2014 Final Report
Planning and Curriculum Innovation for Public Affairs

For the advancement of the Public Affairs Mission across Missouri State University

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II. Proposal Title: Making the Connections: Technical Writing and Public Affairs

III. Summary of Original Proposal

Through quiz questions, an article summary, and annotated bibliography, a survey, and a reflection paper, research was gathered for the purpose of learning if and how students at Missouri State University are assimilating and adopting the Public Affairs Mission as their own. With these assignments, I will look for evidence of an intention by the students to live the mission even after they graduate from the University and move on to their careers.

IV. Outcomes of the Work

Data has not been analyzed or coded yet, but initial findings indicate that there are many students who adopt the Public Affairs Mission early in their time at Missouri State. Others, however, are resistant to it and believe the university should not push this on them. Many participants noted that they did not remember hearing about the Mission until this class. Others had heard about it in GEP (or UHC), where it is usually introduced.

V. Describe how your project moves the goals of the grant forward

My goal has been that my students will learn that the Public Affairs Mission at Missouri State is not something to be experienced within the confines of the MSU campus. It is something they should adopt and live throughout their lives, which will make them a more responsible (and better) citizen no matter where they live or what they do.

VI. How Does Your Work Align and Move Forward the Goals of the Grant

I did a variety of activities and connected already-planned assignments to the Public Affairs Mission. For example,

- We had several in-class discussions about what public affairs is and talked about the mission and the three pillars of the mission.
• I included a question at the end of a reading quiz asking students to define what the Public Affairs Mission is at Missouri State and to list the three pillars.
• An article summary was assigned that was about possible ethics issues in their future line of work. We discussed the ethics issues and how they could be an ethical leader in their future work force.
• The annotated bibliography assignment required two articles about their future career and linked those to the three pillars of the Public Affairs Mission. For example, if they are going to be a physical therapist (PT), they annotated two articles about how a PT could be involved in community engagement, two articles about how a PT could be an ethical leader, and two articles on how a PT could be culturally competent.
• In another reading quiz, there was a question on it asking students to explain how they would assimilate the Public Affairs Mission into their future line of work.
• I gave students a survey, which included (among other items) demographic information, questions about their understanding of the Public Affairs Mission, how they learned about the Mission, and what their opinion of the Mission is.
• Finally, there was a reflection paper assigned at the end of the semester.

The assignment for the reflection paper was handed out to students a week before classes ended.

Throughout the semester, we continued to have class discussions. We began the semester defining the Public Affairs Mission and talking about what the three pillars meant, but as we progressed, I asked students to explain how they might practice public affairs in their future career.

I have collected a lot of data in the form of student writing, and am ready to begin analyzing and coding it. I have already submitted the reflection papers from students to the QIP.

To create greater clarity for faculty and staff, I added to the Tool Kit for teachers that includes suggestions and ideas on how to incorporate the Mission into a classroom, emphasizing that it truly is not additional work. For most faculty, including the Public Affairs Mission does not create additional work. It can be incorporated into what is already being done in the classroom.

VII. Next Steps and Plans for Dissemination

I have received IRB approval and plan to take the data collected and write an article explaining how I incorporated the Public Affairs Mission into my beginning technical writing class. I hope this will show others how easy it can be to incorporate this into any class. Additionally, I think the data collected will give an idea as to how and when students learn about the Public Affairs Mission – and if they adopt it or not.