

**Communication Department Assessment Report  
AY 2021-2022**

**Summary**

The Communication Department assessed student work in the following courses:

- Public Relations Writing (PURE 105)
- Concepting II: CW/AD Teams (ADVE 325)

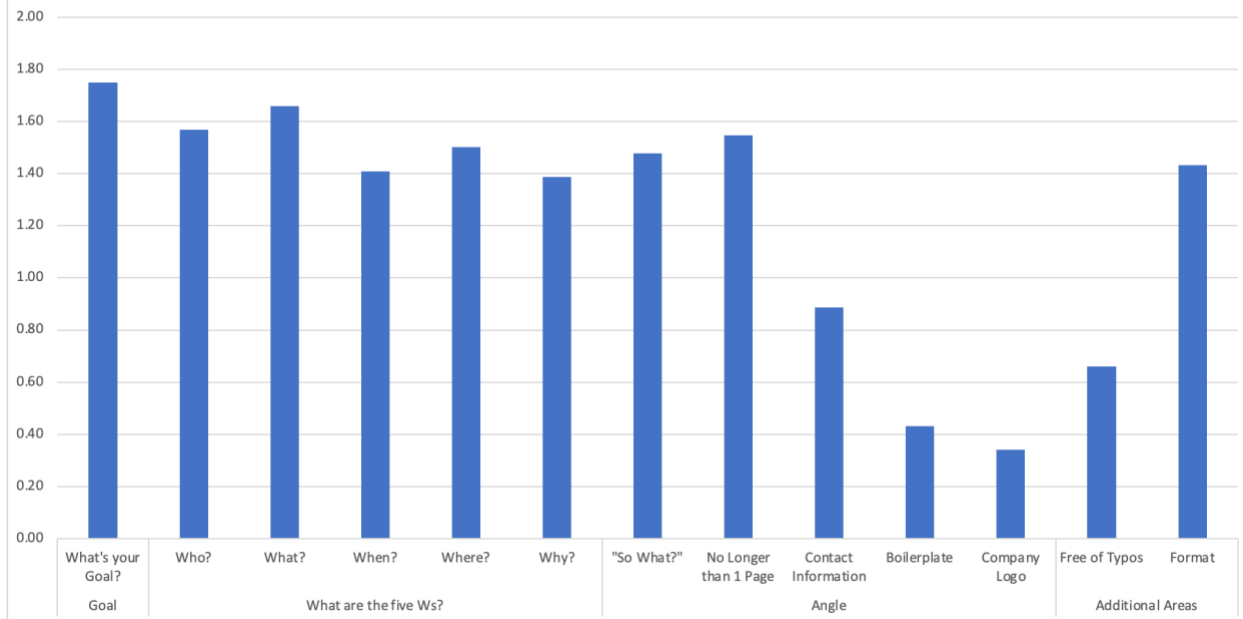
**Public Relations Writing (PURE 105)**

Student work on two assignments in the course were assessed by a panel of two Communications Department faculty. One of the Assignments was a Media Alert; the other was a Press Release. The panel used a rubric that identified the essential elements of each type of writing and assigned 1, .5 or 0 points to the student work (thus, the maximum score in any category would be 2 points. The Media Alert’s rubric contained 13 categories; the Press Release’s rubric contained 23 categories.

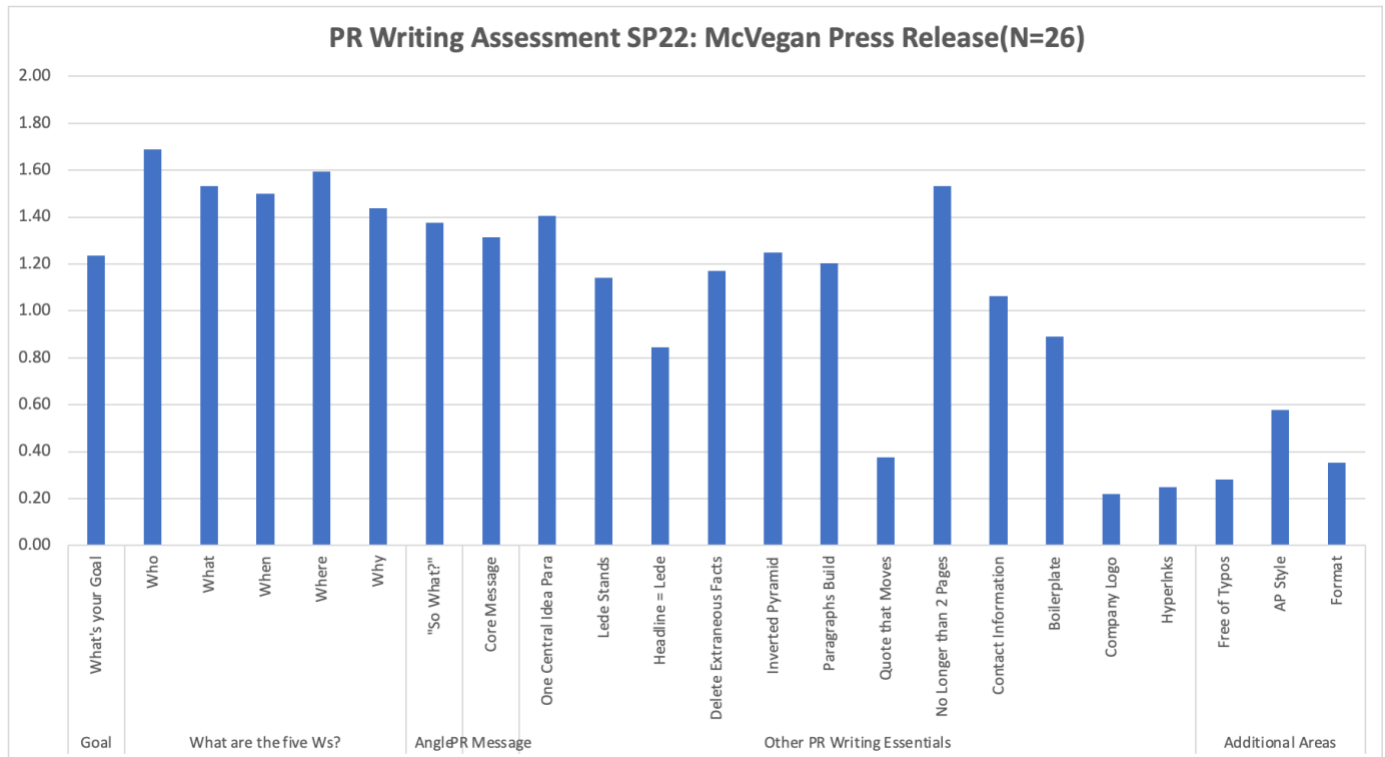
The Results:

<b>Starbucks Media Alert (N=22)</b>		
Goal	What's your Goal?	1.75
What are the five Ws?	Who?	1.57
	What?	1.66
	When?	1.41
	Where?	1.50
	Why?	1.39
Angle	"So What?"	1.48
	No Longer than 1 Page	1.55
	Contact Information	0.89
	Boilerplate	0.43
	Company Logo	0.34
Additional Areas	Free of Typos	0.66
	Format	1.43

PR Writing Assessment SP22: Starbucks Media Alert (N=22)



<b>McVegan Press Release (N=26)</b>		
Goal	What's your Goal?	1.23
What are the five Ws?	Who?	1.69
	What?	1.53
	When?	1.50
	Where?	1.59
	Why?	1.44
Angle	"So What?"	1.38
PR Message	Core Message	1.31
Other PR Writing Essentials	One Central Idea Para	1.41
	Lede Stands	1.14
	Headline = Lede	0.84
	Delete Extraneous Facts	1.17
	Inverted Pyramid	1.25
	Paragraphs Build	1.20
	Quote that Moves	0.38
	No Longer than 2 Pages	1.53
	Contact Information	1.06
	Boilerplate	0.89
	Company Logo	0.22
Hyperlnks	0.25	
Additional Areas	Free of Typos	0.28
	AP Style	0.58
	Format	0.35



In general, student performed strongest in the “Five Ws” over both assignments. For the Media Alert, they were weakest in “Boilerplate” and “Company Logo.” The Logo was also a weak area for the Press Release, in addition to other fairly standard components, such as “Hyperlinks” and “Quote that Moves.” In addition, very few of these assignments scored high on “Free of Typos.’

As part of the debrief, the panel responded to three questions.

### 1. What surprised you about the results?

Panel Member 1:

*Some of the outstanding work submitted as a first draft. I was delighted to see some very creative approaches and attention to detail by the students who performed well. We have some talented students and I'm always happy to see this.*

*The differences faculty members can have in interpreting instruction. The assessment instructors even concluded different things about a few of the instructions on the rubric. If faculty can do this, then of course students will also have different interpretations as well.*

*How long the process took to carefully assess the work. I am always reminded how much work goes into teaching a writing class. It's essential that these classes be kept small so students can get the attention they need and deserve.*

Panel Member 2:

*I was amazed the students did not show a greater understanding of the material and as a group made the same mistakes. Numerous errors were made on what one would think was the more basic requirements.*

## **2. What did not surprise you about the results?**

Panel Member 1:

*We had some near perfect scores and some zeros, and the vast majority in between. It's consistent with results in classes I teach.*

*The difficulty many students had with meeting basic "easy" requirements (logo, boilerplate, contact info, typo-free). I was not surprised as the assignments lacked a clear and simple rubric/checklist and instead were provided lengthy narratives (from which we derived our checklist for this assessment exercise). We know students do not read instructions that are given as lengthy narratives. Professors should adapt their methods to support student success and build their confidence.*

*The lack of attention to detail. This skill is one of the hardest to build in students and why writing assignments must be iterative. Every student should have the opportunity to resubmit and leave the class with portfolio-ready pieces.*

Panel Member 2:

*I was not surprised the students, for the most part, did a fine job with the 5 W's. There was little chance students could avoid proper formatting and avoidance of typos based on the lack of direct feedback.*

## **3. What kinds of implications can you draw from the results for curriculum and pedagogy?**

Panel Member 1:

- *Every instructor should use rubrics*
- *Assessments should happen regularly with the goal to improve pedagogy*
- *Having one faculty member teach both sections of the same course has pluses and minuses*

Panel Member 2:

*In order for the process to click with our students the rubric needs to be constructed for greater understanding and carefully explained. In my estimation, there needs to be some handholding. Meeting individually with the students on more than one occasion to go over the work is critical. This goes right in step with the need to have multiple drafts.*

**Concepting II: CW/AD Teams (ADVE 325)**

In the Teams course, student original advertising campaigns were presented to the faculty member and a panel of industry professionals. The industry professional representation included creatives from an advertising agency Aisle Rocket and the Brand Manager, Shopper Marketing - CPG at Whirlpool Corporation, which is ad agency's client, for the everydrop brand.

One of the notable aspects to this assignment is that Columbia students had access to branded marketing assets such as the logos, fonts, proprietary images, design formats, exclusive die lines for in-store merchandising, brand guide, and more.

And a notable outcome: six students of the sixteen in the class (i.e., over 1/3 of them) were invited to interview for paid internships at the ad firm because of their questions during the briefing session and their presentations. While the number of students who accepted this invitation is unknown – it was at the end of the spring semester when many students already had summer internships lined up – one was hired for it.

The presentations consisted of a set up with insight's drawn from Whirlpool's and the agency's proprietary research as well as the students' independent observations, a statement detailing the creative strategy and proposed marketing program, as well as speculative advertisements, which are traditionally shown to clients during the pitch for a campaign, so the client can pick the campaign direction and elements to use. Specifically, the deliverables were, as explained in the assignment brief:

- [SOCIAL] everydrop brand media assets for Facebook and Instagram, (Choose 2-3):
  - Static
  - Collection
  - Carousel
  - Short-form video (6s-15s)
  - Influencer Partnership
- [AD LOB] everydrop brand ad-like object:
  - Print or Digital
- [RETAILER DISPLAY] everydrop brand in store displays at retailer
  - See here for Dielines
  - Cross-sell opportunity here within Lowe's or another retailer
- [WILD CARD IDEA] everydrop brand:
  - Think outside the box for water filtration. This could include a cross-sell opportunity outside of our typical retailers, an out-of-home idea or a brand act.

A total of seven groups presented and the complete comments from the panel are presented as Appendix A.

Overall, the comments from the three entities (instructor, advertising agency, and the client) were very positive.

Faculty: It was noted that there were a few typographical/language errors, and these are not acceptable. But students were able to incorporate the branded elements into their ads and this was very positive.

Agency: Overall, very favorable comments about the student work. For one group, they noted: "There is something unexpected about the elements (good). Liked the snarky humor - some are spot on and some off, but that's why you pitch a variety of ideas." Another observation was "Copywriting is awesome" and "Constant brand recognition was good."

Client: Again, very favorable comments were shared. Representative comments include "Like ability to do socials in different ways" and "The social tactic is SO GOOD."

## Appendix A: Concepting II Reviewer Comments

### Panel Full Comments (from Canvas):

Kat T and Rachel B

OOH - don't need to show the fridge - show the inside with the filter. Slide 7 (and social) better than slides 5 & 6 (they're too literal to the concept - it's the emotion of the Oasis that matters. Storyboard works for me. How can you expand the OOH to other ideas to show it has legs (i.e., say the same idea in different ways)? Agency: Loved the experiential - but you can (and should) do it anywhere, not just in the Bahamas (i.e., expand the usage of idea). Move the Oasis experiential from the Bahamas to festivals and more. Question: What you create - is it the fridge or what you created that's the relaxing thing. (It should be the creation). First mock up was hard to understand what you were trying to convey - OOH does a good job. Constant brand recognition was good (scattered throughout elements). More campaign focused.

Liam K and George B

Me: Might put Problem / Insight / Solution onto three separate pages. (Every time should be two words and can be cut from social.) Look at thing words. Spot the difference - what if both pictures were the same and the answer is in the clean water and better tasting food is the answer? (Fix word: sunscreen and child stew) Slide 5 is confusing. Add a discussion and/or thank you slide at the end. Agency: Very fun, cheeky and humorous. There is something unexpected about the elements (good). Liked the snarky humor - some are spot on and some off, but that's why you pitch a variety of ideas. Need to make sure social comments are not about everydrop. Cutout style goes with the passive - aggressive tone (but could get pushed out more. It's not on all elements). Copywriting is awesome. Felt very strategic - what you were saying where you were saying it. Great immediate reaction to ads. Perhaps sell-in alts that are softer in tone. Client: Whirlpool corp does not go funny. More upper funnel. Lower funnel needs to explain how it works. (Me: You might want to create some lower funnel items to show how this idea could work.) Great copywriting punches.

Veronica J, Dylan B, and Alfred P

Me: Need more brand on the in-store elements. Flip copy to be more "you" oriented - "Cut brand as part of the sentence just have "Remove 73 toxins from your drink". (Say we, not I when presenting.) Missing bold brand colors. I don't get the adlob - needs to better spell out the idea. Agency: In-store image - flip it, so the toxins are at the top of the image. Loved giving away the water bottles. Liked use of word "fresh" in social ads. Liked how toxins highlighted. If it is blue-and-white, it won't stand out from competition. Think about placement - move over water filter. Can have less copy on it. Six Flags, Disney - can work in water stations at events like fun runs. Client: Liked experiential. Like ability to do socials in different ways - and included static image (like that could do both).

Joshua H and Colton L

Me: Big idea focused on ice and what you can do with it. In-store - put one in the fridge. Might expand beyond just ice. Some designs can be tweaked for better eye-flow. Like that you used the branded template. Agency: Loved elevating the food. Loved the cross-promotion idea. Can also make an influencer pack - kit for shaved ice. Liked that the campaign was results oriented. Liked the influencer involvement. Brought in lots of colors and other branding. Brought in results - "very smart." Brand architecture - great. Client: Liked the association with KitchenAid - give you the finished product. Liked how brought in the color palette and the branding. Said they have to do the drink cart at trade shows and conferences. Trailer can then be branded with all of the logos within the parent company.

Julia K., Karin L., and Auzha V-C



Me: Need payoff line with the adlob. Change OOH to perhaps "here's a long, confusing talk about water." You should want people to read the long text - make it interesting. Still have the filtering to key points. Agency: Loved the progress on the adlob. Loved how you use similar themes in a unique and interesting way. Why not have water wash away the excess words. Liked how the jargon is filtered through everydrop. Adlob was clever. Have filters on shelves near logo on the floor. Wish the colors were a bit more vibrant. Bright. More branded. Can extend to website. Can extend to social media (filtering out noise). Great job taking feedback and moving it along. Client: They give the jargon; we give clarity versus competition. Bring brand in colors. Cut payoff copy in OOH. People read copy - don't wish they won't read it. OOH: Here's a long talk about water filtration - not confusing talk about the brand.

Zachary R. and Saana R.

Agency (Jeff): Great storytelling. Client learned things about the runoff - a good story. Would have like to see more brand - some brand colors (in the lemon). Beautifully organized and shot. Liked the socials - can related to it (wasn't around at the start). Pump up the brand colors in socials (tone feels right). The piece missing in video - what do you do with the water. Keep the journey going a bit more to result (usage). Very arresting in story and visuals. Has emotional weight. Clearly identified a pain point with water - need to also show how everydrop solves the pain point, Enjoyed how took us from where water showed up to it is today. Liked the pop references and how old the pipes. Client: "The social tactic is SO GOOD" Should add more branding in retailer display. End result - more active than just a cup of water - what you can do with clean water.

Rachel R. and Fabian U.

Me: Should be "every day" on page 4 (everyday means something different). Can tweak design of OOF to be more branded (and for design fitness). But like that you employed some of the brand templates. Agency: Liked how team could pivot for presentation, because of location of one team member. Different touchpoints - each works in different ways. Bring brand in more. Loved social - reminded them of Orbit campaign - dirty mouth, clean it up. Filtered comedy. Client: Liked the in-store execution. Experiential - great idea. Social - watch with spelling of the brand / logo use (might seem like a small thing, but it's not). Ali Wong very good choice.