Written Plan Deadline: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 (by 6:00 p.m. – submit to Assignments on D2L); refer to syllabus for other deadlines. NOTE: This deadline gives you a short window of time following your final presentation to make minor edits to your plan, if you deem it necessary.

The purpose of the public relations campaign assignment is to have students demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of how to create a comprehensive public relations plan for a client. Students will work with a team on behalf of a client to develop a robust, strategic, measurable and actionable strategic communications plan.

Through this assignment, students will think critically, creatively and independently by analyzing the planning principles applied to the management of a PR campaign.

Students will use strategic public relations planning and research techniques to develop a strong relationship with a client and to construct a portfolio-worthy communications plan for that client.

Throughout the development of the campaign, students will conduct peer reviews/critiques of others’ work, report progress to the instructor frequently through individual meetings, and deliver four professional-grade presentations regarding the adopted client.

Upon completion of the assignment, each student will have served as a presenter, a researcher and a member of a team that will author a comprehensive campaign.

This course represents an opportunity to bring together everything you’ve learned through your coursework in the program, including (but not limited to) writing, research methods, strategy and visual communications.

Guidelines

Written Plan Guidelines

The comprehensive plan will include various components of a written campaign plan, as presented in the texts and discussed in class. Specifically, the plan will include the following elements:

- Executive Summary
- Situation Analysis (SWOT analysis, problem statement, key publics, research statement)
- Research (primary and secondary)
- Goals and Objectives
- Strategies and Tactics
- Timeline and Budget
- Evaluation and Contingencies
- Appendices/Promotional Pieces
Client Selection (refer to guidelines distributed in class)

Students must consider the following:

☐ The organization’s need. Does this client demonstrate a need? Will you have enough work to complete your project? One of the goals of this project (and of the course) is to help the community. Keep this in mind as you make a selection.

☐ The organization’s publics. While you may not know exactly what need(s) your client may have at this time, you should do some background research before selecting a client to identify its mission, goals, objectives and publics. Who does the client serve? This is important because your campaign will focus on your client’s publics (target audience), who often drive your campaign strategy.

☐ Communication. You must maintain constant, two-way communication with your client throughout the semester. You are expected to communicate with your client on a weekly basis (at minimum). One of the meetings will be the presentation of your work at the end of the semester during our class meeting session on Tuesday, December 13. Your client will need to be present (or available via Skype) during that session, so please make your client aware of this requirement at the beginning of the semester. You are expected to keep your client updated of your progress as you develop the campaign plan. Your client’s feedback about the quality of your campaign, your final presentation, your professionalism, your ongoing communication efforts, and your level of responsiveness will determine a portion of your grade.

☐ You may choose to work with a nonprofit organization, a for-profit organization, government agency or even a viable home-based business. Keep in mind that our goal is to help the community. Also, be mindful that your team will need to submit a rationale for the client selection, which will need to demonstrate that your client: (1) exists and is legitimate and (2) has identifiable challenges that warrant your campaign. Client proposals are due on Tuesday, September 20 by the end of class. Once approved by the instructor, your client consent form is due on September 20 at the start of class.

NOTE: Please refer to the client selection criteria instructions/guidelines for restrictions on client selections.

1. Executive Summary (5 points)

Much like an abstract, the executive summary provides the reader with an overview/summary of the plan. The summary should be a brief synopsis outlining the problem(s) or opportunity and should concentrate on only the most salient points and recommendations. This is the first section of your written plan. The summary should be no more than 1-2 full pages in length.

2. Situation Analysis (15 points)

The situation analysis represents everything you know about the problem or opportunity that affects your client. The analysis includes the following components:

Client Information
The organization’s mission, vision and goals, history, service(s) offered, Personnel, publics and other relevant background information for the campaign must be provided.

Remember: the organization’s mission forms the basis for strategic planning. All elements of the campaign plan must relate to the client’s mission.
**Problem or Opportunity Statement**

The problem or opportunity statement is the foundational document that guides the communication plan. It clearly identifies the key elements of the issue or opportunity and how (and why) it affects the organization’s ability to fulfill its mission. It serves as the justification for your campaign. The problem statement should be concise (approximately 18-25 words in length) and should address the six key elements discussed in our lectures (refer to Chapter 2 in the text).

**SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis will explain the challenges and/or opportunities that exist within the organization and its environment. The analysis should provide a detailed “what’s happening” overview that aids in developing a thorough understanding of the problem, the relevant publics and the environment. Your familiarity with the organization, its publics, and specific details about the problem or opportunity should be evidenced in this section. The SWOT analysis will identify relevant publics and, most importantly, a discussion of opportunities that may help solve the identified problem (or opportunity) and the challenges that could pose barriers. In addition to a thorough investigation of the problem, the situation analysis should comment on its implications, identify possible consequences if no action is taken (how it affects the client) and provide guidance for next steps. Your analysis, suggestions and conclusions must be supported by research.

**Key Publics**

The target audience(s) must be clearly identified and justified. Why is/are the group(s) relevant? How is each group affected by the problem? Provide specific information about your segmented audience(s) and the relation to and (potential) influence on the client.

**NOTE:** Students are required to submit a draft of a completed situation analysis for instructor review. *(Due: Thursday, September 29, 2016)*. The situation analysis will include all components in this section. In addition, a brief overview of research (client interview, primary research plan, and secondary research) will be included for guidance.

**NOTE:** Actual copies of questionnaires for the survey and data analysis are not expected at this point. For the research component, please see the information in the section below and please note the IRB application deadlines on the syllabus.

**3. Research (20 points)**

Detailed information about your research will be included and evidenced in this section. Both primary and secondary research will be conducted and included to support your problem statement and analyses. Research will include, at minimum, an interview with your client contact(s), the design, implementation, and analysis of a survey (using SurveyMonkey) with target audience(s), and the use of secondary research. Your narrative should include key results and outcomes from primary research that supplement your analysis (as analyzed using SPSS). You will be required to obtain IRB approval for your primary research. Copies of your interview and survey questions and responses should be included in your appendices. Secondary research must support the campaign focus. Citations (APA style) are required and should be documented throughout the written plan and as a separate references sheet at the end of the plan.
4. **Goals and Objectives (10 points)**

Proper construction and execution of goals and objectives are critical to a campaign’s success. Each goal and objective must be clearly outlined and relatable to the organization’s mission and goals, as well as the problem statement. Goals provide the direction for your campaign; objectives indicate where you want to end up at the end of the campaign. Goals must be quantifiable; objectives must be measurable and deadline-oriented. (Remember: objectives drive evaluation.) Both goals and objectives are simple statements that indicate desired outcomes.

5. **Strategies and Tactics (10 points)**

The overall strategy for the campaign plan must be identified. Additional related strategies should also be identified. The strategy represents the overall plan of action that will be taken to implement the campaign. It will indicate how you plan to accomplish or complete the goals and objectives. The strategy or strategies should include an overview of communications activities that will be implemented to achieve your stated goals and objectives. What message(s) will you distribute, to whom, and through what medium(s)?

Include specific tactics that outline the details of the plan. Tactics are the tasks that must be accomplished to achieve a stated objective. Tactics should identify the task, the parties responsible for completing the task and the deadline(s) associated with each task. Tactics must be specific and should include the development of specific communication pieces (e.g., brochures, logos, public service announcements). **You must develop and include at least two communication pieces for inclusion in your appendices.** Tactics must be convincing and compelling.

6. **Timeline and Budget (5 points)**

A strong campaign plan is always accompanied by a budget for approval. The budget will clearly outline staff time and out-of-pocket expenses for plan implementation. A realistic timeline and budget must be constructed for the implementation of the campaign. When will the tasks be completed? What is the estimated cost associated with each task? How much time is needed for each task? From what source(s) will funds be generated to implement the plan? Provide a detailed breakdown of the information above, including an estimate of the total cost and time needed for plan implementation. **Suggestion:** include a timeline and a chart/table that outlines budgetary items. Include a brief narrative that provides justification for your timeline and budget. Keep your client’s resources and bottom line in mind when developing this section.

7. **Evaluation and Contingencies (10 points)**

A strong campaign plan or proposal addresses how results will be assessed. Evaluation requires one to revisit the goals, objectives, strategies and tactics of a plan to determine success. How would one measure the success of the campaign? Include specific evaluation methods and contingencies for each objective. How would one measure each objective to determine success? Make sure you are assessing key elements that are included in your objectives. Contingencies should address the “what if’s” – what would one need to do if the goals and objectives were not met? What would need to be accomplished and/or changed to strengthen the plan for the “next time?” What tools should be used to measure the success of the campaign? Your research methods (as part of summative research) will be evidenced in this section.

**NOTE:** This is a proposal. You are not required to complete the evaluation phase for the campaign; rather, you are including specific methods for evaluation that your client (or another party) should follow upon implementation of the campaign.
8. **Appendices/Promotional Pieces (10 points)**

Include appropriate appendices in your plan. Appendices will include the two communication pieces (logos, publication pieces, brochures, training materials, public service announcements, etc.) that you develop for the campaign.

Appendices will also include interview and survey questions that you developed as part of your research. You are not required to include your data analysis file, but please be prepared to submit it upon request. You may also include relevant secondary research for reference.

**Formatting/Citations (10 points)**

- APA style (title page, table of contents, proper citations, running head, etc.)
- Double-spaced, 12-point font, one-inch margins (on all sides)
- Citations (APA style) should be included within the document (as in-text citations, where necessary) and on a separate “References” page

**Spelling/Grammar/Mechanics (5 points)**

- Students are expected to submit top-quality work that has been thoroughly proofed for errors. Points will be deducted liberally for work that contains spelling and grammatical errors.

**Submission Guidelines**

- Each team is required to submit one paper copy of the completed plan in a professional/bound format. This will be presented to the client at the end of the semester (in class during the final presentation on Tuesday, December 13).
- Each team will submit a PDF of the campaign plan on D2L. This is due on Tuesday, December 13, by 6:00 p.m. Please submit your PDF file to the D2L Dropbox. All files should be merged into one PDF file. Do not submit several documents.
- Late submissions will not be accepted.
Evaluation

Content ............................................................................................................................................ ___/85

Executive Summary ...........................................................................................................................(___/5)

Situation Analysis .............................................................................................................................(___ /15)

(includes client information, problem/opportunity statement,
SWOT Analysis and key publics)

Research (client interview, primary, secondary) .............................................................................(___/20)

Goals ................................................................................................................................................(___/5)

Objectives .........................................................................................................................................(___/5)

Strategies ..........................................................................................................................................(___/5)

Tactics ................................................................................................................................................(___/5)

Timeline and Budget .........................................................................................................................(___/5)

Evaluation and Contingencies ............................................................................................................(___/10)

Appendices (research questions; two promotional pieces) ............................................................(___/10)

Formatting/Citations/Submission (APA Style) ....................................................................................(___/10)

Spelling, Grammar, Mechanics .........................................................................................................(___/5)

Total ...................................................................................................................................................(___/100)