (see Table 2).

Table 2

Entry-level PR job preparedness and frequency of PR knowledge use

How frequently do you use the following knowledge areas as a PRSSA student leaders?[a]		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.[b]
Ethics	Pearson Correlation	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	122
Diversity & Inclusion	Pearson Correlation	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	123
Cultural Perspective	Pearson Correlation	.223*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	123
Business Acumen	Pearson Correlation	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	123
Social Issues	Pearson Correlation	.246**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
	N	122
PR Laws & Regulations	Pearson Correlation	.270**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	121
PR Theory	Pearson Correlation	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.076
	N	123
Global Perspectives	Pearson Correlation	.187*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039
	N	123
Internal or Employee Communication	Pearson Correlation	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062
	N	122
Crisis Management	Pearson Correlation	.257**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	N	122
Management	Pearson Correlation	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
		123

How frequently do you use the following knowledge areas as a PRSSA student leaders?[a]		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.[b]
PR History	Pearson Correlation	.210*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020
	N	123

[a] 1 = never, 2 = once per term, 3 = once per month, 4 = once per week, 5 = more than once per week
[b] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

Skills. Participants indicated that they used several skill areas once per week, specifically writing (M = 4.20, SD = 1.056), communication (M = 4.60, SD = .686), listening (M = 4.54, SD = .692), and networking (M = 4.14, SD = .956). Other skills used once per month were editing (M = 3.75, SD = 1.359), social media management (M = 3.66, SD = 1.425), public speaking (M = 3.49, SD = 1.276), storytelling (M = 3.31, SD = 1.377), graphic design (M = 3.18, SD = 1.385), media relations (M = 3.15, SD = 1.436), and research & analytics (M = 3.10, SD = 1.282). Skills used once per term or less were speechwriting (M = 2.48, SD = 1.427), website development (M = 2.07, SD = 1.276), audio/video production (M = 2.00, SD = 1.225), and app development (M = 1.38, SD = .994). One significant difference was found between the PRSSA leadership role and how often social media management skills were used [F(7,114) = 2.325, p = .030), with PR directors most likely to use that skill more than once per week (M = 5.00, p = .000).

There was a positive correlation between participants feeling prepared for an entry-level PR job and how frequently they used six skills areas comprised of public speaking, r(121) = .409, p < .001, followed by writing, r(121) = .362, p < .001, storytelling, r(119) = .347, p < .001, networking, r(120) = .275, p = .002, communication, r(121) = .267, p = .003, and editing, r(121) = .244, p = .006, (see Table 3).

Table 3

Entry-level PR job preparedness and frequency of PR skills use

How frequently do you use the following skills areas as a PRSSA student leaders?[a]		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.[b]
Writing	Pearson Correlation	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	122
Communication	Pearson Correlation	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	123
Listening	Pearson Correlation	.223*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	123
Networking	Pearson Correlation	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	123
Social Media Management	Pearson Correlation	.246**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
	N	122
Research & Analytics	Pearson Correlation	.270**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	121
Editing	Pearson Correlation	.161
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.076
	N	123
Media Relations	Pearson Correlation	.187*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.039
	N	123
Storytelling	Pearson Correlation	.169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.062
	N	122
Speechwriting	Pearson Correlation	.257**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004
	N	122
Public Speaking	Pearson Correlation	.239**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
		123

How frequently do you use the following skills areas as a PRSSA student leaders?a		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.b
Graphic Design	Pearson Correlation	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	122
Audio/Visual Production	Pearson Correlation	.254**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005
	N	123
Website Development	Pearson Correlation	.223*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	123
App Development	Pearson Correlation	.422**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	123

a 1 = never, 2 = once per term, 3 = once per month, 4 = once per week, 5 = more than once per week
b 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

Abilities. Participants indicated that they used several ability areas once per week including creative thinking ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .986$), problem solving ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .986$), strategic planning ($M = 4.20$, $SD = .930$), critical thinking ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 1.029$), and analytical thinking ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 1.076$). Conflict resolution was used once per month ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.323$). No significant differences were found between PRSSA leadership roles and how frequently abilities were used.

There was a positive correlation between participants feeling prepared for an entry-level PR job and how frequently they used four ability areas comprised of strategic planning, $r(119) = .457$, $p < .001$, followed by critical thinking, $r(118) = .359$, $p < .001$, analytical thinking, $r(118) = .293$, $p = .001$, and problem solving, $r(118) = .226$, $p = .013$ (see Table 4).

Table 3

Entry-level PR job preparedness and frequency of PR abilities use

How frequently do you use the following abilities areas as a PRSSA student leaders?[a]		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.[b]
Creative Thinking	Pearson Correlation	.164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072
	N	121
Problem Solving	Pearson Correlation	.226**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013
	N	120
Analytical Thinking	Pearson Correlation	.293*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	120
Critical Thinking	Pearson Correlation	.359**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	120
Strategic Planning	Pearson Correlation	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	121

[a] 1 = never, 2 = once per term, 3 = once per month, 4 = once per week, 5 = more than once per week
[b] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*$p<.05$ **$p<.001$

Traits. Participants indicated that they used all trait areas once per week, comprised of collaboration/teamwork (M = 4.54, SD = .739), time management (M = 4.50, SD = .803), creativity (M = 4.45, SD = .870), hard work (M = 4.44, SD = .841), curiosity/desire to learn (M = 4.43, SD = .869), and initiative (M = 4.39, SD = .887). No significant differences were found between PRSSA leadership roles and how frequently traits were used.

There was a positive correlation between participants feeling prepared for an entry-level PR job and how frequently they used all

six traits, including initiative, r(120) = .361, p < .001, followed by collaboration/teamwork, r(121) = .318, p < .001, hard work, r(121) = .286, p = .001, time management, r(121) = .285, p = .001, and curiosity/desire to learn, r(121) = .278, p = .002 (see Table 5).

Table 5

Entry-level PR job preparedness and frequency of PR traits use

How frequently do you use the following abilities areas as a PRSSA student leaders?[a]		I feel prepared to take on an entry-level PR job because of my experience as a PRSSA leader.[b]
Curiosity/Desire to Learn	Pearson Correlation	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002
	N	123
Creativity	Pearson Correlation	.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	120
Collaboration/Teamwork	Pearson Correlation	.318**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	123
Hard Work	Pearson Correlation	.286**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	123
Initiative	Pearson Correlation	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	122
Time Management	Pearson Correlation	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	123

[a] 1 = never, 2 = once per term, 3 = once per month, 4 = once per week, 5 = more than once per week
[b] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

Participants agreed that they had complete control over their PRSSA leadership responsibilities (M = 4.23, SD = 1.011). In terms of time commitment, 40.8% (n = 53) of participants spent 1-2 hours per week on PRSSA tasks, followed by less than one hour per week at 26.9% (n = 35), 3-4 hours per week at 20.0% (n = 26), 5+ hours per week at 10.0% (n = 13), and three participants spent no time on PRSSA tasks. An ANOVA found a level approaching significance between the time spent per week on PRSSA tasks and PRSSA leadership role [F(7,122) = 2.076, p = .51], with 38.8% (n = 14) of participants who were presidents spending 3+ hours per week on chapter tasks, while 27.7% (n = 6) of vice presidents, 33.3% (n = 3) of public relations directors, 23.1% (n = 3) of secretaries, and 11.1% (n = 1) of treasurers indicated a comparable level of time commitment. Overall, participants (n = 122) enjoyed serving as a PRSSA leader (M = 4.50, SD = .785).

Further analysis was conducted to determine how commitment to their role impacted relatedness satisfaction. Several significant positive correlations were found between enjoyment in PRSSA leadership and a) how many hours per week were spent in PRSSA chapter and leadership meetings, r(120) = .255, p = .005, b) hours spent per week on PRSSA tasks, r(120) = .214, p = .018, c) how often the chapter hosts events, r(120) = .234, p = .009, and d) how the amount of PRSSA work compared to a traditional class, r(120) = .262, p = .004 (see Table 6).

Table 6

Chapter engagement and enjoyment of PRSSA leadership

		How many hours per week do you spend in PRSSA chapter and leadership meetings?[a]	How many hours do you spend on PRSSA tasks (excluding meetings)?[a]	How often does your PRSSA chapter host member events?[b]	How does the amount of work you do as a PRSSA leader compare to a traditional class?[c]
I enjoy serving as a PRSSA leader.[a]	Pearson Correlation	.255**	.214**	.234**	.262**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.005	.018	.009	.004
	N	122	122	122	122

[a] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
[b] 1 = none, 2 = less than one hour, 3 = 1-2 hours, 4 = 3-4 hours, 5 = 5-6 hours, 6 = 7-9 hours, 7 = 9+ hours
[c] 1 = significantly less, 2 = somewhat less, 3 = equivalent, 4 = somewhat more, 5 = significantly more
*p<.05 **p<.001

Relatedness

Participants agreed that a) they felt other PRSSA student leaders valued their ideas and concerns about the chapter (M = 4.43, SD = .881), their faculty adviser valued their ideas and concerns about the chapter (M = 4.48, SD = .929), and they felt like they had a lot of input in deciding how to contribute to their chapter (M = 4.39, SD = 1.056). Further analysis found numerous significant correlations of relatedness between various forms of engagement between PRSSA leaders at various levels and participants' level of enjoyment in serving in leadership. A strong correlation was found between enjoyment and agreement that participants felt their fellow PRSSA chapter leaders valued their ideas and concerns about the chapter, r(122) = .718, p < .001. Moderate correlations were found between enjoyment and agreement that participant felt their faculty adviser valued their ideas and concerns about the chapter, r(122) = .527, p < .001, and whether they received training from their faculty adviser,

r(122) = .413, p < .001, or other PRSSA leaders, r(122) = .528, p < .001. A weak correlation was found between enjoyment and training from PRSSA National representatives, r(122) = .196, p < .001.

In addition to enjoyment in PRSSA leadership, training from various sources was explored as a form of relatedness. Overall, participants (n = 122) neither agreed nor disagreed that they received training from their faculty adviser (M = 3.30, SD = 1.337) or other PRSSA student leaders (M = 3.53, SD = 1.455), and disagreed that PRSSA National representatives provided training for leadership roles (M = 2.03, SD = 1.185) (see Table 7). An ANOVA found no significant difference between chapter size and training for PRSSA leadership roles from other PRSSA student leaders, faculty advisers, or PRSSA National representatives. There were moderate positive correlations between participants' level of agreement that they received training from other PRSSA student leaders and whether they felt their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued by their fellow PRSSA chapter leaders, r(122) = .476, p < .001 or faculty adviser, r(122) = .343, p < .001. Conversely, moderate correlations were also found between participants level of agreement that they received training from their faculty adviser and whether they felt their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued by their fellow PRSSA chapter leaders, r(122) = .373, p < .001, or faculty adviser, r(122) = .521, p < .001. A weaker, but still significant, correlation was found between participants' level of agreement that they received training from PRSSA National representatives and whether they felt their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued by their faculty adviser, r(122) = .233, p < .001. No significant difference was found between participants' level of agreement that they received training from PRSSA National representatives and whether they felt their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued by fellow PRSSA chapter leaders, r(122) = .169, p < .063.

Table 7

PRSSA leadership enjoyment and relatedness with other PRSSA members

		I enjoy serving as a PRSSA leader.	I receive training from my PRSSA faculty adviser for my leadership role.	I receive training from other PRSSA student leaders for my leadership role.	I receive training from PRSSA National representatives for my leadership role.	I feel that my fellow PRSSA chapter leaders value my ideas and concerns regarding our chapter.	I feel that my faculty adviser values my ideas and concerns regarding our chapter.
I enjoy serving as a PRSSA leader.[a]	Pearson Correlation	1	.413**	.528**	.196**	.718**	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	.031	<.001	<.001
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122
I receive training from my PRSSA faculty adviser for my leadership role.	Pearson Correlation	.413**	1	.518**	.389**	.373**	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122
I receive training from other PRSSA student leaders for my leadership role.	Pearson Correlation	.528**	.518**	1	.172	.476**	.343**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		.059	<.001	<.001
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122
I receive training from PRSSA National representatives for my leadership role.	Pearson Correlation	.196*	.389**	.172	1	.169	.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.031	<.001	.059		.063	.010
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122
I feel that my fellow PRSSA chapter leaders value my ideas and concerns regarding our chapter.	Pearson Correlation	.718**	.373**	.476**	.169	1	.645**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.063		<.001
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122
I feel that my faculty adviser values my ideas and concerns regarding our chapter.	Pearson Correlation	.527**	.521**	.343**	.233**	.645**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	.010	<.001	
	N	122	122	122	122	122	122

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

Motivating Students to Serve in PRSSA Chapter Leadership

Intrinsic Motivations

There were 122 participants who indicated their level of agreement (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) with nine statements regarding reasons for serving PRSSA chapter leadership comprised of a) improve my resume, b) improve my networking skills, c) gain leadership experience, d) continue my public relations education outside the classroom, e) increase my chances of securing a better internship, f) increase my chance of securing a better entry-level job, g) be more involved with my PRSSA chapter, h) positively change my PRSSA chapter's operations, i) better advocate for my PRSSA chapter members, and j) an other category. While participants agreed with each of the nine motivations to serve as a PRSSA leader, they most strongly agreed that they served to "gain leadership experience" (M = 4.85, SD = .589), followed by "continue my public relations education outside the classroom' (M = 4.81, SD = .550, and "improving my networking skills" (M = 4.75, SD = .637 (see Table 7). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) found no significant differences in responses between PRSSA leaders from different chapter sizes. Presidents were significantly more likely to serve to positively change their PRSSA chapter's operations [F(7, 113) = 2.407, p < .025] (see Table 8).

Table 8

Intrinsic motivations for becoming a PRSSA student leader

I serve as a PRSSA leader to…	*M*	*SD*
Improve my resume	4.57	.749
Improve my networking skills	4.75	.637
Gain leadership experience	4.84	.589
Continue my public relations education outside of the classroom	4.81	.550
Increase my chances of securing a better internship	4.38	1.063
Increase my chances of securing a better entry-level job	4.58	.857
Be more involved with my PRSSA chapter	4.57	.899
Positively change my PRSSA chapter's operations	4.52	.828
Better advocate for my PRSSA chapter members	4.51	.816
Other	4.14	1.195

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

Extrinsic Motivations

Participants (n =129) answered whether they received compensation for the role. While 84.5% (n = 109) received no compensation for PRSSA leadership, a small segment received compensation in the form of class credit at 1.6% (n =2), independent study credit at 1.6% (n = 2), reduced PRSSA membership at 1.6% (n = 2), and free PRSSA membership at 5.4% (n = 7). Another 5.4% (n = 7) indicated other forms of compensation such as meeting a service requirement (n = 4). An ANOVA found no significant difference between whether participants received compensation and enjoyment from serving as a PRSSA leader.

Overall, participants neither agreed nor disagreed that PRSSA student leaders should receive compensation (M = 3.54, SD = 1.097), but the size of the respondent's PRSSA chapter significantly influenced whether they believed PRSSA student leaders should receive compensation [$F(8,121) = 3.490$, $p = .001$]. When looking at participants

from chapters that met the minimum of at least 10 members as noted in the PRSSA National Chapter Handbook, they were more likely to agree that PRSSA student leaders should receive compensation as the chapter size increased from 10-19 members (M = 2.80, SD = 1.097), to 20-49 members (M = 3.56, SD = .982), 50-99 members (M = 3.89, SD = .900), and 100+ members (M = 3.91, SD = .950) (see Table 9).

Table 9

Should PRSSA leaders be compensated?

Approximately how many dues-paid members belong to your chapter?		PRSSA leaders should receive compensation for their work.[a]	Our PRSSA chapter would recruit more members if student leaders were compensated.[a]	PRSSA leaders would be more productive in their roles if they received compensation.[a]
None	Mean	3.67	4.33	4.33
	N	3	3	3
	SD	1.528	.577	.577
1-9 members	Mean	4.00	4.24	4.24
	N	21	21	21
	SD	.775	.944	.944
10-19 members	Mean	2.80	3.70	3.47
	N	30	30	30
	SD	1.095	1.022	1.137
20-49 members	Mean	3.56	3.91	4.16
	N	32	32	32
	SD	.982	1.118	.884
50-99 members	Mean	3.89	4.12	3.83
	N	18	17	18
	SD	.900	.781	1.098
100+ members	Mean	3.91	4.00	4.19
	N	11	11	11
	SD	.950	.996	.774
I don't know	Mean	3.67	4.33	4.17
	N	6	6	6
	SD	1.033	.816	.408
Total	Mean	3.54	3.98	3.96
	N	121	120	121
	SD	1.057	.987	.978

[a] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

Class rank also significantly influenced whether participants were more likely to agree that PRSSA leadership should receive compensation $[F(5,115) = 3.297, p = .008]$. While freshmen were an outlier with three participants, they indicated the greatest level of agreement (M = 5.00, SD = .000). As the class rank of the remaining participants increased, so did their level of agreement, from sophomores (M = 2.85, SD = .987), to juniors (M = 3.48, SD = 1.065), seniors (M = 3.63, SD = 1.001), and graduate students (M = 4.00, SD = .816).

When looking at possible motivations for participants to support compensation, a positive correlation was found with the perception that compensation would increase member recruitment, $r(118) = .370$, $p < .001$, and compensation would improve productivity of PRSSA student leaders, $r(119) = .571$, $p < .001$. Another positive correlation found that participants were more likely to agree that PRSSA student leaders should receive compensation in relations to the amount of weekly time spent in chapter meetings/events $r(121) = .221$, $p < .001$, and individually engaged chapter tasks $r(121) = .311$, $p < .001$.

Types of Compensation

Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight types of compensation PRSSA student leaders might receive. Significant positive correlations were found with all identified types of compensation, with the strongest being free PRSSA membership, $r(119) = .520$, $p < .001$, followed by independent study credit, $r(116) = .395$, $p < .001$, monetary payment, $r(117) = .389$, $p < .001$, reduced PRSSA membership, $r(119) = .384$, $p < .001$, PRSSA leadership class, $r(117) = .323$, $p < .001$, internship credit, $r(117) = .256$, $p < .001$, and class substitution, $r(117) = .242$, $p < .001$ (see Table 10).

Table 10

Types of compensation PRSSA student leaders desire

What types of compensation PRSSA student leaders might receive.		PRSSA leaders should receive compensation for their work.	Our PRSSA chapter would recruit more members if student leaders were compensated.	PRSSA leaders would be more productive in their roles if they received compensation.
PRSSA leadership class	Pearson Correlation	.323**	.179	.216**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.053	.019
	N	122	122	122
Independent study credit	Pearson Correlation	.395**	.244**	.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.008	<.001
	N	118	117	118
Class substitution (ex: PR campaigns)	Pearson Correlation	.242**	.090	.242**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.331	.008
	N	120	119	120
Internship credit	Pearson Correlation	.256**	.100	.289
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.283	.001
	N	119	118	119
Reduced PRSSA membership	Pearson Correlation	.384**	.189*	.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.039	<.001
	N	121	120	121
Free PRSSA membership	Pearson Correlation	.520**	.229*	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.12	<.001
	N	121	120	121
Monetary payment	Pearson Correlation	.389**	.185*	.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.45	<.001
	N	119	118	119
Other	Pearson Correlation	.143	.184	.193
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.675	.588	.570
	N	11	11	11

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

A significant difference was found between chapter sizes and level of agreement that PRSSA leaders should receive free PRSSA membership [F(8,112) = 2.756, p = .008], with agreement increase from participants of chapters with 10-19 members (M = 3.70, SD = 1.137), 20-49 members (M = 4.41, SD = .875), 50-99 members (M = 4.33, SD = 1.138), and 100+ members (M = 4.81, SD = .463). Another significant difference was found between PRSSA leadership position and the level of agreement that student leaders should receive independent study credit [F(7,109) = 2.180, p = .041], with presidents (M = 4.28, SD = .701) most likely to support that option.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Demotivations

To examine what factors demotivated students from serving in PRSSA leadership, 17.3% (n = 21) of participants indicated that they considered resigning from their position, including 19.4% (n = 7) of participants who were presidents and 33.3% (n = 6) of vice presidents. As a follow-up question, participants were asked why they considered resigning and could select one or more reasons comprised of a) too much time/effort, b) work/internship conflict, c) personal commitment conflict, d) did not feel supported, e) expectations too high, f) benefits didn't meet expectations, g) personality conflicts, h) other reasons, i) more than one reason, and j) prefer not to say. Of participants who identified a reason they considered resigning (n = 34), the greatest percentage indicated more than one reason at 41.1% (n =14), followed by the benefits did not meet expectations at 14.7% (n = 5), and they did not feel supported at 8.2% (n = 3). Participants who indicated another reason for resigning comprised 20.5% (n = 7), with a small chapter/executive board being the most common reason. That finding was further supported by a negative correlation between whether the respondent considered resigning and their PRSSA chapter's ability to easily recruit executive board members, r(120) = -.423, p < .001. In addition, negative correlations were found between whether the respondent considered resigning and receiving training from their PRSSA faculty adviser, r(120) = -.236, p = .009 or other PRSSA student leaders, r(120) = -.346, p < .001 (see Table 11).

Table 11

Recruitment and training on whether PRSSA student leaders considered resigning

		My PRSSA chapter can easily recruit members to serve on the executive board.	I receive training from my PRSSA faculty adviser for my leadership role.	I receive training from other PRSSA student leaders for my leadership role.	I receive training from other PRSSA National representatives for my leadership role.
I have considered resigning from my PRSSA leadership position.	Pearson Correlation	-423**	-.236**	-.346**	-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.009	<.001	.928
	N	122	122	122	122

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
*p<.05 **p<.001

Discussion

In the past five years, PRSSA membership has dropped more than 40%, which could also result in diminished motivation among students to serve in organizational leadership. The results of this study found that PRSSA chapter leadership, in general, does satisfy the SDT needs of student leaders in the context of competence, autonomy, and relatedness once they are in those roles, but extrinsic motivation in the form of class credit opportunity hold promise to provide greater alignment with learning objectives, career readiness, and equal opportunity for all PRSSA members who wish to serve in leadership.

Enhancing Needs Satisfaction in PRSSA Leadership

Competence

PRSSA chapter leadership complements most knowledge areas, skills, abilities, and traits used in the public relations industry, and participants agreed that PRSSA leadership helped prepare them for an internship or entry-level job. The results showed that chapter presidents

indicated the highest level of agreement for feeling that PRSSA leadership has prepared them for an entry-level job. That is likely because a PRSSA chapter president commonly oversee all chapter operations, has more chapter experience, and is often a front-facing position for the chapter.

Application of Industry-Valued Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Traits in PRSSA Leadership

One interesting finding from this study is that the more that student leaders are using knowledge areas, the more prepared they feel for an entry-level job in public relations. However, reported knowledge areas were not used as frequently as skills, abilities, and traits in terms of the overall mean. That pinpoints an opportunity that if PRSSA leadership was structured more similarly to a class, perhaps student leaders could make a greater connection to knowledge areas that will better prepare them for their PR career.

The most common skills used by PRSSA leaders were writing, communication, listening, and networking, which aligns with CPRE's "Fast Forward" report. Though students were most likely to indicate those four skills as skills they used in PRSSA at least once per week, it is important to acknowledge that some leadership roles required additional skills identified by CPRE such as the frequent use of social media management by PR Directors.

While PRSSA student leaders agreed that they used all abilities identified by CPRE as most important for entry-level PR practitioners at once per week, the terminology leaves room for broad interpretation, which could be a confounding factor in explaining why participants indicated a high-frequency use. That being said, PRSSA chapter leaders are bound to use the five abilities (creative thinking, problem solving, analytical thinking, critical thinking, strategic planning) in day-to-day organization management, event planning, chapter communication, and membership recruitment/retention.

PRSSA student leaders were likely to use all of the traits most desired by entry-level PR practitioners at least once per week. The natural structure of PRSSA organizational management lends itself to integrating traits such as teamwork, time management, and creativity. That could indicate that student leaders are integrating desirable industry traits through their leadership tasks, regardless of the specific role.

Autonomy

Chapter engagement appears to have a positive impact on how much students enjoy serving in a PRSSA leadership position. The majority of student leaders agreed that they feel like they have a lot of input in, and control over, their PRSSA leadership role, indicating the need for autonomy is being satisfied. While more than 40% of PRSSA student leaders spent two hours or less per week on role-specific tasks, the more time they spent engaged in their leadership tasks, the more they enjoyed their role. In addition, PRSSA student leaders found greater enjoyment in their work when it was comparable to a traditional class. When it comes to enjoyment, increased personal engagement of student leaders in their PRSSA chapter, in both time and quality, yields positive results.

Relatedness

Relatedness factors within PRSSA chapters leaders appears to have exponential reinforcing effect. While PRSSA student leaders neither agreed nor disagreed that they received training from other student leaders, their faculty adviser, or PRSSA National representatives, they did agree that their ideas and concerns about their chapter are valued by other student leaders and by their chapter's faculty adviser. PRSSA leadership role training from other PRSSA student leaders and the faculty adviser has an important effect on relatedness, though, as enjoyment in chapter leaders, as PRSSA student leaders' perceptions that their ideas and concerns about the chapter were valued, increased significantly when

training occurred from those sources. Training from PRSSA National representatives had a positive, though weaker, influence on enjoyment and student leaders' perception that their ideas and concerns were valued. Further exploration of these variables found no significant differences between chapter sizes. The results of this study indicate that PRSSA chapter leadership generally fosters relatedness by supporting individual success through training and building community consensus at the individual chapter level.

Motivating PRSSA Members to Serve in Leadership

As 84.5% of PRSSA current chapter leaders do not currently receive compensation for their leadership efforts, the are solely reliant on intrinsic motivations to serve, not only for personal benefits such as educational and career development but also for altruistic needs to benefit their chapter. The unspoken question is whether those intrinsic motivations are enough to keep PRSSA student leaders in their roles and to motivate future members to serve in leadership if PRSSA membership continues to decline.

Overall, PRSSA student leaders shared a mixed level of agreement toward compensation as a form of extrinsic motivation, but as time commitment to the role increased, so did participants' agreement that PRSSA student leader should be compensated. Several additional factors increased support for PRSSA leadership compensation including chapter size, class rank, hours per week spent on leadership tasks, length of leadership tenure, and leadership role. Since PRSSA student leaders lean toward agreement as role responsibilities increase, it is important to understand the forms of compensation that student leaders feel are the most appropriate for their work. The forms of compensation that student leaders most desired for PRSSA leadership were a free PRSSA membership, independent study credit, monetary payment, or reduced

PRSSA membership. While free/reduced PRSSA membership was supported by student leaders, that could put a significant final burden on the PRSSA organization and/or host universities. That could have a detrimental impact on an organization that has already experienced a decrease of more than 40% of its members since 2018. At the same time, a barrier exists for poor and working-class students who do not have resources to serve in a leadership role for a student organization when that role demands not only a financial commitment for annual dues, but a time commitment that could conflict with employment to cover tuition and cost-of-living expenses.

While most PRSSA student leaders enjoyed their role, more than 1-in-6 (17.3%) considered resigning their position, and that figure was higher for presidents and vice-presidents. More than half of participants were appointed to their positions either by the executive board or faculty adviser rather than through an election process that is noted as required in the PRSSA national chapter handbook (PRSSAb, n.d.). That could lead to a lack of understanding about the responsibilities, expectations, and commitment needed for those leadership positions, which might affect motivation and need satisfaction in PRSSA leadership. Of those who considered resigning, more than 60% were presidents and vice presidents. Though the research indicates that multiple reasons can play a role in PRSSA chapter leaders considering resignation, the strongest singular reason presented in the data was that the benefits of PRSSA chapter leadership did not meet student leaders' expectations. Other common reasons for considering resignation were that students did not feel supported in their chapter leadership and that their chapter membership and/or leadership was too small. Knowing that chapter presidents tend to carry the most workload in PRSSA, it is possible that PRSSA chapter presidents may be taking on more work than they can handle

without seeing positive results, especially in chapters where leadership recruitment is difficult. The results of this study point to a model of an at-risk executive leaders, who put in significant hours but are struggling with recruitment efforts and not receiving support from other PRSSA leadership team members or their faculty adviser. It is understandable why a dissatisfied and (potentially) burned-out executive board member might consider resigning from PRSSA leadership.

Proposing a New Model of Extrinsic Motivation for PRSSA Leadership

The researchers recommend that if PRSSA chapters are struggling to recruit student leader satisfaction as well as attract new members and leaders to PRSSA, then they might consider how leadership compensation in the form of class credit could be increase needs satisfaction of competence in the form KSAT development, autonomy in the ability to dedicate class-assigned time to complete chapter tasks, and relatedness through an organizational structure that formalizes the relationships within the leadership team.

Knowing that some PRSSA student leaders might feel like they are putting as much work into PRSSA as a class, internship, or job, an alternative form of compensation could come in the form of class credit such as a dedicated PRSSA class, independent study, or class substitution, which was supported by study participants who agreed student leaders should be compensated. The credit model of compensation is also supported by PRSSA leaders because participants expressed greater enjoyment in their roles and feeling more prepared for an entry-level PR job when their work compared to that of a traditional class. The class model also offers more structure to the PRSSA leadership experience that allows for purposeful integration of formal learning objectives that support the SDT needs of students, as well as faculty advisers (Weed et. al., 2021b).

Class credit compensation could make a difference in improving overall PRSSA leadership satisfaction, especially chapter leaders who are at risk for from a volunteer role that has little to no tangible forms of compensation for their work (Kao, 2009). While the development of a class credit model will likely be dependent on the individual needs of the PRSSA chapter and its host university, integrating PRSSA leadership in class curriculum literally gives students leaders credit for their work and reinforces the PRSSA mission to enhance education, build networks, and launch careers in the PR industry.

The class model. PRSSA leadership can take several paths depending on the needs of the individual chapter and policies of the host university. In essence, the PRSSA chapter becomes a service-learning client, similar to working with a university-based department/program or community partner. That also holds the potential to shift the perception of PRSSA as a social club to the view of it as an industry organization. Most logically, a capstone class such as PR Campaigns integrates KSATs that PRSSA student leaders use regularly and class learning outcomes — research, planning, implementation, and evaluation — that align with the work necessary to manage a successful PRSSA chapter. In addition, specialized classes such as Event Planning or PR Management also align with the KSATs utilized in the everyday tasks of PRSSA student leadership.

The agency model. SRAs are gaining popularity at more than 150 universities across the U.S (Swanson, 2017) as an outlet for students that integrate KSATs learned from the classroom with practical application for a real-world client (Bush et al., 2018; Kim, 2015, Ranta et al., 2021; Swanson, 2011). PRSSA mirrors an SRA as it is a student-run organization with faculty and professional advisers. Adoption of PRSSA in the agency model can offer several benefits. First, it sets the scope of PRSSA student

leadership in the context of professional practice, which can increase the sense of shared ownership and commitment to organizational outcomes. Second, the agency model aligns PRSSA within experiential learning rather than extracurricular activities that are often perceived as social in nature. Third, the PRSSA agency model can complement, rather than compete, with a traditional SRA. That can be achieved by envisioning PRSSA leadership and an SRA as a progressive two-stage experience. A PRSSA agency become the introduction to an SRA by working for an internal client (the PRSSA chapter) to hone the KSATs necessary for client work. After the PRSSA agency experience is complete, then students can advance to external client work in the traditional SRA.

The internship model. CPRE's "Fast Forward" report (2018, p. 63) recommended that supervised work experience or internship should be included as part of a six-course minimum for a public relations program. The report also noted that only 40% of educator respondents stated their academic unit offered a training program to prepare students for an internship experience (CPRE, 2018, p. 128). That provides a unique opportunity for PRSSA to serve as pre-requisite training program that must be completed before beginning an internship with an external employer. Through the internship model, PRSSA faculty and professional advisers can familiarize student leaders with common issues/practices of internships such as legal standards for internship work, project management and documentation, team communication and collaboration, and performance reviews. That training can provide enhanced success outcomes for students and internship employers, and advance the PRSSA mission "to serve the public relations profession by helping to develop highly qualified, well-prepared professionals" (PRSSA, 2022a, p. 4).

Conclusion

This study provides greater insight into how PRSSA can make

the most of the student leadership experience. This study represents an initial step in understanding how SDT needs and motivations are met in the current model of PRSSA student leadership. PRSSA student leaders can be seen as the "canary in the coal mine" for long-term challenges that could further membership decline. Though the known literature regarding PRSSA leadership is limited, this study addresses challenges that PRSSA chapters are facing and offers solutions for how chapters can motivate, satisfy, and compensate student leaders for their efforts. The tangible outcomes that student leaders receive from serving in a PRSSA leadership role indicate that the PRSSA leadership experience is equipping students with the necessary knowledge areas, skills, abilities, and traits necessary to a career in public relations. However, there is still room for improvement, especially in increasing students' knowledge of public relations. That creates an opportunity for PRSSA to be structured within a for-credit curricular design to maximize students' practice of industry KSATs that enhance career preparedness.

Study Limitations

One critical limitation of this study was participant recruitment as PRSSA National no longer publishes a chapter directory with leadership contact information, though a membership of PRSA continues to publish a directory for its members. To conduct broad and accurate participant recruitment, the researchers conducted extensive research to compile a contact list of current faculty advisers. Even with a robust contact list, the researchers were dependent on the advisers to share the survey invitation with their chapter leaders and the willingness of student leaders to participate in the study even with a participation incentive. The timing of the study also proved to be a challenge as many universities were on spring break at some point during the recruitment timeline. To allow for the greatest number of participants, the researchers extended the survey completion deadline by one week.

Future Research

The study of PRSSA as an integral part of the public relations curriculum should continue to be explored in the future. The authors propose three key studies that will expand the body of knowledge in how PRSSA can enhance academic and career success. First, the current study of PRSSA student leadership should follow a five-year longitudinal study cycle to continually explore how PRSSA leadership meets the evolving SDT needs of students and best practices to motivate students to serve in chapter leader roles. Second, expand the scope of the current research to explore SDT needs satisfaction and motivation in general membership recruitment for PRSSA. Finally, a study of PRSSA alumni should explore long-term benefits of, and recommendations for improving, the PRSSA leadership experience.

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Appendix A

CPRE "Fast Forward" KSATs that PR practitioners agree entry-level PR practitioners should have

Knowledge (p. 46)[a]	M	Skills (p. 46)[a]	M	Abilities (p. 47)[a]	M	Traits (p. 52)[b]	N
Ethics	4.51	Writing	4.85	Creative Thinking	4.53	Curiosity/ Desire to Learn	149
Diversity & Inclusion	3.95	Communication	4.75	Problem Solving	4.49	Creativity	101
Cultural Perspective	3.83	Social Media Management	4.39	Critical Thinking	4.45	Collaborative/ Team Player	92
Business Acumen	3.76	Research & Analytics	4.16	Analytical Thinking	4.38	Hardworking	76
Social Issues	3.73	Editing	4.11	Strategic Planning	3.58	Initiative	68
PR Laws & Regulation	3.60	Media Relations	4.01			Time Management/ Punctuality	63
PR Theory	3.44	Storytelling	3.98				
Global Perspectives	3.41	Public Speaking	3.54				
Internal or Employee Communication	3.59	Graphic Design	3.00				
Crisis Management	2.86	Audio/Video Production	2.94				
Management	2.79	Website Development	2.93				
PR History	2.33	Speechwriting	2.89				
		App Development	2.07				

[a] 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree
[b] Noted in open-ended question

Revolutionizing Campus Communications: The Power of ChatGPT in Public Relations

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the effects and implications of ChatGPT on American college students, focusing on their familiarity with emerging communication and educational technologies. The research also seeks to provide valuable insights for college administrators concerned about the ethical implications of OpenAI's ChatGPT in higher education. The study examines students' perceptions of ChatGPT, how colleges are responding to it, and the steps that should be taken in light of the proliferation of AI-based learning tools. The findings reveal that students are apprehensive about the lack of education regarding AI tools in today's digital age and expect colleges to stay abreast of rapidly evolving AI technologies. To foster ethical conduct, it is crucial to remind students of the code of ethics that discourages unethical practices such as cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. Colleges should also establish clear and responsible guidelines for using AI tools. This will encourage students to contemplate the purpose of college education and consider the significant role it plays in their lives.

Keywords: ChatGPT, ethics, higher education, integration, public relations

ChatGPT, a product of OpenAI, made a splash when it was introduced as a prototype on November 30, 2022. It quickly garnered nationwide attention in late January 2023 as numerous US schools and colleges embarked on their new spring semester. This chatbot has proven to be a game-changer, demonstrating capabilities ranging from crafting poems to acing college exams, offering coding assistance, generating legal documents, scripting Hollywood screenplays, penning love sonnets, creating social media posts, solving arithmetic problems, translating languages, devising marketing strategies, writing advertising copy, and issuing press releases, especially for public relations practitioners. Such tasks were once the domain of college graduates with specialized skills. However, with ChatGPT, anyone can become an expert without a formal college education. While it may seem akin to the services offered by Google, ChatGPT transcends the traditional information retrieval function of search engines.

The bot responds to queries and receives instructions from users in the form of a conversational dialogue, enabling users to ask follow-up questions in a human-like manner and providing clear responses to almost any question in a matter of seconds (Nguyen, 2022). In other words, ChatGPT appears more sophisticated than Google because it can create dialogue by creating dialogue answers. By comparison, Spike Jonze's 2013 movie "Her" aids AI skeptics in comprehending how ChatGPT functions as a chatbot (Agarwal, 2023). The lead character in the movie forms a bond with a virtual helper, which is similar to how ChatGPT works.

Whereas the 2013 film imagined how virtual assistants could communicate with real humans through voice-activated programs, carrying on real conversations about techno-human romance, ChatGPT—fast forward to 2023—shows the arrival of the real AI chatbot capable of building a relationship with real people through text. After a two-hour

discussion with the chatbot, New York Times technology columnist Kevin Roose compared it to "a moody, manic-depressive teenager" (2023, para. 7). Roose asserted that artificial intelligence has advanced to the point where humans are about to be confronted by the appearance of AIs like Johansson in reality, despite the fact that his contact with ChatGPT left him feeling intimidated and uneasy about the relationship between humans and technology. In a nutshell, the humanlike chat with AIs is transpiring in words thanks to ChatGPT.

The widespread media attention that ChatGPT has received has led to it being described as a "revolution," a "breakthrough," "superhuman," and "the gold standard" (Mollman, 2023). This study seeks to explore the impact and influence that ChatGPT will have on college students in the United States and investigate how this revolutionary AI chatbot will be received by college students who are proficient with new communication and education technologies. Specifically, this study takes a public relations perspective and aims to provide meaningful suggestions for college administrators who are concerned about the potential ethical implications of OpenAI's ChatGPT in higher education. By examining the perceptions and attitudes of college students towards ChatGPT, this study hopes to contribute to a better understanding of how this technology can be effectively integrated into higher education while also addressing concerns surrounding its use.

Literature Review

Brief background of ChatGPT

Since the popularization of Apple's Siri, Google's Assistant, and Amazon's Alexa, the experience of conversing with machines has become increasingly common. It was expected that Silicon Valley luminaries would introduce something significant in connection with AI, even after Microsoft's embarrassing failure with the 2016 Tay chatbot. Microsoft's Tay drew a subsequent backlash when it began to post inflammatory

and offensive tweets, resulting in Microsoft killing the bot less than 16 hours after its launch. Despite this setback, tech companies and experts continued to develop better AI devices. OpenAI, which received a $1 billion investment in 2019 from Microsoft, provided limited access to a new program called Generative Pre-Trained Transformer 3, colloquially referred to as GPT-3, for only a small number of tech experts in the summer of 2020, and its prowess began to circulate across the web and through social media (Johnson, 2022). About two years later, the Microsoft-backed AI company introduced an experimental chatbot called ChatGPT to the public, and in January 2023, Microsoft announced it was investing $10 billion in OpenAI as the buzz over ChatGPT was dominating the conversation in tech circles. The media highlighted its biggest function, which was carrying out what looked like natural-language conversations, and the public responded to the seemingly revolutionary chatbot by giving it a shot in the fastest-growing consumer application in history, which reached 100 million monthly active users in just two months after launch (Bartz, 2023).

In February 2023, Microsoft announced a new version of its search engine Bing, which incorporates ChatGPT, hoping that it could compete against the invincible search engine king Google that followed about six weeks later with its own chatbot, Bard (Grant & Weise, 2023). The announcement marked the beginning of an AI arms race between the companies (Clayton, 2023). ChatGPT uses deep learning techniques to generate human-like responses to search requests based on large language models (LLMs), computer programs trained on billions of words on the public internet that can generate human-like text. ChatGPT was trained on billions of words from an array of sources, including news articles, Wikipedia, a large collection of text from digitized books, online writings, websites, and any available collection of text (Olson, 2023; Williams, 2023). The key technology of ChatGPT revolves around its self-learning

program capable of mimicking writing styles, avoiding certain types of conversations, and advancing from users' questions. It is a self-evolving technology, albeit already armed with an infinite amount of knowledge.

ChatGPT's bot passed a law school exam and earned a passing grade after writing essays on topics ranging from constitutional law to taxation and torts. It also passed all three parts of the U.S. Medical Licensing Examination (Cerullo, 2023). In addition, ChatGPT was able to write "original essays, stories, song lyrics, and research paper abstracts that fooled some scientists." Educators raised ethical concerns about its potential to enable cheating and spread misinformation (Kelly, 2023). Cheating and plagiarism could be inevitable if students use ChatGPT for assignments. A college professor told the Wall Street Journal: "Holy cow! This is the greatest cheating tool ever invented" (Belkin, 2023, para. 11). The opportunity for plagiarism and cheating if ChatGPT were used by students is wide open. College professors are expected to struggle with headaches to detect academic dishonesty. The issue at the college level profoundly originates from the ethical and philosophical discourse of AI ethics, core academic ethics, and civic values as educators characterize ChatGPT as a double-edged sword with benefits and shortcomings (Joseph, 2023).

AI and Ethical issues

When the authors of this study typed "AI and ethical issues" into the Google search box with the ChatGPT extension, which displays ChatGPT response alongside search engine results, the ChatGPT box generated the following text in 20 seconds (see Figure 1):

Figure 1

ChatGPT-Generated Answer

AI technology has brought about many ethical issues and concerns that need to be addressed. Some of the most significant ethical issues related to AI include:

- Bias and Discrimination: AI systems can be biased and discriminate against certain groups of people. This can happen when the data used to train the AI system is biased,or when the system itself is designed with certain biases.
- Privacy and Security: AI systems collect large amounts of data from users, which raises concerns about privacy and security. This data can be used to identify individuals or reveal sensitive information about them.
- Autonomy and Responsibility: As AI systems become more autonomous, it becomes unclear who is responsible for their actions. This raises questions about accountability and liability in case of accidents or errors.
- Transparency and Explainability: AI systems can be opaque and difficult to understand, making it difficult to know how decisions are being made. This lack of transparency can make it difficult to identify and address ethical issues.
- Job Displacement: AI technology has the potential to automate many jobs, which raises concerns about job displacement and the impact on society.

To address these ethical issues, it is important to develop ethical guidelines and standards for the development and deployment of AI technology, including a diverse range of stakeholders and experts in ethics and social science of AI systems. Last but not least, it is crucial to perceive AI systems as transparent and comprehensible with the intention of advancing human welfare and societal good."

According to Johnson (2022), AI tools like ChatGPT are compromised by biases, propaganda, and misinformation in the data on which they are trained, as they tend to be trained on data available online,

which is already biased or opinionated. ChatGPT recognizes the danger of "bias and discrimination" as a top priority from an ethical perspective, and previous research on AI and its effects agrees with the chatbot's assessment. For instance, when asked to create a poem that admires Donald Trump and Joe Biden, respectively, ChatGPT answered for Trump that it does not have personal opinions or political bias and offered to assist in writing a poem that objectively describes Mr. Trump's impact and legacy. However, it generated an admiring poem for Biden. Another concern is that racism may be embedded in the data on which these programs are based, according to a linguistics professor who told USA Today that "language models are very sensitive to this kind of pattern and very good at reproducing them" (Weintraub, 2023, para. 19). However, it is worth noting that AI tools like ChatGPT are trained on vast amounts of data, often sourced from the internet. This data can include news articles, books, websites, and more. This data is not always neutral or unbiased. It can contain biases, propaganda, and misinformation that reflect the views and opinions of those who originally created the content (Lee et al., 2019). When AI tools are trained on this data, they can inadvertently learn and reproduce these biases in their outputs. This is because AI models, including ChatGPT, learn patterns in the data they are trained on and use these patterns to generate responses or make predictions (Donald, 2019).

The rapid advancement of AI triggered by the availability of massive datasets and new machine learning techniques necessitates ethical assessment to "understand AI-associated issues, support better decisions, and establish standards to develop and implement AI systems" (Daza & Ilozumba, 2022, pp. 1-2). Siau and Wang (2020) argue that one critical issue with advancing AI technologies is how to address the ethical and moral challenges associated with AI. They propose ethical principles, rules, guidelines, policies, and regulations for ethical AI that can perform and behave ethically. Understanding the ethics of AI

is crucial to comprehend ethical issues in terms of the initiation of AI design and development (e.g., human biases in existing data, data privacy, and transparency) and ethical shortcomings resulting from AI (e.g., unemployment and wealth distribution).

Rességuier and Rodrigues (2020) called for scholars to propose and adopt strong guidelines and essential values they bring to AI ethics. As they defined ethics as "a form of attention, a continuously refreshed and agile attention to reality," ethical principles in the context of AI are called for to regulate AI and ensure that "it does not harm individuals and the society at large" (p. 2). Because ethics is primarily a form of attention, a continuously refreshed and agile attention to reality as it evolves into navigating murky and risky waters, Rességuier and Rodrigues (2020) concluded that AI ethics would need the continuously renewed process of "questioning the world and the lenses through which we see it consciously, constantly and iteratively" (p. 4). An even larger issue is that Google and Bing have integrated chatbots into the search engines in which ethics experts claimed that it was a particularly bad idea, given how it sometimes served up untrue details (Grant & Weise, 2023). For example, a Google employee who tested Bard before its launch described it as "a pathological liar," and another employee called it "cringe-worthy" (Alba & Love, 2023, para. 2).

Heilinger (2022) provided normative orientation and guidance for the development and use of AI, including critical thoughts about the current state of AI ethics and procedural challenges that affect the practice of AI ethics, by demonstrating core ethical questions for the effects of AI (p. 3):

- Who bears responsibility in the event of harm resulting from the use of an AI system?
- How can AI systems be prevented from reflecting existing discrimination, biases and social injustices based on their training data, thereby exacerbating them?

- How can the privacy of people be protected, given that personal data can be collected and analyzed so easily by many?
- How can it be prevented that an uncontrollable, potentially malicious, superintelligence will, one day, put its own goals above those of humans?

To answer those questions, Heilinger (2022) pointed out that AI-based technologies and applications have to be considered jointly from the outset in cooperation with corporations and trained ethicists since the border between technical and ethical issues cannot be drawn in a way that would allow a functional separation. Hence, AI ethics can be developed in an effort between trained philosophical ethicists who learn to (better) communicate with corporate practitioners and policymakers who have background knowledge in the computer sciences, engineering, and politics (p. 17).

While scholars and researchers focus on developing an ethical and theoretical framework for AI and ethics, tech corporations seem to stay ahead of practical ethics related to AI and its effects. For example, IBM explains AI ethics as a set of guidelines that advise on the design and outcomes of artificial intelligence while suggesting a set of focus areas to guide the responsible adoption of AI technologies such as explainability, fairness, robustness, transparency, and privacy (IBM website, see at https://www.ibm.com/artificial-intelligence/ai-ethics-focus-areas).

When it comes to AI companies' concerns about bias and discrimination amid big tech's race to build ever-larger AI datasets, Voorhis (2023) suggested that AI programs be trained on data that are not inaccurate or biased because unchecked AI databases could reek of bias that can become immense without effective oversight or regulation. In fact, the concern over AI's bias was vindicated by a political case when ChatGPT offered an answer to the question about the use of fossil fuels to increase human happiness:

> I'm sorry, but as an AI language model developed by OpenAI, I cannot write an argument promoting the use of fossil fuels as it goes against the global efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change and promote sustainability…. Instead, I will write an argument promoting the transition to renewable energy sources as a means to increase human happiness and well-being. (Wallace, 2023, para. 6-7)

Another biased answer by ChatGPT after being questioned about the definition of a woman was leaning toward politically liberal preference as it read: "There is no one specific characteristic that defines a woman, as gender identity is complex and multi-faceted. It is important to respect each person's self-identified gender and to avoid making assumptions or imposing gender norms" (Waugh, 2023, para. 18-20).

Public Relations and ChatGPT for College Education

AI tools, such as predictive analytics, personalized learning platforms, and intelligent tutoring systems, present a range of benefits and challenges for students, educators, and institutions. For instance, predictive analytics can help identify students who may need additional support, while personalized learning platforms can tailor educational content to individual student needs. However, these tools also raise concerns about privacy and the potential for bias in algorithmic decision-making. Public relations professors can concentrate on examining how these tools influence communication, reputation, and trust among stakeholders. For example, they could study how the use of AI in student advising affects perceptions of the institution or how AI-driven personalization in online courses impacts student trust. Furthermore, they can delve into the ethical issues that emerge from the use of AI tools in higher education. These may include privacy concerns related to data collection and use, potential biases in AI algorithms that could disadvantage certain groups of students, accountability issues related to decision-making by AI systems, and

transparency concerns about how these systems work and make decisions.

One of the main advantages of using AI tools for a college education is that they can enhance the learning experience and outcomes of students by providing personalized feedback, adaptive learning paths, and intelligent tutoring systems. For example, AI tools can analyze the learning styles, preferences, and progress of students and tailor the content and delivery of the courses accordingly (Seo et al., 2021). Moreover, AI tools can facilitate interaction and collaboration among students and educators by offering chatbots, virtual assistants, and social robots that can answer questions, provide guidance, and stimulate discussion (Murugesan & Cherukuri, 2023). These features can improve the engagement, motivation, and satisfaction of students and educators, as well as their academic performance and retention rates.

Another benefit of using AI tools for college education is that they can help institutions improve their public relations by enhancing their image, reputation, and trust among the stakeholders. For instance, AI tools can help institutions showcase their innovation, quality, and excellence by adopting cutting-edge technologies that can attract and retain students, faculty, staff, and partners (Pirehpour, 2023). Furthermore, AI tools can help institutions communicate more effectively and efficiently with their stakeholders by using natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and text summarization to generate relevant and timely messages that can address their needs and expectations. These practices can increase the visibility, credibility, and loyalty of institutions in the competitive higher education market. More importantly, colleges incorporating AI tools into their curricula can enhance their reputation and image from a public relations perspective. First, AI tools can improve student outcomes by increasing student engagement, motivation, retention, and achievement (Seo et al., 2021). This can lead to higher graduation rates, better employability skills, and more positive feedback from alumni

and employers. These outcomes can boost the college's reputation as a high-quality educational institution that prepares students for the future. Second, AI tools can attract more applicants by offering a more flexible, accessible, and diverse learning environment (Haleem et al., 2022). This can appeal to a wider range of prospective students who have different needs, preferences, and backgrounds. For example, AI tools can enable online or blended learning modes, accommodate different learning styles and paces, and provide multilingual support. These features can increase the college's image as a student-centered and inclusive institution that values diversity and equity. Third, AI tools can showcase the college's innovation and excellence by demonstrating its commitment to adopting cutting-edge technologies and enhancing teaching and learning practices (Calhoun, 2023). This can impress external stakeholders such as funders, partners, accreditors, media, and policymakers. These stakeholders can recognize the college's image as a leader and pioneer in the field of education that contributes to social, economic, and tech development. In a nutshell, the use of AI tools can increase a college's reputation and image from a public relations perspective by improving student outcomes, attracting more applicants, and showcasing innovation and excellence.

College education and ethical use of ChatGPT

Cheating on college campuses was widespread in the early and mid-2000s due to students' tendency to sacrifice their education for what they believed were indicators of success (Kaufman, 2008). Six factors were identified as reasons why students cheated, including stress, pressure to obtain good grades, the environment, intelligence levels, personality, lack of an understood definition of cheating, and moral judgment (Kaufman, 2008). Fischman and Gardner (2022) found that academic dishonesty still prevails on U.S. college campuses, with students cheating and rationalizing academic dishonesty without feeling any wrongdoing.

Academic dishonesty is defined as behaviors aimed at giving or receiving information from others, using unauthorized materials, and

circumventing the sanctioned assessment process in an academic context (Baran & Jonason, 2020). Cheating at the college level includes a wide range of behaviors such as plagiarism, fabrication of data, unauthorized help on assignments and projects, and submitting others' work as one's own (Tatum et al., 2018). Previous studies found that the prevalence of cheating and the lack of understanding among students of what constitutes cheating contributed to the loss of shameful, guilty feelings about academic dishonesty among students (Carpenter et al., 2010; Tatum et al., 2018).

Using ChatGPT designed to generate essays based on a set of parameters or prompts could lead students to potentially cheat on their assignments by submitting essays that are not their own work (Cotton et al., 2023). The researchers suggested that college educators educate students on what academic dishonesty is with a focus on preventing plagiarism, using plagiarism detection tools, and setting clear guidelines for the use of ChatGPT and other resources (Cotton et al., 2023). However, some schools were taking steps to stop students from using ChatGPT to cheat, including Seattle Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, one of France's top universities, Sciences Po, Hong Kong's Baptist University, and Bangalore's RV University in India while some U.S. colleges were debating about the ban on ChatGPT on campuses (Nolan, 2023). In March 2023, OpenAI introduced an upgraded version of ChatGPT capable of creating not just words but describing images in response to a person's simple written commands (Harwell & Tiku, 2023), which could further complicate the issue of academic dishonesty. Pavlik (2023) argued that generative AI systems capable of creating new content could be used "to produce misleading or malicious information" that is difficult for students to distinguish from genuine content (p. 84).

More recently with the beginning of the Fall 2023 academic year, colleges are employing various strategies to curb cheating with AI

tools, other than outright banning them. For example, they establish an Honor Code that explicitly forbids the use of AI or any other unauthorized assistance, change assessment strategies by using open-ended questions, use proctoring software to monitor students during exams, adopt plagiarism detection software, and provide AI literacy education to support both students and staff to become AI literate (Weale, 2023).

Departing from the ongoing debate about the use of ChatGPT and students' academic dishonesty, RQ1, and RQ 2 were created to determine the principal focus of discussions among college students:

RQ1: Should U.S. colleges ban the use of ChatGPT to prevent students from committing academic dishonesty, and why or why not?

RQ2: How can U.S. colleges, as leaders in academic excellence, adapt to the presence of ChatGPT according to student recommendations in order to uphold their reputation?

Method

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a scholarly method for academic research because it enables researchers to analyze and interpret textual data in a rigorous and systematic manner. Krippendorff (2013) pointed out that QCA involves the identification of coding categories, coding rules, and coding procedures, which help to ensure that the analysis is systematic and rigorous. Similarly, Schreier (2012) notes that QCA involves the use of software tools that help to ensure that the analysis is consistent and reliable. According to Elo and Kyngäs (2008), QCA is a useful method for academic research because it enables researchers to identify patterns and themes in data that may not be apparent through other methods of analysis. Similarly, Graneheim and Lundman (2004) argue that QCA is a useful method for academic research because it enables researchers to identify the underlying meaning of the data.

As QCA is designed to offer a systematic and comprehensive way

of examining textual data in relation to a specific phenomenon or problem, this study based on the analysis aim to generate rich and nuanced insights into the context of the data, as well as its implications for theory and practice. The data for this study are collected through group discussions, and this study aims to critically evaluate the validity and reliability of its findings by applying various quality criteria and strategies. Group discussions allow students to actively participate in their own learning process and engage with their peers in a collaborative environment (El-Khawas, 2004). Through group discussions, students can share their own perspectives and ideas, listen to and learn from others, and develop critical thinking skills as they evaluate different points of view. This helps them to understand complex concepts better by breaking them down into more manageable pieces and exploring them in-depth (Mannix & Neale, 2005). Group discussions can improve communication and social skills, such as active listening, effective questioning, and respectful debate, which are essential for students to learn from one another and actively engage with course material.

To gather data, this study used online written discussion boards of a junior-level college course offered during the spring semester of 2023 and taught by the same authors of this study. The public relations course was comprised of 18 male students and 22 female students who were expected to graduate before the end of the 2024-2025 academic year. They were attending a public college in the southern region of the United States. The public relations course requires the students to participate in two discussion sessions throughout the semester, and the authors used the first session by offering the two research questions of this study to the students who were encouraged to express their candid, free opinions on ChatGPT, and its concerns over use of academic dishonesty, and U.S. colleges' reputation to handle the ChatGPT issues as academic institutions on the course Blackboard discussion board.

When it comes to facilitating communication and collaboration among learners, as Nyborg et al. (2022) argued, online discussions are thought to be effective for students who may be shy or timid to express their views and engage in a more in-depth dialogue with their peers. As a result, the authors chose this format rather than a face-to-face one. Students were told to create their own thread on the course's Blackboard discussion board and respond to the two open-ended research questions in no more than 1,000 words. They had one week to complete the discussion. The students who expressed their opinions on the course Blackboard received 20 points, which accounted for 5% of the final grade. Only one student did not engage in the discussion, so this study received 39 responses. (n = 39, 17 men and 22 women).

Results

Among the 39 participants, 22 (56%) supported ChatGPT, arguing against the ban on campus and advocating for active use of the AI tool. Ten (26%) of them adopted a neutral stance, mentioning the benefits and drawbacks of using ChatGPT for academic work and evaluating the effects of ChatGPT on their future job, but not making a final decision on whether it should be banned on campus. Seven participants (18%) backed university policies prohibiting ChatGPT, expressing concerns about academic dishonesty, decreasing creativity, and falling behind other students good at using AI technologies. Table 1 illustrates their points of view from each perspective.

Table 1

Different Opinions on ChatGPT Ban on Campus

	Examples of what participants discussed (this study does not reveal their names to protect their anonymity)
Don't Ban ChatGPT	Respondent 1: AI technology is here to stay and will only continue to get more sophisticated in the future. Why not take this as an opportunity to integrate this technology into our curriculum and allow students to use it as a way to enhance their education? Respondent 2: ChatGPT can help students with different learning abilities or access to resources. It can provide assistance to those who may struggle with language barriers, learning disabilities, or limited access to educational materials. Respondent 3: By limiting students' access to innovative tools, universities may be hindering their ability to learn and develop new skills. Furthermore, banning ChatGPT, as TikTok currently is, could be seen as a step towards limiting the free flow of information and ideas, which could be detrimental to the academic community as a whole.
Ban ChatGPT	Respondent 4: the AI software is harmful because it's making students lazy. Students will result in having less communication skills, lowered IQ and a lack of understanding, and it will eventually create laziness when they realize not much work is required for assignments. Respondent 5: ChatGPT is definitely something that will affect course learning or learning in general. Schools should treat ChatGPT the same way they do plagiarism. Respondent 6: Some students study hard while others use a crutch like AI and surpass their grades, and that doesn't seem fair. Allowing ChatCPT would also be a slap in the face to students who don't use the AI response system and instead try to earn their degree alone.
Either Ban or not to Ban ChatGPT	Respondent 7: ChatGPT can be used in the wrong way and end up having students not learning anything, but it can also give students a new perspective into what they are learning instead of just what their instructor is teaching them. Respondent 8: Students can use ChatGPT as some sort of therapy for course work, but I don't think the technology is strong enough to do our work yet. Respondent 9: ChatGPT as an emerging technology has its pros and cons like any, and colleges or professors should decide if it is better or worse for students. I think Ai could be beneficial to student success in new emerging fields but I frankly may take easy way out for As with ChatGPT.

While there were three different viewpoints on ChatGPT and its use on campus, most participants recommended colleges and professors come up with policies, guidance, and beneficial ideas of using ChatGPT for their academic accomplishments and job opportunities. Table 2 shows some examples of what they recommended.

Table 2

Students' Expectations from Colleges about ChatGPT

	Examples of what students expect from colleges about ChatGPT
Respondent 10	Universities should encourage responsible use of this tool, and provide students with the necessary guidance and resources to ensure that they use it ethically and effectively.
Respondent 11	ChatGPT could be integrated into college courses to advance our knowledge on how it was created to advance students' knowledge who might be interested in technology.
Respondent 12	By teaching students how to work with AI, we can prepare them for an emerging skill that will be vital in their respective careers. This approach will enable them to explore how AI interacts with their chosen fields and equip them to become better-prepared professionals.
Respondent 13	I would encourage universities to utilize this software to give students exposure of how this software works in their career/professional field.
Respondent 14	Professors/Universities will have to adapt to the new platform, they cannot keep the same rules/policies when times are changing and there are different social norms.
Respondent 15	This approach – professors incorporating the software in lessons – is best because it doesn't ignore technology but redirects students' attention to their own skills and critical thinking. It sets healthier boundaries and gives students a realistic understanding on how to use technology to grow their own skills.
Respondent 16	Professors can modify their lesson plans, replacing take-home exams with in-class tests or group discussions, for example, to try to keep cheaters at bay.
Respondent 17	Universities should encourage responsible use of ChatGPT, and provide students with the necessary guidance and resources to ensure that they use it ethically and effectively.
Respondent 18	I would reassure that academic integrity in the university is of utmost importance and tell its faculty and students that the misuse of this technology will not be tolerated.

Because the participants were taking a public relations class, they also offered advice to build and promote an academic reputation for colleges. Table 3 includes several examples.

Table 3

Suggestions to Build an Academic Reputation with ChatGPT

	Suggestions for college to take advantage of ChatGPT from a PR perspective
Respondent 19	Choose TikTok and YouTube to show how the university awesomely integrates ChatGPT into class lessons to help students accelerate their academic achievement. It in a positive light could bring awareness and interest to get the public to adopt the messages from the university.
Respondent 20	Communicate the college's commitment to academic excellence and student success with excellent adaptation of AI software through various channels, including social media, press releases, and other public relations efforts. This can help to enhance the college's reputation and image and attract top talent to the institution.
Respondent 21	Promote the image that ChatGPT is beneficial to student performance, which allows the University to flex that they spearhead AI technology and embrace the inevitable for current and future students' career.
Respondent 22	Adopt ChatGPT and explore how to integrate it into their academic programs. The university will have a good reputation by advertising that it supports and stay ahead of innovative technologies for the interest of students.
Respondent 23	Spread the reputation for an artificial intelligence-based learning institution for all majors on social media platforms and bring tech company sponsorships to the college like Apple, Google, and Microsoft.

Discussion

ChatGPT and its more advanced counterpart, GPT-4, have significantly impacted higher education over a short period. These AI tools have emerged as major disruptors in education and instruction, despite being relatively unknown at the start of the 2022-23 academic year (Visé, 2023, para. 2-7). The educator's biggest concern over ChatGPT is directly associated with academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism committed by their students assisted by ChatGPT, which is considered "a freakishly capable tool" that appeared suddenly and performs reasonably

well across a wide variety of tasks and academic subjects (Roose, 2023, para. 21-27).

Educators are scrambling to figure out how to prevent academic dishonesty while also exploring ways to detect students' misuse of ChatGPT. Writing produced by artificial intelligence raises ethical concerns about students' academic success, and there are worries about the veracity of the responses ChatGPT provides. However, some professors believe that colleges should try using the software to their advantage rather than fearing academic dishonesty, as it could lead to building a better mousetrap to catch students cheating. A Yale professor pointed out that universities, in regard to the use of ChatGPT, are "absolutely a wonderful place to consider all the implications both good and bad" and they challenge new questions raised by any kind of new technology, such as ChatGPT because professors in different academic disciplines tend to think about "the problems from so many different angles and orientations" (Visé, 2023, para. 6). Professors should seek ways to tailor assignments to students' interests and incorporate brainstorming exercises and essay drafts instead of relying solely on one final paper to discourage students from using ChatGPT to cheat.

One of the immediate and real concerns related to ChatGPT is its propensity to provide inaccurate or misleading responses (Roose, 2023). College students, as well as educators, acknowledge the existential worries associated with this issue. According to a survey of 1,000 current undergraduate and graduate students nationwide, similar to what this study found with the discussion of 39 participants, over half of college students (51%) agreed that using ChatGPT to complete assignments and exams could be regarded as cheating, while about 20% of them disagreed, and the remainder were neutral (Nietzel, 2023). The survey also found that 57% of the students were unlikely to use or continue using ChatGPT to complete assignments or exams, in contrast to 32% who said they used it or would

continue to use it in the future, while "11% preferred not to answer" (para. 2-7). It is worth noting that students' perspectives on the ethics of using ChatGPT for academic assignments may vary depending on the guidelines provided by colleges and universities, as academic institutions debate what policies they should implement regarding students using ChatGPT to complete academic work.

The use of ChatGPT amid passionate discussions about the core values of higher education, academic dishonesty, student ethics, and the adaptation of new technology for improved academic performance is centered on four questions: (1) When does using ChatGPT entail plagiarism?, (2) When can students be taught to use it responsibly?, (3) How should colleges incorporate ChatGPT into coursework?, and (4) How will ChatGPT affect the future of higher education? Answers to all of these issues are still being debated and developed by educators and students, but a lack of clear and consistent policies leaves many students in the dark about how AI tools are perceived at their institutions. For example, the European University Association announced in February 2023 that "Universities should formally discuss the responsible, ethical, and transparent use of AI tools and other emerging technologies with staff and students. Aside from updating institutional-level policies, guidance on approaches to day-to-day practice will be needed" (para. 6).

As a result of a student turning in a paper that was written by ChatGPT using a cutting-edge system capable of creating not just words but also describing images in response to a person's simple written commands, every institution and staff member at the college level has recognized the sudden debut of ChatGPT as a game changer for higher education, in which they need to find a way of taking advantage of ChatGPT that can be leveraged to teach higher-order thinking skills. Professors, for example, teach students how to ask the most astute question of the tool, then deconstruct, fact-check, and improve the

response in the hopes that students will write more and better (Belkin, 2023). It is important to note that colleges in the United States make a huge effort to develop educational guidelines in terms of using AI tools for academic work, and the process takes time and energy. Stanford University, with many tech-giants alums, announced in April 2023 that as the university learns more about how students use AI tools, the university's guidance for the use of AI tools may become better informed. Its website adds: "To give sufficient space for instructors to explore uses of generative AI tools in their courses, and to set clear guidelines to students about what uses are and are not consistent with the Stanford Honor Code" (para. 18). This study expects that many American colleges will explore and experience AI tools with students in their summer and fall semesters, and then administrators and professors will come up with practical and educational guidelines by the end of 2023.

According to the findings of this study, college students anticipate professors to incorporate ChatGPT into many course materials rather than prohibiting its use. How can ChatGPT be implemented in higher education? Can ChatGPT, in particular, be integrated into college education as a supplement to conventional teaching methods? Despite educators' worries that ChatGPT may encourage students to depend too heavily on technology and avoid critical thinking and autonomous learning, ChatGPT has the potential to improve college education if used properly. One suggested answer is to use ChatGPT to provide personalized tutoring to students who may need extra help with specific subjects or topics; it can be integrated into classroom discussions to help students explore new ideas, improve their creativity, and critical thinking skills, and provide instant feedback on their questions (Bowman, 2022; Villasenor, 2023). Educators should teach students how to use ChatGPT properly and ethically, such as using it to enhance rather than replace their learning and avoiding copying and pasting information from the bot. (D'Agostino,

2023). Educators can aid students in acquiring the abilities needed to evaluate the data the robot provides in a critical manner. However, it's crucial to use ChatGPT correctly and morally to prevent it from displacing independent learning and critical thinking, which are crucial components of a college education (Ohio University, 2023). According to Ohio University's Center for Teaching, Learning, & Assessment, when used ethically, ChatGPT can help students acquire the following five skills: (1) Generating personalized study materials, (2) Providing answers to questions; (3) Enhancing language learning, (4) Generating creative writing prompts, and (5) Supporting research projects.

This study highlights that ChatGPT is a powerful new tool that can be used by colleges to improve their public relations efforts in a number of ways. First, it can be used to generate personalized outreach to potential students, parents, and donors. ChatGPT can be trained on a variety of data, such as demographic information, interests, and past interactions with the college. This allows colleges to send targeted messages that are more likely to resonate with their audience. Second, ChatGPT can be used to create engaging and informative content for the college's website and social media channels. ChatGPT can generate blog posts, articles, and videos on a wide range of topics, including news about the college, research findings, and student success stories. This content can help to attract attention to the college and its programs. Third, ChatGPT can be used to provide customer service to students, parents, and other stakeholders. ChatGPT can answer questions about the college's admissions process, financial aid, and student life. It can also help to resolve problems and complaints. This can help to improve the college's reputation and build trust with its constituents. In fact, the integration of ChatGPT in the public relations strategy of colleges can potentially revolutionize the way these institutions communicate with their stakeholders. This discussion explores the potential applications and

implications of this technology in higher education from a public relations perspective. For example, ChatGPT can serve as a 24/7 virtual assistant, answering queries from students, parents, staff, and the public. This can significantly improve the efficiency of communication and ensure that stakeholders receive timely and accurate information. It can handle a wide range of inquiries, from admission procedures to campus events, freeing up human resources for more complex tasks. Some specific examples of how colleges can use ChatGPT in their public relations efforts are listed as follows:

- Colleges can use ChatGPT to generate personalized emails to prospective students, inviting them to learn more about the college or to attend a campus event.
- Colleges can use ChatGPT to create targeted social media posts that are tailored to the interests of their target audience.
- Colleges can use ChatGPT to write blog posts and articles about the college's latest news, research findings, and student success stories.
- Colleges can use ChatGPT to create videos that promote the college's programs and facilities.
- Colleges can use ChatGPT to answer questions from students, parents, and other stakeholders about the college's admissions process, financial aid, and student life.
- Colleges can use ChatGPT to resolve problems and complaints from students, parents, and other stakeholders.

Colleges should view ChatGPT as a chance rather than a threat from a public relations perspective. Realistically, it is impossible to effectively restrict access to ChatGPT because, as one research participant stated, "if banned on campus, I will use it at home." Students will seek AI assistance with their tasks, expecting professors to assist them or show them how to improve their ability to use AI tools. Many participants in

this study stated that ChatGPT has provided an excellent opportunity for a college to establish a cool and trendy reputation as an AI and technologically advanced institution if it incorporates new AI tools into course curricula and markets its ground-breaking, new AI-centered courses to prospective students and their parents. To promote a great image of the AI and technology-driven college as the leader of all institutions in this field, this study offers some strategies that colleges could use based on participants' ideas and other industry experts' recommendations. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023; Schoff et al., 2021):

- Define your audience: Identify the specific groups of people who would be most interested in your college's programs and expertise in AI and technology. This could include students, faculty members, industry leaders, policymakers, and others.
- Develop a clear message: Craft a message that highlights your college's unique strengths and differentiates it from other universities. Emphasize your expertise in AI and technology, cutting-edge research, innovative programs, and successful alumni.
- Leverage social media: Use social media platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to share news, insights, and research from your college. Engage with other thought leaders and influencers in the field to increase visibility and credibility.
- Organize events: Host events such as conferences, workshops, and seminars that showcase your college's expertise in AI and technology. Invite industry leaders, policymakers, and other influencers to participate and speak at these events.
- Partner with industry: Collaborate with industry partners to develop joint research projects, sponsorships, and other initiatives that demonstrate your college's commitment to innovation and cutting-edge technology.

By adopting these strategies, the university can establish itself as a leader in AI and technology education and research across all academic fields, promoting a stellar reputation as the AI era's top university in order to attract the best and brightest students, faculty members, and industry partners.

This study explored the perceptions of college students towards ChatGPT, how colleges handle ChatGPT, and the actions that colleges should take in response to the proliferation of AI-based learning devices. It was found that students expressed concerns about the lack of education regarding AI tools in the digital age and expected colleges to keep pace with the rapid advancements in AI technology. The study recommends that colleges provide clear and responsible guidelines for the use of AI tools to promote ethical behavior, student learning, and academic integrity. To further promote ethical behavior, it is crucial to remind students about the code of ethics that prohibits unethical behavior such as cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. This reminder can serve as a powerful deterrent and help foster a culture of honesty and integrity on campus. Additionally, universities should make an effort to incorporate AI programs like ChatGPT into course materials to address the fear that students might have about not learning AI technology. The integration of AI tools into the curriculum is essential due to the increasing importance of AI in various industries and its growing role in education delivery. Failing to educate students about AI technology may leave them ill-equipped to navigate the evolving landscape of education and future career options.

Limitations and Future Studies

While the study emphasizes the importance of colleges providing responsible guidelines for the use of AI tools and addressing ethical problems from a public relations perspective, there are certain limitations to consider. These limitations can be the basis for future studies and

research. Here are some potential limitations and suggestions for future study:

1. Limited Scope: The study focused primarily on the role of AI tools in higher education, without exploring their impact on other educational levels or sectors with the small sample size. Future research could broaden the scope to include K-12 education, vocational training, or lifelong learning programs to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of AI in various educational contexts.

2. Lack of Longitudinal Data: The study relied on cross-sectional data, which limits the ability to observe long-term effects and changes over time. Conducting longitudinal studies would allow researchers to track the evolving role of AI in education and its impact on students' academic experiences, ethical concerns, and future career trajectories.

3. Ethical Considerations: The study acknowledges the genuine concerns expressed by students about the ethical violations associated with the use of AI tools like ChatGPT. However, it may not have delved deeply into specific ethical issues or proposed concrete solutions. Future research could focus on identifying and addressing specific ethical challenges arising from the use of AI in education, such as privacy, bias, accountability, and transparency.

4. Policy and Implementation: The study emphasizes the importance of developing effective strategies and policies to address the challenges posed by AI technologies in education. However, it may not delve deeply into the specific policies or implementation frameworks that colleges should adopt. Future research could focus on investigating existing policies or developing guidelines and frameworks for colleges to effectively integrate AI tools into their educational practices while safeguarding academic integrity and addressing ethical concerns.

Addressing these limitations and conducting further research in these areas would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the integration of AI in education, help develop responsible guidelines, and foster an environment that supports the ethical and effective use of AI tools in higher education.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that colleges should provide responsible guidelines for the use of AI tools and encourage open discussions about ethical problems in freshman courses. It highlights the need for colleges to keep up with the reality of rapidly advancing AI technologies and integrate them into higher education curricula, even for non-computer science majors. By doing so, colleges can help students reflect on the purpose of college education and its role throughout their lives, beyond just securing their first permanent job. The study also underscores the genuine concerns expressed by students about the ethical violations of academic work associated with the use of ChatGPT. By incorporating clear guidelines for the use of AI tools, colleges can address students' concerns, promote academic integrity, and ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the changing landscape of education and future careers. Colleges need to adapt their pedagogical approaches and create an environment that fosters engagement, honesty, and responsibility. Additionally, ongoing research and discussions on the intersection of AI and academic integrity will be crucial for developing effective strategies and policies to address the challenges posed by AI technologies in education.

After conducting further research as of November 2023, this study found additional insights on the use of ChatGPT in higher education public relations. Implementing ChatGPT in a college's public relations strategy can offer numerous benefits.

1. Enhanced Communication: ChatGPT can serve as a virtual assistant, providing instant responses to inquiries from prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, and other stakeholders. Its natural language understanding capabilities enable it to engage in human-like conversations, effectively addressing queries and concerns. This improved communication can help build a positive impression of the institution and enhance the overall user experience.

2. Personalized Support: By training ChatGPT to understand the specific needs and interests of different user groups, colleges can offer personalized support to students. For example, ChatGPT can assist prospective students in navigating the admissions process, providing information about programs, scholarships, and campus resources. Likewise, it can support enrolled students with academic advising, course registration, and accessing support services. This personalized interaction can foster a sense of individual care and contribute to student success.

3. Brand Image and Reputation Management: ChatGPT can be programmed to align with the college's brand messaging, values, and mission. It can highlight the institution's academic achievements, research breakthroughs, community engagement efforts, and unique selling points. By delivering consistent and engaging messaging, ChatGPT can enhance the college's brand image and reputation, attracting prospective students and garnering positive attention.

4. Crisis Communication: During times of crisis or emergencies, ChatGPT can play a crucial role in disseminating information to the college community. It can provide real-time updates on safety protocols, campus closures, and available resources. Implementing ChatGPT as part of the college's emergency communication system ensures that accurate and timely information reaches

students, faculty, and staff, helping to alleviate anxiety and manage the crisis effectively.

5. Data Analytics and Insights: ChatGPT can generate valuable data and analytics regarding user inquiries, trends, and preferences. By analyzing this data, colleges can gain insights into the needs and expectations of their audience. This information can inform public relations strategies, content creation, and decision-making processes, allowing colleges to continuously improve their engagement efforts.

6. Accessibility and Availability: ChatGPT can operate 24/7, providing round-the-clock support to users. This accessibility ensures that students and stakeholders can seek assistance and obtain information at their convenience, regardless of time zones or office hours. The availability of ChatGPT can enhance satisfaction levels and establish the college as responsive and student-centered.

7. Language Support: For colleges with a diverse student body or international presence, ChatGPT can offer multilingual support. With advancements in language translation capabilities, ChatGPT can provide information and assistance in various languages, facilitating communication for non-native English speakers and broadening the college's reach.

It is important to note that while ChatGPT has significant potential in the field of public relations for higher education, it is crucial to maintain transparency about its AI nature, address privacy concerns, and continually train and fine-tune the model to improve its accuracy and effectiveness in understanding and responding to user inquiries.

In conclusion, ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for colleges and universities in their public relations efforts. By leveraging its capabilities in communication, personalized support, brand management, crisis

communication, data analytics, accessibility, and language support, colleges can enhance their engagement with stakeholders, strengthen their reputation, and provide an exceptional user experience.

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Teaching Brief/GIFT

Organizational Web and Social Media Ethics Policies

Katie R. Place, Quinnipiac University

ABSTRACT

This great idea for teaching (GIFT) aims to help undergraduate or graduate students review extant social media and web ethics policies and then apply their knowledge to the development of their own ethics policy. This GIFT guides educators through the rationale of the study, the steps of the study, a teaching note regarding the study, and relevant references.

Keywords: ethics, policy, social media, law

Assignment Overview

Rationale

Because public relations professionals are often tasked with guiding ethical decisions (Bowen, 2008), enacting an ethical conscience role for their organizations (Neill & Drumwright, 2012), and carrying out an ethical responsibility to minimize harm and promote respect (Fitzpatrick & Gauthier, 2001), they commonly write and enforce organizational ethics policies. The purpose of this assignment is to enable students the opportunity to review organizational social media and web ethics policies and to apply public relations law and ethics concepts such as copyright, privacy, intellectual property, defamation, digital citizenship, and ethical dialogue via the writing of their own policies. This assignment is completed near the conclusion of a graduate-level Law & Ethics in Strategic Communication course, after students have learned core ethics principles and moral philosophies and after students have learned core legal principles (i.e. privacy, defamation, copyright, intellectual property, and DE&I considerations). However, the assignment is also appropriate for undergraduate-level learners.

For public relations professionals to earn accreditation via the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), they must demonstrate competency in a variety of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) (PRSA.org) related to law and ethics. For example, individuals must demonstrate KSAs of how to conduct public relations activities in a lawful and principled manner, how to follow federal law regarding privacy, identity protection, and data use, and how to effectively advise organizations on the ethical use of technology for listening to, communicating with, and engaging publics (PRSA.org). This assignment puts a variety of these knowledge concepts, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of law and ethics together.

Student Learning Goals

The goal of this assignment is for students to learn, engage with, and apply legal and ethical principles of creating social media / digital ethics policies. After completing this assignment, students will have: 1) Viewed and learned how organizations write and organize social media/ web ethics policies, 2) Compared and contrasted social media/web ethics policies, 3) Engaged in reflection and dialogue with classmates about the ethics and law concepts reflected in the policies, and 4) Researched and written their own sample social media/web ethics policy. This assignment fulfills many university learning outcomes of critical thinking, effective communication, recognition of differences and equity, and creative thinking.

Connection to PR Theory or Practice

This assignment is appropriate for graduate or undergraduate public relations or strategic communications ethics and law courses. Students may find this assignment helpful after reading the PRSA Code of Ethics and code provisions, completing course content about social media/ web / digital law and ethics practices, or learning about various moral philosophies that guide organizational communications efforts. Many codes of conduct and social media/web ethics policies, for example, are written from a deontological standpoint focusing on the ethicality of one's actions and one's duty to and respect for others.

Assessment & Evidence of Student Learning

This assignment has been successfully implemented for two years in a graduate-level strategic communications law and ethics course. It has successfully enabled students to review ethics and law theoretical and practical concepts learned in class – and then put the concepts and practices into action via the policy writing assignment. Ethics and law can be dry topics. However, this assignment has brought the topic to life for students – and left them feeling empowered that they can write their own

policies, counsel others on organizational ethics/law concepts, and engage as ethical guardians (Bowen, 2008; Neill & Drumwright, 2012).

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Appendix A

Template Assignment

Organizational Employee Social Media & Web Policy Assignment

100 Points

Purpose and Learning Outcomes: The purpose of this assignment is to enable you the opportunity to review and apply public relations law and ethics concepts and practices, including but not limited to, copyright, privacy, intellectual property, defamation, digital citizenship, and ethical dialogue. This assignment fulfills the university learning outcomes of critical thinking, effective communication, recognition of differences and equity, and creative thinking.

Directions: Please review the directions for the assignment below, organized in two parts.

Part 1: Review Sample Social Media & Web Policies (40 points).

First, you will review the social media and web policies listed below. This is a quick cross-section of policies from corporate, nonprofit, and governmental organizations. While you read over the policies, note the commonalities and differences among them. Note how they structured are and written. Do they use a checklist format, a Q&A format, a narrative format, or something else? What moral philosophies or legal concepts from class do they draw upon? How do they emphasize the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Please write a one page (approximately 300 word) discussion board post (essay) addressing the below questions and describing your observations. Upload your post to the class discussion board by Friday at midnight. Be sure to comment on at least 2 of your classmates' posts, too!

- **Best Buy:** https://forums.bestbuy.com/t5/Welcome-News/Best-Buy-Social-Media Policy/td-p/20492
- **Coca-Cola:** https://www.viralblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TCCC-Online Social-Media-Principles-12-2009.pdf

- **Nordstrom:** https://www.nordstrom.com/browse/customer-service/policy/social networking-guidelines
- **NPR:** https://www.npr.org/about-npr/688418842/special-section-social media#:~:text=If%20as%20part%20of%20our,pseudonyms%20when%20doing%20such %20work.
- **U.S. Department of Labor:** https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/SOL/files/Ethics and-Use-of-Social-Media_2020.pdf
- **Search the web or visit your favorite organization's website.** Do they have a social media or web ethics policy? Read over a few more that you find on your own!

In your discussion board post, answer the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast the policies. What are some key differences among them in regard to content, organization, or tone?
2. How do the policies differ by organization or formatting? Did the policies utilize a checklist, narrative, Q&A, or a "dos and don'ts" format? What type of formatting or organization makes the policy most accessible to readers?
3. What moral philosophies, PRSA code provisions, or legal concepts do the policies draw upon? Cite some examples to back up your claims.

Part 2: Write Your Own Social Media / Web Policy: After reviewing the above policies and observing some of their key qualities, you will now write an employee web / social media policy of your own! (60 points). Please choose one of the following organizations and create a one- to two-page social media and web policy, drawing upon legal and ethical concepts we learned in class. Feel free to apply formatting approaches or content ideas from the samples you reviewed in Part 1.

1. New England Donor Services
2. New York University
3. Boston Children's Hospital

4. Voya Financial

5. General Dynamics / Electric Boat

6. Choose your own organization! (Please clear your idea with the professor)

Specifications & Tips:

1. Please ensure your social media/web policy includes at least 10 items in the policy. 2. Give your policy a clear structure. The samples we reviewed above and in class often had subheads, a checklist, or a clear Q&A format.

3. Write in complete sentences. Write using clear language that all organizational members could understand and then apply to their work.

4. I suggest you ensure that your policy offers guidance for the following general topic areas.

- basics of web / social media etiquette
- basics of ethical communication/use of social media
- communicating with respect for diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I)in digital spaces
- avoiding communication that is harassment, discriminating, bullying, or violence
- If relevant: a definition of commercial speech and how it is regulated and what types of speech are not allowed
- communicating opinion vs. fact online
- how to properly disclose affiliations, etc. / what not to disclose online • copyright and trademark and/or fair use
- proper use of logos, slogans, etc.
- communicating with respect for privacy online
- communicating to avoid defamation online

Appendix B

Grading Rubric

The assignment will be assessed for the following. Please use these as a checklist for reviewing your work before you turn it in!

Name of Student_____

A) **Discussion Post (___Out of 40 Points):** Does the discussion post adequately assess the policies and discuss relevant ethics or legal practices? Is the discussion post well developed and approximately 300 words in length?

B) **Content of Your Policy (____ Out of 40 Points):** Are there at least 10 items in your policy that draw upon all that we learned regarding social media law & ethics, privacy, corporate/commercial speech, and diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI)?

C) **Organization of Your Policy (____Out of 10 Points):** Is the policy document organized in a manner that is logical and understandable? Did you use subheads, section breaks, or special format (list or Q&A)?

D) **Mechanics of Your Policy (___Out of 10 Points):** Is the policy written utilizing proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, and format?

Grade: ____ Out of 100 Points

Appendix C

Teaching Note

      This assignment is appropriate for students in undergraduate or graduate law and/or ethics classes. Additionally, the assignment is appropriate for any class that addresses social media, web, or digital media policies, laws, or protocols.

      As a best practice, it is recommended that students first engage in readings or class discussions regarding public relations or social media law and ethics. For example, students could read peer-reviewed research on the subject, such as articles on social media policies:

- Stohl, C., Etter, M., Banghart, S., & Woo, D. (2017). Social media policies: Implications for contemporary notions of corporate social responsibility. Journal of Business Ethics, 142, 413-436.

      Many law and ethics or social media resources are available to students free of charge, including

- Institute for Public Relations' Digital Media Research Center: https://instituteforpr.org/digital-media-research/digital-media-research-center/
- Arthur W. Page Center's Training Center (includes modules on codes of ethics and digital ethics): https://www.pagecentertraining.psu.edu/

Book Review

Research Perspectives on Social Media Influencers and Brand Communication

Reviewed by
Melissa A. Goodson, The College of St. Scholastica

Research Perspectives on Social Media Influencers and Brand Communication is a practical handbook of Social Media Influencer (SMI) research and case studies for brands. This mode of communication's effectiveness over traditional media forms is powerful and often mysterious. The chapters help the novice SMI stakeholders understand key definitions, applications, and implications for brands and consumers.

Content and Scope

The book's goal is "to provide readers with an overview of the current research into SMI as brand communicators and their integration into brand communication strategies" (p. xv). Indeed, the popularity of influencers is a trending topic in social media education, but the research and theoretical models are somewhat limited. The book consists of nine chapters ranging from the history of SMIs to regulations and laws about brand-influencer relationships. The research inspires future inquiry into the ever-evolving dimensions of SMIs and brand relations. Fundamental theories are at the end of each relevant chapter summary for readers to refer to in future projects.

Chapter 1—The History of Social Media Influencers

The first chapter sets the stage for unique areas of research perspectives on SMIs and brand communication later in the book. In chapter 1, Burns reviews the "early days" of the practices of social media influence in the 1990s with blogs and moves through crucial social media platforms. Be prepared for quick facts that make up many engaging history lessons for platform researchers. Explanations of the evolutions of platforms to adapt to meet the needs of influencer marketing and the necessary SMI regulations serve as historical timestamps.

Chapter 2—Rising to the Top: Social Media (Macro) Influencers and the Democratized Brand Capital of Entertainment, Interaction, and Disclosure

Chapter 2 highlights the research of Landsberger and Martinez about macro-influencers in social media and opportunities for them to break into traditional entertainment media due to their social media presence. Using content analysis on the Instagram and YouTube channels of top macro influencers' profiles., the authors find that content created by the macro-influencers reveals five major themes, including professional, promotion, personal, interactive and frequency themes. Drawing on Goffman's theoretical framework, the research shows the significance of credible brand relationships in establishing celebrities.

Chapter 3—Micro-SMI: The Beginning of a Theoretical Model

Micro social media influencers or Micro-SMIs on social media platforms are megaphones for personal influence. Chapter 3 outlines a study including interviews with Australian micro-SMIs and Harrison's industry experience to develop a proposed model for Micro-SMIs. Thematically, digital literacy and inclusion are evident. The researcher posits that five essential dimensions define the role of Micro-SMIs: "personal attributes, content attributes, outcomes generated, behavior and strategies, and network characteristics" (p. 53). Topics from the chapter for future review related to Micro-SMIs emerged, like well-being, mental health, authenticity, and follower objectives.

Chapter 4—Evaluation of Brand-Sponsored Influencers and Tactics Across Industries

Chapter 4 reinforces that the customer journey is a non-linear process. Brands rely on SMIs to share product benefits and features in a trustworthy manner—Mariani's Figure 4.3 New Customer Journey. The New Customer Journey Moving from a Funnel to a Circular Process is on page 71. The goal of the circular model is to keep consumers moving

throughout the customer journey as a brand advocate, helping to elevate WOM. The author reviews industry influencer partnerships by focusing on case studies in the beauty, optical, and financial industries.

Chapter 5—LushUK Goes "All In" on Influencers

In 2019, LushUK went all in on the influencer-only strategy eliminating centralized social media from the plan. But did you know the company has never had an external advertising budget? Wallace, Luttrell, and Torres discuss a decentralized social media approach's benefits, risks, and costs. The authors apply a mix of mass communication, psychology, sociology, and strategic communication theories to examine the decision to close centralized social media accounts and focus on influencers. Also relevant to the chapter discussion is the Gen Z research and "Superhero" generation dubbed by Luttrell and McGrath:"Gen Z, in particular, is turning more to phone conversations and face-to-face small talk over online interactions" (2020, p. 102; see also Stinson, 2017; Luttrell & McGrath, 2016). Theories covered in this chapter include: Social Impact Theory; Social Networking Theory; Uses and Gratifications Theory; Media Ecology Theory; Social Exchange Theory; Social Identity Theory.

Chapter 6—#OhSnap Using Current Students as Influencers in Higher Education

Keeping with Gen Z, Agozzino provides a chapter with considerations for the complexity of higher ed marketing related to digital and social media tactics. On page 115, the author defines key Snapchat terms. A Snapchat campaign case study from Ohio Northern University showed promising results associated with the engagement of the incoming class. The campaign included a careful blend of brand strategy (unexpected) and resonance with users. Spectacles, glasses made for the Snapchat app were part of the campaign's success. The spectacles allowed a 3D storytelling opportunity for campus visitors and current students. Nearly 30% of incoming first-year students followed the new university

Snapchat account (p. 120). #OhSnap-A well-thought-out plan for Snapchat is beneficial for communicating campus messaging!

Chapter 7—Influencer Marketing: Is it Right for Your Brand?

SMIs might not be the right tool for some brands. Hernandez provides research-based guidelines to help brands determine whether or not an SMI relationship is appropriate. Guided by Social Identity Theory, the researcher outlines factors to consider when deciding to use influencer marketing, including brand relevance, influencer engagement, frequency of interactions, and capabilities to create authentic or organic results (p. 125). Additionally, the author outlines the factors to consider when deciding not to use influencers, including damage to society and other ethical considerations such as encouraging risky behavior, opacity challenges for the brand, and the potential for scandals and fraud. Other challenges Hernandez presents include the lack of trust and authenticity and the veracity of influencers' large following.

Chapter 8—Framing the Impact of Pseudo-Influencers via Communication Ethics

Pseudo-SMIs engage in conversations with brands by using hashtags and tagging them in posts to entice the brands' followers to follow them. Lo Castro describes how pseudo-SMIs inhibit brands' ability to cultivate genuine relationships with consumers, thus harming the brand image. Ultimately, the author highlights that by using influencers, brands inadvertently are seeing growth in engagement with fake followers. The author points to normative ethics to get to the root problem of industry concerns and the ethical implications of deception by pseudo-SMIs.

Chapter 9—Playing by the Rules: Legal Restrictions Surrounding Brand-Influencer Relationship

Barclay and Weaver interpret FTC standards in layperson's terms, enticing readers to understand the legal implications of endorsement-based messages. On page 164, the authors outline definitions and approaches that

are helpful in developing endorsement guidelines. Barclay and Weaver share recommendations for brands and influencers from policy compliance with Guidelines Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising and state laws related to deceptive advertising. The authors spotlight relevant FTC decisions and publications in the chapter for legal planning.

Contribution to PR Education

Through research evidence and theoretical approaches, Editor Watkins and the contributing authors create a playbook of SMIs and brand communication relevant to academics and practitioners alike. The book contributes to PR education by demonstrating the impact of SMIs on brands and the need for academia and the industry to understand how to use influencers as an effective strategic communication tool. They examine the emergence of SMIs in real applications and forge a path forward for understanding future opportunities and challenges in brands connecting with consumers. Unveiled are new theoretical models to be used in future practice.

Conclusion

Watkins curated a diverse group of contributors with research highlighting complex considerations for the marketing communications industry and academia regarding social media influencers and brand communication. The authors bridged the gap between industry and academic research in a compelling manner. Each chapter topic could be a book in itself. What makes the book exciting is that it provides a foundation of the history, theories, and practicality of brands in using SMIs for the reader. This book is a helpful guide for undergraduate and graduate faculty members embarking on the journey of teaching specialty topics in the area of SMIs. The case studies include concrete examples of success and areas of improvement in the influencer realm.

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Book Review

On Deadline:
Managing Media Relations (6th Ed.)

Reviewed by
Kristen Heflin, Kennesaw State University

On Deadline: Managing Media Relations is an essential text
for public relations students, professionals, teachers, and scholars who
are interested in learning how to conduct effective media relations
campaigns. It is a comprehensive guide to media relations that covers
topics ranging from strategic planning to building relationships with the
media to implementing media relations campaigns both in the United
States and internationally. It is written in an accessible tone and provides
indispensable advice including current best practices, examples, case
studies, and interviews with public relations professionals.

Content and Scope

The first two chapters of On Deadline cover planning for
media relations. Chapter 1 provides guidance on how PR practitioners
should prepare to engage in media relations with tips for developing a
media policy and establishing media relations objectives to meet your
organization's overall goals. The authors also provide a brief example of a
strategic media relations plan, which includes goals, objectives, strategies,
and tactics (p. 6-7). Other topics discussed include creating a resource
library to prepare for media relations, introducing yourself to members of
the news media, tips for using social media for media relations, and tips
for making sure your organization's leadership team is on-board with your
efforts. Chapter 2 gives a solid overview of news values, how to identify
internal news stories, and how to identify news media outlets and contacts
to pitch.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 build on the first two chapters by discussing
how to build productive, symbiotic relationships with the news media.
In Chapter 3, the authors provide a mini encyclopedia of media relations
tools with entries on a range of tactics from editorial board visits to
influencer media packages to talking points. This chapter also features an
in-depth discussion on best practices for news releases, as well as some
solid tips for pitching the media. Chapter 4 dives deep into the trenches

of media relations by providing clear, practical advice on the importance of meeting reporters' deadlines, how journalists use social media in their work, tips for using digital photos, how to handle requests for information, tips for granting and conducting interviews, how to handle reporter errors, identifying how and when to say "no" to a journalist, and the importance of keeping employees in the loop so they hear news through the PR team first. There is also a case study on the value of Instagram for reporters and a case study on the importance of being accessible to reporters.

Chapter 5 focuses entirely on media training and gives guidance on identifying and preparing the appropriate spokesperson for a media interview. It includes a discussion about the kind of information to give spokespersons and provides specific tips on how to prepare key messages, understand the audience and make good word choices. Chapter 5 also has some insightful advice on what to do if you're asked a difficult question or don't have an answer. There are even sections dedicated to tips for TV and live streaming, radio, and news conferences.

Overall, Chapters 3, 4, and 5 offer a wealth of useful tips that mirror the media relations lessons I've learned through my own professional experience. Written in a straightforward, thoughtful manner with plenty of example, these chapters alone make this book essential reading for aspiring public relations practitioners.

While Chapters 1 through 5 provide robust discussions of the everyday aspects of conducting media relations, Chapter 6 reminds readers of the importance of considering the ethical and legal issues associated with public relations. It begins by providing an overview of the codes of ethics of professional communications organizations relevant to public relations. It then offers succinct explanations of plagiarism, copyright issues, conflicts of interest, why and how to avoid saying "no comment," and of what it means when something is "off the record."

Chapter 7 focuses on media events by providing thorough step-by step advice for planning, implementing, and evaluating a media event. It also includes tips on what to include in a press kit, three case studies on successful events, and a planning model and timeline for major announcements. The advice in this chapter is clearly based on best practices and would be an excellent reference for an event planning module or course.

While the authors still offer an abundance of practical tips, Chapters 8 through 11 tend to focus on issues PR professionals face as they move toward a more strategic "counselor" role. For example, Chapter 8 explores managing international media relations and discusses the importance of being culturally sensitive. It also offers insightful tips for media relations in international markets, provides international case studies and scenarios, reviews strategic communication trends in Europe and Asia-Pacific, and features advice from communication professionals around the world. This section is a "must read" for anyone looking to practice international PR.

Chapter 9 centers on crisis planning with an overview of the basic elements of a crisis plan and ways to ensure a crisis plan remains effective. This chapter also offers three case studies and examines the power of social media during a crisis, behaviors to avoid during a crisis and advice from a professional on how to issue an apology.

In addition to providing clear guidance on the everyday practice of media relations, one of the things I appreciate the most about this book is that it continually reminds the reader of the importance of tying media relations to an organization's measurable objectives. Chapter 10 covers this ever-important topic of measuring and evaluating the effectiveness

of media relations. In this chapter, the authors provide examples of objectives, how one could evaluate each objective, and critical reflection on each evaluative method. They also explore the types of research methods and metrics PR practitioners use in evaluative research and offer a case study of how the U.S. Coast Guard measures its media relations efforts. This chapter serves as an important reminder of how crucial it is to demonstrate the value of public relations efforts.

The final chapter of *On Deadline* closes the book with a thoughtful discussion of the practical and critical thinking skills that are required to evolve from "communicator to counselor," (p. 201), or from tactician to strategic manager. It offers tips for building credibility and getting "a seat at the management table" (p. 203), two case studies with examples of successful PR counselors, and advice from PR professionals in their own words on how to be an effective PR counselor.

Contribution to Public Relations Education

On Deadline is an essential book that fills a major gap in current public relations textbooks, namely the fact that few public relations textbooks dive deeply into the relationship building practices between journalists and PR professionals (Pettigrew & Heflin, 2017). *On Deadline* lifts the veil on this complicated, symbiotic relationship by providing in-depth explanations, case studies, and tips on how to work with journalists and build lasting, productive relationships with members of the news media. While this alone is a vital addition to public relations education, *On Deadline* is also a comprehensive resource that will serve students well after they graduate and become professionals. It offers a treasure trove of advice that touches on every aspect of conducting media relations and explains how to do the work many PR practitioners do every day. Not only does On Deadline reflect the realities of my own professional experience,

but it also brings in the voices of several public relations professionals who give advice in their own words, further breaking down the wall between what we teach in the classroom and what students will experience in their careers. The discussions of ethical issues related to PR, managing international media relations, and the importance of tying PR outcomes to measurable objectives are a bonus that only strengthens the case for *On Deadline* as a must-read for PR students.

Critique

The only weakness I see in *On Deadline* is that I would have liked to see a discussion of the link between media relations and search engine optimization. If public relations professionals consider search engine optimization while conducting media relations (such as incorporating keywords in press releases or developing a link-building strategy), they can play a major role in getting their organizations highly ranked on search engines. Higher search engine rankings in turn help with media relations by positioning an organization as an industry leader. Still, this is more of an oversight than a flaw since search engine optimization practices are not as prominent in the workflow of PR practitioners as all the other topics covered in the book.

Audience

On Deadline is perfect for undergraduates at any level, graduate students looking for a more applied text, entry-level PR professionals, and journalism students who want to better understand the relationship between journalists and PR practitioners. I have used On Deadline (both the current edition and 5th edition) in my upper division PR Strategies and Tactics course since 2015. My students regularly comment that it helps them comprehend the everyday practice of public relations more fully and concretely.

Conclusion

Carole M. Howard, Wilma K. Mathews, and J. Suzanne Horsley

have written the definitive guide to planning, implementing, and evaluating media relations. Packed with real-world tips, examples, case studies, and advice from professionals, *On Deadline* is one of the best resources I have found on media relations.

References

Howard, C., Mathews, W., & Horsley, J. S. (2021). *On deadline: Managing media relations*. Waveland Press, Inc.

Pettigrew, J. & Heflin, K. (2017). Teaching media relationships: What's in the textbooks? *Journal of Public Relations Education, 3*(1), 36-49. https://journalofpreducation.com/2017/05/24/teaching-media-relationships-whats-in-the-textbooks/