

# **Pathways to a Program: An Examination of Public Relations Education programs in Canada**

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## **Abstract**

In light of the continued debate on Public Relations education and the discussion on professionalism, this study examined the current state of Public Relations education in Canada. The sample used consisted of the programs listed on the Center for Education's list of College, University Programs & Academia on the CPRS website. The CPRS *Pathway to the Profession* (2011) was used as a template to analyze current programs. Findings indicate an overall strong match for Pathway 1, the Technical Pathway, a weaker match for Pathway 2, the Career Pathway and little or no match for Pathways 3 or 4, the Management Pathway and the Leadership Pathway.

Findings are discussed in terms of how they related to the main characteristics of professionalization. Also explored is how they contribute to the Public Relations role within the Senior Management Function.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Public relations (PR) is a growing profession. Globally, academics are reporting the state of PR in their respective countries by highlighting the increased number of professionals, the increased number of PR education programs, the increased number of students taking PR courses, or all three (DiStaso, Stacks, & Botan, 2009; Chung and Chow, 2012). Linked to the economic growth and increased complexity of an organization's global relationships, PR is still fighting for its place as both a profession and for access to senior management. Education, or a lack thereof, could be the common link between what turns 'a practice' into a 'profession,' which in turn lends enough credibility to address the debate on where PR should be situated within an organization.

Surprisingly, given the importance education plays in establishing professionalization, Canadian academics have paid little attention to micro details and have chosen instead to study, and recommend changes, at the macro level. That is, Canadian studies have focused on the macro level, or the abstract view, of what PR education *should* look like or what qualifications people *should* have to enter into the field. While those studies have created very valuable theories into the opportunities around professionalization, they have not studied in-depth what the environment currently looks like.

Framed in the on-going debate on the professional status of PR, this research examines the current state of PR education in Canada and the implications of this for the debate around PR's access to the senior management.



## **The Research Question**

“Public relations education in the United States reflects the field as a whole in that it is continuing the high-growth patterns of the last two and a half decades” (DiStaso, Stacks, & Botan, 2009, p. 254).

“Since Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) first began to explore standardizing of curriculum and program outcomes in the 1980s, there has continued to be a wide proliferation of Public Relations (PR) and Communication Management (CM) education programs” (Canadian Public Relations Society, The National Council on Education, 2011, p. 5).

Public Relations is an applied discipline and, as the quotes above make clear, growth in the practice of PR has led to a growth in the practice of PR education. It is now one of the most rapidly growing academic fields in communication. Two or three decades ago, fewer than a dozen PR degree programs existed in the United States. Today, more than three hundred US schools offer a PR program (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 375). The growth in the practice of PR and the growth in the availability of PR education programs are linked to a move to professional status.

Within the practice of PR, the call to become a recognized profession has been discussed widely since 1968 (Meyer & Leonard, 2014). Prominent in this debate has been the work of James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) who proposed four characteristics of professionalism: a body of knowledge, a code of ethics, specialized educational training, and accreditation (Meyer & Leonard, 2014; Niemann-Struweg & Meintjes, 2008; 2008; Pieczka, 2000; Sha, 2011). While all four characteristics have been discussed frequently

in the literature with various combinations and additions made, the role of PR education has been a core element associated with professionalization (Meyer & Leonard, 2014).

This focus on education in North America can be seen in two major reports on PR education. In the US, the Commission on Public Relations Education released a report, *The Professional Bond: Public Relations Education for the 21st Century* (2006). In Canada, the National Council on Education, an arm of the Canadian Public Relations Society, released its report in 2011, *Pathways to the Profession: An Outcomes Based Approach towards Excellence in Canadian Public Relations and Communications Management Education*. The titles of both reports indicate how strongly the belief is that PR education is linked to the professional status of PR. Both of these reports focus on what *should* be taught in PR programs, however, they do not look at what *is* being taught. What is being taught has received little to no research attention, especially in Canada. As PR education is expressed as playing such a central role in defining the professional status of PR, this gap in the literature presents an opportunity to contribute to the discussion in a new and meaningful way. By studying and comparing the composition of education programs in Canada at the undergraduate level, this research helps to close the gap by providing a view of the current landscape in Canada. The broad question for my proposed research then is: what does public relations education in Canada look like in 2014?

In addition to providing recommendations on the ideal courses required for postsecondary programs in PR, the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) designed its Pathways to help educational institutions establish their curriculum. Drawing on its unique position of having membership from both working-level professionals and

academics, CPRS worked to find a balance that provided employers with the skills required for employment while still striving to create an ethical, theory-based profession. “Pathways to the Profession” attempted to establish benchmarks for a CPRS certification program through providing core programming required for various pathways into the public relations profession.

According to the CPRS website:

The Pathways recognition program is based on a review of a program's alignment with the CPRS Pathways to the Profession®, a guide to public relations (PR) and communications management (CM) curriculum in Canada. Pathways to the Profession® outlines what, as determined by CPRS, should be included in PR and CM education programming in Canada and as such, will form the basis of how programs will be recognized by the National CPRS. (website address)

The themes outlined in the CPRS report reflect common threads in the academic literature, such as the increasing internationalization of the field and the need for standardized ethics. This report points to structures and proposed curricula that can help standardize the profession to aid in a process of professionalization. However, there has not been a comprehensive study that has looked at the current structures and curricula of PR programs in Canada. As the current landscape of PR Education is unknown, the degree to which Canadian Institutions reflect the pathways outlined by CPRS is also unknown. Before we can change a system, we need an unbiased, unfunded, academically grounded view into the systems creating and educating practitioners in that field. While studies like those completed by CPRS and PRSA are extremely valuable and insightful,

they could present a bias specifically towards the importance of recognition. This leads to the question for the proposed research: How do the educational programs compare to the pathways recommended by the CPRS report on *Pathways to the Profession*?

### **The Researcher**

I do not come to this research as a dispassionate, unbiased outsider. I graduated with a Bachelor of Public Relations and a Certificate in Marketing from Mount Saint Vincent University in 2009 and am currently completing a Masters of Arts in Communications from the same institution. I have worked for the Federal Government in various communication roles since 2009, including Issues Management, Ministerial Events, Media Relations and Internal Communications. My position as a researcher is an insider in the profession. The experiences I have gained as both a PR student and a PR practitioner have helped shape all aspects of this thesis and I believe made me well suited to examine undergraduate public relations education in Canada.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Professionalization**

“The question of whether public relations is a profession or a craft has been debated widely for almost two decades” (Sriramesh, 2006, p. 3). According to Madga Pieczka (2000), “in public relations, the use of the term professionalism is normally linked to the expression of a need to improve the occupational standing” (p. 212). Andrea Meyer and Anné Leonard (2014) define professions as “being set apart from other career paths by their status and public respect which allow them a proportionate degree of autonomy in decision-making” (p. 2). This call for professionalization can be seen around the world. Academic bodies from the United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Taiwan, Mexico, Canada, the US, Australia and countries in Europe, are all weighing in on the issue and trying to find the solution to the very complex problem (Daymon & Hodges, 2009; Gupta, 2007; Kirat, 2006; Niemann-Struweg & Meintjes, 2008; Wu & Taylor, 2003). A key factor across the research is that the growth of public relations is linked to the economic growth of the country.

For PR, the fight to become a profession is connected to its turbulent and sometimes unethical past. Many scholars “agree that it is important for public relations to gain professional status because that would give credibility and reputation to the industry, increase the accountability and credibility of practitioners, enhance the quality of work produced by practitioners, and give practitioners greater opportunities to contribute organizational decision making” (Sriramesh, 2006, p. 4). Professionalization is often linked to four characteristics: a body of knowledge, a code of ethics, specialized educational training, and accreditation (Meyer & Leonard, 2014; Niemann-Struweg &

Meintjes, 2008; Pieczka, 2000; Sha, 2011). My research examines specialized education training, which might lead to accreditation, a Canadian context.

### **Public Relations Education**

Academic literature about public relations education can be separated into four categories. First, there are broad recommendations about how programs should be structured. Second, there are articles that speak to current design of PR programs in post secondary institutions. In addition, there are many articles that review student perspectives of the field of PR and those that explore the pedagogy of how to teach the actual courses. These will not be reviewed for this thesis, as I am more concerned with the structure of the program and the courses required for graduation from the program.

### **What Should PR Education Look Like?**

As I have already introduced above, there are two prominent reports on what PR education should look like in North America: *The Professional Bond* (2006), and *Pathways to the Profession* (2011).

The first report, *The Professional Bond* (2006) was published by the Commission on Public Relations Education (CPRE). “This report, like earlier reports of the Commission on Public Relations Education, presents recommendations for public relations undergraduate and graduate education” (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006, p. 3). It is based on “five ‘waves’ of research” (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006, p. 5). Of these five ‘waves’, four were surveys and one a set of interviews. The surveys were conducted with: PR practitioners and educators on the

state of the PR curriculum, the leaders of PR firms on their perception of the value of PR education, faculty advisors to the Public Relations Student Society of America about internship programs and program heads on the growth and expansion of PR education. The interviews were conducted with senior practitioners and educators on trends in PR practice. From this research the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) identified essential course content for majors in public relations:

- Writing and speaking skills,
- The fundamentals of public relations,
- Strategic thinking skills,
- Research skills,
- Planning and problem-solving skills,
- Ethics,
- The fundamentals of how organizations operate,
- Liberal arts and sciences, and
- Internship or practicum (p. 20).

The CPRE (2006) also recommend five program areas that should make up a major in PR:

- Introduction to public relations (including theory, origin and principles);
- Public relations research, measurement and evaluation;
- Public relations writing and production;
- Supervised work experience in public relations (internship);
- An additional public relations course in law and ethics, planning and management, case studies or campaigns.

The Canadian version of *The Professional Bond* (2006) is the Canadian Public Relations Society's *Pathways to the Profession* (2011). *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) was published by the CPRS National Council on Education, whose mandate is "to develop guidelines and a clear overview that – from a professional association's perspective – reflected what was required in programs that would in turn reflect current practice" (p. 212). Unlike the US report (2006) that recommended nine essential course contents and a core of five courses that would define the minimum for a PR major, they found that developing one set of standards impossible because of the diverse nature of programs offered and the "unique nature of the current slate of programs along with the independent decision making incorporated by the respective institutions which offer them" (p. 212). Instead, they appear to have closely followed the approach of the UK Public Relations Educational *Trust Matrix* that was "designed to show the skill and knowledge base of the professional from entrant to senior practitioner" (Rawel, 2002, p. 72) and the Public Relations Institute of South Africa's *Port of Entry* (Rawel, 2002).

What the CRPS (2011) proposed was a series of pathways into the profession based on "an integrated program planning model that includes an emphasis on program outcomes along with recommendations for a course framework" (p. 212). The six pathways described are: Technical Pathway (Pathway 1), Career Pathway (Pathway 2), Management Pathway (Pathway 3), Leadership Pathway (Pathway 4), and Scholar Pathway (Pathway 5) (p. 223).

The pathways can be considered levels. Technical Pathways programs are typically one to two year certificate or diploma programs and are aimed at providing basic skills in PR and communications management (CM) (Canadian Public Relations



Society, The National Council on Education, 2011, p. 13). The next level, the Career Pathway, provides a deeper understanding of PR or CM that comes from a four-year undergraduate degree (Canadian Public Relations Society, The National Council on Education, 2011, p. 14). In level three, the Management Pathway, learners usually have experience in PR or CM and are looking to advance career aspirations through professional association accreditation programs like CPRS (Canadian Public Relations Society, The National Council on Education, 2011, p. 16). The fourth level is the Leadership Pathway and is geared towards those already in management positions, but who wish to take on a more senior role by learning more in-depth skills. The fifth level is the Scholar Pathway. This pathway is for individuals who seek to explore public relations on an academic level.

The course framework developed by CPRS (2011) outlines recommendations for courses at each level (p. 12). It presents four key areas to guide program development:

- “Public Relations Theory and Practice provides context for models, research and theory that supports the profession.
- Management Theory and Practice incorporates PR and CM into organizational structure and strategy.
- Personal and Group Competencies speaks to ways of work and skills sets required in the management of self.
- Applied/Integrative Practice reflects how theory is applied, either in the classroom with “real world” experiences or through external opportunities, including projects and work experiences” (p. 11).

Regardless of the pathway chosen, CRPS suggests that the following values should be reflected in all programs and practitioners:

- Ethical practice,
- Strategic practice,
- Mutual benefit,
- Leadership and engagement, and
- Continuous learning (p. 11).

The Pathways document is intended to be used as a “framework for the decision-making” on program development or review (Canadian Public Relations Society, the National Council on Education, 2011, p. 12) and a yardstick to “recognize programs and support learners” (Canadian Public Relations Society, The National Council on Education, 2011, p. 12).

While the two reports are on the same topic, they differ in their style and outcomes. This could be as a result of the difference between PR education in Canada and the US (Wright, 2011). According to Wright (2011), “the growth and development of university-based education within the traditional professions of medicine, law and clergy is extremely similar between Canada and the USA [but] such is not the case with education for public relations” (p. 327). He attributes this to the different history of development of PR education that has resulted in it being offered through a broader range of institutions and within institutions. This is acknowledged early in *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) in the statement that “the project began by looking at requirements for curriculum standards but it quickly became apparent that PR education in Canada is offered in diverse ways within many autonomous institutions” (p. 212).

Both reports address how the “practice of public relations [is] attempting to become the profession of public relations” (Bivins, 1993). The *Professional Bond* (2006) shows this clearly in the first paragraph of the report where it states that it is intended not just to make curriculum recommendations but also to “demonstrate, facilitate and encourage the kind of linking of public relations education and practice that is the hallmark of any profession” (p. 5). CPRS has already invested heavily into the notion of professionalization as is demonstrated by both their accreditation program and their commitment to educational studies such as *Pathways to the Profession* (2011). This strengthens the argument that professional organizations and academics are looking at the notion of professionalization.

The essential courses of *The Professional Bond* (2006) and the course framework of *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) are consistent with academic literature on professionalization that call for PR professionals to have a standardized education that includes areas like ethics and that focuses not only on teaching technical skills, but also strategic or managerial skills. As such, both offer possible templates against which to evaluate current PR programs. As the context of this thesis is educational programs in Canada, and the *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) is the more recent of the two documents, it offers the most relevant template to examine current PR programs in Canada.

Both reports also identify other factors that should be present in PR educational programs. In the case of *The Professional Bond* (2006) these are themes that characterize the development of PR over the decade preceding the report that need to be reflected in the PR curriculum: strategic emphasis, internationalization of the practice, the importance

of diversity, an essential emphasis on ethics and social responsibility, and increased questions about curricular and structural independence on some campuses (Commission on Public Relations Education, 2006, p. 14). For *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) they are stated as values that should be reflected in all programs: ethical practice, strategic practice, mutual benefit, leadership and engagement, and continuous learning. What is common across these factors is the emphasis on ethical practices and on strategic/management practices. These again are reflected in the academic literature, but seldom studied at the institutional level. Given the amount of time that has passed since the reports were published, it is important to see if these characteristics are currently present in PR education programs in Canada.

### **Current PR Program Design**

Since the publication of *the Professional Bond* (2006) and *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) there have been studies examining the content of PR programs, however, none of these have looked directly at Canadian PR programs. They have been mostly United States-centric, with a tendency to focus on the United States (US), comparisons between US and other countries or focused on a single area of the curriculum.

Examples of research that have focused on a single area are the studies on ethics education in global PR curricula and writing requirements in US PR programs. Lucinda Austin and Elizabeth Toth (2011) conducted a content analysis of English Language websites from 218 schools in 39 countries, excluding the US. They found that “public relations ethics is not taught in most countries globally as an independent course” (p.

509). Overall, 37 percent of the 218 websites surveyed had an independent PR ethics course. For the Canadian programs viewed (n =11), 64 percent had independent ethics courses. There was no indication of which 11 institutions were used.

Three studies have done content analysis across the broader PR programs. Gisela Gonçalves, Susana de Carvalho and Celma Padamo (2013) conducted a qualitative content analysis of PR programs of BA and Master's programs in Portugal. The website content of 14 BA programs was analyzed. They found that only two of the BA programs had the five courses recommended in *The Professional Bond*, as part of their program of study.

The other two studies are more directly related to the proposed study. Wonjun Chung and Jinbong Choi (2012) examined professionalism in PR pedagogy through a content analysis of selected PR programs in the US, UK and Republic of South Korea (RSK). They asked the following questions:

RQ1: What is the current status of PR curricula in the United States, United Kingdom and South Korea? How does each curriculum vary among the countries?

RQ2: How can the effort toward professionalism be characterized in the PR curriculum of the United States, United Kingdom and South Korea? Are the curricula more theoretical, skill based or practical? (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 378).

Using a sample of 100 randomly sampled universities from the US, 35 from the UK and 40 from RSK, they conducted a content analysis on the websites of the selected institutions. They found differences between curriculum in the three countries with the

US offering “the most balanced PR education while the United Kingdom focuses on theory and Korea focuses on skill learning” (p. 386). This is attributed to the different histories of the development of PR education, with the UK having a historical tradition of “theoretical business, marketing and management perspectives” (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 385), Korea a “new and growing academic field and as a primary undeveloped area” (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 385), and the US a “crucial center of PR theory and research, advanced technology and media systems“ (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 386). They also argue that PR education in each country is not yet fully developed enough to teach an ideal version of professionalism” (Chung & Choi, 2012, p. 386) citing a lack of PR specific international courses, new media technology courses and ethics courses as problem areas.

Jinbong Choi (2012) examined the general requirements, core PR courses, program requirements and optional courses of PR curriculum of 44 US colleges that had a PRSSA chapter. This was done through a content analysis of the websites of these institutions. Findings indicate that PR programs fall under either a Department or School of Journalism and Mass Communication (64 percent) or a Department or School of Communication Studies (36 percent), and that 91 percent of the programs went by the name of Public Relations and 9 percent by the name of Strategic Communications. The most prominent courses were principles of public relations (offered by 77 percent), public relations writing (offered by 57 percent), public relations campaigns (offered by 55 percent), public relations research (offered by 41 percent), public relations cases (39 percent) and crisis communication (11 percent). In terms of degree requirements, Chou (2012) found that almost all “required students to take an introduction to public relations, public relations writing, public relations campaigns and also public relations cases” (p.

995). In terms of elective courses, Chou found that PR students were given choices in PR-focused courses such as health PR, financial PR, PR management, non-profit PR and international PR. Chou (2012) noted that “relatively few schools offered new media studies as public relations electives” (p. 996). In discussing the findings, Chou (2012) argues that “in order to keep in touch with the fast-changing media landscape, more PR programs should require and integrate new media, crisis communication and public relations ethics courses” (p. 997). He also points out that his “study focused only on analyzing PR curricula of American colleges. Analyzing and comparing PR curricula of colleges from different countries would provide insights into this matter.” This study intends to do this by examining PR programs in Canada.

Debates about professionalization of PR or the ideal curricula for students do not happen in silos. While academics argue where the communications function should sit within an academic institution, PR professionals argue about where the function is housed within organizations. Part of this debate can be linked back to the objective of PR itself, and how practitioners carry out the role.

### **Grunig’s Models of Communications**

“The role of public relations in management and its value to an organization has been debated for at least 100 years” (Grunig & Grunig, 1998, p. 1). They claim that “participation in strategic management provides the integrating link that makes it possible for the public relations function to contribute to achieving the goals of an organization” (p. 4) and that as a profession, public relations is still moving towards the model of both a

managerial or strategic function that is like his two-way symmetrical model of communications (Grunig & Hunt 1984).

Grunig's two-way symmetrical model of communication was one of four that he proposed to explain the function of public relations: 1) the press-agentry/publicity model, 2) the public information model, 3) the two-way asymmetrical model, and 4) two-way symmetrical model (Laskin, 2012). The first two models are a form of one-way communication, where the public relations professional pushes information out, but does not take information back in. In model three and four public relations professionals use research to make informed decisions regarding communicating with publics, with the fourth model focusing on using and building relationships with external publics to also inform the decision (Grunig & Grunig, 2000). These models were later reviewed and amended, but never received the wide adoption that the first four did (Laskin, 2012).

Although historically these models have formed the basis for modern public relations studies, they have also undergone significant criticism both academically and professionally (Laskin, 2012). For example, Alexander Laskin (2012) believes that "the models and the dimensions fail to recognize important concepts in public relations scholarship such as the role theory or the relationship-building aspect of public relations" (p. 3). However, with the emphasis on the need for PR to hold a relationship role between the organization and its publics, the two-way symmetrical model still holds importance for the practice of public relations. That is, the two-way symmetrical model of communications hinges on the practitioner being the bridge between the organization and its publics and this is key because it involves not only pushing out information but bringing in information that helps inform organizational decision-making.



Grunig's models were the foundation of his "excellence study" where he attempted to determine "how must public relations be practiced and the communication function organized for it to contribute the most to organizational effectiveness?" (Grunig & Grunig, 2000, p. 2). The result of this study was that the "research confirmed the importance of strategic public relations in effective organizations: involvement of public relations in strategic management consistently was the best predictor of excellent public relations" (Grunig & Grunig, 2000, p. 2).

Grunig and Grunig's study (2000) explains the concept of strategic management in public relations:

Strategic public relations is a loosely defined concept that recently has become popular among public relations practitioners. Both major professional organizations in the United States, the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the IABC, for example, regularly hold seminars on the topic and include the topic in their publications. Most of the discussion of "strategic" public relations, however, consists of loose reference to the idea that public relations should be planned, managed by objectives, evaluated and connected to organizational objective. Thus, in essence, "strategic" public relations refer to managed public relations as opposed to public relations as a set of communication tactics supplied by communication technicians. (p. 3)

This notion of strategic management can also be seen through the theory of the dominant coalition, which public relations scholars are using to argue the value of holding a seat with senior management.

Elements of Grunig's two-way models can be seen in the pathways outlined by CPRS. The course framework for each pathway reflects the development of both tactical and strategic skills dependent on the chosen pathway.

### **The Dominant Coalition**

Intrinsically linked to Grunig's Excellence Model is the notion of the dominant coalition. Grunig's two-way model emphasizes influencing organizational behaviour in accordance to stakeholder feedback, whether real or anticipated. In order to influence organizational behaviour, the function of PR would have to hold a high position within the organization. As organizations become larger, more globally distributed and complex in nature, public relations, like many other disciplines, draws on organizational theories to understand, explain and predict the phenomenon that develop as part of the ever-changing cultures of organizations. The dominant coalition is one such theory and is used to explain the distribution of power within organizations.

The dominant coalition is usually credited to the work of Richard Cyert and James March (1963). It draws on earlier work on the concept of coalition used in the literature on organizational theory (Stevenson, Pearce and Porter, 1985, as cited in Kanihan, Hansen, Blair, Shore, & Myers, 2013). This research focused on how "individual attempts at influence might be transformed into collective action within organizations" (Stevenson, Pearce and Porter, 1985, as cited in Kanihan et al., 2013 p. 257). These coalitions are:

Interacting groups of individuals, deliberately constructed, independent of the formal structure, lacking its own internal formal structure, consisting

of mutually perceived membership, issues oriented, focused on a goal or goals external to the coalition, and requiring concerted member action. (Stevenson, Pearce and Porter, 1985, as cited in Kanihan et al., 2013, p. 258).

Organizations may have several coalitions pursuing conflicting goals and have members with conflicting motivation for membership (Berger, 2005). The concept of dominant coalition is that within the organization one of the coalitions has more power and authority over decision-making. This usually means that members come from upper management of the organization and have the power to “affect its structure, define its mission and set its course through strategic choices the coalition makes” (Plowman, 2005, p. 242). As Matthew Bowler (2006) suggests:

In theory, the goals of an organization flow from the chief executive officer, board of directors, or top management team. However, the dominant coalition maintains an influence on goals through informal, rather than formal, channels. This allows individuals other than formal leadership to manipulate the goals of the organization. Top management members are typically, but not exclusively or necessarily, members of the dominant coalition (as cited in Kanihan et al, 2013, p. 261).

Bruce Berger (2005) claims that organizations are not just governed by a single dominant coalition, but that many can exist that influence different areas or priorities. As they are informal in both nature and membership, defining who is in the coalition and how they gained access is not an easy task. According to Bowler (2006), membership is not just restricted to within organizations, it can extend to “any supplier, customer, or

other stakeholder with significant control over the organization's distribution channel(s) or decisions could exercise influence within the dominant coalition" (p. 261).

Additionally, "coalitions are only somewhat stable in their makeup and their influence. Many forces influence stability and change in and around organizations and also affect the makeup and intent of dominant coalition" (Bowler, 2006, p. 261).

The dominant coalition therefore is a powerful group of decision makers, whose membership is not solely based on job titles or senior ranking positions, that influence and set organizational goals and agendas through both formal and informal means. It appears that gaining consistent access to the dominant coalition will play pivotal role in achieving two-way communication as outlined by Grunig. However, it appears that both experience and education that help people access this group.

"Current undergraduate programs focus on mastering technical competencies but pay little attention to organizational politics or political astuteness. We could benefit from case studies and seminars that provide greater insights into political dimensions of the job, and Spicer's (1997) text is a good starting point. Knowing what public relations managers should accomplish in the dominant coalition is important; knowing how to do so is no less significant" (Berger, 2005, p. 20).

The dominant coalition requires skills beyond the technical roles that entry-level PR professionals typically occupy. The transition from "technician" to "manager" is especially challenging for PR professionals who do not have the educational background on organizational or strategic skills. The research presented in this thesis gives a glimpse into what current programs are teaching and a breakdown of the tactical and strategic nature of these programs.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological design of the study. It is organized in three parts. First it names and describes the research design, then outlines the sampling procedure and finally explains the coding frame developed for data analysis.

### **Research Design**

As the intent of the research was to describe and compare data collected from a naturalistic setting, a qualitative research design was used. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research designs allow for emergent possibilities and the use of inductive data analysis. The research design, a qualitative content analysis allowed for these possibilities.

### **Data Collection**

#### *Sampling Strategy*

A purposive, non-probability sample was used (Trochim, 2006). The population for the study was all educational institutions in Canada that offer programs in Public Relations or Communications. As the focus for the study was on the CPRS's Pathways, the sampling frame used was the educational listing on CPRS's website.

#### *Sample*

The data set was identified by utilizing the Center for Education's list of College, University Programs & Academia on the CPRS website ([www.cprs.ca](http://www.cprs.ca)). This list is compiled through the self-identification of institutions, with placement, space and features dependent on the membership level purchased. Membership rates range from

free at the basic level to \$480 for the premium level. For the consideration of this research, no distinction is made between the different levels of membership.

As of June 2014, there were 51 listings on the CPRS website with a total of 54 programs. Of these 54 programs, six were graduate level programs and eliminated from the sample as the focus for the study was on undergraduate post secondary programs. A further six were eliminated because they were duplicate programs. For example, for the listings in Alberta, the University of Calgary's Communications and Culture Program was entered twice. The entries were identical except for the name of the individual to contact for program information. Finally, three programs were removed because the program as listed on the CPRS website no longer exists. This left a sample size of 39 for analysis.

The material being used to analyze each program was the institutional websites. As this is not static data, Scribble, an online digital media management program, was used to capture and freeze the website during the Month of July. In instances where no course description was available, the University Calendars were also saved.

After the 39 programs were accessed and saved, a preliminary analysis of the programs was done. At this stage, nine more programs were eliminated and not used in the final analysis. This was for one of two reasons. First, as programs were analyzed based upon how they measured up to the suggested course framework in the Pathways document, it became clear that programs must have a structured and guided educational program to properly ensure that all the required courses/competencies were acquired. With programs that did not offer structured programs, it was impossible to say whether any given graduating student had taken all the required courses to obtain pathway

certified degrees. Second, some programs were eliminated as they were offered in short workshop formats. This gave a total sample size of 30 programs for analysis (Appendix 1). Table 1 below gives a breakdown of the sampling decisions.

Table 1

*Breakdown of Sampling Decisions*

	CPRS Listings	Number of Programs	Removed Prior to Analysis		Removed During Analysis		Number Analyzed
			Number of Graduate Programs	Duplicate Entries	Program Changed/Do not exist	Insufficient data for valid analysis	
<b>Alberta</b>	7	8	0	1	2	2	3
<b>British Columbia</b>	7	7	1	1	1	1	3
<b>Manitoba</b>	3	3	0	1	0	0	2
<b>New Brunswick</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Newfoundland</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	4	4	1	0	0	1	2
<b>North West Territories</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Nunavut</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Ontario</b>	28	30	4	2	1	6	17
<b>PEI</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Quebec</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	2	2	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Yukon</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>30</b>

**Description of Sample**

Six of the nine Canadian Provinces are represented in the sample. No territories are represented. Ontario had by far the largest number of programs representing 63 percent of the sample. Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Quebec are not represented in the sample. The programs are also overwhelmingly Anglophone with only two of the 30 programs, la cité collégiale and the University of Ottawa, offering core courses in French.

Figure 1

*Breakdown of Programs by Province*

a

nitoba  
7%

a Scotia  
7%

Fifty-seven percent of the programs are college-based and 43 percent are housed at Universities. Where the programs are housed within the universities also varies greatly. Schools that appear to have a focus on media studies and technical skills represent 30 percent of the sample. Programs that were placed within the Continuing Studies Department made up 17 percent of the sample. Business departments housed 16 percent of programs. Only 10 percent of programs were found within schools focused solely on Communication Studies and a further 7 percent were located within the Arts Faculties.



Figure 2

*Breakdown of Where Programs are Housed in the Institutions*

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ture  
ry

**Data Analysis**

The 30 programs identified in the process described above were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis process (Schreier, 2012). Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a systematic way to bring meaning to qualitative data (Schreier, 2012). It is most commonly used in social sciences, and originated in communication studies (Schreier, 2012). It involves the construction of a coding frame either through a concept driven or a data driven process. According to Schreier (2012), the coding frame consists of two principle elements. First, the main categories or dimensions are aspects that focus the analysis and the subcategories. The subcategories are aspects that contribute to the meaning of the main category (Schreier, 2012). Concept driven categories are deductively built from what one already knows while data driven categories are inductively built from the data (Schreier, 2012). The coding frame used in my study was both content driven and data driven.

## Coding Frame

The coding frame was developed following an initial read through and review of the data. Schreier (2012) specifies four requirements for coding frames. First, she states that they are uni-dimensional. Each dimension should capture only one aspect of the data (p. 72), Second, it is required that categories are mutually exclusive. A unit of coding can only be assigned to one subcategory (p. 75). Third, categories should be exhaustive meaning that all data can be captured in at least one subcategory (p. 76). Finally, coding frames must be saturated, so that each subcategory is used at least once (p. 77). Taking into account these four criteria and the initial review of the data, five data driven categories were identified based on the type of academic qualification given upon completion of the program: undergraduate diploma programs, undergraduate advanced diploma programs, bachelor degree programs, graduate certificate or diploma programs and continuing education programs. This division was made because in theory, institutions granting higher credentials should code at a higher Pathway.

*Figure 3*

*Coding Frame – Categories*



The undergraduate diploma programs category was fairly uniform. Programs were two years or four semesters in length and required completion of high school for admittance. Of the seven programs in this category, five were offered through community colleges and two through universities.

The advanced diploma programs category differed from the diploma program in the length of study – three years or six semesters rather than two years or four semesters. All three of these programs were offered through the community college system and all three were in Ontario. They were analyzed as different categories as the additional year should be reflected in the Pathways' criteria.

The bachelor degree programs category, as the name suggests, consisted of programs that led to a bachelor's degree. While they were treated as a uniform category, there was a difference between the two University of Ottawa programs in that they are 'top-up' programs for students transferring from community college. The two years of transfer credit were included in the analysis of these programs. The other anomaly in this category was Conestoga College in that it is part of the community college system rather than the university system. It granted a degree under special authority of the Ontario Minister of Education.

The graduate certificate and diploma programs category was not as uniform. The programs were of varying length and the name of the academic qualification received at the end of the program was different. Six of the ten programs in this category awarded a graduate certificate, two a post-graduate certificate, one a diploma and one an advanced diploma. What differentiated these programs from the previous three program categories was that they required either a diploma or a degree for admittance.

The last category, continuing education programs, was the least uniform of the categories. What the programs had in common was that they were offered through university extension programs rather than directly through an academic department or faculty. Length and delivery of programs varied and related work experience could be

considered in the admittance process. Most of the programs were geared towards part time study for those already in the field.

Nested within each of these five subcategories are the pathways. These are conceptually driven and based on the suggested course framework in CPRS's *Pathways to the Profession* (p. 12). They were used in order to address the research question: How do the educational programs at Canadian post secondary institutions compare to the pathways recommended by the CPRS report on *Pathways to the Profession*? The pathways are divided into 5 levels: Technical Pathway, Career Pathway, Management Pathway, Leadership Pathway and the Scholar Pathway. As the scope of this thesis was to study undergraduate programs, the last pathway, the Scholar Pathway is not discussed.

*Figure 4*

*Coding Frame – Pathways*



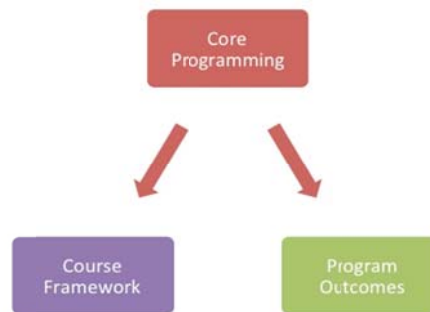
*Coding Frame Protocol – Core Programming*

To facilitate coding and help address the issue of trustworthiness (Shenton, (2004), Rolfe (2004), a coding frame protocol was established based on the core programming requirements from *Pathways to the Profession* (2011). As mentioned in

Chapter 1, *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) attempted to establish benchmarks for a CPRS certification program through providing core programming required for various pathways into the public relations profession. This core programming is addressed in two ways within the *Pathways to the Profession* (2011): it is expressed as a *Course Framework* and as a series of *Program Outcomes*.

*Figure 5*

*Structure of CPRS Core Programming*



The course framework suggests, “key areas which guide program development” (pg. 13): PR Theory & Practice, Management Theory and Practice, Personal and Group Competencies and Applied/Integrative Practice. Under each area is a list of suggested course content that starts at the basic and introductory level skill for the first Pathway and expands to a more managerial focus at the fourth Pathway. The table that follows shows the complete list of the suggested course content for each pathway.

Table 2

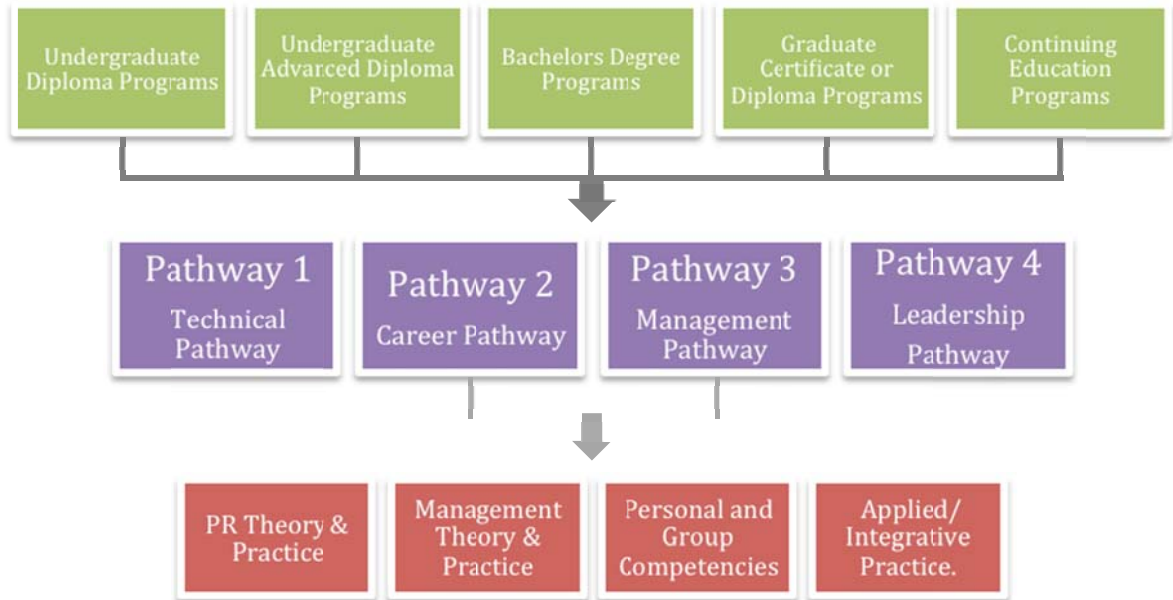
*Pathways to the Profession Course Framework*

Pathways	PR Theory and Practices	Management Theory & Practice	Personal & Group Competencies	Applied/Integrative Practices
<b>Level 1 Technical Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to PR and CM theory, principles and practices</li> <li>• Communications theories</li> <li>• Writing for PR</li> <li>• Communications tools overview</li> <li>• Introductory media relations</li> <li>• Tactical communications and special event planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to ethical decision-making</li> <li>• Introduction to advertising Web design and social media</li> <li>• Software tools and applications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group and team work</li> <li>• Management of self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Applied and experiential projects as part of course work</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 Career Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The theory and practice of PR and CM</li> <li>• Media relations</li> <li>• Communications planning</li> <li>• Communications tools and production</li> <li>• New and social media</li> <li>• Advanced writing</li> <li>• Print production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic research and evaluations</li> <li>• Ethics</li> <li>• Introduction to management</li> <li>• Basic financial management including budgeting</li> <li>• Organization development</li> <li>• Basics of project management</li> <li>• Basics of planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of groups</li> <li>• Team charter process</li> <li>• Effective business communications</li> <li>• Time management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case Studies</li> <li>• Co-op, work term or internships</li> <li>• Mentorships and learning from external experts</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 Management Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic communications planning</li> <li>• Issues management</li> <li>• Crisis management</li> <li>• Reputation management</li> <li>• Principles of persuasion</li> <li>• Stakeholder relations</li> <li>• Advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial management for PR</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility</li> <li>• Managing team processes</li> <li>• Business ethics</li> <li>• Public opinion</li> <li>• Internal and external consulting skills</li> <li>• Introduction to corporate and communications law</li> <li>• Introduction to HR management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing and leading teams</li> <li>• Current events and media literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Work experience</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 Leadership Pathway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managing the PR function</li> <li>• Stakeholder management</li> <li>• Reputation management</li> <li>• Areas of specialization including investor relations, government relations and public affairs</li> <li>• Consulting and collaboration</li> <li>• History and evaluation of PR and CM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational policy</li> <li>• Financial reporting and accounting</li> <li>• Risk management</li> <li>• PERT analysis</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• Operational planning</li> <li>• Principles of influence</li> <li>• Strategic management</li> <li>• Corporate social responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal consulting</li> <li>• Managing change</li> <li>• Personal leadership</li> <li>• Personal learning planning</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Negotiation and conflict management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing management</li> <li>• Work experience</li> </ul>

Note: From *Pathways to the Profession* by the Canadian Public Relations Society, 2011, pg. 12.

This course framework, embedded within each of the four pathways, was used as the template for analysis.

Figure 6

*Final Coding Frame*

The second way that core programming is addressed within the *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) is through a series of program outcomes for each pathway. The program outcomes provide a performance measure as a way of ensuring the listed outcome is achieved within a program. It outlines the capabilities that demonstrate the outcome has been met. For example, in Pathway 1: The Technical Pathway, the first program outcome states students graduating from institutions certified at this level should demonstrate that they can “communicate effectively at both a personal and organizational level by using a variety of communication tools and techniques” (CPRS, 2011, pg. 13).

*Pathways to the Profession* (2011) notes that is accomplished when students:

- Understand and use clear writing and demonstrate an appropriate command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling, free of errors;

- Write and produce a wide range of communications tools including brochures, correspondence, and organizational material;
- Write speeches to persuade, influence and inform;
- Plan and prepare newsletters for both internal and external use by an organization;
- Produce feature articles for newsletters, newspapers, or magazines (pg. 13).

The course framework and the program outcome are closely linked; they express the same core programming in different ways. This allows the course framework to be used as a validating system for the coding.

Figure 7

*Expression of Pathways to the Profession (2011) Core Programming*



The program outcomes were used to identify keywords that helped to determine whether or not a program met the requirements of the course framework, the main analytic framework. Those identifiers were then applied to the course framework (Appendix 2) and clearly show how CPRS (2011) categorized CM and PR terms within



the framework. Drawing on the earlier example, from Pathway 1: The Technical Pathway, the course framework states that students are required to learn “communication tools overview.” The first program outcome within that framework for the Technical Pathway states students should “communicate effectively at both a personal and organizational level by using a variety of communication tools and techniques” (CPRS, 2011, p. 13). This is clearly linked to the communications tools from the course framework. Therefore, by reading how students demonstrate they have met the first program outcome, within the Technical Pathway, it can be deduced that CPRS (2011) has identified things like speeches, newsletter, writing, social media strategies and brochures as communication tools. During the coding of the programs this allowed more valid assumptions to be made when determining if a course covered a knowledge or competency sought by the CRPS (2011) Framework.

This chapter has outlined the sampling procedure and data analysis process for my thesis. It has described the decisions made in arriving at the sample of 30 programs and the process of developing the coding frame used for the analysis. The next chapter presents the analysis of the 30 programs organized around the five main categories of the coding frame.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis

As discussed in the previous chapter, the coding frame for this research contains five categories analyzed against the four Pathways presented in the CPRS's *Pathways to the Profession* (2011). This chapter presents the analysis for each category by describing the process and results of the analysis.

### Pathways

To examine the match between the 30 PR programs from the sample and the four Pathways presented in the CPRS's *Pathways to the Profession* (2011), a two-step process was followed. The first step used the titles of required courses taken from the program website and the second used course descriptions, when available.

#### *Step One – Course Titles*

Coding began by looking at the titles of courses listed as being required to fulfill graduation requirements. When the title of a course clearly fulfilled the listed knowledge/competency, the program received a “1” in the coding-frame. For the program to receive a “1”, the course title had to match the topic/competency with high accuracy.

#### *Step Two – Course Descriptions*

After coding on the basis of the required course titles, the course descriptions, when available, were examined with the purpose of filling in any blanks in the coding scheme. That is, if a knowledge/competency received a “1” coding, it was not considered again during the coding of course descriptions. If a required course description matched a knowledge/competency outlined, the program received a “2”. To receive a “2”, the course descriptions were analyzed for keywords identified by both researcher knowledge

of the subject and through the use of the skills required to fulfill a program outcomes as published in the Pathway document (Appendix 3).

Figure 8

*Example of Coding*

**PUBR58634**  
**Strategic Communications Planning**  
 Sheridan Course Outlines

I: Administrative Information II: Course Details III: Topical Outline(s) Printable Version

**Section I: Administrative Information**  
**Program(s):** Corporate Communications  
**Program Coordinator(s):** Andrew Coxhead  
**Course Leader or Contact:** Andrew Coxhead  
**Version:** 8.0  
**Status:** Approved - Under Rev (AREV)  
**Section I Notes:** N/A

**Section II: Course Details**  
**Detailed Description**  
 Strategic Communications Planning is designed to provide corporate communications students with genuine client experience in executing a communications plan. The course delivery method will include using the **case method** to identify best practices (including social media) in analysis, client needs assessment, budget development, time tracking and evaluation. As well, **expert guest lecturers** on specific topics such as tactics development will guide the students through components of the plan's creation. Finally, lab hours are built into the course so that students can interactively develop components of the communications plan and receive prompt feedback from the instructor. Students will learn how to prepare a proposal including **timeline, estimated costs and project deliverables**. Once the proposal is signed off by the client, students will move on to preparing the elements of the plan in consultation with the client and the instructor. Finally, the students will prepare a final report and accompanying presentation to deliver to the client and the instructor.

**Total hours:** 42.0  
**Credit Value:** 3.0  
**Credit Value Notes:** N/A  
**Effective:** Winter 2013  
**Prerequisites:** N/A  
**Corequisites:** N/A  
**Equivalents:** N/A  
**Pre/Co/Equiv Notes:** N/A

**Pathway 1**  
 Green = 1 for Tactical communications and special event planning  
 Yellow = 2 for Applied and experiential projects as part of course work

**Pathway 2**  
 Yellow = 2 for case studies  
 Orange = 2 for Mentorships and learning from external experts  
 Blue = 1 for Communication planning  
 Purple = 2 for Basics of planning

For instance, in the first pathway the Course Framework by CPRS (2011) outlines introduction to media relations. If a required course for a program was “media studies”, it is not immediately clear if media relations’ skills are being taught. Therefore, the program could not receive a “1”. However, if the course description states that students learn how to respond to media calls, the course could be coded as a “2” for that particular institution because students are presumed to be learning skills required in media relations (i.e. responding to media calls). While this coding remained the same for all four levels of the pathways coded, at the higher levels (career, management and leadership pathway), some topics/competencies could not receive a “2” based on the depth of the topic required. For example, at the higher levels, competencies like issues management and crisis management were listed. These skills could not be gained, at the managerial level,

without a course dedicated to that topic, or being covered within multiple courses.

Therefore, judgment was used based on the level/length of the course at the higher levels.

## Analysis

Each category is presented separately below. Within each category, each pathway is also presented separately and has its own figure for reference.

### *Category 1 – Undergraduate Diploma Programs*

The first category contains seven undergraduate diploma programs. They were all placed into this category for two distinct reasons. First, they are two-years in length.

Second, the only entry requirement is the completion of Grade 12.

Table 3

### *Raw Coding Data: Category 1, Pathway 1*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice			Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices	
	Intro. to PR and CM theory, principles and practices	Comms. theories	Writing for PR	Comms. tools overview	Intro. media relations	Intro. to ethical decision-making	Tactical comms. and special event planning	Intro. advertising	Web design and social media	Software tools and applications	Group and team work	Management of self	Critical thinking	Applied and experiential projects
Algonquin	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	
Canadore	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	
Conestoga	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	
Kwantlen	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	
La cité	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	2	2	2	
Red River	1	0	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	
Winnipeg	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	2	

Table 4

Raw Coding Data: Category 1, Pathway 2

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies			Applied/Integrative Practices			
	Theory and practice of PR and CM	Media relations	Comms planning	Comms tools and production	New and social media	Advanced writing	Print production	Basic research and evaluations	Ethics	Intro to management	Basic financial mgmt incl. budgeting	Organization development	Basics of project mgmt	Basics of planning	Theory of groups	Team charter process	Effective business comms	Time management	Case Studies	Co-op, work term or Internships	Mentorships and learning (external)
Algonquin	0	0	2	2	1	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	1	2
Canadore	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Conestoga	2	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	1	0	1	0	2	1	0
Kwantlen	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	0	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
La cité	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Red River	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Winnipeg	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	1	1	2

Table 5

Raw Coding Data: Category 1; Pathway 3

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices		
	Strategic comms planning	Issues mgmt	Crisis mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Principles of persuasion	Stakeholder relations	Advocacy	Financial management for PR	Corporate social responsibility	Managing team processes	Business ethics	Public opinion	Internal/external consulting skills	Intro - corporate & comms law	Intro to HR management	Managing and leading teams	Current events & media literacy	Case studies	Work experience
Algonquin	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2		N
Canadore	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		N
Conestoga	1	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	2		N
Kwantlen	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		N
La cité	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0		N
Red River	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0		N
Winnipeg	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	1		N

Table 6

*Raw Coding Data: Category 1; Pathway 4*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices					Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies					Applied/Integrative Practices					
	Managing the PR Function	Stakeholder mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Areas of specialization	Consulting and collaboration	History & evaluation of PR and CM	Organizational policy	Financial reporting & accounting	Risk management	PRRT analysis	Strategic planning	Operational planning	Principles of influence	Strategic mgmt	Corporate social responsibility	Internal consulting	Managing change	Personal leadership	Personal learning	Motivation	Negotiation and conflict mgmt	Ongoing mgmt	Work experience
Algonquin	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Canadore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Conestoga	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	N
Kwantlen	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
La cité	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Red River	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Winnipeg	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	N

Two of these programs, Kwantlen Polytechnic University and Conestoga College are already CPRS accredited. As expected, these two met all the qualifying criteria for Pathway 1. Algonquin College and the University of Winnipeg also met all criteria for Pathway 1. Canadore met all but two of the requirements; “group and team-work” and “applied and experimental projects as part of course work.” These two categories are interesting because they are concerned more with how things are taught rather than what is taught. It is important to note that while the analysis did not find evidence of this in the documents, it does not mean they were not present.

The other two programs in this group, la Cité collégiale and Red River College were missing more than one of the criteria for Pathway 1. A critical omission from both of these programs was “introduction to ethical decision making.” As CPRS (2011) provides “support to members and their employers to ensure high levels of professionalism and competence, resulting in strategic and ethical practitioners” (CPRS, pg. 10), the lack of an ethics course is significant and these programs, as currently constituted, would not meet CPRS recognition.

From the coding, it is clear that both Kwantlen and Contesgota met the requirements for first Pathway and therefore are accredited at least to this level. Given how well Canadore coded at the first pathway, the institution could be undergoing the recognition process.

Five of the seven programs also met a considerable number of the criteria for Pathway 2. The University of Winnipeg met 81 percent of the criteria, Conestoga met 76 percent, Kwantlen and Algonquin met 62 percent and Canadore met 57 percent. Again, both la Cité collégiale and Red River College had a high number of zeros.

None of the programs did well at the Pathway 3 or Pathway 4 level especially in the Management Theory and Practice and Personal and Group Competencies criteria. This is not surprising for two year, entry-level programs.

### *Category 2 - Undergraduate Advanced Diploma Programs*

Three schools fell under the second category, the undergraduate advanced diploma programs. Only found in Ontario, these programs were marketed as being “advanced.” It was expected these programs, with the additional year, would have more time to the cover course content outlined by CPRS.

Table 7

### *Raw Coding Data: Category 2, Pathway 1*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices						Management Theory & Practice			Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices	
	Intro. to PR and CM theory, principles and practices	Comms. theories	Writing for PR	Comms. tools overview	Intro. media relations	Tactical comms. and special event planning	Intro. to ethical decision-making	design and social media	advertising Web applications	Software tools and applications	Group and team work	Management of self	Critical thinking
Cambrion	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2
Durham	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	2	1
Humber	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	1	2	1

Table 8

*Raw Coding Data: Category 2; Pathway 2*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice						Personal & Group Competencies			Applied/Integrative Practices				
	Theory and practice of PR and CM	Media relations	Comms planning	Comms tools and production	New and social media	Advanced writing	Print production	Basic research and evaluations	Ethics	Intro to management	Basic financial mgmt incl. budgeting	Organization development	Basics of project mgmt	Basics of planning	Theory of groups	Team charter process	Effective business comms	Time management	Case Studies	Co-op, work term or internships	Mentorships and Learning (external)
Cambrian	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	2	2	2	0	2	0	0	1	0
Durham	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	2
Humber	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0

Table 9

*Raw Coding Data: Category 2; Pathway 3*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices		
	Strategic comms planning	Issues mgmt	Crisis mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Principles of persuasion	Stakeholder relations	Advocacy	Financial management for PR	Corporate social responsibility	Managing team processes	Business ethics	Public opinion	Internal/external consulting skills	Intro - corporate & comms law	Intro to HR management	Managing and leading teams	Current events & media literacy	Case studies	Work experience
Cambrian	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	N
Durham	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	N
Humber	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	N

Table 10

*Raw Coding Data: Category 2; Pathway 4*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies					Applied/Integrative Practices		
	Managing the PR function	Stakeholder mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Areas of specialization	Consulting and collaboration	History & evaluation of PR and CM	Organizational policy	Financial reporting & accounting	Risk management	PRRT analysis	Strategic planning	Operational planning	Principles of Influence	Corporate social responsibility	Internal consulting	Managing change	Personal leadership	Personal learning	Motivation	Negotiation and conflict mgmt	Ongoing mgmt	Work experience
Cambrian Col.	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Durham Col.	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Humber Col.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N



Similar to the first category, all three programs coded almost perfectly across the first pathways, with the notable exception once again being ethics. Two of the programs did not cover ethics at all and the third program covered it within the content of another course. While it is impossible to say that all of the course content outlined by the CRPS is being met, the three-year advanced diploma programs cover almost all the topics outlined by CPRS within the first Pathway, the technical level. Although the sample size is smaller than the two-year programs, the consistency with which the programs coded could demonstrate how much the additional year adds to the depth of the curriculum.

Surprisingly, the three-year programs did not code well within the second pathway. The data showed that, within the limitations of the coding frame, at the surface level there was no real difference in the course content covered by the three-year programs and the two-year programs. Cambrian College covered the most, missing only ethics, a team charter process, time management, case studies and learning from external experts. Both Humber College and Durham College met 57 percent and 66 percent, respectively, of the suggested course content. The fact that two of the programs within the first group were accredited could account for the higher percentage of the coding for those programs. It does not account for the high performance of the additional programs in that category.

Similar to the first group, none of the programs were well represented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Pathways. However, this is not surprising as students are admitted into these programs with only high school degrees and would therefore likely not have enough experience to be ready for positions at the management level.

### Category 3 - Bachelor Degree Programs

Five of the programs analyzed granted Bachelor Degrees. The group represented the highest portion of accredited programs, with both Mount Saint Vincent University and Conestoga College holding the designation.

This category has two subsections. Conestoga College, Mount Royal and Mount Saint Vincent University all offer four-year bachelor degrees. The University of Ottawa is a ladder program that allows students who have completed the two-year certificate from either Algonquin (English) or La Cité collégiale (French) to complete two additional years and receive a degree in public relations. The program at University of Ottawa is only offered as part of the laddering program, requiring students to either complete the two-year certificate before or after their time at University of Ottawa. Of the five degree programs, two are housed within the Faculty of Art, two within Communications Studies and one within the school of Media and Design.

Table 11

#### Raw Coding Data: Category 3, Pathway 1

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice		Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices	
	Intro. to PR and CM theory, principles and practices	Comms. theories	Writing for PR	Comms. tools overview	Intro. media relations	planning special event	Tactical comms. and	Intro. to ethical decision-making	Intro. to advertising Web design and social media	Software tools and applications	Group and team work	Management of self	Critical thinking
Conestoga	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Mount Royal	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
Mount St. Vincent	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
Ottawa (Algonquin)	t1	t2	t1	t2	t2	t2	t2	t1	t1	t2	t2t	t1	t1
Ottawa (La Cite)	t2	t2	t1	t2	t1	t1	2	t1	t2	0	t2	t2	t2

Table 12

Raw Coding Data: Category 3; Pathway 2

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies			Applied/Integrative Practices			
	Theory and practice of PR and CM	Media relations	Comms planning	Comms tools and production	New and social media	Advanced writing	Print production	Basic research and evaluations	Ethics	Intro to management	Basic financial mgmt incl. budgeting	Organization development	Basics of project mgmt	Basics of planning	Theory of groups	Team charter process	Effective business comms	Time management	Case Studies	Co-op, work term or internships	Mentorships and learning (external)
Conestoga	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
Mount Royal	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Mount St. Vincent	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	0	
Ottawa (Algonquin)	1	0	t2	t2	t1	0	t2	t1	2	2	t2	1	t2	t2	3	0	t1	t2	t2	t2	
Ottawa (La Cite)	t2	t2	t2	t2	t2	t1	t2	t2	2	2	t2	1	t2	2	3	0	0	0	2	t2	t2

Table 13

Raw Coding Data: Category 3; Pathway 3

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices			
	Strategic comms planning	Issues mgmt	Crisis mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Principles of persuasion	Stakeholder relations	Advocacy	management for PR	Financial responsibility	Corporate social responsibility	Managing team processes	Business ethics	Public opinion	Internal/external consulting skills	Intro - corporate & comms law	Intro to HR management	Managing and leading teams	Current events & media literacy	Case studies	Work experience
Conestoga	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	N
Mount Royal	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	N
Mount St. Vincent	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	N
Ottawa (Algonquin)	3	2	0	0	t1	0	0	t2	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	t1	t2	N	
Ottawa (La Cite)	T	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	T	2	N	

Table 14

Raw Coding Data: Category 3; Pathway 4

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies				Applied/Ingrative Practices				
	Managing the PR function	Stakeholder mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Areas of specialization	Consulting and collaboration	History & evaluation of PR and CM	Organizational policy	Financial reporting & accounting	Risk management	PERT analysis	Strategic planning	Operational planning	Principles of influence	Strategic mgmt	Corporate social responsibility	Internal consulting	Managing change	Personal leadership	Personal learning planning	Motivation	Negotiation and conflict mgmt	Ongoing mgmt	Work experience
Conestoga College	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Mount Royal	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Mount St. Vincent	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Ottawa (Algonquin)	0	3	0	t1	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	t1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	N
Ottawa (La Cite)	0	3	0	t1	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	t1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	0	N

Overall, this category performs the best over the first pathway. This is not surprising given the length of these programs and the level of credential being awarded at the end. This is also true for the second pathway. The two accredited programs coded very highly within the second pathway. Conestoga met 100 percent of the suggested course content, while MSVU was only missing effective business management and time management. Conestoga also coded better at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> level as compared to the second pathway. This could be because of the difference in how the programs were presented. Conestoga presented longer, flashier course descriptions, while MSVU only published course descriptions in the academic calendar.

Looking at the data it is also apparent that there is substantial difference between the certificate and diplomas versus these degree programs. Within the first two pathways, the degrees met a high percentage of the suggested course content. Combined, the degrees met 93 percent of course content at the first pathway and 83 percent at the second pathway. This compares to category 1, which met only 88 percent of the course framework for the first pathway and 60 percent at the second pathway. Category 2 received 95 percent and 67 percent respectively.

Similar to the previous two categories, the Degrees did not code well at Pathways 3 and 4.

#### *Category 4: Graduate Certificate and Diploma Programs*

This was the largest category, containing ten programs. For this category, a previous degree or academic experience was required for entry into the programs. Six of the ten would also consider mature admission on the basis of work experience and this



Table 16

*Raw Coding Data: Category 4; Pathway 2*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies			Applied/Integrative Practices			
	Theory and practice of PR and CM	Media relations	Comms planning	Comms tools and production	New and social media	Advanced writing	Print production	Basic research and evaluations	Ethics	Intro to management	Basic financial mgmt incl. budgeting	Organization development	Basics of project mgmt	Basics of planning	Theory of groups	Team charter process	Effective business comms	Time management	Case Studies	Co-op, work term or internships	Mentorships and Learning (external)
Centennial	0	1	2	2	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	2	1	2
Fanshawe Col.	0	1	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2
Grant MacEwan	0	1	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Loyalist Col.	2	0	2	2	0	1	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Niagara Col.	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
NSCC	0	0	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Seneca Col.	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Sheridan Col.	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humber Col.	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Royal Roads	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 17

*Raw Coding Data: Category 4; Pathway 3*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices		
	Strategic comms planning	Issues mgmt	Crisis mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Principles of persuasion	Stakeholder relations	Advocacy	management for PR	Corporate social responsibility	Managing team processes	Business ethics	Public opinion	Internal/external consulting skills	Intro - corporate & comms law	Intro to HR management	Managing and leading teams	Current events & media literacy	Case studies	Work experience
Centennial	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	N	
Fanshawe Col.	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	
Grant MacEwan	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	
Loyalist Col.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	N	
Niagara Col.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	N	
NSCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	N	
Seneca Col.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N	
Sheridan Col.	1	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	N	
Humber Col.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	N	
Royal Roads	1	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	N	

Table 18

*Raw Coding Data: Category 4; Pathway 4*

Inst	PR Theory and Practices						Management Theory & Practice								Personal & Group Competencies				Applied/Integrative Practices				
	Managing the PR Function	Stakeholder mgmt	Reputation mgmt	specialization	Consulting and collaboration	History & evaluation of PR and CM	Organizational policy	Financial reporting & accounting	Risk management	PERT analysis	Strategic planning	Operational planning	Principles of Influence	Strategic mgmt	Corporate social responsibility	Internal consulting	Managing change	Personal leadership	Personal learning planning	Motivation	Negotiation and conflict mgmt	Ongoing mgmt	Work experience
Centennial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Fanshawe Col.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Grant MacEwan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Loyalist Col.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Y
Niagara Col.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
NSCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Seneca Col.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Sheridan Col.	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N
Humber Col.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	N
Royal Roads	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	N

With the exception of Royal Roads, all programs code well within the first pathway. Niagara and Sheridan both met all criteria. Fanshawe, Humber and Seneca are only missing one each, communications theory, ethics and software tools respectively. This group is unique in the analysis because students come in with another degree and there may be an assumption that courses such as media relations, and theory and practice have already been covered in their earlier course work. Only two of the programs offer stand-alone courses in ethics. As these are considered “graduate” programs, this seems like a large gap in the curriculum.

Given that these programs seem to be primarily aimed at professionals already in the field and the use of such words as ‘corporate communication,’ ‘professional communication management’ and ‘advanced diploma’ in their titles, it would be expected that these programs would fit more into Pathway 2. With the exception of Royal Roads, the programs only did well in Pathway 2 in the first set of criteria, the section on PR Theory and Practices. They programs performed poorly for the criteria set out in the

Management Theory and Practices section. This is surprising given the level of credential awarded. However, it is not surprising given the length of the programs.

Pathways 3 and 4 are hardly covered at all, again not surprising given the length of the programs.

Royal Roads is the outlier for this group and was more difficult to code. There are only three courses on which to base the analysis and the program can be completed in three months.

#### *Category 5: Continuing Education Programs*

This grouping is the least uniform, with the only common denominator being where the programs are housed within the institutions. These programs are offered through a university extension program rather than through an academic faculty or department. Other than this, there is little in common among the programs in terms of the award granted, the program requirement, the admission criteria or the delivery of the programs. This makes comparison across programs difficult.

Table 19

#### *Descriptions of Category 5 programs*

	Award	Program Length	Admission	Delivery
University of Victoria	Diploma in PR	2 years (10 courses of 12 weeks)	Current practitioners	Distance
University of Regina	Certificate in PR	1 year (5 courses = 15 credit hours)	Entry level students	In class
Ryerson University	Certificate in PR	2 years (8 courses of 39 hours)	Degree or 4 years experience	Distance
Mount Royal	PR Extension Certificate	1 year (3 semesters/9 courses)	Not stated	Evenings & 2 day courses
McMaster University	Diploma in PR	1 year (9 courses)	Current practitioners	In class

Table 20

#### *Raw Coding Data: Category 5, Pathway 1*



Inst	PR Theory and Practices					Management Theory & Practice				Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices	
	Intro. to PR and CM theory, principles and practices	Comms. theories	Writing for PR	Comms. tools overview	Intro. media relations	Tactical comm. and special event planning	Intro. media relations	Intro. to ethical decision-making	Software tools and applications	advertising Web design and social media	Group and team work	Management of self	Critical thinking
McMaster	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	3	3	0	0	2	2
Mount Royal	1	0	1	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Ryerson	1	1	1	1	3	1	0	2	2	0	0	2	1
Regina	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	0	3	0
Victoria	1	1	1	1	3	2	3	3	0	0	0	2	0

Table 21

Raw Coding Data: Category 5; Pathway 2

Inst	PR Theory and Practices							Management Theory & Practice					Personal & Group Competencies			Applied/Integrative Practices					
	Theory and practice of PR and CM	Media relations	Comms Planning	Comms tools and production	New and social media	Advanced writing	Print production	Basic research and evaluations	Ethics	Intro to management	Basic financial mgmt incl. budgeting	Organization development	Basics of project mgmt	Basics of planning	Theory of groups	Team charter process	Effective business comms	Time management	Case Studies	Co-op, work term or internships	Mentorships and learning (external)
McMaster	2	1	1	2	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	0
Mount Royal	0	3	2	2	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ryerson	0	3	1	2	3	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regina	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria	1	3	1	1	3	1	0	1	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

Table 22

Raw Coding Data: Category 5; Pathway 3

Inst	PR Theory and Practices						Management Theory & Practice							Personal & Group Competencies		Applied/Integrative Practices		
	Strategic comms planning	Issues mgmt	Crisis mgmt	Reputation mgmt	Principles of persuasion	Stakeholder relations	Advocacy	management for PR	Corporate social responsibility	Managing team processes	Business ethics	Public opinion	Internal/external consulting skills	Intro - corporate & comms law	Intro to HR management	Managing and leading teams	Current events & media literacy	Case studies
McMaster	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Mount Royal	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ryerson	0	0	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Regina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Victoria	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 23

Raw Coding Data: Category 5; Pathway 4

PR Theory and Practices	Management Theory & Practice	Personal & Group Competencies	Applied/Integrative Practices
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Inst. Num	Inst	Stakeholder mgmt Managing the PR function	Reputation mgmt	Areas of specialization	Consulting and collaboration	History & evaluation of PR and CM	Organizational policy	Financial reporting & accounting	Risk management	PEPR analysis	Strategic planning	Operational planning	Principles of Influence	Corporate social responsibility	Internal consulting	Managing change	Personal leadership	Personal learning planning	Motivation	Negotiation and conflict mgmt	Ongoing mgmt	Work experience
16	McMaster	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Mount Royal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Ryerson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
33	Regina	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34	Victoria	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

One of the programs, the University of Victoria's Diploma in Public Relations is accredited by CPRS. In many ways it is like the two-year undergraduate diploma programs, the main difference being that it is aimed at professionals already in the field and is a distance delivered program. This analysis shows that it was not as complete as most of the two-year undergraduate programs for Pathway 1. Three of the criteria were met by elective rather than required courses. There was also no evidence of personal and group competencies.

Three of the five programs did not mention ethics at all. In addition, there was no direct evidence for any of the five programs for 'software tools and applications' or 'management of self.' As a group, these five programs were not as complete in terms of Pathway 1 criteria as other program groupings. None of the programs could be considered strong in terms of Pathways 2, 3 and 4.

Analysis of the 30 PR programs in terms of the four Pathways presented in the CPRS's *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) show an overall strong match for Pathway 1, the Technical Pathway, a weaker match for Pathway 2, the Career Pathway and little or no match for the Pathways 3 or 4, the Management Pathway and the Leadership Pathway. These findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

This research examined the current state of PR education in Canada in light of two significant trends in the literature on PR, the push for professional status for PR practitioners and call for PR practitioners to have the skills required for strategic management roles.

### Professionalization

Grunig and Hunt (1984) propose four characteristics of professionalism: a body of knowledge, a code of ethics, specialized educational training, and accreditation. This research examined specialized education and training, which presumably would help an individual gain accreditation.

### Specialized Education and Training

Specialized education and training was examined by using *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) as a template against which to assess the current state of PR education in Canada. The sample chosen for this study was the Center for Education's list of College, University Programs & Academia on the CPRS website ([www.cprs.ca](http://www.cprs.ca)). *Pathways* set out five different ways of getting into a profession, beginning with a technical entry and ending with a scholarly pathway. Each pathway has a course framework that suggests key areas of PR and Communications education. Along with the course framework comes a voluntary recognition program that allows institutions to become recognized as fulfilling all the requirements of a pathway. For the purpose of this

research study, this course framework represents the ideal standard of how education programs in PR or Communications in Canada should be structured.

Overall, it appears that the programs examined were more in line with the first two pathways outlined by the CPRS (2011). With the exception of Royal Road's Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication Management, all programs coded well for Pathway 1 and all coded better on Pathway 1 than on Pathway 2. No programs coded well for Pathway 3 and 4. As expected, programs that have already sought recognition from CPRS coded consistently and highly within at least one of the four pathways that were examined.

As mentioned earlier, the characteristic of professionalization that Grunig and Hunt (1984) call 'a code of ethics' was not specifically examined in this research. The notion of 'ethical practice', prominent in both *The Professional Bond* (2006) and the *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) also was not examined. What was examined was evidence of the teaching of ethical practice in the curriculum of the PR programs in the sample. Twenty percent of programs had a course on ethics, 23 percent had ethical practice mentioned in the course description as being part of the course and 13 percent offered an elective course on ethics. This leaves 44 percent of programs that had no mention of ethics either in the course title or as part of the course descriptions. While this is a high number given the emphasis that literature on professionalization places on ethical practice, it is higher than the 37 percent that Austin and Toth (2011) found in their survey of 218 PR education websites from 39 countries. The same study by Austin and Roth (2011) however did report that of the subset of 11 Canadian institutions (not identified in the article), 64 percent had an ethics course. This is probably due to

sampling differences as Austin and Toth (2011) used a sample of institutions recommended to them by members of the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communication Management and probably included a higher proportion of bachelor degree programs. In my study 100 percent of the bachelor degree programs had an ethics course while only 33 percent of the three year advanced diploma programs and 40 percent of the graduate certificate and diploma programs had them.

### **Accreditation**

When used in discussions of professionalism, accreditation usually refers to a standard set of skills that an individual must have to be a member or be licensed in that profession. This is the sense in which it is used by Grunig and Hunt (1984). This research did not look at accreditation in this way. However, the data can be used to examine the move toward a standardized curriculum and to comment on the process of recognition of PR education programs. It could be expected that individuals who complete a program recognized by the CPRS would be better set-up to obtain personal accreditation.

According to the Public Relations Institute of Australia (2009) “ a properly constituted, controlled and industry-supported education system” (p.1) is needed to pass on the body of knowledge that informs PR practice. One impediment to this is controlling the institutions that provide the educational programs. The programs analyzed in this research were diverse in nature. They were offered through a myriad of departments and vary greatly in admission requirements, length of program, name of award and delivery mechanism. Admission requirements ranged from high school graduation to related work experience or completion of a first degree. Program length falls between nine weeks

(Simon Fraser's Diploma in PR, not analyzed in this research) to four years. Delivery ranges from full-time, face-to-face classes to part-time, entirely on-line with or without a practicum experience.

Just as the nature of the programs is diverse, where programs are housed is equally as varied. According to Chung and Choi (2011), PR programs in the UK are most often found in the Department of Marketing (31 percent), the Department of Management (20 percent) or the Department of Journalism (17 percent). In the US, they are most often found in the Department of Communication (30 percent), the Department of Journalism (18 percent) or the Department of Public Relations (14 percent). For the sample analyzed in this study, the pattern is very different within the Canadian programs analyzed. My study showed that programs were most likely to be housed in a department with a media focus (30 percent), continuous education or extension divisions (17 percent) and departments with a business focus (16 percent). Only 10 percent were housed in departments with a focus in communications. This supports Wright's (2011) contention that the different history of development of PR education in the US and Canada has resulted in Canadian programs being offered through a broader range of institutions and within institutions.

While this diversity could be viewed as a strength in that graduates from one institution would have a different set of skills than a graduate from another institution, it could also be viewed as weakness in any attempt to standardize the profession around a specific set of skills. It certainly reflects, "the unique nature of the current slate of programs along with the independent decision-making incorporated by the respective institutes which offer them" (CPRS, 2011, pg. 3). However, it could also be seen as a

reflection that the profession itself isn't standardized. Programs can focus heavily on one aspect of public relations like social media, writing or design while ignoring the strategic or managerial aspect and still grant a credential in public relations that holds the same weight as more balanced programs. Wright (2011) found that "most of Canada's recent PR program growth has been at colleges rather than at universities." (p. 236). The "independent decision-making incorporated by the respective institutes" (CPRS, 2011, pg. 3), which offer PR programs would seem to point to a further problem in aligning programs with skills.

While controlling the diverse nature of PR programs in Canada presents a challenge, there is no doubt that the process of program recognition, a main goal of *Pathways to the Profession* (2011), is already influencing these programs. While it is too soon to have concrete data showing how these pathways are influencing the profession, there are indications that positive changes have been made. Recognized programs have not only adopted the course structure suggested by the Pathways document, but also mirror language from the document in course descriptions. It is also evident in the way they describe their programs. For example, Conestoga College (2014), an accredited two-year diploma program uses the following to describe PR:

Public relations is the management function of building mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics. In this highly interactive program, students will learn strategic and creative communication strategies to solve organizational problems or make the most of business opportunities with key publics.

Not only is this a positive representation of the public relations field, it speaks to the idealized definition of what public relations should be as a profession—a serious, meaningful career choice.

In contrast, Niagara College (2014), which is not an accredited program, chooses to describe the power-relations aspect, “if information is power, then skilled communicators are the power brokers.” Mount Royal (2014), another program that is not accredited, states:

As a public relations professional or a supporting member of a PR team, you require practical skills to enhance your job or volunteer commitments. In this program, learn from PR professionals from diverse industries to gain relevant information and skills to communicate, design and implement public relations projects in any organization.

While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with how the institutions are portraying the profession, they do not fit the image of the profession that *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) is trying to create.

## **Image**

While image is not one of Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) characteristics of a profession, it is non-the less an important consideration for any profession. This is especially important for Public Relations, a profession that specializes in managing images.

In terms of this research, the image of PR can be inferred from the composition of the programs and also the descriptions of the careers the credential supposedly leads to.



Niagara College and Mount Royal were not alone in projecting a 'light' image of PR in contrast to a serious meaningful career choice.

For program composition, prime examples would be Simon Fraser's Public Relations Certificate and the University of Western Ontario's Professional Certificate in Communications and Public Relations, both of which were not reviewed for this research, as the programs were too short. Simon Fraser's program promotes itself as setting its graduates apart in the job market and that its students find jobs within three weeks of graduation. It can be completed in nine weeks; six weeks of course work and three weeks of practicum. Western's program is aimed more at 'communication practitioners' and is 'designed to empower managers and their staff with the professional tools' to communicate effectively. This can be accomplished through seven, two-day workshops. What is interesting about both these programs is that they are offered through the continuing education division of the university. While we do not know what graduates of these programs are doing, it seems unlikely that the quality of the education is equal to those of the four-year degree programs.

There is evidence here of a 'jump on the bandwagon' approach similar to that reported by Rawel (2002) in his review of how PR professional associations influence the direction of PR education. Quoting Ehling (1992) he argues "there is still widespread evidence that various schools and departments, cashing in on the popularity of public relations among students, have added a course or two to existing sequences in journalism and advertise them as *bone fide* programs in public relations" (p. 73).

In terms of professional image, what really stood out was how some of the institutions described their program and the career paths that the credentials would lead

them to. For example, Loyalist College's one-year graduate certificate program, which they've called "PURE", describes the profession as an exciting, lucrative career choice. It claims "many jobs offer extensive opportunities for travel" (Loyalist College, n.d.) and "many graduates in urban centres are earning over \$100,000" (Loyalist College, n.d.). Loyalist's program is a one-year graduate certificate that requires a diploma or degree for entry. While the program coded well at the first level, it only met 52 percent of the suggested course content for the second pathway and only 5 percent of the suggested course content at the third pathway. This suggests it could be preparing students for a more technical role than the managerial role that could be expected from graduate programs. The program description is clearly a strategy to sell and attract students. This could be a problematic description of the profession because it positions it as something light and fun, where you make a lot of money and get to travel, as opposed to a strategic management function.

### **Strategic Management Function**

Grunig (2006) has long been a proponent that the communication function can achieve the best results as a strategic function. He argues that "public relations scholars need to develop both positive and normative theories—to understand how public relations is practiced and to improve its practice—for the organization, for publics, and for society" (pg. 2). The Excellence Study showed that "involvement in strategic management was the critical characteristic of excellent public relations" (Grunig, 2006, pg. 10) as it allowed for a two-way symmetrical communications model. This model is important as it allows PR professionals to work with both an organization and its publics

to help build and maintain relationships – thus reducing risk for an organizations (Grunig, 2006). The Excellence Study also highlighted the importance on the Dominant Coalition as “unless it is empowered to be heard, public relations will have little effect on organizational decisions” (pg. 10) needed to ensure the two-way symmetrical model can be enacted. Therefore, the importance of gaining entrance to the senior ranks is critical to the professionalization of PR.

Berger (2005) suggests that education maybe a barrier to public relations practitioners’ entry into senior ranks. It could be interpreted that *Pathways to the Profession* (2011) outlines two pathways to senior ranks, Pathway 3, The Management Pathway, and Pathway 4, The Leadership Pathway. As no programs coded well for Pathway 3 and 4, the strategic management and leadership pathways, it would appear that in Canada, educational qualifications might still be a barrier to public relations practitioners becoming members of senior management. This may be a limitation of the sample as only undergraduate programs were sampled and it would be expected that graduate programs would focus much more on strategic management functions. Also, the sample used was programs listed on the CPRS website and reflect the way CPRS operates the listing and how some institutions view their programs in relation to CPRS.

CPRS (2014) clearly states on the list of College, University Programs & Academia that the “listing on the CPRS website does not provide any information regarding the quality of education at the institute, nor does it imply any endorsement by CPRS and its National Council on Education”. This may be a legal requirement or could just have been overlooked while updating the page, but as this listing now includes

recognized programs, this could be problematic. It may lead institutions to question the value of paying for listing a program that carries no endorsement of that program.

The second explanation for lack of coding at the strategic/management level may lie in how institutions view their programs in relation to CPRS. A good example of this is the University of Ottawa, which has a Department of Communications, and which offers both a Bachelor of Public Relations and a Bachelor of Communications. The Bachelor of Public Relations, which is listed on the CPRS's website and was analysed in this research, states the following:

In Canada, the public relations industry employs more than 40,000 people.

A career in this area offers you a wide variety of functions and tasks: developing communication plans and strategies; writing communication materials; building and maintaining relationships with the media; organizing press conferences, product launches, inaugurations, open houses and exhibits; acting as spokesperson; lobbying and public affairs; developing multi-media kits; producing videos; designing web sites; creating and implementing social media strategies; and managing crises.

Public relations are ubiquitous in politics, in business, non-governmental organizations, and even in the entertainment industry.

The description for University of Ottawa's Bachelor of Communications, which is not listed and was not analysed, says:

We live in the information age. Innovations in communication and information technology are altering the fundamental nature of how we

live, work, play and learn. Since the 1970s, the Department of Communication has been at the forefront of inquiry into how the evolution of communication is shaping our social, cultural, political, economic, organizational and legal landscape.

The undergraduate program in communication combines both theory and practice and offers courses in two main areas—media studies (effect of social media and mass media, video and multimedia production, audience research, communication policy) and organizational communication (communication in public and private organizations, interpersonal communication, health communication, crisis communication, public relations, advertising). The interdisciplinary approach of our program will provide you with a broad perspective on the interplay among mass media, human communication, cultural studies, technology, policy, political economy and public relations. Consequently, the courses offered in our BA program in communication and in our joint philosophy, political science and sociology programs, will help you understand and manage the communication revolution occurring in health, politics and business as well as in government and non-governmental organizations. Our faculty are leading researchers in their fields, and many of your instructors will have experience as practitioners in various areas of applied and professional communications, such as public relations and video production.

With its interdisciplinary focus and unique blend of theory and practice, this program is designed to position you for leadership positions in communications in the private and public sectors as well as prepare you for advanced studies.

There is a clear difference in the way these two programs are described. The public relations program is positioned as a career choice with ‘functions and tasks’ while the communications program is described as preparation for ‘leadership positions in communications’ in such fields as ‘public relations and video production’. However, both are aimed at students coming out of high school. What is interesting is that the University of Ottawa chose to advertise the PR program on the CPRS website, but not the communications program. It might be that the University views CPRS as an organization that represents the tactical/skill side of the profession rather than the strategic management part. This may also be why only four bachelor programs are listed on the site.

In addition, Public Relations and Communications seem to be used interchangeably. This research shows that these two terms might not be interchangeable. Of the sample in my study, ten percent of programs were housed within communication studies, three percent within faculties of communication and culture and seven percent in faculties of arts. This is clearly reflected within the names of the degrees being granted by the institutions, with a majority of programs in this study granting degrees in Public Relations. While a broader study of all programs that offer communications, public relations or communication management program would be required, it could be that the term “public relations” is inherently linked with tactical, while “communications” is

linked more with strategic. As discussed above the University of Ottawa is a clear demonstration of how the term public relations is viewed. The institution decided to advertise only one of its two programs with CPRS, the Undergraduate Degree in Public Relations. The Undergraduate Degree in Communications, which is housed in the same school as the PR degree, is not advertised. While it is hard to tell from my research, this could point to an issue with the terminology rather than curriculum. My research found that the majority of the programs studied scored highest on the first Pathway set out in *Pathways to the Profession* (2011), the technical pathway. Whether or not the correlation between the high fulfillment of the tactical areas of the pathways and the designation of public relations is a limitation of the sample or not, it raises some interesting questions for future research. It also suggests that If PR is viewed as tactical profession, then CPRS may be limiting the reach of *Pathways to the Profession* through out-dated nomenclature.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Limitations to the study relate to the sample and the data. The population for the study was all post-secondary institutions in Canada that offer programs in PR or Communications. The sample drawn for the study was post-secondary institutions listed on the CPRS website. As this was a purposive, non-probability sample (Trochim, 2006), it does not necessarily represent the total population, and caution needs to be exercised in generalizing to institutions outside the sample.

Limitations in terms of the data relate to the fact that only course titles and course descriptions were used for the analysis. These are written at high levels of abstraction. As

a student, I have had personal experience of how a course title and course description can be different from the course outline and how the course is taught.

These two limitations point toward areas for future study. First, an analysis of PR and communications programs not listed on the CPRS website would give a more representative picture of PR education in Canada. This may help give a clearer view of the management and leadership training available for PR practitioners, as institutions with these programs may not self-identify as PR programs. The inclusion of Master's level programs would also lead to a more representative view. Second, it would be interesting to match course outlines against the CPRS criteria and survey instructors and/or students to determine their perception of the match between courses as delivered and the CPRS criteria. While the latter has been done in the US, it has not been researched in a Canadian context.

While we have an idea of the number of programs offering PR qualifications, there appears to be no data on the number of graduates turned out by each institution. Promotions for many of the programs paint a rosy picture of employment opportunities, but there has to be a limit to the number that can be absorbed by the profession. Survey of students who have graduated over the last five years would help validate these claims as would a survey of those already holding PR positions. It would be interesting to find out their pathway to the profession and get their views on PR education.



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## Appendixes

## Appendix 1: Detailed list of sample

ū	Institution	Department/Faculty	Degree Name	Credential	Minimum requirement	Program Length	Course/ Hours	Accredited
1	Algonquin College	School of Media & Design	Public Relations	Ontario College Diploma	Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent.	2 years	27 courses (1421 hours)	No
2	Cambrian College	Business and Information Technology	Public Relations	Ontario College Advanced Diploma (6 semesters)	High School		34 courses + 1 placement	No
3	Centennial College	School of Communications, Media & Design	Corporate Communications and Public Relations Program	Ontario College Graduate Certificate	College diploma or Degree in any discipline	1 Year/ 2 semesters	16 courses	No
4	Canadore College	School of Business and Management	Public Relations	Ontario College Diploma	High School	2 years	23 courses + placement	No
6	Conestoga College	School of Media & Design	Bachelor of Public Relations degree	Bachelor of Public Relations degree	High School	4 years	45 courses + 3 co-ops)	Yes
7	Conestoga College	School of Media & Design	Public Relations	Ontario College Diploma	High School	2 years	24 courses	Yes
8	Durham College	School of Media, Art & Design	Public Relations	Ontario College Advanced Diploma	High School / Mature students	3 Years	27 + 2 co-op	No
9	Fanshawe College	Contemporary Media	Corporate Communications and Public Relations Program	One-Year Ontario College Graduate Certificate Program	An Ontario College Diploma, A University Degree or Experience	1 Year	14 courses + 1 placement	No
10	Grant MacEwan University		School of Business Public	Public Relations Career Diploma	Public Relations Career Diploma	30 Hours of post-secondary courses (including English)	10 Months	No
11	Humber College	School of Media Studies & Information Technology	Public Relations	Advanced diploma program	High School	6 Semesters	28 + Internship	No
12	Kwantlen Polytechnic University	School of Business	Diploma in Public Relations	Diploma in Public Relations	Grade 12	4 Semesters	60 credits; 20 courses; approx 900 hours over two academic years	Yes

13	La cité collégiale	Communication	Relations Publiques Programme	Diplôme d'études collégiales de l'Ontario	Diplôme d'études secondaires de l'Ontario (DESO) ou l'équivalent, ou réussite du test de candidat adulte (pour les candidats de 19 ans ou plus)	2 ans	29 courses	No
14	Loyalist College	N/A	Public Relations (PURE)	One-year Ontario College Post-Graduate Certificate	A diploma or degree in a related field from a recognized college or university	1 year	12 + placement	No
16	McMaster University	Centre for Continuing Education	Public Relations	Diploma	University degree (with expectations for college + work experience)	12 months	27 units	No
17	Mount Royal	Continuing Education/ Business Management	Public Relations	Public Relations Extension Certificate	n/a	2 Semesters fulltime	8 courses or 120 hours	No
18	Mount Royal University	Faculty of Communication Studies	Bachelor of Public Relations	Bachelor of Communication & Public Relations	High School		43 courses	No
19	Mount Saint Vincent University	Department of Communication Studies	Bachelor of Public Relations	Bachelor in Public Relations (BPR)	High School	4 years	23.0 units	Yes
20	Niagara College	Media & Design	Public Relations Program	Ontario College Graduate Certificate	Bachelor's Degree or Ontario College Diploma (two-year or longer) in a related area of study	1 year	12 courses + placement	No
21	Nova Scotia Community College	n/a	Public Relations Program	Advanced diploma	College diploma or undergraduate degree from a related area, or equivalent education and work experience. Related areas include: business, arts or journalism.	1 year	18 courses + Placement	No
22	Red River College	n.a	Creative Communications	Diploma	High School	2 years	27 plus 2 co-ops	No
24	Ryerson University	The Chang School of Business	Public Relations	Certificate	An undergraduate degree or three-year community college diploma;	n/a	8 courses	No
25	Seneca College	N/A	Corporate Communications Program	Ontario College Graduate Certificate	A recognized degree or three year post secondary diploma from an accredited institution	1 year	15 courses + optional co-op)	No
26	Sheridan College	N/A	Corporate Communications		Ontario College Graduate Certificate	1 year	14 courses ( 42 credit hours)	No
29	University of Winnipeg	Professional, Applied and Continuing Education	Public Relations Diploma • Marketing Management Diploma • Management Certificate.		Public Relations & Marketing Management Diploma Program	n/a	33 courses	No
32	University of Ottawa	Faculty of Arts	Honors Bachelor in Public Relations	Honors Bachelor in Public Relations	high school		75 credits	No
33	University of Regina	Centre for Continuing Education	Certificate in Public Relations	certificate	None	n/a	5 courses	No
34	University of Victoria	Continuing Studies	Public Relations	Diploma in Public Relations	University degree, or relevant professional qualifications and three years work experience OR high school graduation and five years work	N/A (part or full time)	7 + 3 electives	Yes

					experience OR any combination of equivalent education and work experience OR relevant voluntary experience and/or a strong motivation to acquire a credential in public relations but with no previous experience			
37	Humber College	School of Media Studies & Information Technology	Public Relations	Postgraduate Ontario Graduate Certificate	Bachelors Degree	1 Year/ 2 semesters	17	No
38	Royal Roads University		Professional Communications Management	Communication & Culture	Graduate Certificate in Professional Communication Management	4 year undergrad + 3 years experience	6 months	No
39	University of Ottawa (La Cite Collegiale)	Faculty of Arts	Honours Bachelor in Public Relations		Honors Bachelor in Public Relations	Honors Bachelor in Public Relations		No



## Appendix 2

**Coding Identifiers - Concepts from CPRS Application Form (June 2014)**

## Pathway 1: The Technical Pathway

<b>SKILL AS OUTLINED BY OUTCOME</b>	<b>NUMERICAL IDENTIFIER</b>
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 1: COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY AT BOTH A PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL BY USING A VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES</b>	
Understand and use clear writing and demonstrate an appropriate command of grammar, punctuation, and spelling, free of errors	<b>1.1.1</b>
Write and produce a wide range of communications tools including brochures, correspondence, and organizational material	<b>1.1.2</b>
Write speeches to persuade, influence and inform	<b>1.1.3</b>
Plan and prepare newsletters for both internal and external use by an organization	<b>1.1.4</b>
Produce feature articles for newsletters, newspapers, or magazines	<b>1.1.5</b>
Demonstrate writing for the web	<b>1.1.6</b>
Monitor and implement strategies using social media	<b>1.1.7</b>
Develop material that is graphically and visually appealing including print material and websites	<b>1.1.8</b>

<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 2: DEVELOP AND SUPPORT MEDIA RELATIONS STRATEGIES AS PART OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION</b>	
Explain the difference between reactive and proactive media relations strategies	<b>1.2.1</b>
Compose all elements of a media kit, including news release, media advisory, biography, backgrounder, and fact sheet	<b>1.2.2</b>
Prepare news releases and information materials using Canadian Press (CP) and related journalistic style	<b>1.2.3</b>
Monitor media response to organizational and industry related issues	<b>1.2.4</b>
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 3: APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS THEORIES AND PRACTICES TO DEVELOP AND EXECUTE BASIC TACTICAL COMMUNICATION PLANS</b>	
Describe the goals of a communication plan from a public relations perspective	<b>1.3.1</b>
Develop and implement a tactical plan	<b>1.3.2</b>
Develop and implement a special events plan	<b>1.3.3</b>
Support planning for more complex processes	<b>1.3.4</b>
Explain simple models of social communications theory	<b>1.3.5</b>
Define the impact of theories on public relations programs	<b>1.3.6</b>

Explain the impact of current events and trends on the individual and the organization	<b>1.3.7</b>
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 4: USE APPROPRIATE SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE TO SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS FUNCTIONS</b>	
Proficient in current software applications used in organizations	<b>1.4.1</b>
Use basic applications of software packages suitable for desktop and web publishing	<b>1.4.2</b>
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 5: DEVELOP A PERSONAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION MAKING</b>	
Examine organizational values and ethics	<b>1.5.1</b>
Develop a personal code of ethics for use in the workplace and identify personal values as they pertain to career expectations and aspirations	<b>1.5.2</b>
Assess his/her fit within an organization based on shared values and ethics	<b>1.5.3</b>
Recognize and explain basic PR values in relation to ethical dilemmas	<b>1.5.4</b>

Pathway 2: The Career Pathway

**PROGRAM OUTCOME 1: DEVELOP CLEAR AND MEASURABLE COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES AND IDENTIFY TECHNIQUES TO EVALUATE**

<b>THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE OBJECTIVES.</b>	
Differentiate between goals and objectives	2.1.1
Establish and differentiate between reputation management goals, relationship management goals and task management goals	2.1.2
Write measurable objectives	2.1.2
Formulate evaluation strategies reflective of the measurable objectives	2.1.3
Manage projects	2.1.4
Ensure that communication planning objectives are aligned with organizational goals	2.1.5
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 2: COMPLETE ALL WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH PUBLIC RELATIONS CODES OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS, STANDARDS, AND PRACTICES AND RELEVANT LAW.</b>	
Recall and understand the CPRS code of ethics for PR professionals and apply to real business situations and cases	2.2.1
Identify corporate values	2.2.2
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 3: APPLY CREATIVE APPROACHES TO COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING, EXECUTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING.</b>	
Classify campaigns by type and	2.3.1

objective	
Conduct formative research.	2.3.2
Devise a campaign strategy.	2.3.3
Create communication tactics.	2.3.4
Conduct evaluative research	2.3.5
Apply knowledge and build skills by planning and proposing a public relations campaign	2.3.6
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 4: USE RESEARCH SKILLS TO MEET SPECIFIED COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES</b>	
Set measurable objectives for communication outcomes	2.4.1
Choose the most appropriate metrics that apply to the right aspects of the communication plan	2.4.2
Explain and apply qualitative and quantitative research techniques for measuring messages, communication channels, and organizational outcomes	2.4.3
Manage a research project	2.4.4
Analyze and communicate research findings using independent critical thinking	2.4.5
Incorporate an awareness of ethical	2.4.6

issues associated with conducting research on human participants	
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 5: IMPLEMENT PROJECT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN SUPPORT OF PR PLANS AND ACTIVITIES</b>	
Develop, execute, and monitor action plans as part of communication planning	2.5.1
Delegate and monitor the progress of plans	2.5.2
Manage the implementation of plans	2.5.3
Develop and monitor project budgets	2.5.4
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 6: IMPLEMENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS</b>	
Liaise with staff and vendors to ensure that communication objectives are met	2.6.1
Manage project budgets	2.6.2
Function as an effective and responsible member of an organizational team	2.6.3

Pathway 3: The Management Pathway

<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 1: APPLY KNOWLEDGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORIES AND PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT A STRATEGIC ROLE FOR THE FUNCTION</b>	
Apply knowledge of contemporary	3.1.1

organizational theories	
Use strategic thinking to develop and execute communication plans, incorporating research, analysis, communications, and evaluation	3.1.2
Execute a complex communications plan using appropriate strategies and tactics	3.1.3
Examine the influence of organizational and community dynamics on the communications planning process	3.1.4
Develop and define communication objectives based on needs and criteria for projects and plans, in consultation with stakeholders	3.1.5
Develop communication plans to support the needs of internal and external stakeholders	3.1.6
Examine the impact of corporate culture on communications	3.1.7
Develop a budget for communication plans	3.1.8
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 2: APPLY CREATIVE APPROACHES TO COMPLEX COMMUNICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES USING A RANGE OF</b>	

<b>COMMUNICATION PLANNING PROCESSES THAT DEFINE APPROPRIATE STRATEGY, IMPLEMENTATION, AND PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	
Choose and apply critical thinking skills and strategies	3.2.1
Analyze ideas, concepts, and programs to determine influencing factors	3.2.2
Generate creative ideas for strategies and solutions considering organizational dynamics, concepts, themes, and opportunities	3.2.3
Critique problems and recognize opportunities	
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 3: DISPLAY A COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING, BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE WORK ENVIRONMENT</b>	
Debate public relations and organizational communication issues and trends	3.3.1
Compare and assess own skills and knowledge	3.3.2
Adapt own skills, knowledge, and values to new situations	3.3.3
Display enthusiasm for continued learning and personal growth	3.3.4
Demonstrate an interest and a plan for	3.3.5



professional accreditation	
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 4: APPLY PRINCIPLES OF ADVOCACY AND ETHICS AND BE ABLE TO MAKE DECISIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BASED ON SOUND PRINCIPLES OF EACH</b>	
Work within established organizational culture and acknowledge its impact on an organization's changing needs	3.4.1
Follow correct organizational process when preparing and submitting work	3.4.2
Compare and contrast organizational behavior theories used to influence corporate/organizational culture	3.4.3
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 5: DISPLAY MINDFUL AWARENESS OF EVENTS, TRENDS AND CULTURAL SHIFTS THAT IMPACT THE ORGANIZATION AND CAN BE USED IN PROACTIVE WAYS IN COMMUNICATIONS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES</b>	
Examine current trends and issues and their potential impact on the organization	3.5.1
Translate issues from the particular to broader implications	3.5.2
Identify how events, trends and cultural shifts might be used in communication activities	3.5.3

<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 6: FUNCTION IN A RESPONSIBLE, PROFESSIONAL, TRUSTWORTHY, AND ACCOUNTABLE MANNER RESPECTING THE LEGAL, MORAL, AND ETHICAL PRACTICE</b>	
Examine ethical, legal, and moral issues facing organizations	3.6.1
Conduct oneself within professional and organizational codes of conduct	3.6.2
Recognize the significance and implications of relevant laws (such as privacy, defamation, intellectual property, investor relations) on the communication function or plans	3.6.3
Recognize the importance of corporate social responsibility frameworks on organizational reputation	3.6.4
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 7: CONDUCT AND CO-ORDINATE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION PROCESSES TO SUPPORT COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES</b>	
Conduct strategies to effectively implement and monitor the outcomes of plans, issues, and activities	3.7.1
Monitor and evaluate methods of output, process, and outcomes	3.7.2

Report on project status	3.7.3
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 8: FUNCTION AS AN EFFECTIVE MEMBER OF A TEAM</b>	
Prepare plans in teams	3.8.1
Work on events in groups	3.8.2
Collaborate/brainstorm ideas with partners for group projects in-class	3.8.3
Prepare and present group presentations	3.8.4
Provide counsel and advice in a persuasive and tactful manner	3.8.5
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 9: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN IMPLEMENTATION OF PR AND CM OBJECTIVES</b>	
Advises and counsels managers and team leaders	3.9.1
Aligns PR and CM function with organizational business objectives	3.9.2
Supports the development of communication procedures and policies	3.9.3

Pathway 4: The Leadership Pathway

**PROGRAM OUTCOME 1: APPLY THEORY MODELS AND CONCEPTS OF PR AND CM BASED UPON A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THEIR RELEVANCE TO**

<b>INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE AND TO THE PROFESSION AS A WHOLE</b>	
Compare and contrast current models of PR and CM and explain the application of each to the work place	4.1.1
Summarize the role of PR and CM in society	4.1.2
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 2: USE RESEARCH TO DEVELOP AND EXPAND ON A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE</b>	
Deliver original quantitative and qualitative research to support projects	4.2.1.
Create original work that supports areas of PR and CM specialization, based on industry or area	4.2.2
Identify the appropriate use of qualitative and quantitative methods	4.2.3
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 3: PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO THE ORGANIZATION ON REPUTATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND POSITIONING</b>	
Plan and implement organizational communication priorities	4.3.1
Develop high-level reputation management strategies	4.3.2
Provides counsel and strategies in support of the reputation management of the	4.3.3

organization.	
Generate planning processes aligned with organizational strategy	4.3.4
Evaluate issues, opportunities, and challenges facing the organization and develop strategies to address these factors	4.3.5
Relate leadership theories and identify and exhibit personal leadership traits	4.3.6
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 4: ARTICULATE THE STATUS OF PR AND CM WITHIN A BROAD SOCIAL CONTEXT AND APPLY THIS TO THE IMMEDIATE ORGANIZATIONAL ONE</b>	
Appraise current thinking on PR and CM and determine its applicability to the work place	4.4.1
Compare the historical context of PR and CM to the present	4.4.2
Describe the evolution of PR and CM based on a theoretical framework	4.4.3
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 5: ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES THAT SUPPORT A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SELF AND OF THE PROFESSION</b>	
Self-reflect on the application of work to career planning and personal objectives	4.5.1

Engage in professional and personal activities that highlight an ongoing plan for learning	4.5.2
Develop personal learning plans	4.5.3
Interpret current content and knowledge to assess best practices	4.5.4
Construct theory about professional practice	4.5.5
Engage in professional opportunities that support the search of excellence	4.5.6
<b>PROGRAM OUTCOME 6: DISPLAY MINDFULNESS OF THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER</b>	
Discuss current management theory	4.6.1
Appraise the impact of global, national, and local events on the organization and its operations	4.6.2
Understand fundamental elements of business, including financial, organizational, and human resources	4.6.3
Exhibit high levels of trustworthiness and professionalism	4.6.4