



THE MEDIA SCHOOL

BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY

**THE ARCHIVE OF THE
PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATORS FORUM (1994-1999)**

**Compiled and edited by Professor Tom Watson
February 2013**

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The Public Relations Educators Forum Archive

The PREF archive was acquired by Professor Tom Watson of Bournemouth University in November 2011 when it was presented to him by Dr Jacquie L'Etang, then of the University of Stirling and now Professor of Public Relations at Queen Margaret University. The archive comprises two lever arch files and is the extant record of this group which was formed in 1990 and ceased to exist in the early part of the first decade of the 21st century.

The records that remain were compiled by the second PREF Secretary, the late Dr Archie McLennan (from 1994 to 1997) and his successor Dr Jacquie L'Etang (1997 to 1999). File 1 consists of mainly routine correspondence. However, it includes letters and messages which illustrate the tension between PR academics and the industry and professional bodies about the quality and outcomes of undergraduate PR education. File 2 has a wider range of material including newsletters, information on conferences, agendas and minutes of meetings, membership data and outline financial information. It also includes a section on policy matters which also covers the academic-industry tension over the design and quality of PR education and training.

The physical archive can be inspected by appointment at Bournemouth University. This document is the catalogue of the archive and offers some documents such as Newsletters, mailing lists and policy documents which contain important indications of the development of UK PR education in its first decade and illustrate some issues.

About PREF

PREF was formed in 1990. In *PREF Newsletter No.2* (1997), it was stated that UK PR pioneer Tim Traverse-Healy started it over a lunch with PR academics at the Athenaeum (club) in London in 1990. It was later formally launched at the Institute for Public relations' London headquarters in the same year.

Mr Traverse-Healy, who was an honorary Professor at University of Stirling, saw that:

Formal education in public relations would expand comparatively rapidly, that more practitioners would become involved to a lesser or greater degree in the subject, and that more educators would specialise in the subject. (He was also) concerned that no organisation existed which could consider the issues presented in this important area and offer independently the views of dedicated and professional educators (PREF Newsletter, 1997, p.8)

Professor Danny Moss, who attended the original planning meeting in 1990, was co-Chair of PREF from 2000 onwards. Commenting on PREF, he said

The early years saw the group lobbying for greater recognition by the Institute of Public Relations (IPR) and we held a number of meetings at the IPR HQ while John Lavelle was Executive Director. Much of the early drive had come from Tim Traverse-Healy, who had encouraged PREF's development.

Although there was a good deal of talk about PREF playing a more powerful 'educational policy role' alongside IPR, there was very much an impression that while we were being

listened to ... this was only unto a point, and frustration amongst PREF members began to set in. Attendance at PREF meetings in London slowly dropped off because of this and costs. By 1999, enthusiasm for PREF as a lobby group to help shape IPR educational policy had waned although the value of the group as 'forum' for exchange amongst academic staff remained.

PREF was a very useful and much-needed body when first set up [in 1990] and reflected the rapid growth of PR educational programmes and tutors and the need to strengthen the academic representation at IPR. One of the products of PREF's role was the appointment of Alan Rawell as Education Officer at CIPR. He worked tirelessly to try to improve the IPR's accreditation process for colleges and also the design and content of IPR programmes. (Personal communication, February 18, 2014)

The PREF archive demonstrates the growth of university and college-based public relations education in the UK over a decade. The first degree programmes started in 1987 with a Master's programme at University of Stirling and at bachelor level at Dorset Institute of Higher Education (later Bournemouth University) and the College of St Mark and St John in Plymouth in 1988. It is notable that many early academics had been practitioners with the first PhDs being awarded in the mid-1990s. They were exemplars of "pracademics" who are relatively few in modern public relations courses.

Another point of distinct is that there was little gender bias in PREF's membership and its leadership. The chairpersons of PREF in the period of the archive were Sue Wolstenholme (1994-97) and Liz Yeomans, later joined by Emma Wood, as co-Chair in the following three years. The membership of PREF was similarly without a strong gender skew. This may be a factor in the feminisation of public relations practice in the UK that students were taught by many female academics in teaching and research leadership positions.

PREF File 1 - Office File

Correspondence in alphabetical order by recipient's surname; most is routine material.

Title and Name	Affiliation	Notes
Dr Christine Anderson	Robert Gordon Institute	
Nigel Bain	IPR Training & Education Committee	(See also File 2 under PREF 1 – Policy Issues)
Gwen Black		Widow of Sam Black (08/02/99)
Prof Sam Black	Stirling University	
Joyce Blow		See also John Lavelle correspondence re PRET (See also File 2 under PREF 1 – Policy Issues)
Terry Burke	University of Westminster	Discussion over structure of PR degrees – argued for Business degree with PR specialisation (03/11/96)
Di Burton	Cicada Consultants/Trinity & All Saints, Leeds	
Francis Carty	Dublin Institute of Technology	
Anne-Marie Cotton	Egon Hogeschool (Belgium)	
Valerie Cowley		Retirement (1999)
Fiona Campbell	West Herts College, Watford	
Phil Dring	Southampton Institute	
Dr Christine Daymon	Bournemouth University	
Colin Farrington	IPR, London	
Jo Fawkes	UCLAN / Leeds Metropolitan University	
Liz Fraser	Key Communications, London	
Rosemary Graham	UCLAN	
Paul Green	Robert Gordon Institute	

Anne Gregory	Leeds Metropolitan University	
Shirley Harrison	Leeds Metropolitan University (?)	
Jane Hammond	Trident Training Services, London	
John Hitchins	College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth	Proposal for conference on impact of PR degrees upon practice (26/08/97)
David Heal	Harrison Cowley, Manchester	
Barry Jackson	CVCP, London	
Inger Jenson	Roskilde University, Denmark	
Sara Jones (student)	Leeds Metropolitan University	Letter to Jacquie L'Etang about history of PR evaluation
Dr Sonja Kleine	Hogeschool van Utrecht, Netherlands	President of CERP
Kay Kent	UCLAN	Moving to Liverpool John Moores University (12/08/97); also joint CERP/PREF conference in 1998 (01/07/97)
Jacquie L'Etang	Stirling University	Note: Most correspondence in the file is from Ms L'Etang to recipients from 30/04/97 onwards. Took over from Archie McLellan in May 1997
John Lavelle	IPR (Executive Director)	Discussion about students moving into IPR membership (05/11/96) with Jacquie L'Etang. Various letters from PRET (Joyce Blow) and PREF to IPR (See also File 2 under PREF 1 – Policy

		Issues)
Dr Archie McLellan	Trinity & All Saints, Leeds	Initial PREF secretary
Toby McManus	Bournemouth University	
Dr Kevin Moloney	Bournemouth University	
Danny Moss	Manchester Metropolitan University	Organisation of PREF/CERP joint conference; Undated, probably late 1996 – Letter to PREF Secretary Archie McLellan announcing the <i>Journal of Corporate Communications</i> which would be published in the following year by MCB Press
Karen Masters	3G Communications	
Ian Metherell	Communication Skills Europe	PRET and PR training matrix; (See also File 2 under PREF 1 – Policy Issues)
Paul Noble	Bournemouth University	PREF treasurer; Letter of 24/09/96 refers to PRET criticism of PR degrees (See also File 2 under PREF 1 – Policy Issues)
Dr Sandra Oliver	Thames Valley University	
Bob Pilbeam	College of St Mark & St John, Plymouth	
Magda Pieczka	University of Stirling	
Heike Puchan	University of Stirling	
Ruth Parkinson	Leeds Metropolitan University	
Mike Smith	Cardiff University	
Dr Ian Somerville	Queen Margaret College	
Lynne Staite	Aberdeen College	
Harvey Smith		IPR journal editor
Benno Signitzer	Universität Salzburg	Correspondence re Jacquie L'Etang

PREF ARCHIVE - Bournemouth University

		visit
Ralph Tench	Leeds Metropolitan University	
Ruth Townsley	Leeds Metropolitan University/ Durham University Business School	Proposed a PREF/CERP joint conference (1997)
Anne Turner	UCLAN	
Dr Richard Varey	Salford University	
Emma Wood	Queen Margaret College	Re correspondence over relationship between PREF and IPR (16/09/99) and selection of IPR's Head of Education
Prof Tim Wheeler	University College Chester	
Sue Wolstenholme	Ashley Public Relations	Letter to John Lavelle (IPR) about PRET and links with PREF (19/08/96). PREF chair till 1997
Gary Warnaby	Manchester Metropolitan University	
Liz Yeomans	Leeds Metropolitan University	PREF Chair from 1997 onwards; Correspondence in 1999 about meetings with new IPR CEO Colin Farrington

PREF File 2 – Central File

PREF 1 – Policy Issues (as categorised by PREF in file)

1994 – Copy of IPR Education and Training Committee list of approved PR courses (degree and diploma). Ten courses listed.

1996 – PRET (Public Relations Education Trust) *Public Relations Education and Training Matrix* (Appendix 1)

1996 – *National Entry Requirements for BA Hons Public Relations* degree programmes: Single sheet with no author information covering Bournemouth, Central Lancashire, LeedsMet and MarJon courses.

1996-1998 – Correspondence with PRET and IPR over (a) PRET's criticism of PR degree courses; (b) the PRET Matrix, (c) course accreditation by IPR and (d) IPR's own diploma

Undated, but probably 1998 – Reading list for IPR Diploma

1998 – IPR list of approved educational qualifications

Undated, but probably 1998 – draft of IPR/PRCA *Guide to Public Relations Education and Training*

PREF 2 – PREF Newsletters

1996 – Correspondence between PREF members and editor (Jacquie L’Etang) and with PRET chairman Joyce Blow

Issue 1 – October 1996, 4pp [Appendix 2]

Summary of contents

P.1 Editorials by PREF chair Sue Wolstenholme and editor Jacquie L’Etang; Article on Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

P.2 Articles on Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) and Conferences in 1996 (PREF, Keele and Bled)

P.3 Short items on new journals, new courses (Salford, London Guildhall, Trinity and All Saints, Queen Margaret College, LSE); new faces, books, articles, conference papers, book reviews, new institutional moves, personal achievements

P.4 Short items on PhD research, consultancy at Queen Margaret College, Diplomas at Leeds Metropolitan University (LMU) and teaching and learning at LMU

1996 – Correspondence about costs for PREF Newsletter (£55 for 100 copies)

Issue 2 – February 1997, 8pp [PDF Appendix 3]

Summary of Contents

P.1 Editorial by PREF Chair Sue Wolstenholme, discusses A-Level entry points needed for PR degrees, compared with other studies.

P.2 Undergraduate standards n PR degrees (Paul Noble); NVQs (Di Burton)

P.3 RAE outcomes

P.4 Calls for papers; Letters to editor (notable contribution by Kevin Moloney)

P.5 New faces, moves, publications, books and PR at University of Westminster

P.6 PhD Research

P.7 Members of PREF

P.8 PREF’s origins - Claimed by Tim Traverse-Healy to have started over lunch at the Athenaeum in London in 1990. It was later launched at the IPR’s offices in the same year; Mike Smith of Cardiff University awarded IPR’s Stephen Tallents Medal; research at Queen Margaret College; news courses (Thames Valley, Kent, Robert Gordon, and Templeton College Oxford)

1997 – Correspondence about costs for PREF Newsletter No.2 (£102.22 for 200 copies).

Issue 3 – March 1998, 16pp [PDF Appendix 4]

Summary of Contents

P.1 Editorial by PREF chair Liz Yeomans (LMU) on purpose of PREF

P.2 Di Burton elected to IPR Council

P.3 Public Relations research (Sandra Oliver); Abandon Grunig (Kevin Moloney)

P.4-7 Max Clifford – the honest liar (Jo Fawkes, UCLAN)

P.7-12 Public relations: Theory, research and practice (Charles Moncur)

P.12 Conference reports from IPRA/CERP, Helsinki; Bled 1997 and PREF 1997

P.13 Recent publications; Calls for Papers

P.14 Roundup, new faces and moves; Call for Papers (PREF, 1998)

P.15 Correspondence with *Prospects* postgraduate directory over listing of public relations courses

P.16 IPR launches own Diploma; Email directory of PREF members

New editor, Rosemary Graham, announced in 2000 but no further issues on file

Obituaries for Prof Sam Black from *The Scotsman* and PREF News (1999)

PREF 3 - Agenda and Minutes (1994 to 1999)

Editor's note: There appear to have been PREF meetings before May 27, 1994 which is the date of the first archived Agenda and Minutes. However, there are no records of them. The Co-Convenors at this time were Betty Dean of Watford Business School (West Herts College) and Sue Wolstenholme of the College of St Mark and St John

Date	Venue	Comments
27/05/1994	IPR, London	Sue Wolstenholme elected Chair; Archie McLellan# as Secretary and Paul Noble as Treasurer. Membership categories agreed as Full (Organisations with “substantial involvement in public relations education” and “distinguished individuals”; associate membership was for “educators with a substantial interest and involvement in public relations” PREF research bulletin being prepared (but delayed) Discussion over UK's representation in Europe at CERP
02/12/1994	IPR, London	Discussion about a Spring conference to be held at Stirling University in April 1995; followed by a research seminar led by Danny Moss and Toby MacManus
06/06/1995	Trinity & All Saints, College	Spring conference “a success”; brochure needed to promote PREF; no progress on research activities;
16/10/1995	IPR, London	No progress on brochure or academic journal; Planning conference for Easter 1996
26/03/1996	Plymouth	Main issue was criticism of IPR and PRCA's decision on changes recognition/approval processes for degree programmes without consulting PREF. Statement sent by Executive IPR Education and Training Committee which noted “the lack of value attached to higher education's contribution to public relations”.
23/05/1996	Thames Valley University	AGM – Main discussion was PREF statement to IPR, which was “heated”. There had been a breakdown in communications within IPR and between PREF and the Institute's Training & Education Committee. Measures were in place to set out each party's interests.

01/11/1996	IPR, London	Chairperson (Sue Wolstenholme) stood down, having left education and joined IPR as Training & Education Officer. Continued tension with IPR over recognition of PREF's role and expertise
09/04/1997	Trinity and All Saints College	Liz Yeomans took over as Chair; Jacquie L'Etang became secretary. More discussion on relationship IPR and accreditation of degrees
09/09/1997	IPR London	Planning for joint CERP/PREF conference; Also briefing from Ian Methereil on PRET training matrix (see Appendix 1) which emanated from PRCA (paper in minutes)
30/03/1998	IPR London	Broad range of minor issues
05/09/1998	Leeds Met University	Discussion of PRET Matrix (see Appendix 1) with suggestions for its improvement.
26/02/1999	IPR, London	More on the relationships between PR bodies, PREF and PR education.
Undated, Sept/Oct? 1999	Queen Margaret UC, Edinburgh	Further discussions on relationships with PR bodies and a proposal for PREF to focus on "developing educational work" and "detach itself from entangled discussions with the IPR"
29/11/1999	Mansion House, York	Danny Moss and Paul Green elected as co-Chairs of PREF, replacing Liz Yeomans and Emma Wood. Rosemary Graham replaced Jacquie L'Etang as Secretary. Discussion of PREF website and conference.

Archie McLellan died in August 2000 from a heart attack

PREF 4 – Conferences

1995 – PREF Meeting, 20-22 April 1995, University of Stirling – Theme of ‘Shaping the Future of Public Relations Education’, Correspondence and programme drafts, Chair’s summary of the conference, delegates’ list. Also has a copy of Sam Black’s IPR Journal article (April 1993), *How public relations education at degree level came to Britain*. Black did not attend the meeting as he flew to Boston for Edward Bernays’ funeral.

1996 – Spring Conference, 24-25 March, College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth. Theme of ‘Teaching the Truth’. Only document is a one-page conference flyer. Some papers were later published in PREF Newsletter No.3 in 1998.

1997 – 3rd Annual PREF Conference, 2-5 April, Trinity and All Saints University College, Leeds, Call for Papers and correspondence

1997-1998 – Proposal for a joint CERP/PREF Conference for spring 1998 (did not take place)

1998 – Annual Conference, 3-5 September, LeedsMet, Abstracts and Correspondence

PREF 5 – Membership lists (1994 to 1999)

1994 - Correspondence prior to formation of mailing lists

1995 – Membership list (38 members) [[Appendix 5](#)]

1996 – Membership list (Full members – 18 universities and colleges with 36 names; 8 associate members) [[Appendix 6](#)]

1997 – Membership list (Full members – 15 universities and colleges, with 35 names; 11 associate members, including 1 college and 1 university) [[Appendix 7](#)]

Undated – Mailing list of labels, includes others not in membership (119 names)

1999 – Membership list (Full members – 13 universities and colleges, with 37 names; 16 associate members, including 5 universities and 1 college) [[Appendix 8](#)]

Undated, Mailing list of labels marked “probably 1999” – Includes others not in membership (35 names)

PREF 6 – Financial statements

1994 – Balance of £593.95

1994/95 – Balance of £1638.08

1995/96 – Balance of £2139.21

1997-98 – Balance of £2529.64

1998-99 – Balance of £3232.99

Appendices

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PRET

PUBLIC RELATIONS
EDUCATION TRUST

PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION AND TRAINING MATRIX

This document sets out the broad range of knowledge and skills necessary to a public relations professional. It has been developed with and endorsed by the Public Relations Consultants Association and The Institute of Public Relations. It is designed as a basis for:

- ★ self assessment of training needs and career development
- ★ appraisal of employees' skills and their development needs
- ★ evaluation of training and education course suitability.

THE MATRIX

The matrix is in four categories:

- A: Knowledge
- B: Business Skills
- C: Public Relations Skills – Counsel and Planning
- D: Public Relations Skills – Implementation

Five stages of knowledge, skills or experience have been identified:

- Stage 1 – pre-entry requirements** basic skills and knowledge necessary for any candidate wishing to pursue a career in public relations – these may be developed while working in an administrative role
- Stage 2 – professional starter** – specific initial knowledge and skills essential for those developing their public relations career, from assistants and junior executives
- Stage 3 – developing and operating professional and 4** – development, knowledge and skills, necessarily gained over a period of time, to become a fully rounded and experienced public relations practitioner
- Stage 5 – experienced professional specialist and manager** – the continuing development phase from functional to team or group supervision responsibility, senior counselling and management

In association with



PRCA

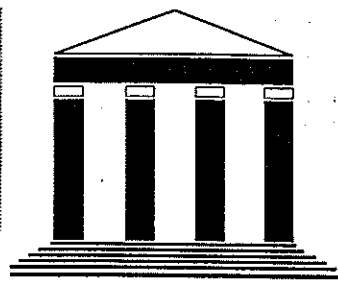
A		KNOWLEDGE	STAGE:	1	2	3	4	5
	1	The role of Public Relations, both in-house and consultancy, in commercial and public sector organisation		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	An appreciation of the range of techniques and media available to public relations practitioners in the UK		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3	The role, responsibilities, vocabulary, techniques, ethics, law and regulations relating to: – public relations – marketing, advertising, research and behavioural studies, sales promotion, direct marketing, direct selling		✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
	4	The role, responsibilities, vocabulary, techniques, ethics, law and regulations relating to: – print and broadcast media, publishing, telecommunications – sponsorship			✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
	5	The structure, priorities, distribution, basic economics, organisation and operation of: – manufacturing industry – service industries – financial institutions – central and local government – the public sector – voluntary organisations – membership bodies – the professions			✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
	6	The legal, legislative and regulatory framework of the UK and the EU					✓	✓
	7	Organisational strategy and policy making, both concept and practice				✓	✓	✓
	8	Communication theory and practice			✓	✓	✓	✓
	9	Organisational: planning and management: – missions/objectives – culture and ethics – growth strategies – financial planning and sourcing – decision-making – change management – structural options – performance measurement – stakeholder theory and power			✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

B		BUSINESS SKILLS	STAGE:	1	2	3	4	5
	1	Communications: Telephone technique		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	Meeting technique		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	3	Presentation technique			✓	✓	✓	✓
	4	Working as part of a team		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	5	Working as part of an organisation			✓	✓	✓	✓
	6	Networking (clients, colleagues, contacts)			✓	✓	✓	✓
	7	Induction and orientation					✓	✓
	8	Negotiating skills			✓	✓	✓	✓
	9	Organisational: Work flow planning and setting priorities		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	10	Interviewing and staff selection					✓	✓
	11	Time management			✓	✓	✓	✓
	12	Delegation and supervision			✓	✓	✓	✓
	13	Motivation and leadership				✓	✓	✓
	14	Budget setting and control				✓	✓	✓
	15	Team building and management					✓	✓

B		BUSINESS SKILLS	STAGE:	1	2	3	4	5
	16	Training and development of individuals and teams					✓	✓
	17	Understanding and design of financial controls					✓	✓
	18	Understanding/design of quality controls, including ISO9000					✓	✓
	19	Human resource planning and management					✓	✓
	20	Analytical: Analysing annual reports and financial data				✓	✓	✓
	21	Understanding the use of research data				✓	✓	✓
	22	Desk research		✓		✓	✓	✓
	23	Communication audits				✓	✓	✓
	24	Risk analysis				✓	✓	✓
	25	Activity and resource analysis					✓	✓
	26	SWOT analysis					✓	✓

C		PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS – COUNSEL AND PLANNING	STAGE:	1	2	3	4	5
	1	Understanding Public Relations objectives and strategies			✓	✓	✓	✓
	2	Identifying publics			✓	✓	✓	✓
	3	Understanding the differing emphasis of various market sectors, such as: – consumer, technical, financial, health and science				✓	✓	✓
	4	Formulating Public Relations objectives				✓	✓	✓
	5	Developing Public Relations strategies, both overall and contingency				✓	✓	✓
	6	Creating Public Relations plans for action				✓	✓	✓
	7	Monitoring and evaluating progress and delivery				✓	✓	✓
	8	Assessing Public Relations implications of general management plans and decisions					✓	✓
	9	Identifying trends, risks and issues relevant to an organisation				✓	✓	✓
	10	Assessing the Public Relations implications for an organisation of the plans and decisions of other organisations, including: – its market place – local and national government – the European community – national and international regulatory bodies – the media – special interest groups – the local community				✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
	11	Understanding the implications of international developments in the media				✓	✓	✓
	12	Counselling and advisory techniques					✓	✓
	13	Issue management					✓	✓
	14	Crisis management					✓	✓

D		PUBLIC RELATIONS SKILLS – IMPLEMENTATION	STAGE:	1	2	3	4	5
	1	Business Writing: – agendas, meeting notes, memoranda, letters – reports, proposals, planning, progress		✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓
	2	Editorial Writing: – photocalls, media alerts, photo captions, draft releases – briefing and feature material, news letters, proof reading – script development and writing		✓	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
	3	Speeches and Presentations				✓	✓	✓
	4	Selecting media to reach identified publics			✓	✓	✓	✓
	5	Compiling contact lists		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	6	Media liaison techniques and operation				✓	✓	✓
	7	Editorial planning and monitoring				✓	✓	✓
	8	Editorial promotions (competitions, reader offers)				✓	✓	✓
	9	Negotiating editorial features and interviews				✓	✓	✓
	10	Handling editorial enquiries			✓	✓	✓	✓
	11	Selecting external resources: photographer, designers, printers and researchers				✓	✓	✓
	12	The basics of photography			✓	✓	✓	✓
	13	Briefing a photographer				✓	✓	✓
	14	Event planning and management				✓	✓	✓
	15	Exhibition planning and management				✓	✓	✓
	16	Sponsorship selection, planning and organisation				✓	✓	✓
	17	Briefing designers				✓	✓	✓
	18	Print selection, briefing and production management				✓	✓	✓
	19	Capabilities of desktop publishing				✓	✓	✓
	20	Audio/visual briefing and production management				✓	✓	✓
	21	VNR/B-Roll production and distribution				✓	✓	✓
	22	Radio production and placement				✓	✓	✓
	23	Public speaking					✓	✓
	24	Giving interviews					✓	✓
	25	Conference and seminar participation					✓	✓



Editorial - Chair PREF

Sue Wolstenholme The role of education, as distinct from training, plays a special part in the professionalisation of public relations. Undergraduate and postgraduate degrees rightly emphasise research skills. Research is vital for three main reasons: first, practitioners need the skills to research issues, client needs, campaign effectiveness and developments in the areas in which they function; second, educators are responsible for developing new ideas in the field, to keep abreast of developments, to keep their teaching up to date and to publish to satisfy the funding council responsible for their university (see article on the Research Assessment Exercise); third, student research develops independent and critical thinking graduates who will be more valuable as employees.

As research is a requirement of education and is necessary to good practice it is clearly desirable for a close working relationship to exist to satisfy all needs. Since public relations became a subject on the curriculum, nearly ten years ago, a great deal of research has been carried out - largely by students - and is now committed to libraries across the UK from Plymouth to Stirling. This newsletter is an attempt to share some of that work, to show the wide range of subjects that have been covered and to encourage those who could find many of the studies valuable to begin to use this growing body of knowledge and to work with educators to develop new research projects.

Research Assessment Exercise

The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which is carried out by Government every four years has been taking place this summer and is nearly complete. Each cognate area within each University is awarded a numerical grade from 1 to 5 in which 5 is the highest, signifying international recognition as a Centre for Excellence, and 1 is the lowest resulting in the loss of funding. On these results depend substantial resources and jobs (the difference between a 4 rating and a 5 rating in a department of around 20 people could be the equivalent of three lectureships).

How does the RAE work? All cognate areas prepare a detailed written submission detailing and categorising all research publications according to specified criteria. These criteria attempt to 'weight' publications according to quality and academic rigour. Thus, a text book written for first year undergraduates is much less valued than single monograph or article accepted in a highly rated journal which employs double or triple blind refereeing (in which articles are reviewed by two or three academics who are unaware of who the author is). Blind refereeing is intended to ensure that standards of academic scholarship, based on scientific, social scientific or humanistic epistemologies and research practice are maintained through the process of critical, independent and confidential review.

The RAE looks for research diversity and vitality so in terms of an

individual's submissions, the presentation of articles on the same subject does not 'count' for as much as articles or book chapters on different topics. Panels of élite academics from the cognate area review the documentation and the submitted books and articles. A process of checking is also undertaken, for

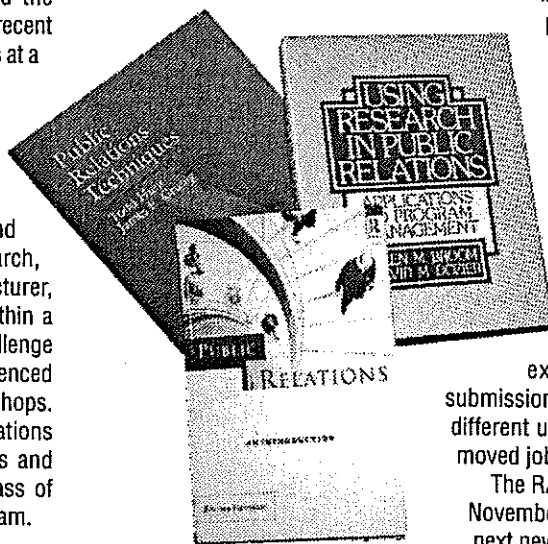
example to ensure that submissions are not entered twice at different universities (if someone has moved jobs).

The RAE results will be out in late November and will be printed in the next newsletter.

The RAE looks for research diversity and vitality ...

Editorial - issue editor

Jacquie L'Etang The purpose of this newsletter is to facilitate networking among PREF members and between PREF and the practice. It aims to give up-to-date news of teaching initiatives, recent or on-going research and new appointments. Public relations is at a crucial stage of development since institutional credibility follows evidence of quality research output and the addition of two new European focused journals provides a timely and welcome opportunity for academics in the field. Since most of us in public relations education came from the practice rather than following the traditional academic apprenticeship and route (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate, Post-doctoral research, Research Assistant/Teaching Assistant, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Professor) the ability to produce quality research within a few years of entering academia is a major challenge. This challenge can be met successfully if we collaborate with more experienced colleagues and if we support each other through research workshops. We also have to manage the expectations of the public relations industry which is inexperienced in dealing with universities and research and unaware of the time, resources and critical mass of staff required to build a productive and interesting research team.



Documentation required for the TQA

- Self-assessment rating
- Introduction
- Mission statement
- Organisational structure
- Degree system
- Departmental aims/objectives
- Curriculum design and review
- Student awareness of course aims/objectives and curricula
- Staffing - deployment, effectiveness and development
- Support services - library, computing - interface between staff and centre
- Course organisation/processes - student handbooks & course feedback
- Student choice/options
- Teaching practices - student skills
- Assessment - coursework/exams
- Recruitment - pre-entry visits, student support
- Access - pt-time
- Quality of intake - u/g, p/g, pt-time
- Degree quality - no. and class of degrees - cf last 10 years
- Employment and careers - relate to employment skills acquired on courses

Teaching Quality Assessment

Many colleagues will have recently been through the Government's Teaching Quality Assessment exercise (TQA) under the aegis of the Higher Education Funding Council (England and Wales) and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council. An excellent introduction to TQA was given at the PREF meeting at Plymouth in Spring 1996 by a member of the sociology department there which was awarded a rare 'Excellent' (TQA assessment leads to departments being given a full assessment report and a grading of Excellent, Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Unsatisfactory). TQA requires a considerable amount of preparation prior to the three-day visit by three experts from the cognate area. Each Department has to prepare a detailed report setting out Departmental mission, aim and objectives, specific educational aims and objectives for all degrees and modules and explaining support systems within the respective University with which the Departmental structures articulate e.g. student counselling, library and computer support.

In broad terms the audit is about processes and procedures rather than assessing specific content of lectures. So, for example, what is the Department's policy on plagiarism? Where is it written down? Are students aware of the policy? Is it on all course handouts? If each member of staff were to be asked how plagiarism is handled in the Department, would they all give the same answer?

In terms of actual teaching it appears that what is important is the underpinning educational methodology. Assessors will sit in on selected lectures (they will need a timetable of options to choose from) but they will not be assessing erudition but whether the educational aims and objectives of each lecture are made clear to students in the context of the unit as a whole. In terms of course units they will look at the balance of assessment and seek justification for the form of assessment - precedence or consistency are not sufficient justifications in themselves! There should be a departmental house style in terms of course handouts which should detail unit aims and objectives; dates, times and location of classes; names of course co-ordinator and lecturers on the unit; details of assessment and topics/essays; structured/themed bibliographies. At a strategic level, some clear departmental mission statement indicating overall aims with regard to curriculum design and the degrees in the departmental portfolio provides a framework for individual units.

Paperwork is important in terms of degree steering groups and all staff-student meetings where minutes and reports of action taken are important in terms of showing how student feedback has been taken account of. Reports of students' evaluations of specific units should be fed back to departmental committee along with regular course reviews etc.

Assessors are interested in links with industry so Departmental records in getting students into relevant jobs, advisory committees, applied research and so on are of great value here. Similarly, any other career-based seminars/briefing for students should be highlighted.

Support documentation

- Degree structures and options
- Numbers of students
- Course leaflets/guides/handbooks
- External examiners' reports
- Student evaluation forms
- Minutes of staff-student committees
- Research profile
- Staff profile, research interests and FTE ratios
- Student services: careers, information services, computing
- Admissions and degree awards
- Employment records of graduates

TQA results 1996

From the Communications TQA in Scotland 1996 taking in public relations and corporate communications degrees:

Glasgow Caledonian Highly Satisfactory
Napier University Highly Satisfactory
Stirling University Highly Satisfactory*

*Public relations courses were assessed in the previous TQA in 1995 under Marketing and Business cognate area and also awarded a Highly Satisfactory.

PREF conference, college of St Mark and St John, University of Exeter, Plymouth March 1996

PREF's conference this year broke new ground because it was set up as an academic conference. Papers were rigorously refereed and presentations were consequently a little more formal than previously. The conference theme was 'Teaching the Truth' which stimulated a range of papers from an analysis of Max Clifford to the real ethical dilemmas faced by those in public relations practice. The conference helped participants to grapple with the many tensions and controversies implicit in public relations and led to useful discussion of pedagogical issues arising. The sessions were chaired by Sue Wolstenholme and attended by a number of non public relations specialists from the College as well as several keen students.

1st International Conference on Marketing and Corporate Communications

On 22-23 April 1996, the first International Conference on Marketing and Corporate Communications was held at Keele University and attended by 31 academics and practitioners from the UK, Belgium, Holland and the USA. The conference was concerned with the current situation of the communications disciplines and their developments and challenges in the light of the new millennium.

3rd International Public Relations Symposium

The Third International Public Relations Symposium was held in Lake Bled, Slovenia, on 11-14 July 1996. About 30 practitioners and academics mainly from Europe were discussing issues surrounding new challenges for the forthcoming century. Major themes were evaluation in public relations, strategic approaches to public relations and new technology. One day of the symposium was dedicated to an Internet-workshop where new ideas for the use of the Internet for public relations research were being generated and a World Wide Web page was set up. The address is: <http://www.pristop.si/iprr/index.html>.

Seminars

New journals

L Journal of Communication Management, Pub: Henry Stewart. Contact: Daryn Moody 0171-404-3040

Journal of Corporate Communication
Pub: MCB Press Contact: Editor Dr Sandra Oliver, (Thames Valley University).

New courses

University of Salford: **M.Sc. in Corporate Communications** (full and part-time). Course director: Richard Varey.

University of Guildhall, London: **M.Sc. in Communication Management** (full and part-time) Course Director: Prof. J. Porter.

Trinity and All Saint's College, Leeds
MA Public Communication for information staff in the public sector (part-time/modular)
Course Director: Dr Archie McLellan

Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh
BA Corporate Communications
Director: Emma Wood

London School of Economics
M.Sc. in Media and Communications (full-time and part-time) Course Director: Dr Sonia Livingstone.

New faces

FIONA CAMPBELL has been appointed to a 0.5 Lecturer post at the University of Hertfordshire to run the postgraduate diploma in international public relations. Fiona will be continuing to work as consultant.

CHRISTINE DAYMON, Senior Lecturer, Bournemouth University, is doing a PhD on a cultural analysis of media organisations. Other research interests include the management of creativity.

ANITA WISEMAN, a double graduate of Stirling University (BA Film & Media, M.Sc. Public Relations) is Lecturer in Public Relations at the College of St Mark and St John, University of Exeter.

HEIKE PUCHAN, who has a first degree in communications and journalism (University of Bamberg, Germany) and an M.Sc. in Public Relations (University of Stirling) has recently been appointed Lecturer in Public Relations at the University of Stirling.

ANN TURNER has been appointed from the consultancy Countrywide to an academic post at the University of Central Lancashire.

Personal Achievements

Jo Fawkes, University of Central Lancashire, recently won Northern Stories - an annual short story annual competition with a story entitled 'Davy Crockett's Hat' which will be published by Ilkley Literary Festival in October 1996. Jo won the same competition two years ago with 'Et in Arcadia Ego'. Judges in 1996 included Jane Rogers and Mark Illis and in 1994 Beryl Bainbridge and David Pownall.

New Institutional Moves

Manchester Metropolitan University has recently established a Centre for Corporate and Public Affairs, the mission of which is to promote research into the development of corporate and public affairs practice in UK and international companies. The Centre, which aims 'to ensure that organisations get their corporate views across to government more effectively' is headed by Danny Moss and Phil Harris, has attracted financial support from major corporate sponsors including Granada TV and Dibb Lupton Broomhead in the North-West of England. The Centre has organised in-company training for United Utilities (formerly North West Water), briefing staff on parliamentary relations and lobbying practices.

Stirling University's staff and courses in the public relations area have been transferred from the Marketing Department to the Film and Media Department. The three lecturers at Stirling specialising in public relations (Jacquie L'Etang, Magda Pieczka and Heike Puchan) are all research-active and have, as a result of the move, become members of the Stirling Media Research Institute which has recently won a £200,000 ESRC grant to research political public relations in Scotland, the UK and the EU.

Books

Gregory, A. *Planning and Managing a Public Relations Campaign*, Kogan Page, 1996.

Harrison, Shirley. *Introduction to Public Relations*, Routledge, 1995.

L'Etang, J. and Pieczka, M. (eds) *Critical Perspectives in Public Relations*, International Thomson Business Press, 1996.

Articles

Cowley, Valerie 'The customer's view of PR people' *British Journalism Review*, Vol. 6, No 1, 1996.

Kent, Kay 'Communication as a core management discipline', *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol 1, No 1, August 1996.

Maloney, Kevin 'UK environmental groups today - their policy influencing status.'

Maloney, Kevin 'Why Companies hire lobbyists'. *Service Industries Journal* with Professor Grant Jordan of Aberdeen, April 1996.

Maloney, Kevin 'Undergraduate perception of corporate communications'. *Corporate Communications*, Vol 1.1, 1996.

Conference Papers

Fawkes, Johanna 'Max Clifford: The Honest Liar?' *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

Harrison, Shirley 'Telling the Truth when the Chips are Down', *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

Hogg, Gillian 'Service Quality in Public Relations: a Sector Study', *Proceedings of the EIASM Workshop on Quality Management in Services IV*, Madrid 15-17 April 1996.

Large, Will 'Politicising Public Relations', *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

L'Etang, Jacquie 'Public Relations and the Rhetorical Dilemma', *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

Maloney, Kevin 'Lobbying: A Pluralist Perspective?' *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Maloney, Kevin 'UK environmental groups today - their policy influencing status and stance' *IRNES Conference*, Keele University, Sept. 11/12, 1996.

Maloney, Kevin 'Implementation of Local Agenda 21 in Dorset' (with Katherine Barker) at *International Sustainable Development Research Conference*, Manchester, March 18/19, 1996.

Moss, Danny and Warnaby, Gary 'Towards a Strategic Perspective for Public Relations (competitive paper)', *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communication*, Keele University, April 1996.

Moss, Danny and Warnaby, Gary 'Strategy, Environment and the Influence of Public Relations' (working paper), *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Noble, Paul 'Is Public Relations a Science?', *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

Pieczka, Magda 'Corporate Culture, "pop-management" and communication' (working paper), *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Pieczka, Magda; Puchan, Heike; L'Etang, Jacquie, 'Evaluation in Public Relations: Methodological Critique and Issues for Consideration (working paper)', *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Puchan, Heike, 'Internal Communications' (working paper), *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Puchan, Heike 'Public Relations and the Management of Cross-cultural Communication: Challenges for the New Millennium', *Third International Public Relations Symposium*, Lake Bled, Slovenia, 11-14 July 1996.

Watson, Tom 'Effects based Planning and new models for Public Relations Education' (competitive paper), *1st International Conference in Marketing and Corporate Communications*, Keele University, April 1996.

Wiseman, Anita 'Truth and Culture', *PREF Conference*, Plymouth 24-26 March 1996.

Book reviews

L'Etang, J. of Black, Sam (ed) *International Public Relations*, Kogan Page, 1995 in *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol 1, No 1 August 1996.

Moss, D. of Gregory, A. *Planning and Managing a Public Relations Campaign*, Institute of Public Relations, 1996 in *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol 1, No 1 August 1996.

Ph.D. research

KEVIN MOLONEY, Senior Lecturer, University of Bournemouth was probably the first practising lecturer in public relations in the UK to complete his Ph.D. in the public relations field. His topic was political communication and lobbying on which he has since made presentations to the Hansard Society.

TOM WATSON (Nottingham Trent/Southampton Institute) managed a career as a consultant while simultaneously tackling a Ph.D. focused on evaluation. He has made conference presentations at IPR Conferences (1994 and 1995), First and Second International Research Symposiums, Lake Bled (1994 and 1995), as well as Keele.

DONN TILSON, Associate Professor, University of Miami completed a Ph.D. at the University of Stirling based on a comparative study of the corporate public relations strategies of the nuclear industry in the US and Britain. In particular he examined the use of visitor centres and environmental messages as key components of advocational campaigns designed to influence public opinion and shape public policy in favour of a pro-nuclear policy. His work has since been published in *Public Relations Review* and *Media, Culture and Society*.

GILLIAN HOGG, Lecturer, University of Stirling, was recently awarded a Ph.D. which analysed the expectations of public relations purchasers in Scotland. The thesis concluded that a large proportion of public relations buyers are unsure about what to expect from public relations input and are thus disappointed when bad management decisions are not miraculously rectified. Gillian is now applying for finance from the Public Relations Consultants Association in order to extend her study into England.

TOBY MCMANUS, Senior Lecturer, University of Bournemouth is writing a Ph.D. looking at culture as a variable in public relations practice based on a comparative cross-cultural study.

JULIA FOSTER, Lecturer, University of Wolverhampton is completing a Ph.D. looking at the use of video in corporate communication.

RUTH TOWNLEY, Senior Lecturer, Leeds Metropolitan University is tackling a Ph.D. looking at organisational culture.

JACQUE L'ETANG, Lecturer, University of Stirling has recently registered for an M.Litt. leading to a Ph.D. researching the evolution of public relations in the UK post-war era.

COMMISSIONED RESEARCH

Public Relations Education Trust (PRET) have commissioned **DANNY MOSS**, **GARY WARNABY** and Ph.D. research fellow, **ANDREW NEWMAN** (all from Manchester Metropolitan University) to investigate the contribution of public relations to the strategic management of organisations. The results of this study are due to be published in 1997.

Corporate sponsors have commissioned staff at the Centre for Corporate and Political Affairs, Manchester Metropolitan University (headed by **DANNY MOSS** and **PHIL HARRIS**) to 'map' the extent, nature and trends in corporate and public affairs practice among North West and UK corporations.

UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH

Plasecki, Andy 'Survey of models for intercultural communication training used by companies located in Scotland, 1995.

Contributions to next issue: please send to Jacquie L'Etang, Film & Media Department, University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland FK9 4LA. News items, articles (maximum words 500), research summaries and abstracts (maximum words 350), recent consultancy contracts, letters to be submitted by January 31 1997.

Particularly welcome: items on supervising research, articles on surviving TQA or RAE or carrying out doctoral research, summaries of doctoral research, abstracts of interesting student dissertations, reports of applied research, individual achievements, new teaching initiatives, recent publications (books, book chapters, articles, conference papers, book reviews).

Advanced Professional Diploma in Public Relations at Leeds Metropolitan University

Advanced Professional Diploma in Public Relations (Public Sector) Autumn 1996 will see the first participants of the Advanced Professional Diploma in Public Relations (Public Sector) receive their diplomas from Leeds Metropolitan University. The course was devised last year by the public relations team at LMU following market research conducted among practitioners in local government. The course aims to meet the continued professional development (CPD) needs of senior and experienced practitioners. Participants are required to attend workshops in Leeds over a six month period, and to submit a reflective learning assignment of 5,000 words - gaining them 18 credits towards a Masters qualification. Course leader Liz Yeomans said "One of the main challenges for PROs in the public sector is the increasing demand on them to be corporate communicators with wider-ranging responsibilities. We aim to provide a framework that allows participants to critically reflect on their professional role within their organisation, and to develop new approaches with confidence."

Advanced Professional Diploma in Public Relations (Financial Services)

Following popularity of the public sector course, LMU has recently validated a similar route for public relations practitioners in the financial sector, in partnership with PA Sundridge Park (part of the Consulting Group).

Teaching and Learning at LMU

Two members of the public relations team at Leeds Metropolitan University are studying for the Advanced Professional Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans are among the first cohort of this new course which is run by the University's Faculty of Cultural and Education Studies.

The course comprises attendance at eight workshops and the completion of a reflective journal and a reflective practice assignment. "It has allowed me to explore teaching and learning theory, assessment issues, and the broader context of policy-making in higher education", said Liz. "My reflective practice assignment will link into curriculum development. We are revising and updating our public relations practice syllabus. The findings from a survey I am conducting among practitioners will inform the syllabus."

PAUL NOBLE, Senior Lecturer, Bournemouth University is studying for a postgraduate certificate of teaching in higher education (PCTHE). So far, he has looked at subjects such as peer and self assessment, peer tutoring, student managed learning and the quality of higher education in terms of fitness for purpose.

NEXT PREF CONFERENCE:
Trinity and All Saints University
College, Leeds, 3 - 5 April 1996.

Consultancy conducted by public relations academics, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh

GUY FIELDING is Head of the Department of Communication and Information Studies. His research explores peoples' attitudes to and use of personal telecommunications, such as fixed and mobile telephones, answer machines, fax, pagers etc. In addition, he teaches modules in attitudes, persuasion and influence.

■ **For Countrywide Communications:** Analysis and interpretation of market research survey data to underpin launch of new Volkswagen-Skoda range of cars, development and delivery of keynote speech at press launch of new range, and associated radio and press interviews.

■ **For Band & Brown Communications:** Research and preparation of briefing materials for several BT campaigns, authoring of editorial material for placement in national broadsheet press, provision of editorial material for booklets forming part of specific BT PR campaigns, media interviews (radio, TV, print) as part of media fulfilment of campaigns

■ **For Quentin Bell Organisation:** Research and writing of brochure for national campaign by TSB to launch their telebanking services, together with associated media fulfilment.

■ **For PR Department of Ogilvy and Mather Direct:** Planning of series of seminars to promote telebusiness services, together with keynote speech and chairing of seminars.

■ **For Burson-Marsteller:** Consultancy to advise on development of strategic communication initiative by major international telecommunications company.

■ **Presentation of several workshops for PR professionals** on group problem solving techniques and theory based approaches to attitude change in PR contexts

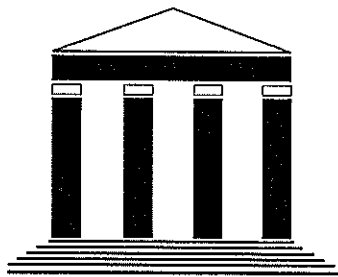
EMMA WOOD is Depute Course Leader for the Corporate Communication degree. Her specific interests are Public Relations and Employee Communications. She worked in Public Relations for 8 years, latterly for the Confederation of British Industry. She is currently chair of the Institute of Public Relations' Education and Training Committee in Scotland. Her research interests include culture change and communication.

■ **For Yarrow Shipbuilders plc:** Directed a communication problem solving and solution implementation project.

■ **For Yarrow Shipbuilders plc:** Design and implementation of communications audit.

■ **For Institute of Public Relations (IPR):** Design and delivery of crisis management simulation programme for PR managers,

■ **British Association of Corporate Communicators:** Developed and co-ordinated course on writing and producing internal publications.



Editorial - Chair PREF

Sue Wolstenholme Since leaving Marjon last year and going back to consultancy work full-time, my perspective on the education/practice debate has developed but not altered to any great extent. The research role of educators and students, as outlined so well in the last newsletter, is still at the centre of the argument in support of public relations in higher education but, more immediate in the minds of practitioners, is the need for the credibility which university study brings to their striving for increased professional status. I have been working on a project with the IPR and I thought it would be useful to discuss some of the aspects of that work here.

To achieve chartered status and thereby create a clear message on the value of membership, fifty per cent of the members of the IPR must hold a diploma or degree level qualification in the subject that is delivered on an accredited syllabus. If all the graduates from qualifying courses joined the Institute (which they certainly do not!) it would be a long time before the required balance was reached. I am working with them on the development of a diploma that can be studied at a number of centres at times to suit people in full-time work as well as those who are unemployed. The diploma is being designed for those already in the Institute or working in public relations and wanting to join. The hope is that the first students will start the course in January '98 at three separate locations in Britain.

Our relationship with the IPR has occupied much of our meeting time in the past but we can be assured that their powerful need to increase the qualified membership will encourage the links with universities as well as their members' growing understanding of the value of academic research.

I know that you will be interested to learn that part of the research for the project has involved a comparison of entry requirements to public relations first degrees with other subjects which might feed students into chartered institutes of practice. Using A-level points (showing the range in brackets) the average entry requirement for public relations is 18 (16-22) whereas for the other courses examined, across fifteen universities, they are as follows: journalism: 20 (18-22); marketing: 16 (14-18); accounting: 16 (12-24); media studies: 20 (18-22). Among the fifteen centres used there is a varying number of those offering each subject, with only four of the sample teaching public relations and media studies and eight teaching accountancy. All the definite and the possible anomalies apart, however, it is my view that in this type of subject area, entry requirements are more affected by market forces than any perceived degree of difficulty on the part of academic registrars and there is very little depth of interpretation that can be applied. The main thing is that the figures do show that public relations is in the middle of the range of vocational and allied subjects and not some way below as some may have implied!

Issue items

- ☐ Research Assessment - can PR hack it?
- ☐ PREF conference programme
- ☐ Talkback: Management cares less about PR?
PR teachers distort Grunig?
Student membership of the IPR
- ☐ New faces; New moves; New publications
- ☐ Undergraduate Standards; NVQs
- ☐ PhD research
- ☐ Public relations at the University of Westminster
- ☐ Calls for papers
- ☐ Personal achievements
- ☐ New courses

'We are talking about intellectually challenging subjects...some vocational subjects come into the category, but public relations and media studies certainly do not..'

(Sir Derek Roberts, provost of UCL quoted in The Observer 22 December 1996)

PREF Conference 3-5 April 1997

Joint hosts: Trinity and All Saints University College and Leeds Metropolitan University

Main themes: new technology; emergent schools of thought; students' perceptions.

... Details inside

Editorial - issue editor

Jacquie L'Etang Since the last newsletter the Research Assessment Exercise has been completed and academic managers are now calculating financial gains and losses. Elsewhere we list results of some of the departments which house public relations courses and debate the impact RAE has on emergent disciplines such as public relations. The battle for credibility is on! (See quote from Sir Derek Roberts). There is increasing evidence of research activity in public relations as can be seen by publication of books by Moloney, Mallinson and Moore (details inside). These new books are very welcome as they go beyond the traditional introductory volumes (valuable though these are) to discuss public relations in a more discursive way or to present original research. There are more opportunities than ever to present ideas and publish and we have publicised some key events inside. Looking at the conference themes and new courses coming on stream in the past few months it seems there is an increasing interest in public relations from both marketers and media sociologists. Such cross-fertilisation can only be good for public relations in terms of developing the area and widening perspectives.

Undergraduate Standards

Paul Noble sifts the evidence

There are currently four institutions in the UK offering public relations undergraduate programmes: Bournemouth University, Central Lancashire, Leeds Metropolitan and the University College of St Mark & St John (located in Plymouth but validated by Exeter University). There are, of course, many other institutions where public relations and public relations related teaching goes on at undergraduate level in one guise or another. Stirling University's MSc for example, was the first public relations degree of any type to be established in this country in 1988.

Of the undergraduate programmes, Bournemouth, Leeds and St Mark & St John were all established in the late 1980s and have recently been joined by Central Lancs. Consequently, the first three have a number of cohorts of graduates to their name. While it will probably require 10 years of output to draw any firm conclusions, destination data so far is very encouraging. All Higher Education Institutions are required to provide the government with accurate first destination data for their graduates; in simple terms, what their graduates are doing in six months after leaving their institution.

The news is excellent. First, public relations graduates are much more likely to find employment than the national average (up to 90% in permanent employment after six months compared with a national average of 50%). Second, a high proportion of those in permanent employment (up to four out of five) are actually working in mainstream public relations posts. On the surface, then, it appears that vocational public relations undergraduate degree courses are succeeding in supplying the profession with a steady flow (about 100+ per annum) of high calibre, focused graduates.

Purely measuring the output from these courses gives no indication of the added value provided by the degree that the graduates have studied. It may be the individual graduates concerned would have entered - and succeeded - in public relations anyway.

An encouraging sign for the future is that the quantity of applicants to these courses remains high. Approximately 1000 (mostly teenage) candidates apply to study public relations at undergraduate level each year. Consequently, the institutions concerned receive up to 600 plus applications each year (potential students can apply to more than one institution) for, typically, 60 places. This normally makes public relations degrees among the most sought after in the institution concerned.

The quality of the applicants to study public relations at undergraduate level also remains high. Public relations courses also reflect the general trend in higher education of wider access. This means that in addition to the typical post A-level students, entrants come to higher education with a range of other qualifications such as BTECs, HNDs, GNVQs and (particularly mature students) via Access/Foundation courses. This enriches the student cohort to the benefit of all concerned.

However, A-level entry remains the dominant entry qualifications for public relations degree courses and therefore A-level 'points' (A-10, B-8, C-6 etc) remain a useful historical input indicator, as well as enabling comparisons with other degree subjects. The four undergraduate programmes require in the range of 16 to 22 points to make an offer (in addition to other selection criteria such as interviews and written submissions): 22 points equates to 2Bs and a C for the typical student studying three A-level subjects. Again, this tends to make public relations programmes among the most difficult to get onto in the institution concerned.

This level of entry has remained stable over the last few years which is encouraging in the face of increased higher education opportunities to study public relations and related subjects. However, the number of points required had increased significantly from the early days of undergraduate provision when public relations was just establishing itself as a valid subject for higher education.

The mean number of points 'scored' by all UK applicants accepted for degree courses with two or more A levels in 1995 was 18. The public relations range of 16 to 22 compares favourably with this figure and UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) statistics show that Communications Studies (the subject area in which public relations is classified) requires higher A-level points than subjects such as psychology, business management, computer science and marketing.

Further research to identify the contrasts between public relations graduates and non-specific graduates will be reported in a future issue.

NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Di Burton

Competence based approaches have become increasingly influential in recent years, and their impact on higher education seems likely to increase with the growing emphasis on the introduction of higher level NVQ/SVQs and GNVQ/GSVQs.

The topical issue at the moment seems to be whether universities should be engaging in the "learning to do or learning to think" debate. The University of York is looking at the compatibility of NVQ higher level competence and academic knowledge. They are studying how some universities are rapidly moving towards an academic structure in which work-based and competence-based learning and skills acquisition are recognised. Despite these developments, concerns are still expressed about the lack of form and depth of knowledge and understanding required for high level NVQs. Nowadays it is argued that only through the acquisition of knowledge and understanding can best practice be achieved. The development of high level skills and competencies can only occur when knowledge provides the foundation for practice in the workplace.

Other universities engaging in competence based approaches include City University, the University of Surrey, Thames Valley University, the University of Northumbria at Newcastle and the University of Warwick.

Activities engaged by some of the above include mapping exercises to enable students to choose programmes which lead both to NVQ outcomes and traditional accreditation. Another factor to take into account is the fact that as more companies are moving towards training strategies focussed around NVQs, universities are beginning to notice some erosion in the more traditional forms of part time recruitment and continuing professional development. Tax incentives and the new lifelong learning target for higher Level 4 skills are likely to attract TECs, organisation and individual employees still further to NVQs.

A NIACE report "An Adult Higher Education" (1993) notes that higher education refers to a stage of education that individuals can undergo in a variety of locations, not just universities. This suggests that to remain major stakeholders in higher level vocational education, universities will need to engage more genuine and complex partnerships for the future. It is in the light of this that many universities are evolving for engaging with NVQs in its curriculum.

ESRC awards studentships to Stirling M.Sc. until 2001

The quality of Stirling University's full-time M.Sc. in Public Relations has been affirmed by the Economic and Social Research Council. The ESRC has granted Specialist Recognition and awarded four studentships, one in each of the four academic years 1997/98 until 2000/2001.

The ESRC Subject Panel considered 105 applications in two classes: Specialist Recognition and Research Training. Stirling was one of 55 courses to be granted Specialist Recognition. The ESRC Subject Panel also had 38 studentships to award and Stirling was one of 19 courses awarded Specialist Recognition to be allocated a recurrent studentship.

Course Director, Jacquie L'Etang said "The course team is absolutely delighted. This is an important step in the acceptance of public relations as a legitimate area for academic study."

PREF conference programme

Public Relations Educators' Forum
3-5 April 1997
Trinity and All Saints' University
College, Horsforth, Leeds

Contacts: Dr Archie McLellan
Trinity and All Saints' UC
Liz Yeomans
Leeds Metropolitan University

Day 1 - Virtually real?: The implications of changing technology on public relations practice. Social science, business and management perspectives on themes relating to new technology: internet, intranet, multi-media. Will the emphasis on user 'empowerment' through technology challenge the communication planner? Or will public relations practice be strengthened by technological innovation?

Day 2 - Public relations education in the 1990s: what have we learned? An educator's brief. Public relations is still a young discipline, but are 'schools of thought' already developing in the field? What teaching and learning approaches work best? How can educators balance theory and practice? This is a rare opportunity for educators with different perspectives to engage in debate as well as share best practice.

Day 3 - To boldly go....students' responses Every year hundreds of students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels research public relations topics either through a dissertation or project or through applied public relations research such as communication audits. This session gives students a chance to share their work with a wider audience and gives educators an opportunity to reflect on student perspectives on public relations and education and student experiences of conducting research in the field.

Research Assessment - can PR hack it?

Jacquie L'Etang

Public relations will never be recognised as a discipline, unless it can earn its bread and butter in terms of research as well as student numbers. However, the chance to produce research work of high quality (and be recognised as such nationally and internationally) requires academic bosses to invest in the area on a long-term basis and not simply see it as a useful way of attracting high student numbers.

There is work to be done. Sir Derek Roberts' comment that public relations is not 'intellectually challenging' illustrates the prejudice of a traditional academic (scientist) but also shows why public relations should not limit itself to a narrow functionalism or applied focus. If public relations educators are limited or limit themselves to a narrow conception of public relations teaching and research then academics from other more traditional areas will certainly 'encroach' upon the area and possibly perpetuate the idea that public relations is an intellectually low-level 'how-to' subject.

One strategy for public relations educators is to work with experienced academics in allied fields such as management, organisational studies, communications, political science and to begin to publish in those more 'accepted' journals. Participating in the more abstract aspects of the field may contribute to academic credibility - though it may also have the disadvantage of attracting criticism from the practice!

There is tension between vocationalism and pure academic work in many subject areas, the difficulty for public relations, however, is that the lay person or public relations practitioner may not have any idea what 'pure academic work' in public relations looks like and how some of it might ultimately contribute to practice. Public relations education in the UK is, to use a cliché 'between a rock and a hard place', straining for acceptability by the practice, without credibility in academia and geographically located in probably the most anti-intellectual culture in Europe.

The 'league tables' of research have been much criticised for their methodology, for their divisiveness and for their basic unfairness in assessing traditional and 'new' universities in the same way despite the fact that the funding resource has never been equal. Listed below are the RAE results for cognate areas known or assumed to be housing public relations courses. In cases where the location of public relations was ambiguous or where contribution from more than one of the cognate areas could be assumed, both results are shown. It is not known whether public relations academics were entered in the returns made by cognate areas. Obviously, public relations could have been entered under several different cognate areas e.g. Business and Management Studies or Communication/ Cultural and Media Studies or Psychology. Given that public relations is such a new area academically I would suggest that these figures tell us more about the research environments within which public relations academics are currently situated than about the state of public relations research: RAE 2000 or 2004 may begin to tell us more about that.

RAE ratings from lowest to highest are: 1,2,3b,3a,4,5,5*.

Business and Management Studies		Communication, Cultural and Media Studies	
Central Lancashire	2	Bournemouth	1
Cheltenham & Gloucestershire	2	King Alfred's Coll, Winchester	1
Hertfordshire	3b	Leeds Metropolitan	2
Leeds Metropolitan	2	London Guildhall	1
Manchester Metropolitan	3b	Southampton Institute	2
Southampton Institute	1	Thames Valley	3b
Thames Valley	1	Ulster	3a
Trinity & All Saints	1	Wolverhampton	1
Westminster	3b	Westminster	5
Ulster	3a	Queen Margaret Coll	3b
Stirling	3a	Stirling	5
Wales, Cardiff	5	Wales, Cardiff	3b

NB Please write to the Editor with any corrections, particularly if public relations in your department is based in a different cognate area (as defined by RAE) such as Sociology, Social Policy and Administration, Psychology. For example, there were no published returns in the above categories for Marjon, Salford or Napier in the Times Higher special issue of 20 December 1996.

LSE gets into evaluation PR Week (17 January) reported that ...

"On 9 December a group of around 40 academics, PR practitioners and media evaluators came together for the first LSE Forum on Communications Research...in a bid to promote a more rigorous stance on evaluation."

'Media evaluation is based on some presumptions about relations between media coverage and public opinion which researchers rejected years ago.'

(George Gaskill, Director of the London School of Economics and Political Science's Methodology Institute)

Management cares little for public relations

Shirley Harrison

LMU was the only public relations academic to submit a paper to a major recent management conference. The British Academy of Management annual conference at Aston University in September 1996 attracted around 700 delegates. Shirley's paper was poorly attended and she writes:

'Jon White and Richard Varey ran a Round Table discussion forum on public relations management, and only two people came. We formed the view that our discipline is not yet taken sufficiently seriously in academic circles. We talked about the possibility of trying to do something about it, by targeting management conferences with academic papers in future. What do PREF members think?'

Public relations is not an exercise in truth...

Kevin Moloney

University of Bournemouth, author of a recent book on lobbying writes:

'As Marxists distorted Marx, so PR teachers distort Grunig. In teaching and research Grunig has come to be represented as follows: PR is an activity of communicative behaviour between social and moral equals who contest to tell the 'truth.' The outcome - as well as the process - is 'truth'. This is at odds with the field evidence where PR is seen as distortion, lying and evasion. The 'Marxist' view of PR has backed us teachers/researchers into a sterile canyon. We need to break free.

If PR is not an exercise in 'truth' we must revert to a 'Marxian' perspective. PR is a contest between self-interested, persuasive and manipulative views offered into the public domain in order to gain marginal advantage for its promoters. PR is about winning; not about equality or two-way symmetry.'

PR teachers sympathetic to this proposition should contact Kmoloney@bournemouth.ac.uk with a view to setting up a study group.

Student membership of IPR

Sandy Oliver writes:

'Views and opinions welcome from PREF colleagues on the rejection of my final year business and management undergraduates for student membership category. Do we need another category if we are not to present a really poor image to future practitioners on whom IPR's income may rest, maybe sooner than we think?'

Sandy goes on to question whether we can wait for the credit-rated IPR Dip. and asks whether a minimum number of credits (double-marked and externally moderated) might not be an acceptable alternative.

Please send responses to Jacqui L'Etang marked 'Management cares little for public relations'; 'Public relations and truth'; 'Student membership of IPR.'

Calls for papers

Corporate Communication Journal

Research-based articles on integrated communication and integrated public relations welcome. The focus is on management/academic driven research for example student/staff case studies and dissertation extracts which address symmetrical communication between one or more stakeholder groups or between institutions. Articles should be strategically focused rather than functional. The Editorial Advisory Board hopes to produce a special Higher Education issue in Autumn 1997 in which opinion pieces will be accepted in addition to pure research - so get scribbling! Of particular interest is the significance on the profession and universities of flexible learning, distance learning and other government driven trends. All submissions are internationally refereed to a high standard and so can appear on CV publication lists. Help is available to prospective authors via e-mail if required on SandyEdit@aol.com. Forthcoming 1997 PREF conference papers will be accepted if they adhere to the format which is explained on the inside back cover of every issue (quarterly from 1997).

If you or your organisation does not subscribe, you can do so to MCB University Press Tel: + 44 1274 777700; Fax: + 44 1274 785201; Internet subscriptions and Internet News <http://www.mcb.co.uk/andrea/leaflet.htm>. Individual sample copies available on request.

Public Relations Research Symposium

Lake Bled, Slovenia 11-13 July 1997

Managing Environment Issues: Public relations, public affairs and environmental issues

This is the fourth conference to be held in the magnificent surroundings at Lake Bled. This year's two-day programme will comprise presentations by a panel of international keynote speakers on each morning of the symposium followed by competitive paper presentations each afternoon. This year the symposium will adopt an environmental theme and papers will explore a variety of issues relating to how organisations can or should relate to the growing challenge of managing their relationships with the environment. The symposium will offer an opportunity for practitioners and academics to explore such issues as how public perceptions of environmental issues have changed; how the environmental agenda has evolved and what role public relations can play in managing organisation-environment interaction.

Of special interest are papers which examine:

- the impact of environmental issues on senior management decision-making;
- community reactions to decisions likely to have an impact on the environment, including NIMBY or 'not-in-my-backyard' reactions, non-violent resistance and

violent reactions in which protest groups resort to violence;

- characteristics of environmental pressure groups and the relationships between pressure groups, government, the media and the community;
- future developments in public concern for the environment;
- recent corporate experience of dealing with the consequences of pressure groups or public concern for the environment;
- international experience of the management of environmental issues.

A selection of papers from previous conferences is presented in a forthcoming volume *Public Relations Research* edited by Danny Moss, Toby McManus and Dejan Vercic and published by ITBP UK academics whose work is represented are: Toby McManus, Danny Moss, Louise Thane, Gary Warnaby and Jon White.

Abstracts for proposed papers should be sent to:

Dejan Vercic
Pristop Communication Group
Selanova 20
PO Box 49
1001 Ljubljana
Slovenia
Tel: + 386 61 161 10 69
Fax: + 386 61 161 10 52
Internet: Dejan.Vercic@Pristop.si

Organisers: Danny Moss, Dejan Vercic, Jon White.

Academy of Marketing (Formerly Marketing Education Group)

31st Annual conference 7-10 July 1997
Manchester Metropolitan University

Competitive and working papers welcomed. Topics include:

- relationship marketing
- political marketing
- gender, sexual orientation and marketing
- international marketing
- marketing and corporate communications

Danny Moss is chairing the marketing and corporate communications track and says 'This is a good opportunity for PR academics to reach a wider audience.'

Contact: Danny Moss 0161-247-6050

IPRA World Congress in Helsinki

16-18 June 1997

Contact: Donnalyn Morris
Tel: + 44 0181 481 7634/5
Fax: + 44 0181 481 7648
e-mail: 100315.26020Compuserve.com

New faces

MICHAEL DUNN, a graduate of Stirling's MSc and manager at BT will be teaching at Marjon in Spring 1997.

DR KATE MACKENZIE-DAVEY, Smythe Dorward Lambert Lecturer in Organisational Communication, Birkbeck College, University of London.

SARAH SOLWAY, formerly Account Director at Lynne Franks agency will be teaching at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh to cover maternity leave in summer 1997.

There are a number of Visiting Professors

who are spending sabbatical time at Stirling.

PROFESSOR PETE HAMILTON, University of Pittsburg, Kansas. Pete is teaching at Stirling from February to July 1997. Pete has taught on public relations and communication courses for twenty years, has a Ph.D. in psychology and is a specialist in communications in the organisational context. In the 1970s he was a member of the International Communication Association (ICA) team that developed standardised methodology for communication audits and this remains a strong interest. He has given many conference presentations and has published articles in *Public Relations Review* and *Journal of Public Relations Research* on situational theory.

PROFESSOR SCHWARTZ, Cornell University, is teaching at Stirling in March 1997. He is Chair of the Department of Communication at Cornell, has a PhD in Communication and has published and presented many papers on communication planning and strategy, total quality management, issues management and corporate public relations, interpersonal communication and, as a former member of the ICA team, communication audits.

DR SAMUEL DYER, Senior Lecturer in Management Communication, University of Waikato, New Zealand. Dr Dyer is teaching at Stirling between July and December 1997. Dr Dyer has a B.Sc. in Business Administration, an MA in Communication specialising in rhetoric and a Ph.D. in Communication specialising in public relations and focusing on the Exxon Valdez disaster. He has taught a wide range of communication and public relations courses including management skills, managerial communication, persuasion and negotiation, and professional speaking. He has published articles on issues and crisis management; public opinion; newsworthy analysis and community relations in a variety of journals including *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *The Australian Journal of Political Science*, *Australian Communication Review*, *Public Relations Quarterly*, *Public Relations Review*.

PROFESSOR DOUG ANNE NEWSOME has a PhD in Public Relations and has special interests in crisis management. She is teaching at the University of Stirling in May 1997 and it is hoped that she will also be teaching in Spring 1998. Her books include *Media Writing: Preparing Information for the Mass Media* (with Doug Wollert); *Public Relations Writing: Form and Style* (with Bob Carrell) and *This is PR: The Reality of Public Relations* (with Alan Scott and Judy VanSlyke Turk).

New moves

SUE WOLSTENHOLME (formerly of Marjon) has returned to consultancy and is running her own business Ashley Communications. She is also helping the IPR to develop a professional diploma.

Sue has recently been appointed as Research Fellow at the University of Exeter (School of English) to supervise PhDs and carry out research in the area of public relations.

JACQUE L'ETANG (University of Stirling) is on sabbatical until autumn 1997. She is continuing her research into the evolution of public relations in the UK in the post-war era.

ANITA WISEMAN (formerly of Marjon) is now Project Manager for Estover Community Arts.

New publications

Three new and rather different books have just been published below by British authors. Bill Mallinson, formerly at Bournemouth University is now at the American College of Greece, Athens and Simon Moore, formerly at Marjon is now lecturing in Business Communication in the English Department at Bentley College, Massachusetts, USA.

Books

Mallinson, Bill, *Public Lies and Private Truths: an Anatomy of Public Relations*, Cassell, 1996.

Moloney, Kevin, *Lobbyists for Hire* Dartmouth Publishing Company 1996.

Moore, Simon, *An Invitation to Public Relations*, Cassell, 1996.

Book chapters

Harrison, Shirley (with Barnett, N.) 'The Citizen's Charter in Local Government' in Chandler, J.(Ed.) *The Citizen's Charter*, Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1996.

Journal articles

Varey, Richard 'Conscious corporate communication: a conceptual analysis', *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol.1 No.2 1996 pp 134-143.

We hear ...

... that Jon White and Sandra Macleod are collaborating on a book about evaluation.

... that Shirley Harrison is writing a book about crisis management.

... that Sandy Oliver is writing a book about management models for public relations.

... that Philip Kitchen's edited text on public relations to which many public relations academics have contributed chapters will be published by ITBP in April 1997.

Public relations at the University of Westminster

Terry Burke, Deputy Head of School writes:

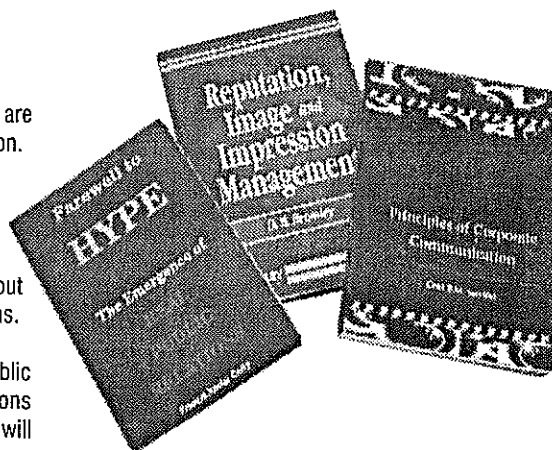
'The study of public relations at the University of Westminster is becoming more firmly established at an academic level. Over the past 15 years it has evolved from a purely vocational business functional area to one in which attention is increasingly paid to the more theoretical issues. The subject matter has expanded from a marketing focus to include issues management and political public relations.

Originally a primarily skills-based BTEC HND module, public relations is now located within the marketing area of the undergraduate integrated business studies modular programme, where it attracts up to 100 students a year, mainly from business, but also from across the university. Public relations now has the potential to form part of a joint Honours degree, within Business Studies, or something similar, depending on the precise outcome of the 1997/98 re-validation process.

More immediately, discussions are taking place to offer public relations to managers and professionals at Master's level, possibly within an organisational or marketing communication context. There may also be slightly different developments in this direction within the area of communication studies per se. What actually transpires will depend in part on organisational developments within the University.'

TQA: they do these things differently in Scotland

In Scotland departments are assessed on a four-point scale: Excellent, Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. In England and Wales departments are assessed in six areas of provision on a four-point scale (1-4) and are Quality Approved if they achieve 2 or above. A score of 1 in any of the six areas means that the department is subject to re-assessment.



PhD research

UNDER THE SKIN OF CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Reginald Watts

Reginald Watts, a Past President of the IPR and one-time Chair and Chief Executive of Burtson Marsteller is currently combining a number of non-executive directorships with a part-time PhD in the Humanities Faculty of the University of Wolverhampton.

His subject is 'An Evaluation of the Interaction Between Corporate Positioning Material, Company Culture and Business Strategy with a view to gaining insights into the Dialogic Processes Involved'. In plainer English, he is looking at the way corporate strategy us affected and affects corporate culture and how that strategy is articulated through the various artefacts which constitute perceptions of an organisation.

The last three years have been concerned with reading texts on semiotics, structuralism and post-structuralism to see whether the theories of people like Saussure, Levi-Strauss, Barthe, Foucault et al can help us understand corporate communications.

Currently Reginald is developing methodologies for applying such theories to large organisations: a manufacturing company; a world class accountancy firm; and a police authority currently applying modern management thinking to its work.

So far his research has had a powerful influence on his thinking about corporate communications. 'Frankly' he says 'it is making me realise how little we know about the communications process generally, let alone as applied to corporate public relations. If we accept the views of writers like Saussure, Foucault, Umberto Eco, Derrida and many others it is apparent that any ideas we might cherish concerning our ability to communicate meaning accurately we can forget. All I can hope for at the end of my doctoral work is to have a clearer idea of what happens during the process by which corporate messages edge their way down the company, pass through the public affairs departments and then struggle onwards towards the company' target audiences.

'Once the theories have been tested in the commercial world it should be possible to devise techniques useful to practitioners working in the corporate field. If nothing else, it will take away the element of subjectivity in our judgement and enable us to say "research shows that X is the case".

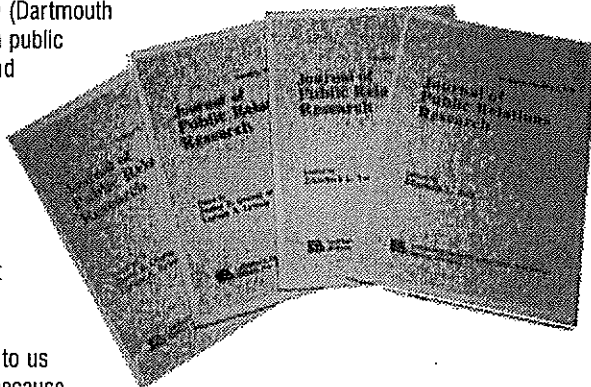
LOBBYISTS FOR HIRE: POLITICS AND PR

Kevin Moloney

One of you kindly - perhaps - designated my PhD and book *Lobbyists for Hire* (Dartmouth Press, 1996) the first UK PhD in public relations. I was flattered and confused. Had I written a Frankenstein? I noted sadly that, without my prompting, the library catalogued the work under 359.361 (the lobbying sub-category of politics) and did not buy two copies.

Do academic boundaries matter to us PR academics? Yes and no. Yes because we need jobs and a bit of undisputed academic turf is fair ground on which to earn a penny. Yes, also because we are as much vocational teachers as academic thinkers and we work in universities where the imperative is to deliver on both. Our employers think these boundaries matter and want us to perform well on both sides. We should tell them about this double burden: poor us for straddling both 'applied' and 'pure' knowledge! Colleagues in astrophysics have it easier.

No, boundaries do not matter after the Bible said Joseph's coat was both multi-coloured and seamless. It was the human weaver's hand which made the colours so blocked and so distinct, not the god of knowledge. We teach about and research into a practice which intermingles marketing, employee relations, investor relations, corporate strategy, issues management, customer relations and lobbying government. It is conceptualisation at its most sterile to block these doings into discrete



categories. PROs in the workplace never wear the primary colours of that young man's coat: we don't work clothes of muted, flecked tweed. You have, by now, made me digest my own confusion. I'm clear that *Lobbyists for Hire* straddles PR and politics. It attempts to be a work portraying how UK public policy is made when powerful businesses hire lobbyists to further their cause (or not) with Government. This problematic is not either/or: it is the pursuit of sectional advantage using public relations techniques (those known as lobbying) to put pressure on government. It is communication to influence the state.

So what's new? *Lobbyists for Hire* takes a neo-pluralist perspective of business as the single most important interest group in the UK. Business uses hired lobbyists as a corporate accessory to add to its already formidable lobbying strength. Sometimes this link-up is associated with success; sometimes not. But there is no known effective methodology to demonstrate that hired lobbyists make the difference. (This corresponds with the US literature about their American colleagues, contract lobbyists.) Other things being equal, business will count these lobbyists in rather than out. The latter do well in terms of their own businesses out of this uncertainty. Thirty eight interviews with their corporate hirers; and with the civil servants and MPs they deal with, and with themselves provide an analysis of what they do; how they do it and what others think of them. Overall, they are a small, distinct, accepted but minor addition to the dramatic personae of UK public policy-making.

Lobbyists for Hire is published by Dartmouth Press, Gower House, Croft Rd., Aldershot, Hants., GU11 3HR. Price £39.90. ISBN 1-85521-794-5.

Doctoral seminar at Stirling

Have you completed a Ph.D. or are you currently researching a Ph.D. or even contemplating the challenge? If so would you be interested in a seminar where you can contribute your ideas and work-in-progress for discussion in a supportive environment? If so, please contact Jacquie L'Etang, University of Stirling expressing your preference for spring 1998 or autumn 1999.

Trinity and All Saints becomes approved NVQ Assessment Centre for Marketing Standards of Newspaper Journalism

Trinity and All Saints University College in Horsforth, Leeds, has become an NVQ Assessment Centre approved by the RSA. The College is the first NVQ Centre in the UK to offer the full range of Marketing Standards which cover Advertising, Public Relations, Market Research, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Products and Services and Communications.

NVQs in Newspaper Journalism are recognised throughout the industry as a measure of competence in a full range of skills. Assessment is carried out by experienced professional journalists and includes qualifications in Writing, Production Journalism and Press Photography. Trinity and All Saints already provides an NCTJ recognised print journalism course: development of the NVQ allows working journalists to obtain formal recognition for their skills.

Trinity and All Saints (TAS) has over two decades of experience in researching and teaching Communication and Media. Whilst applying the highest standards of academic rigour, Trinity has always maintained a clear focus on the practical needs of the communications profession. This commitment is evidenced by its links with a number of industry bodies including CIM and CAM Foundation, which offer TAS graduates exemptions across a range of examinations.

Vocational Qualifications are based on a person proving competence in a particular subject or profession, rather than sitting a written examination. Participants are judged at work, on live projects not theory, creating a level of work-related qualifications never before available. The new vocational qualifications are open to all staff, at all levels and ages, who set their own pace achieving standards in their own workplace.

Trinity and All Saints provides fully trained and professionally experienced assessors who will support candidates from a wide range of backgrounds to achieve and demonstrate their potential. In turn, their work is supported by a dedicated NVQ Centre whose systems and administration will ensure that staff's vocational competence is recognised against nationally set criteria, with minimum disruption to day to day business.

"The College is ideally suited to become an Assessment Centre, as many of our professional courses have a strong vocational element to them," says Di Burton, Senior Lecturer in the School of Media and NVQ Centre Co-ordinator.

Network

Contact addresses of those involved in public relations education

Dr Kate Mackenzie-Davey
Smythe Dorward Lambert Lecturer
in Organisational Communication
Birkbeck College
University of London

Christine Daymon
Toby McManus
Dr Kevin Moloney
Paul Noble
Frank Davies
Bournemouth University

Val Cowley
Cheltenham & Gloucester
College of Higher Education

Dr Jon White, Visiting Professor
City University

Jo Fawkes
Kay Kent
Anne Turner
University of Central Lancashire
Ken Garner
Glasgow Caledonian University

Annie Gregory
Alison Theaker
Ralph Tench
Ruth Townsley
Liz Yeomans
Leeds Metropolitan University

Professor J Porter
London Guildhall University

Dr George Gaskill
Dr Sonia Livingstone
Dr Jon White
London School of Economics
University of London

Phil Harris
Danny Moss
Gary Warnaby
Manchester Metropolitan
University

Sheila Lodge
University of Napier

Dr Guy Fielding
Andy Piasecki
Sarah Solway
Emma Wood
Queen Margaret College

Francis Xavier Carty
Rathmines College

Christine Anderson
Robert Gordon University

Dr Richard Valey
University of Salford
BNFL Corporate Communication
Unit

Professor Tim Wheeler
Southampton Institute

Jacque L'Etang
Dr Brian McNair
Dr David Miller
Magda Pieczka

Heike Puchan
Dr Pete Hamilton, Visiting Professor
Sam Black, Hon. Professor
Tim Traverse-Healy,
Hon. Professor
University of Stirling

Bob Pilbeam
The University College of
St Mark and St John (Marjon)

Robin Pedlar
Templeton College
University of Oxford

Di Burton
Dr Archie McLellan
Trinity & All Saints

Dr Sandra Oliver
Thames Valley University

Pauline Irving
Andy Purcell
University of Ulster

Mike Smith
University of Wales

Fiona Campbell
West Herts College

Terry Burke
Business Faculty
University of Westminster

John Tulloch
Communications Faculty
University of Westminster

Jane Hammond
Trident Training Services

Nigel Bain
NB Associates

The University College of St Mark & St John

PLYMOUTH

LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER in

Public Relations, Department of Social Sciences

Salary Scale: £13,100 - £26,931 (pay award pending)

*Applications are invited following a vacancy which has arisen
in this popular and successful subject.*

Public Relations has been established for six years as a subject in the College's Department of Social Sciences. It is an important and fast growing discipline in the U.K. with exciting prospects for development.

Apart from practical experience candidates should also have experience from a relevant academic field and a proven understanding of theories and concepts applicable to public relations.

A commitment to and experience in research will be an advantage.

Salary, which will be dependent on qualifications and experience, will be within the lecturer/senior lecturer scale. The position will initially be offered on a three years fixed term appointment.

For an informal discussion please ring Bob Pilbeam on 01752 636874.

An equal opportunities Employer

For the record

PREF's origins

The Public Relations Educators' forum was the brainchild of Tim Traverse-Healy, Honorary Professor at the University of Stirling. On his retirement from consultancy in 1990 he was invited by the IPR to take on the chairmanship of the Public Relations Education Trust (PRET) to revitalise that body. Tim took on the task for a fixed two-year term. He saw PRET as a 'ginger group' and during his stint of office the Board published the long-awaited distance learning version of the CAM Diploma, staged a national conference aimed at defining a future strategy for public relations education and launched an industry-funded project to determine a research agenda for public relations. Tim envisaged that,

"Formal education in public relations would expand comparatively rapidly, that more practitioners would become involved to lesser or greater degree in the subject, and that more educators would specialise in the subject."

He was also

"concerned that no organisation existed which could consider the issues presented in this important area and offer independently the views of dedicated and professional educators."

Accordingly he hosted a lunch at his London club - The Athenaeum - to float the idea. Among those who attended were Professor Tim Wheeler (then of Bournemouth), Dr Jon White (then of Cranfield), Sam Black, Honorary Professor at the University of Stirling, Danny Moss (then of Stirling) and Betty Dean (then of Watford).

As 'Founder' Tim suggested the name 'Forum' and undertook for a member of PREF to attend all future meetings of PRET as an observer and rapporteur. A convenor was appointed and subsequently an official launch meeting was called at the Institute's premises.

IPR Education Committee 1997

Chair: Esther Kaposi (Mercury)
Vice-Chair: Jane Hammond (Trident PR)
Members: Jane Ferguson (Burson-Marsteller)
John Aarons (Communication Group)
David Evans (GEA)
Rosemary Graham (IPRA)

Co-opted Members:
Anne Gregory (Leeds Metropolitan)
Kay Kent (Central Lancashire)
Nigel Bain (NB Associates)
Anna Fairbairn
(Student representative)

Personal achievements

Mike Smith FIPR, Course Director of the University of Wales MA in Public and Media Relations for the last three years has been awarded the Institute of Public Relations' highest honour - the Stephen Tallents Medal for exceptional achievement in the development of public relations practice. Mike said,

"Besides the great personal honour I am also thrilled that a Welsh practitioner should be the first outside London to receive the highest recognition the Institute can offer. I also feel this is an acknowledgement of the Institute's respect for the University's postgraduate course and the members' recognition of the high calibre of our students."

Mike Smith is chairman and founder of Golley Slater Public Relations and has led the IPR's Wales Group for the past nine years.

The Stephen Tallents medal was founded in 1984. Previous recipients are: Tim Traverse-Healy, Alan Campbell-Johnson, Frank Jenkins, Margaret Nally, Denis Inchbald, Henry Diamond, Alan Eden-Green, Doug Smith, Robin Thurston, Carol Friend, Neville Wade, Peter Smith.

■ Sir Stephen Tallents KCMG CB CBE FIPR was the first President of the IPR 1948/49 and also in 1952/53. He was instrumental in the development of public relations through his work at the Empire Marketing Board, the Post Office and the Ministry of Information in the 1920s and 1930s.



Research at Queen Margaret College

IPR Scotland Research Initiative

IPR Scotland's Education and Training Committee has launched a series of focus groups entitled Best PR Practice, Scotland. This new initiative offers senior practitioners the opportunity to debate their views on strategic issues and is aimed at identifying, sharing and publishing best practice in Scotland.

Each focus group in the series involves up to twenty senior practitioners, selected from public and private sector in-house departments and consultancies. They participate in a wide ranging discussion about key issues central to developing the profession. The group discussions will be recorded and the research findings eventually published.

Focus group topics include: Strategic Planning, How to Influence the Board, Internal Communication and Lobbying in and from Scotland. Emma Wood, Chair of IPR Scotland's Education & Training Committee and a lecturer at Queen Margaret College says:

"We have held two focus groups so far and the results are really interesting - some strong themes are emerging. The objective is to move from identifying issues faced by senior practitioners to formulating policies for overcoming shared problems and identifying future trends. The IPR in London has been very supportive of the initiative and we hope that the published results will contribute to sharing the best practice in the area."

For further information contact Emma Wood on 0131 669 2786

New courses

Thames Valley University:
MA in Advertising and Public Relations
Course Director: Dr Sandra Oliver.

The Robert Gordon University:
BA Corporate Communication
Course Director: Christine Anderson

University of Kent:
MA in Propaganda, Persuasion and History
Course Director: Prof. Hugh Cunningham

European Centre for Public Affairs
Templeton College, Oxford:
Postgraduate Certificate
Course Director: Robin Pedlar

Contributions to the next issue: please send to Jacquie L'Elang, Film & Media Department, University of Stirling, Stirling, Scotland FK9 4LA. News items, articles (maximum words 500), research summaries and abstracts (maximum words 350), recent consultancy contracts, letters to be submitted by 31 September 1997.

Particularly welcome: items on RAE or TQA; reports of applied research; consultancy contracts carried out by academics; individual achievements; new teaching initiatives; new courses; newly recognised courses; recent publications (published books, book chapters, articles, conference papers, book reviews); IPR Education Committee.

PREF thanks PRET for sponsorship!

PREF extends its thanks to PRET (Public Relations Education Trust) for its sponsorship of this Newsletter.



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Public Relations: Theory, Research and Practice

Issue editor

- PREF Secretary

Jacquie L'Etang (Stirling)

In this issue we include the usual range of news items, reports on conferences and short review articles reflecting on the current scene. In addition we publish two longer reflective pieces which will hopefully be of interest and are included as a follow-up to Kevin Moloney's (Bournemouth) short provocative pieces on public relations paradigms and Max Clifford in this and earlier issues. The essay by Jon Fawkes (Central Lancashire) was presented in conference form at the 1996 Spring PREF meeting in Plymouth and was voted the Best Paper by the external referee. The second essay, which was presented at a recent IPR Scotland meeting is by an experienced practitioner, Charles Moncur reflects on the relationship between theory and practice. Hopefully, by including these more discursive essays we will ensure that PREF newsletter lives up to PREF's aim to 'exchange ideas...in public relations education.'

Editorial - Chair PREF

Liz Yeomans

When I chaired my first meeting of PREF early in September, my first instinct was to ask, what is our *raison d'être*? While it seemed to me that PREF was decidedly a forum to share ideas, information and experiences with colleagues engaged in public relations research and teaching, I was aware that some external perceptions of PREF were perhaps unfairly negative. Were we also a ginger group? Were we acting outside our remit? With these questions in mind, I returned to the PREF Constitution, which was written in November 1991. The 'Purpose of PREF' is here in full.

The purpose of the Public Relations Educators' Forum (PREF) is to:

- further the advancement of public relations education;
- provide a voice for the British public relations teaching profession, making the views and activities of members known to educational bodies and professional bodies such as IPR, PRET, IPRA, and CERP;
- facilitate communications from other relevant bodies, helping the views and activities of those organisations to become known to PREF members;
- exchange ideas and information on new developments, and highlight best practices in public relations education;
- promote a programme of activities of mutual interest to members, particularly on matters of pedagogy, research and professional development.

Setting this year's achievements against these objectives, I can confidently state that PREF is doing its job. We held a successful Spring conference that enabled members to exchange ideas and gain an insight into different perspectives on public relations education. Through conference, we gave our views to the IPR on the proposed syllabus for the IPR Diploma. Recently, we made initial plans for a 1998 autumn conference (to which CERP members will be invited); and agreed to have an exhibition stand (with the possibility of holding seminars) at next year's IPR 50th Anniversary Conference. Members also gave their views on the PRET Matrix to Ian Metherell who is reviewing and upgrading it.

PREF members are key players in the development of public relations education in the UK. Indeed, many PREF members came from practice into education to help raise the levels of qualified practitioners in the industry. However, to do this we also have a commitment to engage in debate about what makes a 'qualified practitioner' and to re-adjust our educational programmes as we learn more about our discipline.

I hope next year will see PREF continuing to strengthen its identity, make its voice known where appropriate and communicate the good work that is going on in our universities towards the development of capable, skilled and thinking public relations practitioners.

Liz Yeomans has gone on maternity leave and the Chair will now be taken over by The Deputy Chair, Emma Wood (Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh)

PUBLIC RELATIONS PENETRATE BUSINESS

Norman Hart, Visiting Professor Leeds

Over the past decade or so, public relations has progressively and surely received serious attention as an emerging business function. Well before the introduction of bachelors' degrees there were serious movements within post experience programmes. One of the first was in Strategic Public Relations at Ashridge, and this has been followed elsewhere, not least of which at Henley Management College

The importance of public relations in post-experience courses is that the people attending for the most part are already in management positions, some very senior, and are thus in a position to put what they learn immediately into practice. The subject always has been included in marketing courses, but here in many respects it has been cast as a subset of marketing, and has been in almost all cases a code for press relations. In fact, for many, it is still synonymous with 'publicity'.

A parallel development has also taken place at post-graduate level in general business studies. An increasing number of MBA Programmes are building into their syllabuses some reference to what might be termed Business Communications or Corporate Relations, or whatever, but in fact some aspects of the ways that public relations is beginning to impinge for instance on other business functions, most particularly upon finance and human resources. Mostly these academic inputs have been achieved by means of visiting senior practitioners.

Even more tangibly has been the development of PR electives on MBA Programmes. The first here was with The London Business School in 1989, which had as many as a dozen visiting faculty. Others have developed and are achieving impressive enrollments and results both in the UK and at overseas centres.

One of the most long-standing PR electives has been at Hull Business School where certainly a few hundred post-graduate students have passed through, each completing an impressive practical assignment. The following gives a brief outline of this course.

MBA in Strategic Marketing - Strategic Public Relations Module

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to demonstrate how the public relations function now contributes to all facets of business policy and implementation. It will examine its role in the City and in investor relations, its contribution to human resources in recruitment and employee motivation, and, in particular, its contribution to marketing. In addition to a consideration of strategic issues, the techniques involved will be discussed with a practical 'workshop' setting.

Curriculum

This particular programme is based upon a combination of home studying coupled with intensive long weekends. The complete spectrum of public relations topics is covered, and these include:

- PR and the corporate strategy
- Strategic public relations
- PR in finance, HR and marketing
- The corporate brand
- The PR plan
- Setting objectives
- Issues
- PR publics/stakeholders
- Formulating messages
- The media mix
- Budgeting
- Evaluation
- Management and outside services

Overall

Throughout the above, integration of public relations with top management practice is emphasised. The context is that here is emerging a new and vital management function with an all-embracing contribution to profit (with a commercial organisation) through the means of an organisation's reputation. And as with any other major business function, its responsibility is to the CEO, and to the board.

Academic Elected to IPR Council


Di Burton FIPR has been elected to Council of the IPR for a three year period commencing 1 January 1998. Di is a senior lecturer in Corporate Communication at Trinity and All Saints University College Leeds where she teaches on the undergraduate degree programme for the School of Media. She is also course director of the MA in Public Communication for the Central Office of Information and the Government Information Service.

Apart from her "day job" of teaching, Di manages a successful public relations consultancy business, Cicada Consultants, whose clients include the Institute of Directors, Aquamen Group Plc (the facilities management arm of John Mowlem & Company PLC) and Harrogate International Centre.

Di has also worked at the forefront of developing NVQs in Public Relations, and at Trinity established the first Assessment Centre in the UK to offer the full range of higher level NVQs in Marketing.

Peter Walker, president-elect of the IPR, has asked Di to sit on the Membership Committee. Entry to membership of the IPR is directly linked to qualifications, be they academic or vocational, and Di is currently working on a 'route to entry' matrix (see below)

"I will be consulting with my PREF colleagues on a credit rating system for the various entry routes to membership" she said. "I hope to use my position on Council to raise awareness of education issues."

NOTE: A114 routes to have a points FIRST DRAFT rating system			
- Accreditation of prior learning			
IPR ROUTE TO MEMBERSHIP			
APEL	OPEN ACCESS ROUTE	VOCATIONAL ROUTE	ACADEMIC ROUTE (Undergraduate)
Practical experience of Public Relations work	NVQs Level 2	LCCI Higher Stage Diploma	(2 yr Diplomas)
	Level 3	CAM Certificate 4	Dip HE
	Level 4	CAM Diploma	1 3/4 yr Undergraduate degree courses
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP			
IPR DIPLOMA - ASSESSED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION			
FULL MEMBERSHIP			
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
VOCATIONAL		ACADEMIC (Postgraduate)	
MCI	OTHER	MSc IN PR MA IN CORPORATE COMM. MA IN PUBLIC COMMUNICATION	MBA
 = Flexible delivery			

Public Relations Research

Dr Sandra Oliver (Thames Valley)

BACKGROUND

The outcome of the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was met with a yelp or a yawn, depending on one's point of view and depending on the status of public relations programmes within the university. Both old and new universities struggle with the pursuit of excellence in higher education generally and with the management of vocational education in particular. At programme level, relationships with professional, qualifying institutions can become fraught where there is ambivalence about the relationship between education and training, pure and applied research. Where there is commitment on both sides however, free market institutional partnerships are proving profitable to both parties, but these depend on sound underpinning of courses based on research.

THE RAE

The effect of the RAE goes beyond research itself because there are signs that its rankings, like school league tables, could be used to centrally control vocational education in the field of public relations, which goes beyond concern for standards, to be used in the marketing of institutions' programmes to prospective students. The age old problem of 'agency' noted by Berle & Means in the 1930s in respect of corporate governance is inevitably still with us.

Added to this are outcomes of the RAE which indicate that certain low rated Units of Assessment (UOA) will not attract research funding. Public relations is particularly vulnerable here as an emerging new vocational discipline whose credibility depends on developing an acceptable body of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge. In the new universities sector, to which a high proportion of public relations and media studies students are attracted, we suffer from an already existing circular effect of undeveloped research, no funding and scepticism about interdisciplinary research because of the fear that it will compound poor ratings. The binary divide can co-exist within institutions where high rated and low rated units co-exist but much will depend on where public relations programmes are housed and in which portfolios. For example, public relations might be managed within the business and management portfolio or it might be managed in a communication, cultural and media studies portfolio. At Thames Valley University, the former received a 1 rating while the latter received a 3b rating and so it is not difficult to see how administrators could take the easy assessment option at the expense of individual programmes or new pathways.

At the 1997 British Academy of Management Conference, Professor Cary Cooper of UMIST chaired the Business and Management RAE 96 Panel. His suggestions for future management research are relevant to evolving public relations research as follows:

- (i) It should be less US driven and carry 'useful' topics
- (ii) There must be more longitudinal research
- (iii) The approach should be both qualitative and quantitative
- (iv) There needs to be more comparative European research
- (v) There should be more emphasis on SMEs
- (vi) Research must include policy driven research eg the effect of public relations on and in society

RANKINGS

Robert Matthews writing in *New Scientist* at the same time as the 1996 RAE ranking tables were published, said that such tables contain a flaw so great as to 'make them virtually useless ... the impact so great that institutions rated among the best performers may in fact be among the worst and vice versa'. He quoted an issue of the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society in which two leading statisticians showed how broad confidence limits could render rankings meaningless even after adjustment. Government officials believed the raw performance figures were 'valuable and still worth publishing'. They insisted that 'information on limitations and uncertainties should be provided, but asked 'how can this be done so that the public will understand?'

PURE AND APPLIED RESEARCH

Such statistical and psycho-social matters are par for the course for PREF members and at the 1997 Spring PREF meeting, the need for fast, efficient and effective consultation between the IPR and PREF was emphasised in spite of an awareness of the complexity in establishing joint accreditation criteria and procedures. As professional academics in public relations and communication, putting across our views and mission to practitioners should be a breeze, but is it? We are experienced and skilled in handling systemic approaches to differing sets of relationships within regulatory frameworks which includes company law, codes of conduct and financial regulation. We are paid as experts in advising and counselling directorates, whether private or public sector, on coordinating client centred, enterprise responsibility at international, national and local level. Not-for-profit organisations are as accountable as anyone else, even if their 'corporate' communication does not include 'incorporated' activity within legal or corporate governance processes.

Yet the development of new working practices within public relations further and higher education is proving to be fraught with difficulty, even ignoring issues around research. The inclusive concept of stakeholding threatens programme expansion to produce conflict at worst and compromise at best, with both parties retreating to lick wounds more frequently than would appeared to have occurred in earlier years for other professions such as marketing and personnel. The drop in media studies applications exacerbates lack of confidence in the industry and colludes in further delay at integrating market, organisational, economic and ethical supply and demand for a chartered public relations profession. Negotiations may not always be able to rely on the benefit of objective judgement or mutual trust where the implicit contract or license to operate are not seen by trustees as a condition of autonomy of action. This is a problem of corporate governance everywhere at the present time, so perhaps there is no reason to assume that the public relations profession should enjoy immunity from it.

The 1998 Spring PREF/CERP Seminar in Manchester is an opportunity to move some of these matters along; to address Cary Cooper's recommendations; and to debate the implications of ranking, especially in the light of the July 1997 Dearing Report of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education as it affects our institutional relations with the IPR and the PRCA taking into account HEQC guidelines for collaborative provision.

Silly season challenges to our thinking

Abandon Grunig

Kevin Moloney, Bournemouth

In August, we read that Max Clifford ('the kiss and tell guru' according to the *Independent on Sunday*) was acting for Dodi Al Fayed. We also heard that Roy Hattersley, trencherman, commentator and former Labour Party bigwig, asked for 'more philosophy and less public relations' from the Government. These two silly season *betises* raise, I suggest, tricky questions for us as we step up to the OHP once more.

Firstly, is Max Clifford in public relations? This is not the standard tedious question of what is public relations: rather the more consequential one about who the public identifies as practitioners of the ideas and matters we teach. Labelling sets the tone for the brand. About the Max question, the PR Establishment harrumphs a most definite 'no' while most of the public would, I guess, say that he is in PR.

It strikes me that we teachers see PR in a completely different way to the general public. We teach PR as a *practice of virtue* while most people see PR as a *practice of disrepute*. Just as they see the practices of politicians, lawyers, journalists and estate agents. If you doubt that PR is held in disrepute generally, note who uses and how often the phrase 'a PR job'. I can just about take my mother but it really hurts when your students use it.

We over-react to these negative connotations in a way that politics, law and journalism teachers do not. We transmute the reaction into an over-emphasis on two-way, symmetrical communication. By the time we have finished listing its Grunigian 'presuppositions', we sound like a branch of ethics or of the social services. No wonder we are at odds with public opinion. We are in danger of becoming teacher-emperors with no clothes on! (I explore these questions further in an article on *Corporate Communications*.)

We must learn from older hands on campus, politics and journalism teachers. They do not work up lathers over sleaze and *Sun* reporters. Rightly so, for it is not the task of university teachers to be moralists for the disciplines they profess. That gets in the way of exploring the philosophical questions and collecting field data. Their task is to research and explain their fields; identify and evaluate 'good' and 'bad' practice. In so far as we are moralists for PR (teaching it as a practice of virtue) we vitiate our role as teachers.

Another way of saying the above is that it is all expressive of our humarurity as a university-taught and -researched subject. Perhaps our maturation as an academic subject group needs at this point a big dose of self-confidence. Let's start by abandoning Grunig as a mental crutch: that would oblige us to think more independently. Let's begin with a look at people who pose uncomfortable questions. Even in the silly season, messrs Clifford and Hattersley have their uses.

Max Clifford The Honest Liar?

Reflections following his visit to the
University of Central Lancashire
by Jo Fawkes, BA, MA, Senior Lecturer in
Public Relations, Department of Journalism,
University of Central Lancashire

Best Paper PREF meeting, Plymouth,
March 24 - 26, 1996

Introduction

In May 1995, Max Clifford visited the University of Central Lancashire campus to talk to journalism and public relations students. This paper explores some of the issues his very presence, let alone his comments, raised. His curious mixture of charm and egocentricity triggered a number of conversations and reflections with students and colleagues, which I would like to take further here.

I intend to discuss his reputation within the public relations industry, and in particular, his declared use of lies to sell stories; the validity of Quentin Bell's counter-assertion that PRs do not tell lies; and the gap between these two positions.

Max Clifford and the PR industry

Clifford's reputation is far higher among journalists than among PR practitioners - not surprisingly, because he gives them what they want, good stories. Whereas the formal bodies of the PR industry, such as PRCA and IPR, view him with as much enthusiasm as astrologers do 'Mystic Meg'. He's the PR all professionals want to disown, while they get out certificates and endorsements from 'serious' clients and assert the scientific basis of their trade.

The PR industry, in books and articles, tries to establish public relations as a respected profession - the very degrees on which we teach are part of this effort.

There are successes: a recent *Independent on Sunday* article analysed the advert for a new Assistant Chief Executive and Head of Public Relations for the London Borough of Hackney.

"The culture of the place is about being defensive...if you've done something wrong you have to say so, rather than pretending we're the victims of some awful conspiracy," said Chief Executive Tony Elliston.¹

The role of PR in developing strategy, in the substance as well as image of an organisation, is finally gaining a wider audience. The article also quoted Stephen Farish, editor of *PR Week*, as saying that public relations specialists should be closer to the decision-making process, and talked about new PR appointments at British Gas, Conservative Central Office and other difficult PR posts.

However, in the popular imagination, the only practitioner the general public - and certainly first year PR students - have heard of is Max Clifford.

Both Clifford and the industry's institutions have cast Clifford in an outlaw role - one he

clearly relishes. In his talk to students, he was scathing about the PRCA's insistence that he call himself a publicist - "I don't give a monkey's what they think about what I do."² and was happy to call Quentin Bell a 'pompous old sod'.³ He characterised the bulk of PR professionals as taking 'themselves seriously, talking about theories...as opposed to getting results'.⁴

Clifford summarised the central clash between himself and Quentin Bell at the *PR Week* debate in 199 as Bell's accusation that Clifford could not be a PR because 'PRs never tell lies'. This was Clifford's reported reply: "To be successful, of course you tell lies. You want to win, to get results...you want to get the message across."⁵

And this is the contention that earns him so many admirers in the media - and so many enemies in PR! His major offence is his honesty about his dishonesty.

Not only does he confirm the popular prejudices about PR as the manufacture of lies, he does so with an attractive insouciance. It seems that confessing to a bit of ducking and diving - and doing so with a chuckle - increases credibility. Yeah, well we that's what you PR guys do, innit? We all know what you're up to - at least you come clean about it. There must be some significance, surely, in the way that self-confessed liars like Max Clifford and Alan Clark are hailed as the moral beacons of our age?

Does the industry increase Clifford's popular standing by being so defensive? Is its own credibility improved by insisting that Clifford is not 'one of us'? Or does it sound a little like the Hackney culture described above, 'a victim of some awful conspiracy'? Why can it not file him under the publicity model outlined by Grunig & Hunt (1984), as a descendent of P.T. Barnum - a promoter of individuals and events without particular regard to the truth of his claims. That would leave the rest of PR to get on with its high-flying corporate strategies unscathed.

I would argue that the hostility towards Max Clifford revolves around PR's claim to tell the truth at all times and his claim to tell lies when circumstances justify it (see below). And, further, Clifford's insistence that all PRs do likewise, the only difference being that he says so and they don't.

In other words, the charge is hypocrisy. And I would guess that most journalists and many PR students would vote for him rather than Bell in any debate. Before covering his defence, I will make the moral case against lying in general, and Clifford's use of lies in particular.

The case against Max Clifford

1) Immanuel Kant and the Duty Not to Lie

Moral philosophers have described the tension between ideal and practical duties and acts over the centuries. I am only going to refer to Kant's Categorical Imperative and the Duty Not to Lie and will illustrate how these ideas inform the debate between Clifford and Bell.

Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804), in his *Ground*

work of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785) set out the principle he called a Categorical Imperative, which claimed that all of us, not just law-makers, should:

Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

Kant said that to be a moral agent meant acting according to 'universal laws' - in all circumstances. Kant's Absolute Rule of particular relevance here is the Duty Not to Lie - again, a total edict, to be followed regardless of the circumstances or consequences of telling the truth. Lying, he felt was 'the obliteration of one's dignity as a human being.'

James Rachels, in his *Elements of Moral Philosophy* (1993), summarises Kant's position as follows:

- 1) You should do only those actions that conform to rules that you could will to be adopted universally.
- 2) If you were to lie, you would be following the rule 'It is permissible to lie'.
- 3) This rule could not be adopted universally, because it would be self-defeating: people would stop believing one another, and then it would do no good to lie.
- 4) Therefore, you should not lie.

Max Clifford does not appear to be adopting Kant's ideals as his practice. Or is he? He asserted several times that he was 'prepared to stand up and be counted'; that his audience was 'free to make your own mind up'. So he might not object to a world in which people routinely lied to each other - indeed his counter-argument is that this is indeed the way PR is practised and that Bell and his supporters are guilty of both lying and hypocrisy. I'll return to his charges later, but it's worth noting that, having started his talk by describing how he got on with and in the media by making up pop stars' quotes and even interviews, at the end he reported with considerable irritation the effrontery of a local journalist in making up quotes about him! Not exactly a universal law, then.

2) Ethical Public Relations

Kant's injunction against lying would appear to inform many of the PR texts on ethical behaviour. In one first year text book, Sam Black distinguishes PR from propaganda:

"Public Relations.... recognises a long-term responsibility and seeks to persuade and to achieve mutual understanding by securing the willing acceptance of attitudes and ideas. It can succeed only when the basic policy is ethical and the means are truthful. In public relations the ends can never justify the use of false, harmful, or questionable means."

Statements similar to these can be found in every text book. They constitute the moral high ground of PR, our defence against charges of manipulation and dishonesty. The Codes of Practice of the IPR, PRCA, and NUJ all embody this Rule. It is built into most of our teaching texts and practices. Jacqui L'Etang's

paper, *A Kantian Approach to Codes of Ethics*, explores the relationship between Kant and these codes in depth and I will not repeat her work, though I do draw on it.

LEtang points out that many of these Codes and the attitudes that inform them are based not only on ethical but also on pragmatic grounds. PRs often claim that it is bad practice - that is, that lying undermines credibility which in turn diminishes professional effectiveness. Indeed, while Grunig & Hunt (1984) avoid this pitfall and argue for the 'will to be ethical', that is, to go further than the minimum defensible ethical behaviour, the (brief) section on ethics is in the Chapter entitled Professionalism in Public Relations.

Business organisations have created ethics committees, the public is showered with mission statements and Citizen's Charters, all vowing to uphold truth, fairness and decency in all their dealings. But, like the proliferating claims in the early '90s that this company or that was devoting all its energies to saving the planet, these claims may be laudable but they are not always credible.

Kant would have none of this argument - "For, if any action is to be morally good, it is not enough that it should conform to the moral law - it must also be done for the sake of the moral law."

Therefore, if PRs assert that we so not tell lies, because our professional reputation (as well as the client/employer's) suffers if we do, then we are being self-serving and not behaving in an ethical manner, according to Kant.

So is the moral high ground over Clifford not so lofty after all?

The problem is, public relations would not be the only group of professionals to fall short of these ideas - and moral philosophers are also critical of Kant's hard line approach. Rachels quotes Elizabeth Anscombe's critique of Kant's view, from the academic journal *Philosophy* in 1958.

His own rigorous convictions on the subject of lying were so intense that it never occurred to him that a lie could be relevantly described as anything but just a lie (e.g. as a 'lie in such-and-such circumstances'). His rule about universalizable maxims is useless without stipulations as to what shall count as a relevant description of an action with a view to constructing a maxim about it.

Perhaps in recognition of the difficulty of achieving Kant's high standards, many Codes of Practice are based on describing circumstances in which acts are prohibited or permitted - they tend to cover behaviour more than motive. In addition to formal Codes, there are informal attitudes that underlie certain professions moral behaviour.

Doctors, for example, have to debate when and where to lie to patients - though every time they decide to lie they are obliterating the dignity of the other, as Kant said.

Journalists have developed attitudes based on the 'lie in such-and-such circumstances'

proposed by Anscombe. These derive from the overriding 'duty' to serve the public interest, and frequently amount to means-serving-ends arguments. Jennifer Jackson contributes a chapter, Honesty in investigative journalism, to the book *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media* (1992), in which she explores the morality of lying and deception in the cause of the public's right to know, such as the work of undercover journalists.

The wrongness of lying, I have derived from our common fundamental need to maintain, by not betraying, trust: a need which is the basis of the duty we are under to be truthful. But while liars inevitably take advantage of others' trust, are there not circumstances in which taking advantage is not taking an unjust advantage, that is not in fact a 'betrayal' of trust?

Suppose, for instance, that those of whom we take advantage are known to us not themselves to be trustworthy: are then entitled to trust us. If liars forfeit the right to trust, we in lying to them, do them no injustice.¹³

Jackson identifies three different types of justification put forward by journalists for telling lies: lying to liars (described above), lying to 'consenters' (as in games of bluff); and lying to those whom we assume give consent.

She then discredits each justification in turn and concludes that there can be no moral right to 'lie to liars':

"...journalists lying in the cause of informing the public of important matters, for example, of corruption in high places, the argument that those to whom the journalists would lie are themselves liars is doubtfully relevant and, in any case, not conclusive".

She also prescribes limits to the extent to which one can lie to consenters:

"...you may lie to your opponents about the cards in your hand but not about the content of the drink you put in their hands".

And Jackson is clear that assuming consent without proof that it is given is not acceptable:

".. while you cannot assume that you have consent except in circumstances where it would be reasonable to give it, neither can you assume that you have consent merely on the grounds that giving it would be reasonable".

This discussion about the morality of journalists justifications of lying is interesting,

- a) because it explores in more depth than I've ever seen applied to PR ethics the arguments put forward by practitioners, and
- b) because Max Clifford invoked each of these justifications in his defence of lying.

Clifford's defence

1) The case for lying

All three of Jackson's justifications were used by Max Clifford last May. The first, lying to liars, was explicitly cited - people who are known by him to have done wrong deserve to

have lies told about them.

"If I had to lie to protect someone I thought was good for the future of the country, I'd do everything I could to stop that [scandal] coming out. In that scenario, I would lie. If I knew they were wholly interested in themselves, then I would lie if it meant taking that power away".

The second concerned whether journalists could be said to have waived their right to be told the truth. Asked about whether a reputation affected his credibility (the pragmatic reason for telling truth put forward in PR) he replied:

"I have no problems with credibility. I spend more time talking to broadsheet journalists than tabloids. Tabloids get packages...the broadsheet journalists keep on to me for guidance and advice, background".

As to whether the readers can be assumed to have given consent to be lied to:

"....in PR terms, truth is grossly overrated... Did I make up the story about the Chelsea strip? You make up your own mind".

It seems to me that Clifford is claiming the 'public interest' defence often used by journalists to explain using hidden cameras, false documents etc. In his case, it is even less convincing because he is the only arbiter of what behaviours will be defended by him and which exposed - using lies to achieve his ends. This is a position of serious power (which rather contradicts his self-image as the 'little man' up against authority).

It may be worth distinguishing between the kinds of media relations he is operating here - the tabloid 'packages' and the broadsheets briefings. In the latter, it is quite likely, even probable, that his currency of secrets exposed or concealed had given him quite a hoard of unused stories. An investigative journalist exploring the background of a particular politician might well check a few rumours out with him, though they would be ill-advised to go to print without corroborating evidence, and they must know this. But much of journalism is based on comment, rumour and speculation, so Clifford would be a genuinely useful source of material even if it could not all be relied upon for accuracy. Here, journalists might well waive their right to be told the truth. They know his reputation, they also know that he has access to valuable information, and would weigh up the likelihood of the information being of use. This is his economy of credibility.

However, the same can not be said of the readers of newspapers - broadsheet or tabloid - where the source of the story is very unlikely to be visible. The kind of kiss-and-tell stories which occupy acres of newspaper don't have to be true - they are only one person's point of view. The libel lawyers can still clear a lot of unverifiable material.

This is the area in which I would suppose most invention can creep in, in which readers are most deceived. But while this would seem to be immoral by most standards, I'm not

convinced that readers - as opposed to the subjects, or objects, of the stories - do mind. Here Clifford may actually be on the strongest territory in claiming the justification which Jackson says is most dubious, the assumed consent of the deceived.

Indeed, I wonder if he, like many of the papers he supplies, should be removed from the field of news, where accuracy and truth are valued, to that of fiction, where it is the *rightness* of the story, rather than its accuracy that supplies its truth, and satisfaction. As if the audience, having been told that David Mellor did not make love in Chelsea strip, shrugs its shoulders and grins - ah, well it was a good story. The news agenda is increasingly driven by personality - everyone is turned into a celebrity, whether politician, actor or criminal. This is Clifford's area of specialism - he knows the conventions of the genre and above all, how to tell a story. He knows that this kind of coverage has converged with soap operas - we know how certain characters should behave, according to laws of fiction, and, as long as coverage is consistent with character, we willingly suspend our disbelief.

The case so far, seems heavily weighted against Clifford. His justifications for lying not only fall far short of Kant's edicts, as do we all, but there don't seem to be many grounds for taking on the mantle of deciding who should be allowed to run the country, free from fear of scandal and who should not.

My greatest admiration for Clifford, so far, lies in his sense of a great story - for example in having the judgement not to try and stop the 'Freddie Starr ate my Hamster' headline which gave us all so much innocent pleasure.

But even here, there may be dangers in blurring the lines between fact and fiction, which undermine the general reliability of all media, not only the tabloids.

There is a moral deficit, the consequence, surely, of predicating so much communication on lies: a general distrust of *all* information. Exactly the reason why Kant, amongst others, said we should not lie: because society cannot function if communications cannot be trusted.

But while Clifford may be a contributor he cannot be held responsible for the decline in trustworthiness of the media or public institutions and anyway, he is open about his dishonesty, which at least absolves him of the charge of hypocrisy. The defence which may not absolve him of the moral culpability of lying but which may be harder to refute is: PR people tell lies and those who say they don't are lying.

The case against PR

PR's codes and text books and public statements may be closer to Kant's ideals than Clifford clearly is, but if they are not actually borne out in practice, as Clifford alleges, then PR is guilty of both lying and lying about lying.

Robert Wolff, a commentator on Kant, is quoted in Jacquié L'Etang's paper *A Kantian Approach to Codes of Ethics*:

"From the standpoint of moral philosophy, the most important kind of contradictory willing is the case in which I commit myself to the adoption, with others, of a collective policy, and then privately adopt another policy which contradicts it... the contradiction consists simply in the logical impossibility of acting in all possible situations on both policies".

This use of double-standards - a charge levelled against both major Parties and many leading industrialists - is a reflection of relative power. It reminds those on the receiving end that they are not in a position to reciprocate: while hypocrisy may be offensive in private life, is it exploitative in public life.

There is a general concern among politicians, educationalists, and political commentators that the public - especially, but not exclusively, the young - has lost all respect for social institutions. Low poll turn outs, even lower registrations are symptoms of disaffection. Politicians now rank below estate agents in public esteem, according to numerous opinion polls. The recent decision of Harriet Harman to make one choice for her family and another for everyone else's, the cash-for-questions scam, knighthoods for party contributions, public policies driven by purely commercial considerations, Nolan, Scott - there is a sense that our elected representatives are more accountable to each other, to the Boards on which they serve, to self-serving codes of common interest than to the electorate.

This extends beyond electoral politics to business in general and the recently privatised utilities in particular.

And public relations is centrally involved in many of these debates. The 'worst jobs in Public Relations' listed in the *Independent on Sunday* article cited above include: Shell, British Gas, Yorkshire Water, Conservative Central Office, Meat and Livestock Commission, British Energy, Group 4 Security.

These organisations are looking to PR to restore damaged reputations - that is the declared aim of public relations, according to the IPR definition.

And it is axiomatic to successful public relations that 'PRs never tell lies'. Isn't it?

The problem is quickly identified by students: is it true - as opposed to desirable - that PRs never lie?

To say yes would, surely, be a lie itself. When I hear a spokesperson for Shell insisting that they have no involvement in the politics of Nigeria, I do not believe them; when I hear a Department of Health official reciting statistics about the growth of the NHS, they may not actually be lying, but I don't believe them. Public relations people know how to time bad news - as Parliament goes into recess, the day of the Cup Final, and how to pump up favourable stories into front page events.

I know that a spin doctor becomes good at throwing googlies - it's our job, often. And, as

in cricket, it's accepted by fellow practitioners and journalists, if not by the general public. These distinctions can infuriate students. Is the answer yes or no?

I think in practice public relations people are likely to deceive themselves, to select and retain only those arguments and that information which supports their employer or client and to become so ego-involved that they genuinely believe that only this point of view is tenable. Opposing points may be rehearsed, but only to demolish them more effectively, not to consider their merits. I have experienced this myself, working on campaigns in the past, and have heard PR people for multinational corporations portray themselves as 'victims' of tiny pressure groups. I would like to explore how cognitive dissonance and self-persuasion theories operate in PR at length, but not here.

Instead, I will turn to the following statements that try to distinguish public relations from propaganda and see if there is evidence to disprove my doubts about the moral worthiness of much of our practice.

Sam Black's definition of public relations' noble aims, referred to earlier was suggested as a counter point to the evils of propaganda, which he describes as:

"... those types of persuasion which are based solely on self-interest and in which it may be necessary to distort the facts or even to falsify them in order to achieve the purpose".

Unfortunately, this seems to be to describe a great deal of PR activity also. Here's another definition of propaganda from Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) quoted by Richard Phillips at the Bled Symposium,

"...the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.."

Phillips comments:

"Most of these words could be used in a definition of public relations, with the addition of some attempt at gathering feedback from the publics, and in an ideal state trying to marry the best interests of the organisation with those of its publics".

One striking example of how a prestigious international public relations consultancy became involved in activity so close to propaganda as to be indistinguishable from it, is Hill and Knowlton's \$10.6 million work for the Citizens for Free Kuwait.

True it is only one case - but it's one that is already in the text books - such as *Cases in Public Relations Management* and was referred to again recently (3/1/96) in Maggie O'Kane's Channel 4 documentary on the Gulf War, *Riding the Storm*.

During October 1990, the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus hearing into the alleged abuses by Iraqi soldiers following the invasion of Kuwait that August, heard shocking testimony from a 15 year old Kuwait girl,

identified as Nayirah, who had seen Iraqi soldiers removing babies from incubators and leaving them to die on the 'cold hospital floors'. Hill & Knowlton arranged media training for her and shot a video news release of her testimony, as well as providing back up media releases.

According to the case study:

"President Bush, who reportedly watched Nayirah's testimony on CNN, brought up her story in at least 10 subsequent speeches, telling one group that Iraqis 'scattered the babies like firewood.'"

There is considerable evidence that this witness played an influential role in persuading American decision-makers, as well as their electorate, to support armed intervention.

A year later, a journalist reported that Nayirah was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the US and that two Congressmen involved in the Caucus had close relationships with Hill & Knowlton.

There were demands for investigations into both the PR company and the behaviour of Congressmen - though not from the PRSA or its British counterparts. Hill & Knowlton's defence was that they had not collaborated in producing false testimony. But Maggie O'Kane, like a number of US journalists before her, found no supportive evidence for Nayirah's allegations and even questioned whether she had been at the hospital at the time of the alleged abuses.

The issue here is not just the veracity of the evidence but the potentially corrupt relationship between PR companies and the people who shape world events. The Nolan Report provides evidence of the concern about these relationships in the UK.

The Public Relations industry may try to distance itself from wide boys like Clifford and complain about about journalists' reluctance to take our two-way symmetric ambitions seriously, but while the world's leading PR professionals lean so heavily on political processes, who can blame them?

Morely Safer, in CBS' '60 Minutes' concluded an item on the Nayirah episode by pointing out that while it was quite possible that the United States would have gone to war with Iraq anyway, the troubling part of the story is the belief by the public relations industry that, with enough access, enough money, and knowing which buttons to push, war can be marketed, just like soft drinks and toothpaste.

Of course, this shouldn't surprise anyone familiar with the origins of PR in selling first hair oil, then conscription.

Conclusion

It is my conclusion, that while Clifford's use of lies is rightly condemned by the PR industry as both morally and professionally wrong, the industry cannot justify its de haut en teas attitude. Clifford makes things up, and says so. While this often results in amusing stories, I believe Kant is right when he says every lie violates the other's human dignity. It is an expression of power, of control. Clifford knows what we do not - and he is clearly going to use this power to influence events to his own

satisfaction.

Which is where his practice looks very similar to the rest of public relations. It is not necessary to tell actual untruths to distort or manipulate information to the suppliers best interests. Most PR commitment to truth is based not on the ideals prescribed by Kant and set out in text books, but on the more pragmatic 'it's not worth lying because it's worse if you get caught'.

Moreover, the loss of so many reporting rights in previously public bodies, such as Health Trusts, Water Boards and other utilities, and the commercial demands for secrecy means that more and more information is funnelled through corporate PR outlets. Like Clifford, corporate PR underestimates its power to determine public events, to an extent that becomes self-serving.

Unless more of our practices - including the morally dubious ones - are discussed openly, the charge of hypocrisy cannot be shrugged off. Clifford is easy to condemn, whereas most PRs are simply less willing, as he puts it, 'to stand up and be counted.'

As PRs exert increasing influence in boardroom strategies, the need to develop critical examination of actual practice is surely more acute. Only then can we develop a complex, honest, moral framework for our actions.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS:

THEORY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

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I Introduction

Previous seminars in this current series have considered the overall standing of public relations and the influence of its practitioners, and in particular, the extent to which it can be accorded the status of a profession. With regard to the latter, one of the defining characteristics of a profession is that of a clear connection between a recognised body of knowledge, grounded in theory and research, and the practice of the profession *per se*: in such a model, professional practice both influences and is influenced by the development of theory and research.

That main purpose of this paper, therefore, is to consider some aspects of this basic model from the perspective of the public relations practitioner. In so doing, the intention is not to review the largely excellent literature which instructs public relations practitioners on the techniques associated with the various activities which we undertake on a day to day basis: such contributions are valuable, and they are necessary to the spread of best practice throughout our community. The intention here, however, is to focus not on the how to do, but on those strands of theory and research which are more concerned with what we do, and the intellectual foundations of our discipline. It is at this deeper level that we can best connect - at least initially - with our academic counterparts, and so define and clarify the parameters within which we both operate.

The paper therefore focuses mainly on frameworks and those macro level theories which are concerned with defining the domain and purpose of public relations. Related work at a more micro level - on theory and research in the specific field of persuasive

communications - has been held over for another occasion in order to meet the time constraints of a single seminar. A section on emergent business paradigms, however, is included. While this may seem tangential to the main theme, it is argued that it is both necessary and appropriate to locate public relations within the context of new thinking in the wider world of business.

The main conclusion of the paper is that theory and research is essential to the ongoing development of public relations, not least in providing a robust framework within which the intellectual foundations of the discipline can be defined and analysed. Conceptual framework and models are also necessary if public relations is to acquire a distinctive identity within the overall spectrum of business and management studies: without such an identity, there is a clear danger that the most significant of the contributions which public relations practitioners can make to modern business will be absorbed into the mainstream of business thought, thus diminishing the chances of public relations ever achieving the goal of separate professional status. A final section acknowledges that public relations practitioners and academics operate on the basis of separate agendas: while this gives rise to certain difficulties, for example in respect of accessibility and alignment, it is concluded that such difficulties must not be allowed to get in the way of constructive collaboration. It is from the very process of working together, rather than a unity of purpose, that mutual benefits will arise.

2 New Business Paradigms

Emergent theories on the structure and management of organisations provide a useful and stimulating point of departure for considering the status of the public relations function.

Underlying much of the current literature in this field, is the somewhat elusive notion of paradigms. A paradigm was defined by Thomas Kuhn in the "Structure of Scientific Revolutions" as a "constellation of concepts, values, perceptions and practice shared by a community which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of how a community organises itself." In Kuhn's view, the power of a paradigm to influence thinking lay in the following characteristics -

- i) it is a shared belief system which is seldom stated explicitly;
- ii) once accepted, a paradigm is clung to tenaciously;
- iii) the emergence of a new paradigm is usually associated with intellectual and emotional resistance.

Public relations paradigms are discussed in a later section, but the most frequently cited illustration of the concept - referred to inter alia by Kuhn and Pascale - is based in science at the turn of the century. The existing paradigm - a shared belief system - was founded on Newtonian mechanics: and it held sway despite the emergence of numerous paradoxes and

contradictions. It was only when Einstein's Theory of Relativity provided a new and powerful alternative paradigm that the problems inherent in the Newtonian approach were resolved and whole new areas of enquiry were opened up. The process of moving from one paradigm to the other, however, was no simple matter and was described by Capra as "not only an intellectual, but an intensely emotional experience."

Pascale and others have agreed that for much of the present century, organisation and business theories were based on the machine image created by Newtonian mechanics. In the machine world which resulted, the focus was on parts: as observed by Margaret Wheatley, "things can be taken apart, dissected literally or representationally (as we have done with business disciplines and academic subjects) and then put together without significant loss." Being based on the principles of reductionism and materialism, it is assumed that the whole could be understood from the working of each part, and it focused on things rather than relationships. The dominant paradigm was thus one of a machine world in which a focus on the separate parts or processes which constitute an organisation would lead to the greater efficiency of the whole.

The existence and inherent deficiencies of this paradigm began to emerge as business strategists sought to explain the under performance of US corporations from about the 1960s onwards, particularly in comparison to Japan. In seeking a new and more powerful paradigm, theorists looked to post-Newtonian science and in particular to the notion of holism - understanding systems as systems, and allowing for relationships to exist between seemingly discrete parts. This new science' paradigm has already spawned a large volume of literature on the effectiveness of businesses and organisations, and its application is already evident within a range of leading edge companies.

In business terms, the new paradigm is quite distinct from its predecessor. Thus within the machine (Newtonian) model, the emphasis of management was on control, predictability, management direction, rigid culture, knowing the answers, and so on: such thinking was part of a shared belief system and it permeated all aspects of an organisation including planning, strategy, and personnel and reward systems.

The new science model, per contra, views organisations as living self regenerative systems which comprise interdependent and interconnected parts: unpredictability and the interaction of the organisation with its environment, are accepted as being the norm rather than unwelcome intrusions to be resisted. The emphasis of the new paradigm is on leadership rather than management: on flexible culture: on not always knowing the answers: on vision and values rather than fixed strategy: on creativity: on individual empowerment: on co-operation, cocreation and contribution: on trust, honesty and compassion.

Some writers prefer to refer to this as the 'emergent' paradigm since by no means is it

universally accepted. As with its science counterpart, it involves an emotional as well as an intellectual struggle in gaining acceptance. It seems to contradict the training of many existing managers: it gives rise to paradox - for example, the co-existence of widespread downsizing and a more compassionate people centred view of business (indeed, the need to live with paradox is one of its underlying messages). It is nevertheless the business paradigm of the future, it not altogether the present, and it is the one we should look to in trying to locate public relations.

Two further dimensions of the new thinking stand out as being of particular interest to the public relations practitioner. The first is an increasing tendency to define a self generative system as a learning organisation, with learning defined somewhat differently from in the past. Pascale, for example, refers to 'little l' (incrementally improving on the base of prior performance) and 'big L' (shifting the context of the baseline itself). Senge, making a similar point, states that leading corporations are now focussing on generative learning (which is about creating) as well as adaptive learning (which is about coping). However defined, it is stressed that successful companies need to be competent in both forms of learning, and to seek ideas and stimuli both within the organisation and within its external environment.

The second dimension of particular relevance to public relations practitioners is the emphasis which the new business thinking places on communications. Communications is the means whereby the energy released by individual empowerment is harnessed for the benefit of the organisation as a whole: it is the means whereby ideas and creativity flow through the system: it is the means whereby the various forms of learning take place: and it is the means whereby corporate visions and values are kept alive.

From this brief review it will be evident that there are aspects of the emergent paradigm which will be welcomed by public relations practitioners. As a boundary spanning activity, public relations has typically adopted a holistic approach in assessing an organisation per se and an organisation within its environment: likewise communications - internal and external - has always been at the very heart of public relations activities. It is also likely that the language and many of the concepts of the new thinking will be very familiar and reassuring.

Less comforting, however, is the possibility that such similarities in purpose between new business thinking and the tradition of public relations might lend to the latter being subsumed within the mainstream of management practice and training. If all business leaders are encouraged to think within a framework which is similar to that applied by the more innovative public relations strategists, it is reasonable to question what this might mean for the future of public relations per se. It could mean, for example, that public relations gravitates toward the status of a grouping of purely functional activities, rather than a unified

profession which can contribute at a senior level to the growth of organisations and the development of management science.

This is one of the major issues which we need to bear in mind as we proceed to look at public relations in terms of the theory, research and academic foundations which support it.

3 A Framework for Public Relations

Numerous commentators have suggested that the development of public relations as a profession has been inhibited by the absence of an integrating conceptual model - ie - "a consistently used framework for understanding, organising and integrating the many activities and purposes of public relations". Two related frameworks are presented below.

a) A Systems Approach (1994)

Cutlip, Center and Broom - who are quoted in the paragraph above - attempted to meet this perceived deficiency by means of a model based on the concepts and presuppositions of systems theory. This approach - which is essentially similar to that of the new business paradigm - starts from the simple proposition that a relationship of mutual dependency exists between an organisation and the various publics with which it interacts: they are said to exist within a system, and are subject to change pressures from each other and from their joint interaction with the wider environment which they share. As in post-Newtonian science, the defining characteristics are holism and interdependency.

In order to extend the application of this simple principle, the authors develop a number of variants around the initial postulate. For example:

i) Subsystems and Supra systems

The organisation can be defined and analysed in subsystem terms, that is in itself consisting of units which form a system. Thus the internal structure and functioning of the organisation must be capable of adapting to change both in its publics and in its environment: otherwise it can be demonstrated that its performance will diminish over time.

At the same time, the organisation and its publics can be viewed as being part of a higher order system, or suprasystem, in which they relate to a larger set of interacting units: this would, for example, correspond to a company and its publics within a wider industry context.

ii) Living Systems

While all systems are said to be alive, this categorisation refers specifically to those systems which engage in interactions with their environments, which in turn, lead to changes both in themselves and in their environment. The likelihood of such occurrences is said to be determined - inter alia - by the size of organisations comprising the system: by the degree of conflict inherent within the external environment, typically involving an interface with governments: and by the extent to which the organisations concerned believe that the system and its environment is susceptible to

intervention. The oil industry is typical of such a system: it meets the stated criteria, and its history has been characterised by a very strong interaction with its environment.

iii) Open Versus Closed Systems

Systems can also be classified as being relatively open or relatively closed - ie - as being relatively responsive or resistant to changes in the external environment. Thus environmental stimuli will lead an open system to react in various ways - eg - by reviewing its aims and objectives, by repositioning, or otherwise adapting to accommodate change. The relatively closed system, per contra, will seek to maintain its present course while attempting to block or reverse changes in the environment.

These basic models can be developed, extended, and refined in an infinite numbers of ways: for example, a dynamic element can be incorporated by allowing for disequilibrium within the system. This in turn gives rise to predictive as well as descriptive powers.

In either the simple or complex variants of the framework, the key role allocated to the public relations practitioner is that of identifying the system components of an organisation, placing the organisation within its wider system and environment, and managing the various interactions which take place.

b) Grunig's Four Models of Public Relations

An early devotee of the open systems approach, James Grunig has since developed the four models approach to public relations which has achieved almost cult status within the literature.

The essence of Grunig's thinking - and the inherent power of his contribution - is rooted in the twin notions of - (i) symmetry and asymmetry and (ii) one and two way communications.

Thus Model 1 (Press Agency) postulates an organisation which feeds information selectively to its various publics - by press releases, publications, speeches, etc - in order to enhance its reputation and in the furtherance of its own narrow interests. This is obviously one way, allowing no opportunity for feedback, and since it takes no account of the concerns of the publics, it is also asymmetrical in Grunig's terminology.

Model 2 (The Public Information Model) allows for more sophisticated methods of feeding information to the organisation's publics - eg by the deployment of specialist staff and modern techniques - but since its ultimate objectives are no different, it remains in the one way symmetrical category.

Model 3 (The Two Way Asymmetrical Model) allows the organisation to study its publics and its environment in order to better understand the context in which it is operating: such studies can be detailed, sophisticated and expensive. Although this model is two way, in that publics and environment are being carefully scanned, it remains asymmetrical in that the information is being collated to underpin the effectiveness

of the organisation's own propaganda: in other words, there is no intent on the part of the organisation to modify its own objectives or behaviour in light of external opinions or concerns.

Model 4 (The Two Way Symmetrical Model) represents Grunig's ideal model of public relations. Thus the organisation communicates with its publics, listening as well as putting its own case, and it allows negotiation and compromise to influence its objectives and behaviour: environmental scanning is undertaken with a view to facilitating dialogue and not merely supporting propaganda.

It is the willingness of the organisation to change which is the defining characteristic of the two way symmetrical model - a point returned to in the next section of this paper. It is also the aspect which distinguishes it from the open model of the systems approach: the latter postulates an interaction with the external environment, but while it is consistent with the internal adaptation of the organisation, it does not require it as does Grunig's ideal model.

3 Paradigms or Worldviews of Public Relations

The foregoing are useful models for meeting their stated objective of encompassing and describing the main functions of public relations. They do not, however, extend to defining the domain of public relations, or underlying presuppositions which give it its values and focus.

In addressing this wider question, Grunig frames the issue in worldview or paradigm terms. Thus he argues that the prevailing paradigm - and the shared presuppositions which underlie it - sees public relations as being persuasive or manipulative: that is that public relations equates to the use of communications to manipulate publics for the benefit of organisations. He further argues that the paradigm is no different even if the word persuasion is substituted for manipulation, or even if it is argued that manipulation benefits publics as well as organisations. Presuppositions which underlie this particular paradigm are that the organisation knows best and that dissident publics would willingly co-operate with the organisation if only they are aware of the bigger picture. This approach obviously corresponds to his asymmetrical models of public relations.

Grunig argues that organisations which function within this paradigm or set of presuppositions do so to their own disadvantage: they are less responsive to change in the outside world, less aware of commercial opportunities, and less innovative. But above all - and much more controversially - he argues that the asymmetrical approach means that they are incapable of taking an ethical, moral and socially responsible approach to public relations. To support this view he cites some of the, "strange things" which publics are expected to accept as a result of co-operation with such organisations eg - pollution, toxic waste, smoking, guns, large scale redundancies, etc.

As an alternative to what he has called the prevailing paradigm, Grunig counter argues that organisations should always operate on the basis of his two way symmetrical model. The underlying presuppositions here are that the organisation does not necessarily know best: that interdependence - as in the systems approach - means that the system as a whole can benefit from consultation and co-operation: that people should be treated as equals: and above all, that organisations should be concerned with respect to the impact of their behaviour on others. The approach envisaged by this paradigm and associated presuppositions is, he asserts, the only one which is defensible in ethical and moral terms.

b) Grunig versus Miller

In an article "Persuasion and Public Relations: Two P's In A Pod", Gerald Miller takes issue with Grunig's stance on morals and ethics. Thus he argues that "persuasion in humankind's primary symbolic resource for exerting control over the environment: it is natural, and therefore amoral rather than either moral or immoral." In Miller's view therefore "PR can be seen as a definitional label for the process of exerting symbolic control over the evaluative predispositions (attitudes, images, etc) and subsequent behaviours of relevant publics." Persuasion and PR are thus the two P's in a pod referred to in his article title.

Miller is careful to point out, however, that neither public relations nor persuasion can be distanced from ethical or moral judgements in respect of the ends and means of persuasive public relations campaigns and activities: it is Grunig's assertion that persuasion is ethically unsound in principle to which he takes exception.

There is thus an interesting dichotomy arising from the respective views of Grunig and Miller, and one which focuses attention on two competing paradigms of public relations. In the one, the PR practitioner sits at the centre of a complex web of relationships which he manages primarily for the benefit of the organisation: persuasion - in extreme cases coercion - is the operational focus, and while publics and the environment are scanned, the resultant information is applied for the benefit of the organisation. In the other, the practitioner manages the same complex relationships, but does so for the mutual benefit of the organisation and its publics: negotiation and conflict resolution hold sway, and environmental scanning is undertaken so that opinions on both sides of the interaction are fully understood and taken into account.

In the one instance, the public relations Practitioner is an advocate: in the other, a mediator.

c) Grunig versus Miller: Theory and Research Implications

The implications of the Grunig/Miller dichotomy for the practice of public relations is discussed in a later section: this section instead focuses on the implications of the dichotomy

for theory and research.

As stated earlier, a paradigm encapsulates the various presuppositions which underlie an area of study and presents them in a coherent way which defines the broad aims and purposes of that area of study. It thus delineates the domain or realm of interest of that activity, and sets a direction for the future development of theory and research: it also points to related domains which might be of relevance.

In viewing the Grunig and Miller paradigms from this perspective, it is immediately evident that a certain amount of common ground is implied in their respective delineation of domain and associated areas of theory and research interest. Thus both imply a strong interest in organisational theory: in the ways in which organisations interact: in the interaction of organisations and their publics: in environmental scanning techniques: in the interaction of governments, organisations and publics: and in the structure and power of the media. Mediators and advocates alike would acknowledge these as legitimate, even essential, areas of interest.

Both authors acknowledge, however, that there comes a point of departure.

Thus Grunig argues that his two way symmetrical model points public relations theory in the direction of co-orientation, systems theory (with an emphasis on the interdependence dimension), conflict resolution, interest group liberalisation, information subsidies, bargaining, negotiation and so on. The emphasis here is on the resolution of discrepant objectives to the benefit of both organisations and publics.

Miller, in equating public relations to persuasion, suggests that communications in the most relevant area of theory and research for public relations: in particular, those areas of communications studies which focus on attitudes, persuasion, and subsequent behaviours. This includes, for example, consistency theories, social judgement theories, attitude and behaviour relationships, communicator credibility considerations, and the various communications techniques per se. Since many of these approaches ultimately involve message recipients accepting discrepant beliefs or indulging in discrepant behaviours, they clearly do not fit well with Grunig's public relations paradigm.

Grunig summarises the dichotomy thus - "the two way symmetrical model makes use of research and other form of two way communication. Unlike the two way asymmetrical model, however, it uses research to facilitate understanding and communication rather than to identify messages most likely to motivate or persuade publics. In the symmetrical model, understanding is the principle objective of public relations rather than persuasion."

4 Frameworks, Paradigms. et al: A Practitioner's Perspective

The systems approach and the Grunig models both provide a framework within which the various activities of public relations can be located and analysed: moreover, both frameworks are sufficiently robust and flexible as to allow further development - eg - in reaching evaluative as well as descriptive conclusions, and in encompassing a range of existing theory and research as well as suggesting new points of departure.

Of particular significance, is the fact that both frameworks are predicated on assumptions and concepts similar to those of the emergent business paradigm referred to earlier: indeed the systems model has a common genesis in the natural sciences. This is an important area of overlap in that it allows public relations both to contribute to the wider field of new business thinking, and also to draw on it for inspiration and direction. As mentioned previously, however, the risk remains that the more challenging dimensions of public relations theory and research are absorbed into the mainstream of business thinking.

With regard to the systems approach per se, the simple notion of an organisation as part of a system within which it interacts with its publics and their environment, is likely to strike a chord with public relations practitioners: it presents a useful point of departure, and corresponds with what would be a typical approach in the early stages of a public relations audit. By extending the basic notion for example, to encompass subsystems or suprasystems, or open and closed systems - the framework can be used by the practitioner to evaluate the internal responsiveness of the organisation as well as the effectiveness of its interactions with its publics and its environment. It can also be applied in evaluating the learning capacity of an organisation via communications flows, and its response to internal and external stimuli.

The Grunig models provide the public relations practitioner with a standard set of descriptors or norms. These can likewise be used for audit purposes eg in determining and describing the public relations behaviour of an organisation, and comparing it to similar or competitor organisations. They can also be applied in evaluative terms eg in assessing how the organisation's public relations norms compare, say, to its own corporate vision and values or to the standards expected of it by shareholders, employees, local communities or governments. It is obviously not necessary to accept all of the stringent requirements of the two way symmetrical model in order to make use of it for descriptive or evaluative purposes.

Both frameworks serve the extremely useful function of providing concepts and a common language by means of which the issues which arise in the day to day practice of public relations can be discussed and explored. This facilitates the development of a deeper understanding, between practitioners themselves, as well as between practitioners and academics: it also helps to avoid those

misunderstanding which arise through dialogues which are not conducted on the basis of common assumptions and concepts.

The frameworks are also useful in terms of defining the core skills of the public relations practitioner. The parameters of a system, or the definition of publics and the environment with which an organisation interacts, is not given in any physical sense

All systems are intellectual constructs: their boundaries are arbitrarily defined:

boundaries, publics and environments all change with time and circumstance, as do the priorities of the organisation itself. It is in identifying systems, in constantly redefining boundaries, and in constantly redefining the locus of the organisation that the skill of the practitioner comes into play: this, along with the subsequent management of the various interactions which follow, is the essence of good public relations practice.

While it is reasonable to assume, therefore, that most practitioners would accept that there is value in models and frameworks, the issues raised in the context of paradigms are more contentious. A strict application of Grunig's two way symmetrical model along with the severe constraints which he applies would, for example, label most of what presently passes as normal public relations practice as being deficient in moral and ethical terms. Indeed, Grunig's own researches have found that the asymmetrical models are more typical of normal public relations practice.

In part it might be argued that this dilemma has arisen through Grunig having parodied both the "existing" paradigm, and that which he has labelled the "alternative" paradigm. It is thus as unrealistic - in practical as opposed to theoretical terms - to suggest that public relations practitioners rely wholly on manipulation or persuasion, as it is to suggest that all conflict can be resolved through negotiation or mediation. By placing ethics at the heart of his two way symmetrical model, and by defining the latter as the very epitome of excellence, Grunig compounds the problem.

In reacting to the debate which ensued, it is likely that most practitioners would lean towards Miller. With his proviso that the ends and means of persuasion should be in themselves ethical, it seems perfectly acceptable that organisations should seek to control their environment by persuasive means. We might also take the view that both Miller and Grunig have presented extreme views in a search for distinctiveness. In practice and in the public relations context, organisations do make concessions to their various publics, and they do take cognisance of external views in determining their own priorities: likewise they do apply persuasion in furtherance of their own ends. Public Relations is and always will be about both mediation and advocacy: quite apart from any moral considerations, it would simply be bad business to exclude one approach or the other.

To adopt such a position, however, is not to imply that we cannot learn from the debate between Grunig and Miller, or that paradigms are not without value in the study of public relations. On the contrary, the dispute sets a context for evaluating issues, and its focus is on the difficulties inherent in agreeing a set of unifying presuppositions which describes the domain and purposes of public relations.

In regard to the latter, it can be argued that there is no reason why competing paradigms should not co-exist, or even be conjoined in some way. In a very stimulating article, for example, Cheney and Dionisopoulos have proposed a public relations paradigm which allows for the convergence of organisational (reflecting Grunig) and rhetorical (reflecting Miller) theory. Following Rorty and others, they propose a language based approach to public relations in which public relations specialists are in the business of producing symbols. In so doing they "shape identity, manage issues, and powerfully locate the organisation in the world of public discourse." In such a model, public relations helps to 'make' and not just 'announce' what organisations are.

As noted earlier, however, a consequence of living with more than one paradigm is that we not only leave open questions of the domain of public relations, but we do likewise with regard to relevant areas of theory and research. Grunig and Miller it will be recalled, led us in different directions: Cheney and Dionisopoulos suggest further areas of enquiry.

This need not matter unduly at this period in time. Interaction between public relations practitioners and academics is still in its infancy: there is much yet to learn from each other, and at this juncture we should be more concerned with the process of collaboration - and the benefits that can bring - than with the boundary issues or where ultimately the process might lead. Whichever paradigm or integration of paradigms we favour, there is a large body of knowledge and enquiry which represents common ground. Beyond that, we should be equally comfortable dealing with research and theory in the field of persuasive communications (our advocacy role) as we are in dealing with the same in the field of negotiation or conflict resolution (our mediation role): or indeed in the area of enquiry which are opened up by a language based approach.

As Pascale has so eloquently put it, the value lies not in 'having the answers' but in 'living the question': successful organisations or professions ask questions and explore not just to find answers, but to "reveal what is possible."

i Working Together: Public Relations Practitioners and Academics

It is the contention of this paper that the case for closer collaboration between public relations practitioners and the academics working in our field is overwhelming: in fact, it might well be argued that collaboration is a necessary

precondition if public relations is to achieve anything approaching the true status of a profession and a distinctive voice in the upper echelons of business. This concluding section therefore considers some of the general issues which arise in pursuing this objective.

Thus, it must first be acknowledged that while the core subject matter might be common, practitioners and academics are approaching it from entirely different perspectives. The latter, for example, must conform to academic standards: rigour must be applied in the use of ideas and language: conceptual propositions must be set in the context of past and contemporary work: above all, stringent peer group scrutiny is the norm. The public relations practitioner, by contrast, operates with fewer constraints: provided that ethical standards are met, practitioners will be judged by results rather than by the intellectual foundations or provenance of their approach: peer group scrutiny is the exception rather than the norm.

This is an important distinction, particularly from the point of view of accessibility.

Academics for the most part, and especially in journal articles, are addressing other academics. Due to the demands of the academic system, much of the material which is produced is extremely difficult and inaccessible from the perspective of the public relations practitioner. Resolution of this problem requires more than simply a greater effort on the part of the practitioner, or a greater emphasis on education within the discipline. It also requires that academics in the public relations field recognise the potential of a dual audience and a dual purpose: they must seek not merely to deepen knowledge, but also to promote a wider understanding over a much larger population.

We must equally recognise, however, that there are also obstacles to collaboration which are inherent in the very nature of public relations practice. For the large part, and certainly in respect of many of the more interesting challenges, the work of the public relations practitioner is conducted within the constraints of very strict commercial confidentiality: as often as not, this stricture applies beyond the actual completion of a project. While academics can and have been brought in on specific projects by including them within the confidentiality ring fence, this has limited appeal since academic careers tend to be built on publication and a wider recognition of their work.

There can be no simple solution to the difficulties which arise from the distinctive characteristics of academics and the practice of public relations. Since the lifting of confidentiality embargoes is seldom within the gift of the public relations specialist, it is probably easier to envisage progress from the academic side of the equation. Indeed, there might well be a lucrative market for academics who are prepared to enlighten practitioners on the deeper aspects of theory and research.

More generally, and on a more positive note,

many of requirements for progress are falling into place. The IPR, nationally and in the regions, is increasingly active in addressing the education and training needs of its members: in so doing, it seems to be evoking a positive membership response. In the academic context, public relations is increasingly available to students at graduate and post-graduate level, research activity is on the increase, and there is evidence that academics are showing more interest in the needs of public relations practitioners.

At the moment, however, these can still be viewed as two separate strands of activity: the areas of overlap and interaction are still insufficient to preclude the possibility that they develop along separate tracks. This could happen, for example, if practitioners were to focus on professionalism - ie raising performance standards across the range of mainline public relations functions - as opposed to consciously taking on board those deeper aspects of theory and research which provide the unifying basis of a profession. This is not in any way to underestimate the importance of professional standards: it is simply to suggest that they must be developed in parallel with some wider and more fundamental goals. Development along separate tracks might also occur if academics are discouraged by the response of public relations practitioners, and seek an alternative outlet for their theory and research elsewhere, for example, in MBA courses and the wider domain of business studies: the potential damage which this might inflict on the separate status of public relations is self evident.

If the willingness to work together is sufficiently strong, and there is a compelling case that it should be, there are an infinite number of practical measures by means of which an interaction between public relations practitioners and their academic counterparts can be promoted. These include regional working parties, seminars, conferences, and workshops: visiting lectureships: work experience and student placements: two way secondments: and the use of the Internet to exchange information and ideas. The only real obstacle to progress would be a lack of commitment.

Conference reports

IPRA/CERP Conference, Helsinki, June 1997

The conference included a rich variety of papers which combined to make this one of the academically strongest CERP conferences. Highlights included a scholarly and sophisticated paper on lobbying by Miia Jaatinen from the Department of Communication, University of Helsinki and a fascinating paper by Rebecca Harris, University of Western Sydney on 'Corporate Artefacts and Public Relations Rhetoric: the Place of the Annual Report in Corporate Discourse'.

A number of speakers addressed the issue of professionalism. Don Wright and Sue Wolstenholme both surveyed practitioners for their opinions about education and qualities needed to practise public relations. Sue's research, entertainingly titled 'How did I get where I am today?' was sponsored by the IPR and looked at IPR members' perceptions as to the necessary personal attributes, knowledge, qualities and experience for a career in public relations. Rather different themes were pursued by Dr Sandy Oliver 'Technology Assisted Teaching and Learning - Implications for an IPRA Baccalaureate' and Di Burton 'On Vocational Education for Public Relations'.

Professor Leif Aberg also from the University of Helsinki argued for 'Humane Visions', an ethical approach to management and public relations while Danny Moss, Gary Warnaby and Andrew Newman (all from MMU) presented some initial findings on public relations roles in the UK based on qualitative research. The keynote presentation (designated Silver Paper as a nod towards IPRA Gold Papers) was given by Jackie L'Etang on the concept of critical work in public relations and its potential contribution to the development of the discipline.

Bled 1997

4th International Public Relations

The Symposium took as its theme environmental issues. Papers included those by Professors Lauri and Jim Grunig (University of Maryland) who reviewed their research on activism in four countries; Anne Gregory (Leeds Metropolitan University) whose paper explored Rhône Poulenc Agriculture's environmental issues management policies; Alex Gryspeerdt (University of Louvain) whose paper explored a typology of crisis management models; Danny Moss and Gary Warnaby (Manchester Metropolitan University) whose paper examined recent qualitative research into senior practitioner roles; and Robert Beveridge (Napier University) whose paper examined source credibility in the management of public agendas and public opinion. There were also a number of practitioner papers including those presented by Sally Sykes (Head of Public Relations at Manchester Airport and graduate of Stirling's MSc in Public Relations) whose paper reviewed the handling of the Second Runway campaign; Isobell Norwell (Corporate Affairs Director Electrolux) who described the way environment issues are managed internationally by Electrolux; and Hugh Grace (Director, Carma International) whose paper analysed the media coverage of environmental issues in the chemical and paper industries.

Selected papers from the first Symposium have recently been published in the volume *Public Relations Research: An international perspective* by International Thompson Business Press and a second volume of papers is due to be published in Spring 1998.

The theme for the 1998 Symposium is to be that of "Government and Public Affairs" and will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Communications Management*.

Details of the papers presented at this year's symposium are available on International Public Relations World Wide Web site: <http://www.pristop.si/pmet>

Anne Gregory, Leeds Metropolitan writes;

Once again the incomparable surroundings of Lake Bled in Slovenia formed the backdrop to the Fourth Public Relations Research Symposium in July.

The gathering was smaller than in previous years, perhaps because academic budgets in particular had been stretched by attendance at the CERP Conference in Helsinki. However, as Prof James Grunig said, 'It's the intimacy of the gathering that makes Bled so special'. The quality of discussion certainly reflected the fact that participants could work through the papers being presented in some detail.

This year's theme was on the environment. A good variety of papers were offered from both academics and practitioners, ranging from two papers on issues and crisis managing proposing new theoretical models to how Manchester Airport PLC dealt with Swampy and friends. The latter became a subject of lengthy discussion extending into the relationship between legitimate democratic protest and the role of the practitioner working on behalf of an organisation acting within the law.

As usual the Symposium was impeccably organised by PRISTOP, who carried the theme of the event right through to providing high quality document wallets in recycled materials! The Saturday evening tasting a huge variety of Slovenian foods also went down a treat.

It's proposed that the symposium takes place again next year and for those who haven't been to Bled yet, it's recommended as a stimulating and challenging experience for the gray matter!

PREF conference 1997

The PREF spring meeting was hosted by Trinity and All Saints, Leeds. There was a full discussion of the content of the proposed IPR Diploma and many suggestions were made reporting curriculum content.

Papers included an insightful paper by Terry Burke (University of Westminster) applying economic theory to public relations, an optimistic paper by Richard Varey (University of Salford) which argued that technological developments are likely to increase democratic possibilities and proposed a 'new public relations' - without revealing if the concept owed anything to New Labour! finally John Hitchin (University College of St Mark and St John) put forward an argument that public relations degree courses needed a far greater emphasis on journalism, media studies and 'news management'.

Recent Publications

Books

Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Principles and Practice of Public Relations*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1997.

Moss, Danny; MacManus, Toby and ? *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective* ITBP, 1997.

Oliver, Sandra *Corporate Communications, Principles, Techniques & Strategies* Kogan Page 1997.

Regeser, Michael and Larkin, Judy *Risk Issues and Crisis Management* Kogan Page, 1997.

Book chapters

Harrison, Shirley "Corporate Social Responsibility: the Halo Effect" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Principles and Practice of Public Relations*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1997.

Moss, Danny & Warnaby, Gary "A Strategic Perspective for Public Relations in Organisations" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Principles and Practice of Public Relations*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1997.

Moss, Danny & Warnaby, Gary "A Strategic Perspective for Public Relations" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Principles and Practice of Public Relations*, London, Chapman & Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. "Introduction and Overview of Public Relations" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997

Kitchen, P. "The Role of Public Relations in Organisations" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. "The Interaction Between Public Relations and Marketing" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. "The Emergence of Marketing PR" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. "Developing a Research Framework:" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. "Measuring the Success Rate: Evaluating the PR Process and PR Programmes" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Kitchen, P. 'The Evolution of Public Relations: Principles and Practice' in Kitchen, P. (ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice* ITBP 1997

Tench, R. "Corporate Advertising:" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Richard Valey "Public Relations: the External Environment Context" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

Puchan, H, P. Pieczka, M. & L'Etang, J. "The Internal Communications Context" in Kitchen, P. (Ed) *Public Relations Principles and Practice*, London, Chapman Hall, 1997.

MacManus, Toby "A Comparative Analysis of Public Relations in Austria and the United Kingdom" in Moss, Danny; MacManus, Toby and Vercic Dejah *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective* ITBP, 1997.

Moss, Danny, Warnaby, Gary and Thame, Louise "Public Relations or Simply Product Publicity? An exploration of the role of public relations in the UK retail sector." in Moss, Danny; MacManus, Toby and Vercic Dejah *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective* ITBP, 1997.

White, Jon "Business and organisational consequences of the moral role of the public relations practitioner" in

Moss, Danny; MacManus, Toby and Vercic Dejah *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective* ITBP, 1997.

Lobbying Without Sleaze

Danny Moss and Phil Harris, co-Directors of Manchester Metropolitan's Centre for Corporate and Public Affairs have launched an "anti-sleaze initiative" according to the *Manchester Evening News*. Described by the paper as "media experts" rather than public relations experts Danny and Phil are looking at ethical issues in business and political marketing. Phil Harris was quoted as saying "We're looking at how businesses look at government policy and try to influence it for their own political gain - we need to look at what is ethical for the modern corporation... Via the Centre, we hope to draw together experienced corporate affairs practitioners and senior management, the media and politicians to ensure all these organisations get their corporate views across to the government more effectively... Whilst much of our work is concerned with development of effective corporate and community relations, corporate governance and evaluation of good public relations practice. We believe it to be right that, at this time of political change and development, we should emphasise the more political aspect of our work..."

The centre hosted a seminar on "Implications for North West Organisations of the Nolan and Greenburg Committee Reports" in November 1996 and organised a forum on "Political Campaign Marketing in the US and UK" in July 1997 as part of the Academy of Marketing Conference.

Conference Papers

Beveridge, Bob 'Source credibility in the Management of Public Agendas and Public Opinion' International Public Relations Research Symposium, lake Bled Slovenia 10 -13 July 1997

Burton, Di 'On Vocational Qualifications: An Industry-led Approach to Vocational Education for Public relations' IPRA/CERP 14 - 15 Helsinki 8 June 1997

Gregory Anne 'Rhone Poulenc's Environmental Issues Management Policies' International Public Relations Research Symposium, Lake Bled, Solvania 10 -13 July

Harrison, S 'Propaganda, persuasion and symmetry: Local and Central government perspectives on community will the citizen' British Academy of Management Conference Aston 16 -18 September 1996

L'Etang, Jacquie 'Critical Public Relations' Silver paper IPRA/CERP, Helsinki 14-15 June 1997

Moss, Danny and Warnaby, Gary 'Qualitative Research into Senior Practitioner Roles' International Public Relations Research Symposium, Lake Bled Solvania 10 - 13 June 1997

Moss, Danny & Warnaby, Gary & Newman, Andrew 'Qualitative Research into Senior Practitioner Roles', IPRA/CERP, Helsinki, 14-15 June 1997

Oliver, Sandra 'Technology Assisted Teaching and Learning - Implications for a IPRA Baccalaureat' IPRA/CERP 14-15 June 1997

Pieczka, Magda 'Un-American Public Relations' Member of International Panel at the International Communication Association (ICA) Conference Montréal May 1997

CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL EDITION OF THE JOURNAL OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

The Strategic Role of Corporate and Marketing Communications

Guest Editors: Danny Moss and Gary Warnaby
The Manchester Metropolitan University

Today's organisations need to adopt an inclusive approach to the development of strategy -one which takes account of diverse stakeholder interests, recognises the need to build reciprocal relationships with customers and other key stakeholders, and emphasises the importance of communicating the organisation's purpose and values clearly and consistently. While the marketing and public relations literatures abound with references to the role of communication and promotional strategies and offer numerous descriptions of the principal components of such strategies, there is little recognition of the implications for communications strategies of more recent debates about the content and process of strategic decision making in the broader strategy literature. This special issue of the *Journal of Marketing Communications* focuses on exploring how recent thinking about the concept of strategy and the process of strategy-making has influenced approaches to the formulation of corporate and marketing communications strategies and how such strategies, in turn, contribute to the successful realisation of corporate and competitive strategic goals

KEY THEMES OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE INCLUDE:

Strategic decision-making within the marketing communications function.

- The contribution of the communication function to successful strategy
- Communication professionals' roles in the strategic decision-making process
- Integrated marketing communications - the way forward for more effective communication strategy formulation?
- Empirical case studies of effective communications strategy making

The interaction of marketing communications and corporate communications

The distinction between integrated communications and integrated marketing communications

The strategic role of marketing and corporate communications

Guest Editors

Danny Moss or Gary Warnaby
Department of Retailing and Marketing
The Manchester Metropolitan University
Aytoun Street
Manchester M1 3GH

Due to the late publication of PREF potential contributors should contact Danny or Gary immediately.

Round Up

97 in '97 for Stirling's undergraduate unit
Stirling's second undergraduate unit in public relations, *Public Relations Principles and Practice* attracted a record number of students -97- from the Marketing and Film & Media degree programmes. The first undergraduate unit *Public Relations and Propaganda* also proved popular and attracted 75 students.

New Faces

Paul Green has been appointed lecturer at Robert Gordon University; Paul studied public relations at Stirling and has had six years teaching experience in further education.

Rosemary Graham has been appointed to a post at Central Lancashire. She has a MSc in Public Relations from the University of Stirling. She was formerly Executive Director of IPRA.

New Moves

Kay Kent has resigned from her academic post at Central Lancashire and also from PREF.

Philip Kitchen, Editor of *Principles and Practice of Public Relations* has left Strathclyde University and been appointed Professor of Strategy at Queen's University, Belfast.

Calls For Papers

3-5 September

PREF Conference 1998

Held in co-ordination with CERP and hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University.

The PREF Conference aims to:-

- Act as a showcase for current research by attracting good quality refereed papers;
- Provide a forum for exploration of best teaching practice;
- Encourage 'Seedcorn' research by including working papers;
- Provide an opportunity for networking with colleagues.

Abstracts to be submitted by **7th April 1998** to Sandra Oliver Thames Valley University. Full papers to be submitted by **1 July 1998**.

For further information contact working party members: Danny Moss, Ruth Townsley, Shirley Harrison, Sandra Oliver.

Next PREF Meeting

30th March 1998
IPR, London.

1998 SUMMER CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

July 9 to July 12, 1998

Arlington, Virginia, Key Bridge Marriott

Curriculum Pedagogy

Student Outcome Assessment

Several professional and academic associations are collaborating to create a new *Commission on Public Relations Education*. That commission will develop curriculum recommendations for both undergraduate and graduate education. In support of that inter-disciplinary effort, the NCA 1998 summer conference on public relations will serve as a "brainstorming" or idea generation session relative to public relations education.

An inter-association taskforce of more than 30 colleagues is planning this summer conference. Co-chairs of the taskforce are Judy VanSlyke Turk, University of South Carolina, and Carl Botan, Purdue University Lafayette. Under the direction of the co-chairs and the NCA national office staff, plans for the conference are moving forward.

Generally, the conference will:

- be inclusive, inter-associational and inter-disciplinary
- center on education and instruction in public relations
- address the needs of the practitioner community, include the role of theory and research in public relations education
- address issues related to both undergraduate and graduate education
- provide informative and educational panels for conference participants be product-oriented (conferees will explore models for undergraduate and graduate education; where consensus is not possible, differing views will be included in the proceedings, for their informative value to the Commission)

Specifically, the conference will be structured around four areas of concern to public relations education:

- Student outcomes (knowledge, skills, and attitudes)
- Curriculum (one that delivers the outcomes)
- Pedagogy (how we deliver the curriculum that delivers the outcomes)
- Assessment (how we measure whether our curriculum and how we teach it delivers the outcomes)

Contact Sherwyn P. Morreale, Associate Director and James L. Gaudino, Executive Director

Sharp-eyed Mike spots editorial gaffe

Mike Smith FIPR, Director of Cardiff's postgraduate diploma course spotted editorial inconsistency in the treatment of public relations in the postgraduate directory 'Prospects'. Mike asked the PREF executive to take up the issue and the following letter was duly sent to 'Prospects':

Dear Ms McGovern

I am writing on behalf of the members of the Public Relations Educators' Forum to express our concern regarding the inconsistent editorial policy regarding public relations courses in the new edition of *Prospects*. It is our belief that *Prospects* would work better as a directory and better serve readers' interests if all such courses were listed together under a new heading of 'Public Relations and Communications Management'.

Public relations is high on the list of preferred careers for school leavers and undergraduates (even if they do not at this stage really have an understanding of what such a career might entail); indeed a recent survey put public relations in the top three preferred careers for school leavers. Thus, graduating students would expect to find public relations listed under a heading of its own.

Public relations has been an established university discipline for over 50 years in the USA and for 10 years in the UK. It has its own journals and conferences throughout the world and continues to expand as a field. It is an interdisciplinary subject, drawing on many areas of the social sciences and has thus arisen in various faculties and departments in different institutions. However, from the point of view of students looking for a vocationally orientated course it makes far more sense to list degrees which include 'public relations' and 'communications management' in their titles together. In particular it is quite wrong to place public relations as a subset of marketing. Marketers have a very limited, product promotion view of public relations which ignores all areas of corporate communication and reputation management dealing with stakeholders other than the consumer.

I hope that you don't mind such a lengthy explanation but I trust you now understand why the members of PREF feel so strongly on the subject. I hope also that you agree that future editions of *Prospects* will list 'Public Relations and Communications Management' under one heading as this will make more sense to the reader.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely

Jacquie L'Etang
Secretary, Public Relations Educators' Forum (PREF)

cc Mike Smith FIPR Course Director P/G Diploma Cardiff
Emma Wood Chair PREF
Liz Yeomans Deputy Chair PREF
Paul Noble, Treasurer, PREF

Mike also wrote his own letter (see below)

Dear Ms McGovern

Further to the complaint by Jacquie L'Etang, Secretary, Public Relations Educators' Forum, I write to express my own dismay and the concern of colleagues in the Careers Department of the University of Wales, Cardiff who were the first to notice the error in the new edition of *Prospects*.

I believe the problem has arisen because *Prospects* is (in this instance at least) producer led rather than customer led.

The course for which I am responsible - one of only eight public relations courses in the UK approved for membership for the Institute of Public Relations - is based in the Centre for Journalism Studies, and in terms of prominence in *Prospects* is lost among the various journalism courses that are on offer.

As Ms L'Etang so rightly said, all public relations courses should be listed together under a 'Public Relations' heading - thus making it simple for graduates to identify the choices available, without having to guess what heading the published may have decided to use.

I have promised to relay your response to our Careers Department, so a personal acknowledgement would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith FIPR
Course Tutor: public & media Relations

Join the Lobby!

Write to:

Sinead McGovern
Prospects
Postgraduate Study
CSV Ltd
Armstrong House
Oxford Road
Manchester M17

IPR launches its own Diploma

The IPR has approved a syllabus for its own Diploma in Public Relations. The Diploma which is available for the first time in October 1998, is seen as an important step towards chartered status. The IPR needs 50 per cent of its members to hold an approved diploma or degree level qualification in public relations to qualify for chartered status.

The course will be taught at Queen Margaret's College, Edinburgh; Leeds Metropolitan University; Thames Valley University at Ealing and at Hackney Community College, City of London.

The syllabus is practical but also reflects the theoretical development of the field of public relations and covers key concepts. In addition to face-to-face tuition a student resource pack is being compiled that will contain lecture notes, references and, very importantly up to date examples of good and not so good practice. Practitioners and journalists are being invited to send examples of case histories, news releases, campaign plans and articles that will provide good examples of public relations in practice.

Entry requirements

Either:

1) Undergraduate or postgraduate degree in business studies, marketing, management, or communication studies plus one year's relevant full-time employment in public relations or related field;

or

2) Minimum age of 21 years plus a postgraduate Diploma in a related discipline e.g. CIM Diploma plus one year's relevant full-time employment in public relations or related field;

or

3) Three years' in public relations or relevant employment plus the CAM Certificate

or

4) Five years' in public relations or relevant employment plus 5 GCSE passes, one of which must be English.

Further information: Sue Wolstenholme Tél/fax: 01579-3770991 or e-mail ashley@ashley.avel.co.uk.

Contributions to next issue:

Please send to Jacquie L'Etang, Film & Media Department, The University of Stirling, FK9 4 LA.

News Items, articles, research summaries & abstracts, recent consultancy contracts, items on research, TQA, RAE, new teaching initiatives, recent publications, letters by 30th July 1998.

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Apologies in advance if you are not listed. Please supply your e-mail number for the newsletter.

20.02.1995

PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION FORUM

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