

Program Review Final Report

Program	166 - Public Relations
Ministry of Training, Colleges, Universities (MTCU) Vocational Standard	70243 - December 1998 (Appendix 1)
Professional Competencies	Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) - Pathways to the Profession (Appendices 1 & 2)
Credential	Ontario College Graduate Certificate (OCGC)
Dean	Piero Cherubini
Associate Dean	Jane Cooper
Program Review Membership	Piero Cherubini, Dean, School of Business and Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Ken Wallis, Associate Dean (Media and Entertainment) Jane Cooper, Associate Dean (Business) Tim Tuck, Coordinator Catharine Ozols, Curriculum Design Carmelinda Del Conte, Research and Planning Analyst Jaspreet Grewal, Course Outline/Program Review Support
Program of Studies	2009/10 (Appendix 3)
Final Analysis Session	Winter 2011
Date of Interim Status Report	Winter 2013
Date of Next Program Review	2017/18
Date Submitted to VPA Office For the Program	January 31, 2013

Associate Dean:



Date: January 28, 2013

For the Vice President Academic:

Dean:



Date: January 28, 2013

Date: _____

Overall Findings by Program Review Component

Program Review Phase	Program Review Component	Met	Partially Met	Not Met	Evidence	
Phase One Curriculum	Course Outlines	✓			CORE	
	Curriculum Mapping Matrix	✓			Appendix 4	
	Framework for Programs of Instruction	✓			Appendix 5	
	Program Advisory Committee	✓			Appendix 6	
	Focus Group	✓			Appendix 7 a & b	
	Curriculum Analysis	✓			Appendix 8	
Phase Two Environmental Scan	Key Performance Indicators	✓			Appendix 9	
	Enrolment	✓			Appendix 10, 11	
	Competitive Analysis	✓			Appendix 12	
	Environmental Scan Notes	✓			Appendix 13	
Phase Three Program Quality and Strategic Initiatives	Quality—Curriculum and Content				Appendix 14	
	Quality—Flexible Delivery					
	Quality—Flexible Operationally					
	Quality—Experiential Learning					✓
	Innovation—Applied Research					
	Innovation—Entre/ Intrapreneurship					
	Sustainability--Curriculum					
	Sustainability--Practices					
	Re-thinking Assessment	✓			Appendix 15	
	PLAR	✓			Appendix 16	
	Learning Plans	✓				
	eLearn	✓				
	General Education	NA				
	Student Feedback on Progress	✓				
Program Quality Analysis	✓			Appendix 17		

Summary of Findings

Introduction

Launched in 2004, Mohawk's Public Relations (PR) Program allows university and college graduates the opportunity to develop public relations skills while attending classes in an intensive, fast-paced schedule of three days a week for 28 weeks. Those with full or part time jobs can, therefore, keep working while pursuing PR studies or do volunteer PR work that contributes to the required field placement hours.

Students work in an environment that is enhanced by exposure to experienced guest speakers and hands-on, real-world activities. To further benefit students, Mohawk College and Brock University have jointly developed the Collaborative Study in Public Relations Program (CSPR). Students can earn both their Honours BA and this Public Relations College certificate in four years.

The Program Review process for this program started in Winter 2010 when course outlines and CLinking were reviewed. Analysis of the data and subsequent phases were completed in the Winter/Spring 2011 semesters. The Program Review Executive Summary was presented to the Program Advisory Committee in November 2011. Some data (e.g. Key Performance Indicators) has since been updated.

Phase 1- Curriculum

During the curriculum mapping process, course outlines were reviewed to ensure they met Mohawk College guidelines. Course learning outcome (CLO) revisions provided the opportunity to streamline the total number of CLO's. This, combined with the discrete nature of each course, resulted in a total of 132 CLO's for the program over two semesters.

Each of the 16 courses was classified as Foundational (6), Specialized (8), or Integrational (2). Course learning outcomes were linked to relevant vocational standards and essential employability skills, and each link was then characterized (CH) by the degree to which it contributed to the graduate's ability to perform the outlined skill:

CH Degree of Contribution

- 1 Minor
- 2 Moderate
- 3 Significant
- 4 Very Significant

The resultant Curriculum Mapping Matrix (CMM) showed that all Vocational Standards (VS) have CLO links from a range of courses in the 2009/10 program of studies in each semester. (It should be noted that the WORK 10081 course data will be added at a later date.) Patterns of emphasis (i.e. # of links to VS01, VS03, VS04, and VS09) relate closely to the core/essential skills that run through the majority of courses in the program of studies such as crafting clear, targeted communication materials, complying with the professional codes of ethics, research, and using technology.

It is judged that CLO Links to *VS11 Develop ongoing strategies and plans to enhance personal and professional development and to promote the development of the public relations profession*, have been under represented in the CMM. WORK 10081, when included in the curriculum analysis, will contribute to VS11 to a very significant degree (4). Students also have opportunities for networking in MCOM 10087 Campaign Presentation, MGMT 10003 Special

Events Planning & Management, and MCOM 10085 Organizational Application where they do work for non-profit agencies. CLO's in these courses will be re-evaluated in 2013, as part of the annual program review process, to determine whether or not they link to VS11, to what degree (i.e. minor, moderate, significant, or very significant), and whether there is a progression of learning from minor to very significant.

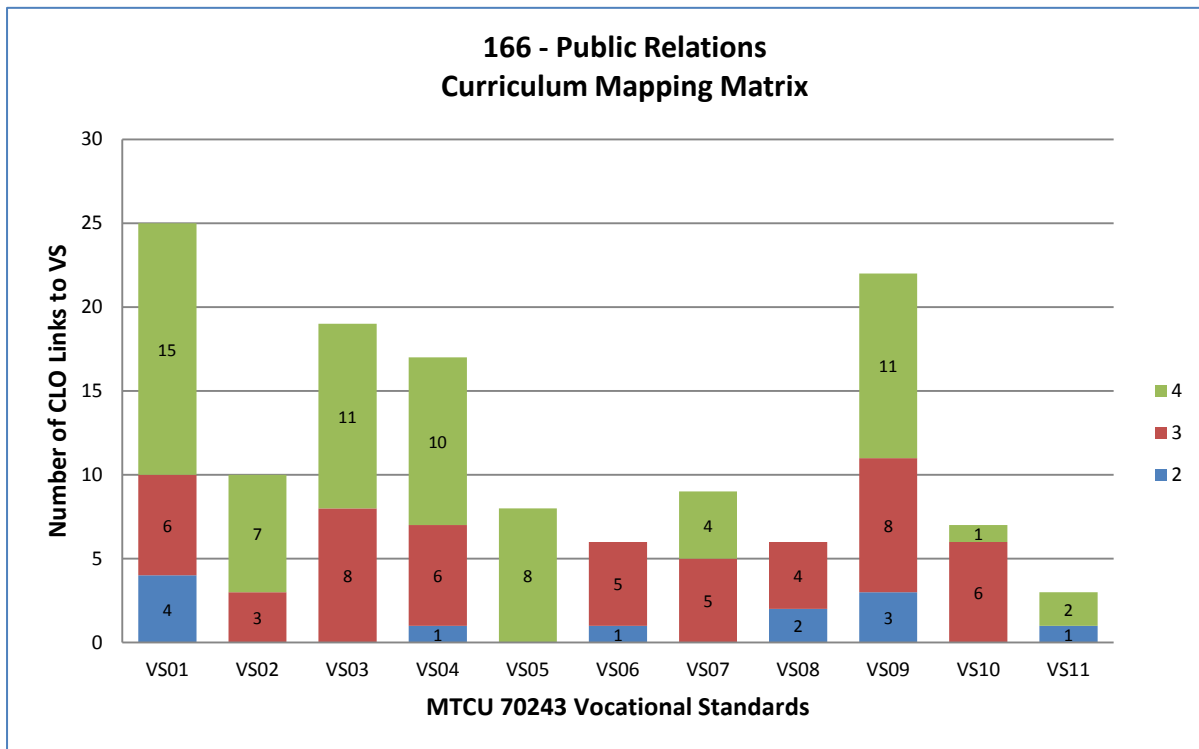


Figure 1 - Links to Vocational Standards

The majority of CLO links to VS (91%) are characterized and linked (Clinked) to VS at a significant (52%) and very significant (39%) level indicating they contribute to the students' ability to accomplish the VS at a significant/very significant degree. There are no CLinks @ 1 (minor level) and few (12 or 9%) @ 2 (moderate level) in this Ontario Graduate Certificate (OGC) program. This is appropriate given that students entering this program have already attained a post secondary credential and are expected to progress to higher levels of learning more quickly. Learning plans and assessment instruments will be evaluated to ensure:

- students have a chance to practice and receive feedback on new concepts early in the course
- learning is appropriately laddered within and scaffolded between courses to ensure student success. (Note: in most cases, students start with low level tasks at the beginning of courses and progress to higher level)

Priority should be given to evaluating ladderings/scaffolding of VS05 *Develop clear and measurable communication objectives and identify techniques to evaluate the achievement of these objectives* which has links only at a very significant level. Assessments in courses with links to a significant number of VS (e.g. MCOM 10003) will be reviewed to validate CLinks.

There are two VS (VS06 and VS08) that have no links at a very significant (4) level:

- VS06 *Adapt to, work within, and influence organizational policies and procedures* has no links at a very significant level (4). VS06 is difficult to attain in a classroom environment, however, there may be more links with the inclusion of WORK 10082.
- VS08 *Develop a project or tactical budget* has no links at a very significant level (4). VS08 is difficult to accomplish at a very significant level since:
 - Not all not-for-profit clients have budgets. LO03 in MGMT 10003 Special Events Planning & Management, 'Execute an event' may, at times, link at a very significant level but this is not always consistent and depends on the client.
 - MCOM 10092 Advertising Introduction has a media planning focus and deals with budgets for only half of the course.

Focus Group Overview

Industry participants like the maturity that post graduate students possess. They stressed that strong writing, grammar, proofreading, and accuracy skills are essential in the Public Relations field. Additionally, graduates need to be able to demonstrate teamwork and relationship building, as well as knowing how to deal with the media. Participants noted that while traditional public relations tools are still relevant, the use of social and online media and computer skills are becoming increasingly important. Students need to be aware of privacy and freedom of information legislation. During the focus group, there was a suggestion that students should be taught to write a Request for Quotation (RFQ), a Request for Information (RFI), get a quote, cost ads, estimate time, and deal with vendors.

Credentials Framework

The Public Relations program meets all the criteria outlined for an OCGC in the Credentials Framework established by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU). It was noted, however, that the Program of Studies totals 483 hours over the two semesters whereas the Credentials Framework states the typical duration for an OCGC is approximately 600 - 700 hours.

(See Appendices 1- 8 for detailed Phase 1 documents.)

Phase 2 - Environmental Scan

At the time of the Environmental Scan, thirteen Ontario Colleges offered OCGCs mapped to MTCU Code 70243, which is the Public Relations program standard. While the majority of programs were titled Public Relations:

- Seneca and Sheridan's programs were Corporate Communications
- Centennial's program was Corporate Communications & Public Relations
- Conestoga's program was Integrated Marketing

Key elements of the curriculum of OCGC Public Relations programs across the province include: various experiential learning opportunities (e.g. field placement, case studies, capstone courses, and client projects), public relations writing, design, digital communications, event management, and media relations. In addition to common threads that run through Public Relations programs to cover vocational outcomes, each college has unique courses within their program of studies:

- Cambrian: Marketing 1 & 2
- Centennial: Business Practice, Project Management, Career Management
- Conestoga: Business Practice, Integrated Marketing Communications, Consumer Research, Portfolio/Capstone
- Fanshawe: Independent Study
- Humber: Public Affairs, Marketing, Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability, Research, Innovative Thinking, Change Management and Communications
- Loyalist: Fundraising
- Mohawk: Crisis Communications, Advertising, Portfolio & Career Development
- Niagara: Research
- Seneca: Research, Government Relations, Investor Relations, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution, Career Management

For Fall 2011, the programs at Centennial, Humber, Loyalist, and Seneca were listed as oversubscribed on OCAS which means they normally do not accept applications after the February 1st deadline. Research showed that total applications and registrations for Humber's program grew significantly in Fall 2011 from previous years and the program was first choice for 53% of applicants. Seneca's program, second largest in Ontario with approximately 90 students, has an optional coop. Centennial has a collaborative agreement with York University.

Applications to the Public Relations program at Mohawk have been fairly consistent since 2008, ranging from a high of 172 in 2008 to a low of 159 in 2010. In 2012, there were 165 applicants to this program. Research conducted in Fall 2011 showed that approximately 1/2 of Mohawk applicants and registrants were from outside the catchment area (usually from Niagara and Sheridan's catchment areas). Although students from Mohawk's catchment apply to other colleges like Humber, Niagara, and Sheridan, more students come to Mohawk's catchment area than leave, resulting in a market gain in applicants and registrants on a yearly basis.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Mohawk's Public Relations program have been consistently high (e.g. 88% overall for 4 capstone questions) for the past several surveys. In the past two KPI surveys (2010/11 and 2011/12), Mohawk's Public Relations program achieved KPI results significantly higher than the provincial, college, and program average for:

- Question 14 (*OVERALL, your program is giving you knowledge and skills that will be useful in your future career*)
- Question 26 (*The OVERALL quality of the learning experiences in this program*)
- Overall Student Satisfaction
- Graduation Rates

(See Appendices 9 - 13 for detailed Phase 2 documents.)

Phase 3 - Program Quality and Strategic Initiatives:

Analysis of courses revealed that students in the Public Relations program have opportunities for differentiated curriculum/content in many of their courses, as well as opportunities for flexible delivery through a variety of online activities. Operational support for the implementation, review, revision, and expansion of flexible and customizable learning options for this program has been positive.

The Public Relations program provides both experiential learning and research opportunities for students. From the use of workplace documents, to case studies, completing applied projects, working with real clients, and participating in real world work experiences, all 16 courses in the Public Relations program provide some opportunity for experiential learning. Students also

develop and use their research skills in 15 of the 16 courses but do not engage in 'pure' applied research activities. They do, however, have several opportunities to do research for real world clients and apply that research when planning campaigns.

All courses in the Public Relations program contain opportunities for students to learn about sustainable financial, social, and (to a lesser degree given the focus of the program) environmental practices. It was noted that the curriculum should be examined to ensure students take into account all three facets of sustainability when developing plans and campaigns. Program faculty will continue to demonstrate and reinforce sustainable practices in all courses in this program, with electronic copies of course outlines and learning plans, electronic submission of assignments, completion of online quizzes, and electronic feedback on student progress. These green practices will increase as more courses move into a more web facilitated or blended format.

With regard to Quality Assurance and Student Success:

- all courses in this program have learning plans
- most have the option for prior learning assessment and recognition
- faculty make extensive use of the online environment to facilitate feedback to students on their progress

A program advisory committee was established in January 2010.

Key Strategic Priorities

Quality 1.1 - Student Success (Differentiated Learning)

Within this section, three different areas (as identified by faculty/student focus groups) were identified for analysis with regard to differentiated learning: Curriculum/Content, Flexible Delivery, and Flexible Operationally.

a. Curriculum/Content

Analysis of courses revealed that the curriculum does provide students with minor/moderate opportunities for differentiated curriculum/content in 11 of the 16 program courses. Very significant opportunities for flexibility in the curriculum are available in the 4 remaining courses: PR Communications Technologies, Campaign Presentation, Special Events Planning and Management, and Field Placement.

b. Flexible Delivery

With the move to greater flexible delivery, all courses have online components, even those courses which are not lecture based. Due to the nature of the program, there is a certain reliance on face-to-face student interaction. In addition, and consistent with the learning outcomes of several of the courses in the PR program, students are required to deliver presentations or participate in role-play exercises based on best-practice industry media training standards. Faculty, however, have introduced many assignments and research projects which support increased online activity around these activities. For example, students are using eLearn to watch and analyse media interviews and to observe proven interview techniques which they can then incorporate into their role-play exercises.

c. Flexible Operationally

At the time of analysis, there was operational support for the implementation, review, revision, and expansion of flexible and customizable learning options for this program.

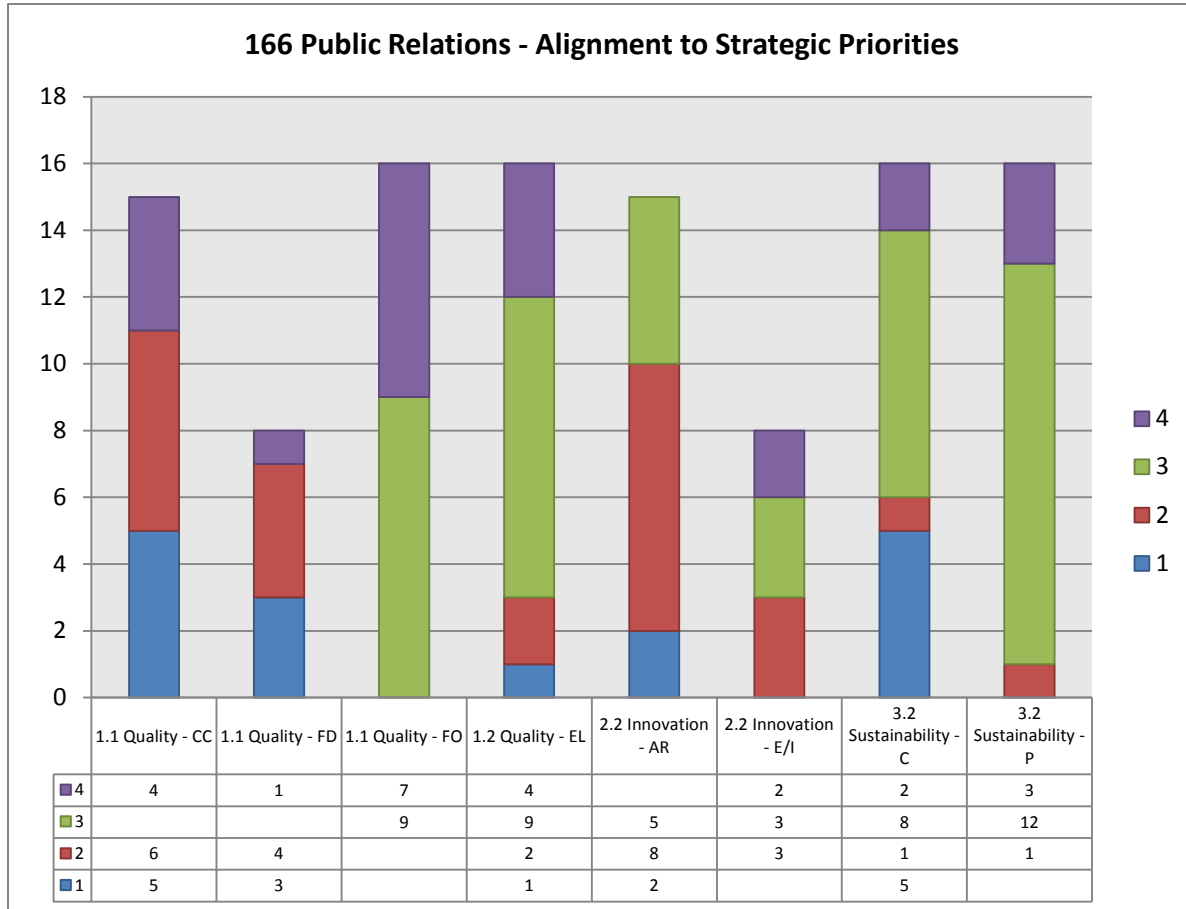


Figure 2 - Links to Key Strategic Priorities

Quality 1.2 - The World is Your Classroom

Mohawk has a very strong culture of providing experiential learning opportunities for students. These opportunities range from the use of workplace documents, to case studies, completing applied projects, working with real clients, and participating in real world work experiences. All 16 courses in the Public Relations program provide some opportunity for experiential learning with the majority of those opportunities (13) contributing to a significant or very significant degree.

Innovation 2.2 - Applied Research

Research provides the foundation for most public relations activities, therefore, students are provided with varying degrees of opportunity to develop and use this skill in 15 of the 16 courses offered. Given the nature of the program as a 1 year graduate certificate, students do not engage in 'pure' applied research activities. Nor are they likely to do so when working in the field. They do, however, have several opportunities to do research for real world clients and apply that research when planning campaigns.

Innovation 2.2 - Entrepreneurship/Intrapreneurship

Few students who enrol in this program seek to pursue entrepreneurial activities upon graduation; most find work in established organizations. Entrepreneurship is also not included in the provincial program standards and is, therefore, not a focus of this program.

However, 8 of the 16 courses provide a range of minor, significant, and very significant intrapreneurial learning opportunities for students:

- very significant learning opportunities occur in classes where the students work with real world clients to develop a special event and present a campaign designed to help those clients improve their organizational capabilities;
- significant learning opportunities occur in classes where the students learn how to train others with regard to media relations and crisis communications.

Sustainability 3.2 - Curriculum

Originally, this portion of program review was intended to focus on 'Greening Mohawk' or 'embedding environmental sustainability principles into programs and practices'. After consultation with program areas, the sustainability concept was expanded to encompass the broader Mohawk priority of 'conducting business to positively impact people, the environment and the economy.'

All courses in the Public Relations program contain opportunities for students to learn about sustainable financial, social, and (likely to a lesser degree given the focus of the program) environmental practices. During the analysis session, it was noted that the curriculum should be examined to ensure students take into account all three facets of sustainability when developing plans and campaigns.

Sustainability 3.2 - Practices

Program faculty demonstrate and reinforce sustainable practices in all courses in this program. Most courses are now facilitated online with electronic copies of course outlines and learning plans. Some courses incorporate the electronic submission of assignments, completion of online quizzes, and electronic feedback on student progress. These green practices will increase as more courses move into a more web facilitated or blended format.

Rethinking Assessment

- **Courses analyzed** - MCOM 10083 Principles of PR. This course has 3 learning outcomes and is linked to 5 of the 6 Essential Employability Skills categories. A total of 9 assessment instruments were used in the course; 5 written assignments and 4 quizzes.
- **Outcomes (Anecdotal Evidence from Workshop & Session)** – Faculty attending found the workshop beneficial. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that, for the course analyzed, all learning outcomes were being assessed to the same degree, which was consistent with the grading scheme assigned to the course outline.
- **Future Plans** - Faculty will continue to “re-think” assessments on a regular basis at the end of each course (i.e. % of grade assigned to a course, technologies being assessed, updating, etc.).

Quality Assurance and Student Success Processes

- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recommendation (PLAR)**
All courses have been assigned PLA types.
- **Learning Plans**
All courses, with the exception of WORK 10081 Field Placement have learning plans developed.

- **eLearn**
All courses are available on eLearn. Faculty report that course materials and resources are available online and that online groups and discussion boards are used extensively, particularly where students are assigned to client projects. Faculty continue to explore ways to enhance eLearn activity through the use of the various online tools and resources that are available.
- **General Education**
General Education courses are not required in an OCGC program.
- **Strategies for Feedback to Students about Progress**
In each course, students received written feedback on individual assignments. Face-to-face feedback is provided in a group setting when returning assignments and individual feedback is available on a per student basis, as requested. Gradebook is used for grade tracking and email is used to provide comments to students as required. Assignments are submitted and graded with feedback via dropbox, as appropriate. Assignments that are done via hardcopy are returned with written feedback.
- **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)**
The PAC was established in January 2010. PAC members are active committee members and also volunteer as guest speakers throughout the year. In addition, they are consulted regularly for feedback on various program issues such as industry needs, trends, and student assignments.

(See Appendices 14-17 for detailed Phase 3 documents.)

Commendations

Commendations highlight success stories and best practices in the Public Relations program and include:

- Brock University and Mohawk College's Collaborative Study in Public Relations Program (CSPR)
- Real world experience working with not-for-profit clients and participating in field placements
- Guest speakers and agency trips
- Compressed timetable (3 days/week)
- Interdisciplinary projects
- KPI survey results

Affirmations

Affirmations are declarations, which may/may not have evidence as a result of program review, that the program faculty identify are areas required to support program quality improvements. The areas identified include:

- Develop additional online resources to enhance flexible program delivery
- Ensure students have a chance to practice and receive feedback on new concepts early in the course and that learning is appropriately laddered within and scaffolded between courses to ensure student success
- Use 'Rethinking Assessment' process in courses taught by more than one faculty member
- Examine curriculum and assessments to ensure students take into account all three facets of sustainability when developing plans and campaigns

Recommendations

The detailed recommendations that evolved from each phase of program review are summarized below. Further details are found in the 5 Year Program Quality Enhancement Action Plan.

- Increase current total program hours (558) to be more in line with Credentials Framework (600-700 hours)
- Develop Course Outline and Learning Plan for Work 10081
- Integrate interdisciplinary student experiences into the program
- Follow up on focus group feedback
- Map program to new Provincial Standards which are currently under review and expected to be delivered in 2013
- Perform yearly environmental scan re: applicants and registrants

5 Year Program Quality Enhancement Action Plan

Objectives	Action Strategies	Timeline	Responsibility	Status
Short Term (within the next 18 months)				
Increase current total program hours (558) to be more in line with Credentials Framework (600-700 hours)	Investigate possible addition of 14 hours in total to Semester 2 courses: Print Design and Application 2 and Advertising Introduction	Fall 2012 POS	Tim Tuck/Jane Cooper	POS hours increased to 609
Develop Course Outline and Learning Plan for Work 10081	Create and input course outline.	May/June 2011	Tim Tuck	Done
Integrate interdisciplinary student experiences into the program	Investigate interdisciplinary projects with School of Business programs	May/June 2011 and ongoing	Tim Tuck and other program faculty	Done - Agency
Move courses to eLearn platform	Move PR Communications Technologies course to Blended Learning.	Complete	Tim Tuck	Done
	Address concerns regarding migrating courses taught predominately by PT faculty to eLearn.	Complete	Jane Cooper	Done - all courses now available on eLearn
	Investigate increased use of blended learning as courses transition to eLearn	Dec 2013	Tim Tuck	All course to have online components
	Use 'Rethinking Assessment' process in courses taught by more than one faculty member (i.e. 1st 7 weeks/2nd 7 weeks), by PT faculty, and as courses are moved to eLearn to promote discussion and ensure alignment of assessments with course learning outcomes.	Ongoing	Catharine Ozols/Tim Tuck and other program faculty	Ongoing
	Examine curriculum and assessments to ensure students take into account all three facets of sustainability when developing plans and campaigns	Complete	Tim Tuck and other program faculty	Done
Follow up on focus group feedback	Look at POS and Business web course to see if there are any opportunities to incorporate web elements.	Complete	Tim Tuck and other program faculty	Done – web design/content
	Reinforce Essential Employability Skills; these are key skills for public relations practitioners.	Ongoing		Ongoing
	Emphasize fact checking, self-editing, and	Ongoing		Ongoing

	proofreading.			
	Promote portfolio development	Complete		Done
	Encourage student involvement in industry chapters.	Complete		Done – guest speakers; industry events
	Integrate social media into Public Relations program.	Complete		Done – MCOM 10124
	Encourage students to take advantage of Alumni and other networking events (e.g. Etiquette Dinner, etc.)	Ongoing		Ongoing
Map program to new Provincial Standards	CLink courses to new Vocational Standards when the Provincial Program Standards are released.	TBD	Catharine Ozols/ Tim Tuck	On hold until new program standards are released
	CLink to Pathways to Professions outcomes.			
	Evaluate learning plans and assessment instruments to ensure students practice and receive feedback on new concepts and that learning is appropriately laddered within and scaffolded between courses to ensure student success.			
	Recognize professional development and networking opportunities during field placements, agency visits, work with non-profit organizations, and in the classroom with guest speakers when Clinking.			
	Validate CLinks			
	Analyze the Curriculum Mapping Matrix			
Investigate possible program name change	Research competitive programs - Naming - Entrance requirement	TBD	Jane Cooper/Carmelinda Del Conte	On hold until new program standards are released
Perform yearly environmental scan re: applicants and registrants	Monitor 1 st choice applicants, market drain, titling, and admission requirements for competitive college programs.	Ongoing	Jane Cooper/Carmelinda Del Conte	Ongoing
	Monitor offers of admission required to attain planned number of registrants for Mohawk's program	Ongoing		Ongoing
Medium Term (within the next 18-36 months)				
Develop an Annual Program Review Process	Utilize the annual program review process created in the short-term plan to monitor	TBD		Pending development of

	program quality.			college-wide annual plan process
Track results from Brock/Mohawk initiative	Enrolments Monitor 'Brock' students/success rates	Ongoing		Ongoing
Long Term (within the next 36-60 months)				
Monitor short-term and long-term program quality enhancements and adjust as required	Utilize Annual Program Review process to monitor program quality enhancements.	To be determined pending outcome of medium term objectives		
	Submit interim program quality report to Program quality area			
	Plan and prepare for Comprehensive Program Review			