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ABSTRACT

Students in the beginning public relations course at Kansas State University work in small groups to make case studies of the public relations needs of organizations (usually campus groups or nonprofit community organizations) and to develop public relations plans for them. After receiving project instructions, students suggest possible clients, and team assignments are made. Work on the projects takes place outside of class except for team progress meetings with the instructor. Part one of each team's project, written in term paper style, sets forth a statement of the problem, information about the organization under study and similar organizations, and a definition of the organization's publics. For part two, students write about long-range objectives, goals, and strategies of their public relations plans and make in-class presentations to which they invite representatives of their organizations. The advantages of the approach--which far outweigh the problems that arise--include its ability to bring relevance to classroom material, and aid community organizations, teach resourcefulness and interpersonal skills, and provide students with a great sense of accomplishment. (The paper includes project instructions and samples of a public relations plan diagram and a case problem discussed in class.) (GW)

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Public Relations Division

USE OF A MODIFIED CASE STUDY APPROACH IN THE INTRODUCTORY PUBLIC RELATIONS COURSE

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM"

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Is it wise, feasible -- indeed, is it possible, to include a case study in the beginning public relations course?

This question came in for considerable discussion during the 1977 convention session dealing with how public relations professors made use of the case study made available by Standard Oil. Some professors expressed doubts. There is so much material to cover in the beginning course it would be difficult to fit in a case study project one argument ran. Beginning students don't know enough about public relations, tools and techniques to handle a case study, ran another.

If it is true that the first course in public relations has so much material to cover that a case problem approach appears impractical, why do we choose to do it?

First, we are able to integrate the projects into our course structure without taking too many class periods away from the kind of material we would otherwise cover. Four days are devoted to class presentations of the public relations plans which the students formulate and during recent semesters two days have been given to team meetings shortly before the first half of the project is due. This does not seem to us to be too much time out of approximately 45 class meetings during the semester. If we did not assign the large project we do, we would probably spend at least two additional classes on another scaled-down case problem anyway. The net loss is only about four classes for the entire semester.

The major reason for doing the project is a very important one. It brings relevance to classroom material. Even descriptions of real problems an instructor has had or has read about tend to be hypothetical to many students. A reference to the handling of public relations in a distant city in the corporate headquarters of a large company may be interesting and aid in learning, but when you can invite students to apply the material you're discussing to public relations problems they are working on at that very time, nothing seems hypothetical. It is real. It is now.

We can show students the relevance of the various steps in the public relations process as we talk about them in class. As we talk about fact-finding, for example, we can remind them of the need to state their client's problem concisely and specifically, to provide information about the client organization, including history, purposes, organization, activities, reputation, and other basic material; and to discuss organizations similar to the one they have selected.

As it turns out for us, we are able not only to give good experiences to students but also to assist the community of Manhattan, Kansas, through the students' projects. Nearly all of the projects have been for campus groups or non-profit community organizations. For instance, at the time of this writing the groups in one public relations class are dealing with the local Big Brother/Big Sister organization, the university's baseball team, the College of Home Economics (which has been experiencing some enrollment problems), the Arts and Sciences Honors Program, and the Recreation Club, a pre-professional organization designed for students majoring in the field of recreation. One group is working with an organization affiliated with the athletic department of another university in the state; Shocker Mountain Ski School is attempting to market ski lessons on artificial turf on a large cement slope at the rear of the Wichita State University stadium. Two other groups are working with local profit-making organizations, an engineering firm and a radio station. In the latter cases it is obvious that the organizations could pay for the services of full-time professionals and in some ways look at their participation in the project as a form of public service. In most cases, however, we are the ones performing a public service. By researching the organization and its public relations, we are likely to be doing something the organization needs or wants but did not have the time or resources to accomplish.

This, of course, opens lines of communication with a variety of local and regional organizations and thereby serves as a public relations technique for Kansas State University, the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications, and the public relations curriculum. This angle does require special handling, however, because the program can occasionally be a public relations minus as well as a public relations plus. There is nothing more embarrassing than having someone from the organization under study appear in your classroom for a presentation which turns out to be a poor excuse for a fourth-grade book report let alone a college-level presentation. It is necessary to explain this possibility to organizational representatives, especially those who tend to be looking at the student projects as the answer to all their problems. We explain that these are beginners and the results may be brilliant, the results may be horrendous, and most likely the results will be a mixed bag of good and not-so-good and realistic and not-so-realistic.

Although we use a modified case study approach in our beginning public relations course at Kansas State University, we don't think we're doing anything unique, nor do we have any sophisticated quantitative data to prove that our approach is better than anyone else's. We believe our approach works, however, and we through a brief description of it might stimulate some useful discussion.

First a little background about our course might be in order. It is numbered as an upper-level journalism course, and normally our majors do not take it until after they have had at least Reporting I and Reporting II. The course does not have any formal prerequisites and has become known in several other departments and two other colleges as a valuable service course. Often half, sometimes as many as two thirds, of the students in a given section are not journalism majors. They come from Animal Science, Home Ec Extension, Food and Nutrition in Business, Ag Econ, Community and Regional Planning, Recreation, Wildlife Biology, occasionally Architecture and Civil Engineering.

While this mix often makes it difficult to decide just where to pitch certain material, we think the interaction with students from other disciplines benefits our own students. And we strongly believe that students who will be going into positions as extension agents, recreation directors or community planners should have a basic public relations course. We know that for nearly all of the non-majors, our beginning course will be the only PR course they will take. If we delayed introducing the case problem approach until our second course, Public Information Methods, the non-majors would not have the advantage of working with a case study.

The fact remains, however, that the presence in the class of so many non-majors to some extent reduces the level of sophistication with which we can approach certain areas, such as media relations and use of graphics. We may well be starting on a more basic level than some of you in other institutions; yet we do use a modified case study approach with success.

We speak in terms of a "modified" case study appraoch, because we do not expect our students to complete the project in the sense that they actually produce press releases, slide shows, brochures or film clips. What we do ask them to do is utilize the complete public relations process to the point that their plan is ready to present to management.

Typically we have two sections of the beginning public relations class during the fall and spring terms. Theoretically, each section closes at 25; in reality, enrollment usually settles at about 30. Students work on the case problem in teams.

We try to keep the teams small, preferably no more than four members. In a class of 30, two teams may have five members or we may add an additional project and have three-member teams.

The fact that they will be doing a class problem is introduced the first day of class, and major project instructions (see Appendix A) are distributed at that time. Also on that first day we ask them to begin thinking about possible "client" organizations, as we will ask them to turn in suggestions. Often spending a little time talking about "clients" from previous semesters is helpful at this point.

We sometimes have difficulty making it clear to students that the "client" need not be a business or an organization with a burning problem. A "client" may be an organization that seems to be getting along well, but could do even better with an improved public relations plan. It may be a new organization or one which has not had a PR program in the past.

Manhattan is a relatively small town (population about 31,00 by county estimate), and students seem to despair at first of coming up with suggestions for clients. The variety and multiplicity of clients they have managed to work with since we started using real rather than hypothetical clients in 1974 make it clear that, even in a town as small as Manhattan, there is no dearth of potential clients.

We have found that students much prefer to work with real cases, rather than with hypothetical ones. They put hours of work into their major project, and they like to feel that their work may be of practical use. Students are urged to invite representatives of the client organization into class the day the related presentation is done, and to make a copy of the finished project available to the client.

Even if clients don't utilize the strategies and tactics their student team suggests, they can often profit from the team's analysis of publics and discussion of similar organizations and their public relations activities.

We have not utilized any systematic sort of follow up with clients, and perhaps we should. We see occasional evidence that strategies and tactics suggested by a class team have been adopted. The Women's Resource Center on campus now has a regular newsletter, for example, and the Small Claims Court makes available a useful reference which the judges themselves didn't know about until one of our teams tracked it down in a secretary's desk drawer.

One team, in the spring of 1977, used the local school board as a client. The school board had suffered two major public relations crises in the previous two years -- the two-to-one defeat of a bond issue and the extremely controversial firing of the superintendent. A copy of the project was given to the new superintendent, and during fall semester of 1977 the man who was spearheading a new bond issue campaign had an opportunity to read the report. He called the instructor to report how many of the suggestions in the project had actually been adopted. Incidentally, the 1977 bond issue passed, by a narrow margin.

During the second week of the semester, then, we call in client suggestions from students, on an optional basis. We ask that the student suggesting a given client get in touch with a representative of the business or organization, to make sure the client is willing to work with the student team. Sometimes the department gets a call from a representative of a local agency or organization, asking for public relations help. We may throw such requests into the hopper with the student suggestions, and if enough students are interested in working with the agency or organization we will use it.

We usually get a workable number of client suggestions. If we get too many, we try to get an indication from the class regarding which projects they would prefer to work on; if we get too few we may line up a client or two. This is seldom necessary.

On a given day during the second or third week of class, team assignments are made. The student suggesting a certain client is assigned to that client if the student wishes. We have not come up with a thoroughly satisfactory way of matching students with clients. The instructor announces the clients, occasionally asking the student who suggested a certain client to give some further explanation, and places sign-up sheets, numbered from one through the maximum number allowed on a team, at the front of the room. Students then sign up to work with a certain client. Not all students get their first choice (somehow a favorite student bar seems to have greater pulling power than Kansas Gas and Electric or the Sasnaks Area Girl Scout Council), but we've yet to come up with a better way.

Formal class is dismissed about 10 minutes early the day the assignments are made, so team members may get acquainted and exchange the necessary names, phone numbers, etc. From this point on, work on the case problem takes place outside of class except for team progress meetings with the instructor.

These team meetings with the instructor were phased in three semesters ago at the suggestion of students. The meetings are held, during the regular class time, a week to 10 days before the first part of the major project is due. The meetings are short, 12 to 15 minutes, and seem to be valuable. They force members of each team to give serious thought to just where they stand, and how much more they have to do before Part I is ready to turn in. They give team members an opportunity to ask the instructor questions, and they give the instructor a chance to learn a little about cooperation within the team and what specific problems a given team might be facing. Team members are formally involved only in the 12 or 15 minutes their team meets with the instructor, so there is some time for team meetings as well.

Some teams actually design and carry out surveys, and the data they collect are useful to clients. For example, a team in the spring of 1977 carried out a survey in the student shopping area regarding potential usefulness of a branch bank. That client has now located a temporary branch bank there and will be putting up a more permanent structure soon. In another case, with postage and supplies being paid for by the client, a team in the fall of 1977 ran a mail questionnaire of 400 for the Kansas Forestry Service.

Most teams do not carry out such formal research (and there really isn't time for us to squeeze a sophisticated research methods course into our PR class).

Most teams do at least do some informal research, and many students become intimately acquainted with the University Library for the first time.

As we discuss analysis of publics, we remind students that they will be expected to define the various publics important to their organization. Once reminded of this, students seem to find what we have to say about demographic and psychographic terms surprisingly relevant. Getting them to zero in on their public is difficult. There is a tendency to believe that because their public is the whole K-State student body it cannot be defined at all.

Researching publics has been an excellent way to teach our students resourcefulness. Some students do not have a research orientation at all, and for them the whole process is one new experience after another. Most are vaguely aware of what secondary research is, and some have had a considerable amount of experience. Few approach their research creatively, however. Students tend to think they should find a book entitled "A Profile of the Public Known as K-State Students." If they don't find such book, they often assume the information doesn't exist. The students working on the Recreation Club are a good example of this situation. Three of the four members of the team are recreation majors who total only about 140. They had gone to the department head and asked if he had the data they needed. No, he didn't. They didn't think to consider him a good source of the data. Instead they despaired. The search for background information gives us many opportunities to teach new approaches and continually reminds of how naive most students really are.

Each semester we request to keep copies of the best two or three projects, and, Buckley Amendment not withstanding, we've yet to have a refusal. These good projects from previous semesters can be helpful in exemplifying for current students that nearly any public can be defined to some extent, and that, once defined, the public is easier to work with.

Part One of the case problem is due sometime during the eighth to tenth week of class (this varies, as we try to work around Thanksgiving vacation, spring break and other varagies of the academic calendar). In Part One (see Appendix A for detail) the teams include their statement of the problem; information about the specific organization involved; information about organizations similar to the one they are working with; definition of the various publics important to the organization and a bibliography. This portion of the case problem is written in term paper style.

By the time Part One is due, we will have spent class time on public relations concepts definitions and functions; communication principles, persuasion, public opinion, attitude formation; fact-finding; analysis of publics; planning; and evaluation. Needless to say, we are seldom satisfied with the depth in which we have discussed these subject areas.

Part Two of the project is due the day each team makes its presentation, one of four days set aside for presentations during the final two weeks of the semester.

Part Two is written in narrative style, aimed at decision-makers in the client organization. Teams include in Part Two (again, see Appendix A for detail) long-range objectives, goals, strategy and tactics. They are asked to discuss the budget, to summarize their plans in a diagram (See Appendix B for a representative diagram), and to discuss how the program can be evaluted, quantitatively and otherwise. A bibliography is also required for Part Two.

Each team makes an in-class presentation, 20 to 25 mintues long, which is basically a sales pitch for their plan. They are to treat the rest of the class as if they represent the management to whom they have been assigned to present the plan. If representatives of the client organizations have been invited to attend the presentation, there may well be some bona fide management people there. Non-presenting members of the class are asked to role-play accordingly.

While teams are working on Part Two outside of class, we are spending class time on tools, details, practical applications, guest-speakers, law, accreditation, professionalization, etc. We try to do at least two case problems in class during the semester, dividing the class into teams of four or five, having them work on the problem during one full class period and about the first 15 minutes of the next class period. One member of each team then briefly presents the team's recommendations. Other students ask questions. The following class period the instructor reacts to the various solutions suggested. (See Appendix C for sample case problems used.)

Working through the in-class case problems seems to give students some feel for working with the public relations process. It also alerts them that they may not clearly understand parts of the process — for example, the difference between strategy and tactics. The instructor may point out that goals are stated so loosely that progress may be difficult to measure, and this will create problems in evaluating the program. Incidentally, the students seem to find the in-class case problems to be fun, a change of pace from the "me lecture, you listen" approach.

In evaluating the use of the projects in our classrooms we have reached a number of conclusions about the disadvantages and advantages of using such an approach. Fortunately the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

One problem is creating team situations which bring together people who are all willing to cooperate with others and commit themselves to a team effort. Until recently we had problems with students from outside the journalism department who were taking the course on the credit/no-credit system. In nearly every case such students would slack off when their workload became demanding. After all, they reasoned, what difference did it make since they were not taking the class for a specific letter grade. As long as they performed at least to the D level, they would receive credit for the course. Often students working for a grade ended up doing most of the work when they found themselves on a team with those not motivated by grades. We eliminated most of that problem by reclassifying the Public Relations course as a for-grade-only offering. The problem still occurs, of course, with slackards who enroll.

Problems now are more likely to evolve around scheduling. So many students here must work to pay their educational expenses that they find it difficult to find the time to meet with their teammates. Often upon questioning it is easy to discover that the problem is not as insurmountable as the students seem to feel it is, but it can be very genuine. If it is, we spend time with the group to attempt a solution and make accommodations if necessary. We also point out that coordinating schedules is part of the "real world."

Another problem has been alluded to above. Because of time and ability limitation, students' projects are often more superficial than we would like them to be. This is a problem which we feel we cannot do much about. In our view it is teaching the process which is important, and although we don't suggest to them that they be superficial, we know what to expect. On the other hand, some plans, most often done by teams dominated by graduate students, have been exceptionally mature.

How to grade the projects? It is definitely a case of apples and oranges and every other kind of fruit you can name. Each project is different, and it is difficult to establish broad criteria which can easily be applied.

How do we know how much each member of the team has contributed? We ask each member of each team to turn in, with Part One, a review of the team's work to date, including a brief report of the meetings held by the team (including attendance) and comments on the contributions made by each member of the team "including yourself." Students seem to be reluctant to "rat" on other students, so we find ourselves making increasingly stronger statements about the need to be open and frank in their critiques: "This is the major way I have of knowing how your team worked together and how each member contributed, so please be honest and specific, even though you may find it difficult. This is not the time to be overly modest, nor should you feel reluctant to comment frankly on the work of teammates (your comments will be strictly between you and the instructor)."

We seem to be getting generally adequate comments in our critiques now, although there is still a problem in getting all students to turn them in. Here we simply apply a little peer group pressure, and refuse to turn back the paper until all critiques are in.

On the class day following each team's presentation, they again turn in a review of the team's work since Part One was turned in. At this time we also require a critique of the presentation. Again, no feedback from the instructor is given until acceptable evaluations from all members of a team have been turned in.

Another problem in the past was attendance during the presentations. A number of students felt no need to attend other teams' presentation. It was pretty depressing for students who had spent a whole semester on a case problem to come for the presentation and find few persons there except the instructor and the members of the other team presenting that day.

Our solution to this problem -- and it has helped enormously -- is to call for informal critiques on presentations by other teams, assigning a maximum of three points per critique.

An enormous advantage of the project (or so the students tell us) is the overwhelming sense of accomplishment which they experience upon finishing the course. Most of them have only a vague realization of how much work is involved, and when they are finished and see what they have done, they are both vastly relieved and (usually) very proud. This kind of feeling is not often elicited by college courses.

The team project teaches them an enormous amount about personal relations. They are forced to interrelate with others--in many cases people they had never seen before coming to class. Those groups which have internal problems usually learn the most about human interaction; unfortunately it is often at a high price. Even those on teams which run with exceptional ease have often indicated what they learned about making a team run smoothly.

The students are also fortunate to have the opportunity to present their ideas to others for testing and for reaction. Most of what is done in higher education is done only for the eye or ear of the teacher. The project forces immediate implementation of course material for immediate feedback. Brainstorming and other planning sessions are valuable learning tools, and most of these activities are done without the professor's direct involvement.

Further the students have another opportnity to test their presentation skills. Many of them are shy or ill-at-ease as a result of little or no experience, and the class presentation gives them one more opportunity to present publicly. Although the teams have the option of not using all team members, nearly everyone is given some part in the presentation.

Finally we can look back to all our reasons for wanting to use the project approach and see them as advantages. We have brought relevance to classroom material, we have fulfilled an altruistic role, and we have developed good public relations for ourselves. We like it and know it works beautifully. It is impossible for us to see that it could not work for nearly every beginning course in public relations.

APPENDIX A

89 630 Public Relations

AJOR PROJECT

Purpose: This assignment is intended to give you experience in utilizing the complete ublic relations process in solving a public relations problem. As you work on the assignent, you should learn not only about public relations, but also about the organization hich you have chosen. For example, if the problem you select happens to be explaining an pplication for a rate increase by Southwestern Bell, you will learn a lot about Southestern Bell (and about the telephone industry in general) while also learning about cororate public relations.

Scope: This is to be a major effort on your group's part. The results (in the forms f a paper and of an in-class presentation) should reflect two things--hard work in searchng for information and hard work in doing some creative thinking. Try to be resourceful, nnovative and individualistic in your approach, but remain aware that coming up with one right and creative idea does not excuse your group from the need for hard work in your inormation search and planning your entire program.

Organization: It is hoped that you can work with an organization related to your own nterests. You will be dealing with a real public relations situation, and it is hoped that he final product will be of practical use to the organization with which your group works.

The Project

Part One: The style to be used in writing Part One will differ from that used in Part wo. All sections of Part One should be written in traditional term paper style, including ppropriate footnoting.

Item 1 -- Your first task is to describe the public relations situation (or problem) as oncisely and specifically as possible. If you see the situation as being multi-faceted or in ny way compartmentalized, make it clear what the various parts of the situation are and how hey interrelate. Regardless of how complex you feel the situation to be, however, the description should be brief and to the point, and no more than one double-spaced typewritten page in ength. If your description can't be expressed in one page, the situation is undoubtedly eyond the time and professional capabilities of students in a basic public relations course. nder these circumstances you will need to limit your efforts.

Item 2 -- Provide information about the specific organization involved. This information should provide background for a reader who may know little or nothing about the organzation. Discuss the history, purposes, organization, activities, reputation, and other asic material about the organization and the current and past public relations used by he organization, making an attempt to determine their public relations budget.

Item 3 -- Discuss organizations similar to the one you have selected. Try to determine ow others are organized, what their activities are, etc., with an eye to those areas in hich they differ from your own organization. Also discuss their public relations programs.

Item 4 -- Define the various publics which are important to the organization in handling ts particular public relation situation. Each of these publics should be discussed in at east two ways -- the importance of each public to the organization, and the general nature f the public in both demographic and psychographic terms. The space devoted to the discusson of each public should be in relation to the importance of each public to the solution f the problem.

Item 5 -- Include a bibliography. Use Turabian's A Manual for Writers as a reference or proper form. In addition to the usual printed sources, be sure to include interviews, orrespondence, etc.

Part Two: Due the day of your presentation. Please turn Part One back in also.

This is the portion of your paper which will allow considerable latitude and flexibility -- and will place special demands on your creativity and adaptability. Write it in narrative conversational style, aimed at decision-makers in your organization. In discussing objectives, goals, strategies and tactics, be sure to indicate to which publics they apply.

Item 1 -- Define the long-range objectives for your public relations program. Depending on the nature of the problem you have selected to work with, these objectives may range in scope from a year to several years. Long-range objectives are usually general, and seldom specific enough to be measurable. (Remain aware, however, that there is a difference between being general and being vague.)

Item 2 -- Discuss the goals for your program. These specific goals must relate easily and obviously to the long-range objectives. Most of these goals should be specific enough to be measurable. In other words, there should be quantitative or countable factors involved in the goals, so the success or failure of the program can in time be determined by something other than intuition or guesses.

Item 3 -- Discuss the general strategy you think should be used to accomplish your goals and objectives. Is a soft sell or a hard sell better? Should communication be direct or indirect? Should communications be constant and continuing or of a saturation nature? Or will infrequent contacts at certain times of the year be adequate? In short, discuss the general communications approaches you think will be best in achieving the objectives and goals.

Item 4 -- After discussing strategies, discuss the tactics you propose to use, and why you feel those tactics are best and what you hope they will accomplish. (Having good reasons for selecting a few tactics is better than listing lots of them but not being able to explain the rationale behind their use). Discuss the budget at this point.

Item 5 -- To summarize your plans draw a diagram of your objectives, goals, strategies and tactics.

Item 6 -- Finally, discuss how you think your program can be evaluated, quantitatively and otherwise. If you've set quantitative goals, this step will be easy.

Item 7 -- A second and undoubtedly shorter bibliography should be developed for Part Two. References will include materials consulted for specific programming aids and ideas.

CLASS PRESENTATION -- The class presentation should be 18-20 minutes long and should be a sales pitch for your plan. Make it interesting. Use appropriate visual aids. Treat the class as if they represent the management to whom you have been assigned to present your plan -- not as a group of your classmates. Non-presenting members of the class should roleplay accordingly. You may find it helpful to explain to the class, before beginning material to help them evaluate properly. This material can also be organized into a handout and distributed to the class the last class meeting before your presentation.

EVALUATIONS/CRITQUES -- When your team turns in Part One of the major project, each student should also turn in a review of your team's work to date. The review may be informal (hand-written, written in first person, etc.). It should include a brief report of the meetings held by your team (including attendance) and comments on the contributions made by each member of your team (including yourself). This is the major way I have of knowing how your team worked together and how each member contributed, so please be honest and specific, even though you may find it difficult. This is not the time to be overly modest, nor should you feel reluctant to comment frankly on the work of teammates (your comments will be strictly between you and the instructor).

On the class day following your team's presentation, you should each turn in a review of your team's work since Part One was turned in and a critique of your presentation.

No feedback from the instructor will be given on parts of the project until acceptable evaluations from all members of the team have been turned in.

BONUS POINT CRITIQUES -- A student may earn bonus points by turning in informal critiques of the presentations given on days other than when his/her team's presentation is scheduled. (Five points per day.)

APPENDIX B

OBJECTIVE

Create awareness of KSDB-FM

GOALS

Increase the advertising of KSDB-FM

Increase the use of KSDB-FM's public announcement services

Increase financial support

STRATEGIES

Advertise KSDB-FM through the local media

Increase awareness of KSDB's available public services

Inform potential sponsors of the benefits of supporting KSDB-FM

TACTICS

Solicit free billboards*#

Advertise more in the Collegian* and Mercury# newspapers

Prepare legitimate news releases*#

Increase the number of remote special broadcasts*#

Place advertising posters in University classrooms* and on community billboards#

Continue the information card handout during registration*

Sell and give away KSDB-FM paraphenalia*#

Prepare table-top memos*

Broadcast over University intercom systems*

Increase placement of the weekly music survey*#

Send the prepared letter to all organization heads*

Advertise KSDB-FM services*#

Develope personal contacts with potential sponsors#

Follow-up support with a thank-you note#

Special Tactics

Give station tours*#

Support local charity drives*#

Prepare an informative brochure on the station*#

Receive a chamber of commerce endorsement#

* indicates tactic is specifically aimed at the University community

# indicates tactic is specifically aimed at the Manhattan community

APPENDIX C

Case Problem #1
289-630 Public Relations

A nationally known chemical manufacturing company opened a branch plant in the hills of a Southeastern state. The location was chosen on the basis of labor supply, raw materials, tax rates and humidity conditions.

Shortly after the plant opened, in an interview with local media personnel and area wire service reporters, a top company executive said, "One of our major reasons for locating here--and thus one of our contributions to this community--was to help raise the standard of living of these hillbillies."

The story was widely reported. A storm broke. Nationally-known natives of the state wrote burning letters to the newspapers. A syndicated columnist wrote a column, half in anger, half in fun. The governor, senators, and other politicians got into the act with duly indignant protests. People in the community expressed bitter resentment.

You are members of the company's public relations staff. Spend the rest of this class period (and the first 15 minutes or so of Monday's class) brainstorming about a program to remedy the situation. Consider fact-finding you would recommend, and outline your suggested program in terms of objectives, goals, strategies and tactics.

Select a member of your group to take notes, and select a spokesman (spokesperson?) for your group to present your ideas to the rest of the class. The notes may be rough, but should include the names of members of your group and must be turned in at the end of the class period Monday. Your team's spokesperson should be prepared to spend 10 to 15 minutes Monday presenting your plans, and you should all be prepared to field questions regarding those plans.

CASE PROBLEM
PUBLIC RELATIONS (289-630)

AVERTING ENVIRONMENTALISTS ACTION LEADING TO SUBSTANTIAL LOSS OF SALES

Misuse of a product by the consumer will often result in his blaming it for any shortcomings. That's bad enough. But, when misuse also damages the environment, sales of the product can not only be impaired but even banned. Just such a situation confronted the Salt Institute (SI), Alexandria, Va., trade association of salt distributors.

Ten million tons of salt are used annually on some 400,000 miles of roads in more than 2,500 communities in 33 snow belt U.S.A. states and Canada. Properly applied, it is believed to be the most effective, environmentally safe, economical, and adequately available product for combatting ice on roads. But, by 1972, hundred of PWDs (Public Works Departments) had been creating, through sloppy storage and inefficient spreading, problems which seemed likely to reduce the industry's $64 million annual sales by 25%. Charges were being made by environmental groups that salt damages pavements and vegetation and endangers water supplies and wildlife, "Halt the Salt" campaigns were being organized, use of salt on roads had already been banned in six communities, and similar ordinances were being proposed in 200 additional ones.

At that point, SI retained Carl Byoir & Associates (CB&A), NYC- headquartered public relations counsel, to develop a program for combatting this threat.

You are the members of CB&A's staff, and you have been asked to do the following:

1. Determine SI's publics in this circumstance.
2. For each public indicate if it is primary, secondary or marginal.
3. Brainstorm about how you will remedy this situation.

Select a member of your group to take notes, and select someone to present your ideas to the rest of the class. The notes may be rough, but they should include the names of members of your group and must be turned in at the end of the next class period.