

## **MAKING THE GRADE: Calgary chapters of IABC and CPRS develop and endorse Management Certificate in Public Relations Program**

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Beginning in September, the University of Calgary will be offering new courses in public relations with the guidance of IABC and CPRS Calgary. Initially offered as stand-alone courses that can be taken as options in the University's existing Management Certificate Program, these courses will form the foundation of a new Management Certificate in Public Relations that is currently going through the University's approval process. The new courses include:

<b>Confirmed Courses</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Introduction to Public Relations	40 hours	Currently being offered
Community Relations	20 hours	Fall 2002
Managing the Public Relations Function	10 hours	Fall 2002
Strategic Planning	40 hours	Winter 2003
Community Investment	10 hours	Winter 2003
<i>*The University of Calgary's Management Certificate Program Calendar will be mailed to IABC and CPRS members and will include course details including recommended proficiency levels, pricing and registration information.</i>		

For many years, the Calgary chapters of CPRS and IABC have struggled with achieving a balance between providing hands-on experience for entry-level members while offering rich and meaningful professional development opportunities for intermediate and senior practitioners. As a result, the two organizations formed a joint committee nearly two years ago to look at existing local education programs and determine how to best provide programs and services to meet the needs of their growing memberships.

After establishing a steering committee, the first order of business was (of course) to conduct research. A group of students from the Public Relations applied degree program at Mount Royal College were brought in to determine whether there was interest in a new part-time education program in Calgary; if so, these students would also identify the potential audience, price and content.

This research, in fact, confirmed that there was significant interest among practitioners. Those surveyed indicated that they wanted to see a series of courses designed to provide the practical skills necessary for public relations practitioners to succeed in their jobs, regardless of previous education or level of proficiency. Respondents wanted to achieve new, meaningful credentials and/or receive instruction in topic-specific areas.

With the need for a new education program identified, the steering committee began discussions with the University of Calgary. As it turned out, organizations could work with the University to offer courses as part of the Management Certificate Program IABC and CPRS wanted to ensure that the new program did not duplicate existing courses offered in the city, and that students had the opportunity to either take stand-alone courses or achieve a meaningful

credential. The group decided to pursue developing a new Management Certificate in Public Relations, working hand-in-hand with the University of Calgary.

Students will be able to either take the individual public relations courses, instructed by accredited practitioners with at least ten years of industry-related experience, as part of their own professional development regime or can work towards the Management Certificate by completing a minimum of 300 hours including 120 hours of core courses, 110 hours of public relations courses and 70 hours of options.

And while the new program will be run and operated by the University of Calgary, IABC and CPRS will stay involved as an Advisory Committee to the University, providing recommendations for course modifications and additions as well as instructors for specific courses.

So don't forget to register! The Fall 2002 course will sell out quickly. To get specific information or pre-register for any of the above-noted courses before the calendar is mailed, contact 220-2988.