Western Connecticut State University
Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process
A Public Relations Campaign

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Abstract

This project is a public relations campaign and press kit for the new department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process at Western Connecticut State University. The project is in two parts, the first being the PR campaign. This campaign lays out the best possible way to gain publicity for the new department as well as how to go about getting it. The second part is a press kit that is provided to the local media be it newspapers or television. The kit provides background information, press releases, and biographies of the new department.
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WCSU Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process Public Relations Campaign
Introduction

As the only school in the Connecticut State University system (Western Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, and Eastern Connecticut State University) that offers a Bachelor’s Degree in professional writing, Western Connecticut State University has an excellent opportunity to take advantage with its new program Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process. The Undergraduate Professional Writing program in the Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process prepares professional writing students for careers in fields that include writing for newspapers and magazines, fictional books, public relations companies, and many other exciting areas.

Still in its infancy, the Department of Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process at Western Connecticut State University has the opportunity to provide many benefits to the students involved in this program. There are so many directions in which this department could help the professional writing majors find the career that best suits them for the future.

To prepare students for careers as professional writers, the Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process focuses on engaging students in writing as a process of making form and meaning; training professional writing students for work in business, publishing in all its facets, and teaching; immersing students in the rich environment of professional writing activities and talent
available in New York City and author-endowed Fairfield and Litchfield counties; emphasizing writing as key to critical thinking; highlighting the importance of linguistics and understanding the basic components of language and texts to professional writers; assisting students with the development of style, voice and attunement to genre and creating a community of writers at WestConn that fosters an awareness of the importance of writing across the curriculum.

The Professional Writing faculty (who are themselves professional writers) believe strongly that we want to train writers to take a professional attitude and to see themselves as professionals.

Courses in the Major are workshops of various kinds: some focus on student writing and hands-on learning with substantial writing projects; others train skills such as copyediting; others invite students to learn by imitating and finding inspiration from texts produced by accomplished writers in many genres.

Through the implementation of this campaign we’re hoping to show the many benefits behind the writing department assist those who will help guide the program in a way that will promote this curriculum for current and incoming students. It is rare to find a degree dedicated strictly to those who plan to make writing their future without incorporating the field of English, which includes study of the English language and literature, knowledge of texts, historical contexts, written and oral communication, and the powers of analysis, into the
agenda. However, this program will do just that, and it will guide future writers to learn the details behind professional writing.

The goals, objectives and strategies outlined in this plan will make the most of the funds available and spread the word for this exciting new program at Western Connecticut State University.
**Situation/Overview**

The department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process offers many options in professional writing, including Creative Writing, Business Writing, Public Relations Writing, Journalism/Freelance Writing, General Writing, and Teaching of Writing for both elementary and secondary education. Each of these options gives students the opportunity to learn the details behind their chosen writing profession.

In the creative writing option, students learn to write in all forms of creative writing such as short stories, novellas, novels, poetry, screenwriting, and playwriting. Students also learn the effective use of literary terminology.

In the business writing option, students learn the basics involved in good business writing. They learn to write effectively in all forms of business writing such as business reports, proposals, plans, and letters.

In the public relations option, students learn to write effectively in all of the forms of public relations writing including press releases, pitch letters, press kits, brochures, and campaigns.

In the journalism/freelance option, students learn how to effectively write news reporting. They learn about the organization and different styles that make a great news story.
In the education option, students learn the basics for writing educationally. They learn how to write teaching plans and other beneficial types of writing needed to excel in their field.

WestConn offers the first Department of Writing, Linguistics, and Creative Process in Connecticut. The undergraduate Professional Writing Program emphasizes the combination of the creative writing such as poetry, fiction and playwriting and “practical” writing such as business and public relations, and journalism.

WCSU’s writing major has always stressed writing as a process and creative process. This philosophical and tutorial approach has been highly successful, as the dramatic increase in Professional Writing majors since 2001 confirms.

Faculty members of the department see themselves as writers among writers and will find it natural to work with students at all stages of their writing development. They bring to the early stages of writing instruction a professional understanding of the writing process and how it evolves. The faculty members are committed to taking the lead in writing instruction across the university in general and for first-year students in particular. The concentration of remedial and first-year writing courses, professional writing courses, and linguistics courses creates exciting opportunities for collaborations among students, faculty, courses, and departments.
Since the writing program is relatively new, we look to let people know about this option in professional writing that WestConn has to offer. Our current problem is finding a way to let people who will be interested know about this offer. We’re looking for support from the administration in the CSU system so that incoming college students will know that WestConn is a great choice for those interested in pursuing a career in writing, letting them know about the advantages and opportunities presented through this writing program. People are not aware of the extensive areas where writers are needed and this program will teach and show others the many things they can accomplish.

**Audiences**

This PR Campaign will focus on two groups of audiences to reach with information on the Department of Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process, the primary audiences and the secondary audiences. The primary audiences will be our main target. These groups are made up of the people who will benefit the most from the new department at Western Connecticut State University. The secondary audiences are the groups of people who will get the word out to our primary audiences about what we are doing at WestConn in the new writing department.

**Primary Audiences**

- CSU Board Members
• Incoming students interested in writing
• High school guidance counselors
• Other colleges and universities in the area for transfer students

Secondary Audiences
• Media
• Local Newspapers
• WCSU Administration
• WCSU Faculty
Goals

This PR campaign gives strategies for four goals that we have established. The purpose of these goals is to let different groups of people know about the writing degree at Western Connecticut State University. It is our hope that each of these goals will be met and launches a future for the department of writing, linguistics, and the creative process.

• To introduce the WCSU Writing Department and its focus on showing writing students to take a professional attitude and see themselves as professionals

• To inform the CSU System about the department and gain both financial assistance and publicity from the state

• To inform incoming students about the department and all that it offers

• To inform high schools in the area about the department and its benefits so that they can pass the information along to their students
Objectives

With the goals for this campaign established, the next step is to determine how we’re going to progress towards these goals. Since this PR campaign is designed to run for a year starting in August of 2008, we’ve developed the following objectives set within a specific time frame of the first 3 months to achieve the immediate goals designated for this campaign.

- By August 1st, our company will have completed lists of our targeted audiences, including the neighboring newspapers, high schools, and colleges, as well as a list of the CSU board members that can assist in promoting this department.
- By September 1st, all neighboring newspapers will have received their press kits which will include all background information and press releases for upcoming informational events.
- By September 30th, all neighboring high schools will receive information about the new department of writing, linguistics, and the creative process at western Connecticut state university, in hopes that they will pass this along to students interesting in majoring in writing when they go to college.
- By October 15th, all neighboring colleges will receive information about the new department of writing, linguistics, and the creative process at
western Connecticut state university to pass along to any students interested in transferring to Western Connecticut State University to major in professional writing.

The above campaign objectives cover the first three months of the proposed time frame. These qualify as the most immediate needs. Without these objectives filled, the rest cannot follow. By October 30th, the client and our company will meet to discuss the next list objectives and the time frame for which they will take place. The following nine months of objectives will be discussed at that time.
Strategies

To achieve the goals we have designed for ourselves in the time frames we have set we have developed the following strategies to explain exactly how we plan to achieve our goals and objectives. These strategies will be effective with help from both the client and our company. The main goal is to reach out to the public and let them know about the new degree program offered at Western Connecticut State University. We believe the best possible way to do this is as follows.

It is our company’s responsibility to create a list of designated contacts that we will use throughout the implementation of this plan. These contacts are very important to the production of the PR campaign. We will constantly refer to them when new events come up, meetings are held, and informational forums are put on by the client. Without them the information about the department will not reach the public. It is our hope the have a dedicated group of contacts that will constantly cover new information out by the client and our company.

This plan will be achieved greatly through press releases and informational events. Since this department is relatively new we need to let people know exactly what this department is and what is does. It will be the clients responsibility to set up a series of meetings and events for the public to receive this knowledge of the department. The clients will then supply us with the list of upcoming events and it will be our responsibility to see that these events
our drawn up in press releases and given to the appropriate contacts to get the word out to the public.

Along with the press releases our company will also set up group press conferences and question and answer forums for the client to participate in. The conferences will give faces the new department. It will allow people to see who is behind the implementation of this new department. We will hold question and answer forums for the public to attend to so that any additional questions they may have about the new department can be answered directly from the faculty who established it.

We will also set up a series of meeting with the CSU board members to establish contact with them and present to them this new program. It is our hope that they will assist with promotion of the department of writing, linguistics, and the creative process at western Connecticut state university and provide financial assistance to the department if it is needed. Out of the four universities involved in the CSU system (Western Connecticut State University, Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University and Southern Connecticut State University), Western Connecticut State university is the only on that offers a bachelors degree in professional writing and we hope to receive assistance from the CSU system by using this to our advantage.

Since we will be targeting new incoming high school students client will represent themselves at all upcoming college fairs around the state. Since the
University currently is actively involved in attending college fair it will be up to the client to make sure that representation is their for this specific department. It is important to get as much information about the department out there as possible.
**Budget**

Hourly Rate: $XXX

The first four months of this one year Public Relations campaign will be the launch months. During this time the foundation will be laid for the ongoing public relations efforts. It will be very labor intensive and time will be spent developing the messages, generating media contacts, identifying editorial opportunities, as well as researching and writing a press kit which will be distributed to the media to provide both news and background information about the WCSU Writing Department. The members of any key media will also be contacted to establish the necessary relationships that will be needed and to determine any other opportunities that may exist to also promote the department.

During the remaining time of the public relations plan, the last five to twelve months, it will be difficult to verify the precise activity patterns. Efforts will be made to focus maintaining coverage of the department and its services.

It is more complicated to give an estimate of the number of hours needed each month to perform these tasks, especially since it its part of the plan to continually research and respond to opportunities that may occur within the media. Therefore, the billing will take place as follows.

Four the first four months it is expected that thirty hours of work will be done on the Western Connecticut Writing Department’s behalf each month. As a result, a retainer fee of $X,XXX will be billed at the beginning of each month to
cover the work done during that time. This fee will include the hours spent working the project as well as a clipping service that will start upon distribution of the first press release.

After the launch months, when it will become more complicated to determine the amount and time spent on work, a nominal fee of $X,XXX will be billed. This will cover the expected fees and the clipping service as well as be credited towards any approved project costs. Any additional fees that will incur during that time will be billed at the end of each month. Equally, the fees are less than those anticipated for a month; a credit will be shown on the next month’s bill. During the final months, a project estimate will be issued at the beginning the month outlining what the major projects are and what the anticipated costs will be. It is at this point that the client, WCSU, will either approve the amount or alter the month’s schedule to suit the budget.

**Separate Costs**

Activity and/or costs budgeted separately will include:

◊ Phone and fax costs

◊ Postage

◊ Photography, reprints, subscriptions

◊ Out-of-pocket expenses incurred by JMW Associates

◊ *Estimates for these items will be submitted to the client for approval
Clipping Service

A clipping service is necessary for the plan both from a strategic and evaluative standpoint. The clipping service will provide clips of any articles that appear in publications dealing with our plan. By collecting these clips, we can determine what worked in our favor and what didn’t, who picked up what pitches and releases, and what was of most interest to the people. We can then use these to refocus our efforts to better target our audiences. By looking at the number of clips, the content, publications they appeared in, and the readership, we can then determine if our plan is working or if we need to implement any changes.
Evaluation

The public relations program that will be implemented for the Western Connecticut State University Writing Department will be evaluated quarterly for this one year PR plan. This evaluation will be conducted through meetings with the client, analyses of any press clippings and interviews, as well as any other feedback. Our Company will also continually look for any feedback from the WCSU Writing Department through e-mail, phone, and other necessary meetings. This PR program will be amended at any time throughout the year if warranted by any evaluation measures.
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Dear………

Writing. You either love it or you hate it. There’s not much you can do about those who hate it, but those who love it can benefit extremely well from the new Writing Department at Western Connecticut State University.

Not much consideration is given to the writers of the world; however we wouldn’t be where we are today if it wasn’t for them. Things we take for granted like directions to an electronic device or a press release that keeps your company in business and guarantees you a job are all written by professional writers. Writers contribute immensely to keeping this world where it’s at and now you can be a part of helping this individual group of people succeed.

I’d like to schedule time for you to meet with a few people who have made this department a reality, in hopes that we can count on your contribution and support while we continue on in this new venture. Please note that WCSU is the only university on the Connecticut State University system that offers this program. This might help you to consider supporting this endeavor.

I’ve enclosed a press release announcing the Writing Department now at Western Connecticut State University. You will also find background information
on the department and the faculty involved. I hope you’ll consider this department in any future support and assistance you could give.

Please don’t hesitate to call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX to request more information and to schedule a time to meet with me as well as the new Writing Department faculty. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
DANBURY, Conn. – On Monday, September 1, at 6 p.m. the new department of Writing, Linguistics, and the Creative Process at Western Connecticut State University will hold an informational meeting in the lobby of Warner Hall on the university’s Midtown campus, 181 White St. Danbury.

This event will provide important information for any incoming students interested in obtaining a degree in professional writing. All students and parents currently enrolled at WestConn or students interested in learning more are invited to attend.

Faculty members of the department see themselves as writers among writers and will find it natural to work with students at all stages of their writing development. They bring to the early stages of writing instruction a professional understanding of the writing process and how it evolves.

The Bachelor of Arts in Professional Writing prepares students for careers in writing fields that range from creative writing to technical writing to public relations to online and print journalism, as well as for writing intensive
professions such as the law, publishing, business and teaching. Students may choose one of five B.A. degree options: Business Writing, Creative Writing, General, Journalism and Freelance, and Public Relations.

Students interested in learning more about this exciting new program are encouraged to attend this informational meeting where the faculty from the department will present the ideas and goals behind the department, and what it hopes to accomplish.

For more information please contact the WCSU Writing Department at (203) 837-9041 or online at www.wcsu.edu/writing.
DANBURY, Conn. – On Monday, October 15, Western Connecticut State University will be at the Danbury Fair Mall College Fair from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Many colleges will be represented at this year’s college fair however, Western Connecticut State University will have further representation to showcase the new department of Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process which offers a bachelors degree in professional writing.

Those students interested in professional writing can benefit extremely well from the new Writing Department at Western Connecticut State University. At the college fair students will have the opportunity to talk about the new program with the department chair, Oscar De Los Santos. This is a rare occasion as most colleges will not be representing one specific career choice at their tables.

Since the department of Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process is a new addition to the WCSU list of degree programs, we want students to learn as much as they can about it. This is a wonderful opportunity for students interested in obtaining a degree in professional writing to learn about the many possibilities in writing.
Western Connecticut State University invites all high school students interesting in pursuing a career in professional writing to attend the college fair and learn more about this exciting new program.

For more information please contact the WCSU Writing Department at (203) 837-9041 or online at www.wcsu.edu/writing.
Background Information

The following has been taken from the Writing department website,
www.wcsu.edu/writing

What is the department of Writing, Linguistics, and the Creative Process?

The Undergraduate Professional Writing program gives form to the contradictory fact of life about writers in American society: They are both specialists and generalists. People who make their living (or some part of it) by writing today find themselves frequently crossing writing genres even as they are called upon to specialize in some specific genre. Business writers may find they are sometimes asked to do PR or may do it freelance; poets won't make a living writing poetry, but they might through teaching, or marketing, or journalism.

Courses within the Professional Writing major are mixed and matched so that they both contribute to the specific writing profession the student is aiming toward, and demonstrate the interrelation of one type of writing with another. This is particularly important in an era when the boundaries between writing genres are breaking down. To take just one example from journalism, news stories these days are much closer in presentation techniques to creative writing and advertising. It is easy enough to bemoan this fact, but we think it is more important to teach writers how to write creative nonfiction in an ethically and professionally sound way, understanding both the advantages of a creative
approach in terms of reader interest, and the dangers of allowing the creative form to falsify and distort the reality they report. Similarly, poets may need to learn advertising.

The Professional Writing faculty (who are themselves professional writers) believe strongly that we want to train writers to take a professional attitude and to see themselves as professionals.

Courses in the Major are workshops of various kinds: some focus on student writing and hands-on learning with substantial writing projects; others train skills such as copyediting; others invite students to learn by imitating and finding inspiration from texts produced by accomplished writers in many genres.

**What is the mission the department?**

Through innovative and cutting-edge writing programs students engage in writing as a process of making form and meaning. Emphasis on the minutia and vagaries of the writing process; writing as a key to critical thinking; the aesthetical and rhetorical dimensions of texts; the development of style, voice and attunement to genre--all elements involved in the creation of high quality imaginative and factual texts.

Make WestConn a community of writers with department members available as advisors and consultants with other departments to foster genuine
writing across the curriculum. Play a key role in general education--preparing students to integrate writing in their chosen fields and to exercise a lifelong confidence in their ability to write.

Maintain, enhance and develop innovative, vibrant graduate programs in writing.

Train graduate students to teach writing.

Train professional writing majors for work in business, publishing in all its facets, and teaching.

Create synergies among all levels of the Writing Department curriculum--from basic (first-year) writing through the graduate level (M.A. and M.F.A.)

Immerse students in the wealth of professional writing activities and talent in the region.

What does the department offer?

The department offers five options in Professional Writing, as well as writing options in Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department’s graduate program includes the nation’s only Master of Fine Arts in Professional Writing and a Writing option and Teaching English as a Second Language option for a Master of Arts degree in English. The Department also offers three undergraduate minors and a variety of writing intensive courses for credit in General Education.
Department of Writing, Linguistics and Creative Process

Contact Information

Department Homepage: www.wcsu.edu/writing

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Faculty Biographies and Life Experiences from the Department of Writing, Linguistics and the Creative Process

Oscar De Los Santos, PhD

Oscar De Los Santos is the current chair of the Department of Writing, Linguistics, and the Creative Process. He is the author and co-author of numerous books including Hardboiled Egg and Spirits of Texas and New England. His essays and stories have appeared in New York Review of Science Fiction, Extrapolation, Connecticut Review, and Saranac Review.
Lionel Bascom

Lionel Bascom is a veteran writer who has 25 years of experience in working as a journalist for various Medias including The New York Times, United Press International, and Money Magazine. He began his career as a news editor for Armed Forces Radio and Television Network. He also has published numerous books including his most recent The Last Leaf of Harlem: The Uncollected Works of Dorothy West.
JP Briggs, PhD

JP Briggs, PhD joined the faculty at WCSU in 1987. He is the author and co-author of several books, including Fire in the Crucible, on creativity (St. Martin's Press); three books on chaos: Turbulent Mirror (HarperCollins); Fractals, the Patterns of Chaos (Simon and Schuster); and Seven Life Lessons of Chaos (HarperCollins). His collection of short stories, Trickster Tales, was published by Fine Tooth Press in 2005. He is one of three distinguished CSU professors from Western. He served as senior editor of Connecticut Review from 2004-2007 and is currently the journal's associate editor. His website is http://people.wcsu.edu/briggsj.
Brian Clements, PhD

Brian Clements coordinates the Department's MFA in Professional Writing. He edits the small press Firewheel Editions and the award-winning journal Sentence, a Journal of Prose Poetics. He is the author and editor of several books, including the forthcoming titles And How to End It (prose poems), Disappointed Psalms (poems), and the anthology An Introduction to the Prose Poem. Disappointed Psalms was awarded the Colombian Poetry Prize and will be published in 2008.
Edward A. Hagan

Edward A. Hagan has focused his recent scholarship on contemporary Irish and American fiction and essay writing. He is particularly interested in what literary trends tell us about contemporary consciousness. He has just completed a book on contemporary Irish and Irish-American fiction and memoir; it argues that farce is the contemporary writer’s tool for puncturing the balloon of triviality of contemporary culture. Hagan authored a Fall 2007 article that argues sports metaphors have become so pervasive in contemporary society that they restrict our abilities to think outside the box of winning and losing.
Patrick Ryan currently coordinates the University Writing Lab and the first-year writing program. He has taught college writing for many years in various places including Malaysia and Minnesota. He joined the Writing department in 2007.
James R. Scrimgeour, PhD

James R. Scrimgeour, PhD has published seven books of poetry and over 200 poems in anthologies and periodicals. He has given over 100 public readings of his work, including one at an International Conference on Poetry and History, Stirling, Scotland. He served as Editor of Connecticut Review from 1992-1995. He has published a critical biography of Sean O'Casey (G. K. Hall) along with numerous reviews and articles on poetry and drama. He currently resides in New Milford Connecticut with his wife, Christine Xanthakos Scrimgeour.
Abbey Zink, PhD

Abbey Zink is currently the Assistant Dean for the School of Arts and Sciences. She has worked as a journalist and a past editor for various newspapers. Her freelance work has appeared in numerous publications and she has also co-authored the introduction to the reissue of *Campaigns of Curiosity: The Journalistic Adventures of an American Girl in Late Victorian London.*