

# **Public Relations Writing** **Principles in Practice**

## **Introduction to the Workbook**

During this course we suggest that you work for one client, for which you will produce most of your writing projects. This is a real-world situation – even if you work in an agency. It allows you to progressively make more sophisticated decisions based on what you have learned about your client and its environment. Perhaps as important, it encourages you to look at documents you have written previously and determine how you can adapt these documents to new audiences, new situations, or new media.

This workbook presents four clients that are simulations of actual organizations, but you can easily do all of the exercises and assignments using other simulated clients or even real-world clients as your professor determines.

## **Part One: Clients**

Part One of this workbook introduces four simulated clients. They are:

- Central College – a private four-year college
- CommunicAID – a non-profit social services organization working with the homeless
- HealthWay Pharmacies, Inc. – a chain of retail pharmacies and mail-order service
- ValleyLINK Communications, an Internet service provider.

For each of the clients we present an introduction, an organizational history, a brief synopsis of the industry and its challenges, an organizational chart, a list of recent media releases, and basic financial information. The clients have been chosen to provide topical relevance, to represent public relations growth industries and both profit and non-profit organizations and to give you an idea of the breadth of organizations that employ public relations writers.

The clients are equal with regard to the amount and depth of background information provided. However, each of them has its own organizational culture that is reflected in the design and formatting of the client pages and in the background text itself. Understanding these differences will help you not only to select a client with which you are comfortable but also to write and design documents that will be appropriate for that client

### **Fill in the Blanks ...**

**IMPORTANT:** We suggest that you define a real region within which your client will operate and that you substitute real cities, towns and states for the locations “Anytown, Othertown, YourState,” etc. For example, you may choose to work in the region surrounding your campus. It should be large enough to have multiple publics, multiple media sources, but probably some natural boundaries, such as a valley, or half of your state, or a metropolitan area (including suburbs).

We have also left blank many names for you to complete.

Although it may be tempting to work for a national client, doing so will make it more difficult to identify and understand the publics you will be writing for and the available media you will use to reach them.

For each client we have provided several pages of introduction, about the client, its services, people, history, finances and policies. This is followed by special scenarios and information that applies to one or more of the writing assignments in Part Two.

### “Getting Started”

At the end of Part One is a “Getting Started” section in which you will define the basic publics and media on which you will base your writing and writing decisions. Because familiarity with both will allow you to focus on real writing decisions, we have not defined the city or area in which any of the clients operate. Instead, we have defined them as working in Anytown, YourState (Anytown, YS). Instead, you will develop the profile from what you already know about your local area, from area guides and directories and from the websites for local towns and organizations.

### **Part Two: Exercises and Writing Assignments**

Part Two includes all of the writing exercises. They provide practice in writing the documents discussed in the text. Moreover, they guide you through the thought processes and planning that will help you gather material and make decisions about the writing projects.

What you write and how you write it will depend on how your class is organized. Because they are grounded in real-world practices, few of the writing assignments have only a single answer. Answers will differ based on decisions you make about your audience, available media and the purpose of the communication. You should be able to defend and discuss any writing decisions you make. Whatever your specific writing assignments and however they are written, there will be no debate on the hallmarks of a successful public relations writer. In all cases your writing should be accurate, on time, and free of errors.

We hope the workbook and textbook will give you a sense of what public relations writing is all about and entuse you to consider a career in public relations.

### “Plan of Attack” forms

At the end of Part Two are the Plan of Attack forms referred to throughout the exercises. There is one for each major writing project plus some extras for additional assignments. The forms are perforated so that you can submit them to your professor if required. The forms guide you through the macro- and micro-level thinking you should be doing before writing each assignment. The first page of each form includes macro-level questions about audience, media, message and style that underpin all writing projects. The second page of each includes micro-level questions and exercises related to the specific project. In most cases, the forms also include a brief “Self-evaluation” in which you will examine and critique your own writing. This is always a good idea.



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CENTRAL COLLEGE  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
Leon C. DeWitt, *Ph.D.*

Dear Colleague:

It is my pleasure to welcome you as a member of the staff of Central College. At Central College our faculty, staff and administrators work as a team to provide the best educational experience possible for all our students. We work hard to fulfill the college mission and we are pleased to have you join us.

Two years ago we reviewed our position in the educational community and the needs of our constituent audiences to come up with a set of goals that we hope will secure our place as an educational leader well into the 21st century. Every position at the college has a place in this plan and yours is no exception. We look forward to your contributions.

The following manual explains much of what you need to know about our campus. Your supervisor or department head will personally explain your department and the particulars of your job. The manual also includes a copy of your contract and the rights and responsibilities of your job.

I believe that CC students are among the best in the country and that it is our duty to both challenge and encourage them. I invite your suggestions as to how we can improve the delivery of education to our current students and how we can broaden our base to include the wider Central College community.

I look forward to meeting all new staff as soon as possible. Please don't hesitate to introduce yourself whenever you see me on campus. In the meantime, welcome to our community.

Sincerely,

Leon C. DeWitt, Ph.D.  
President



## PROFILE

### GOALS AND MEDIA RELEASES

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#### COLLEGE ANNUAL GOALS

- Increase total enrollment 5 percent.
- Increase enrollment from outside YourState by 10 percent.
- Increase annual giving by 15 percent.
- Increase alumni participation by 20 percent, targeting new graduates and the 5-year anniversary classes.
- Increase business and community giving by 10 percent.
- Create and promote scholarship program for local students.
- Expand on-line satellite programs to remote sites in two neighboring towns.
- Open additional annex campus with satellite programs in Fartown, YS.
- Increase community participation in continuing education programs by offering advanced programs in Internet literacy and marketing by computer.

#### SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASES ISSUED IN THE LAST CALENDAR YEAR

NASA Legacy at CC: Science Communication Students Learn to Analyze and Communicate Pathfinder Data

CC Faculty Promotions Announced at Convocation

CC Enrollments Rise in Response to New Programs

Twelve CC Seniors Named to Who's Who in American College and Universities

Making the Most of Opportunities: Disabled Senior Named Most Active Student at CC

Local Lawyer Elected President of CC Alumni Association

No More Maligning College Food: CC Students Lick Their Lips at New Choices: Some of Them Even "Eat Healthy"

CC Sponsors On-Line Financial Aid Seminar for High School Seniors

CC Celebrates Long Serving Employees: 14 staff and faculty honored

CC *Commentator* wins National Journalism Award

"Look Out World; Here We Come!" Many CC Seniors Start Their Careers as Interns

Senator to speak at CC commencement

Senator welcomes 1,203 CC graduates into the "real world"

*(Name of city) student graduates from Central College (Sent to the hometown papers of all graduating students, individualized to the student)*

Alumna Bequest Puts CC Library On-Line

Literacy Tutoring, Storm Clean-up and PSA filming: CC Students Find Community Service Activities Rewarding.



# PROFILE

## COLLEGE INFORMATION

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CC ADDRESSES *Main Campus* — 100 College Avenue, Anytown, YS  
*Othertown Annex* — 30 State Street, Othertown, YS

CAMPUS FACTS AND FACILITIES *CC Wellness Center* — managed jointly by the college health services and athletic departments and located on the CC campus. It is open to the entire college community. It offers a range of fitness programs and equipment, including free-weights, Nautilus, high and low-impact aerobics and swimming as well as nutrition and health advice and counselling.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION *Current Officers:* *President:* Peter Smith, (*Development Dir. CommunicAID*)  
*First Vice Pres.:* Sara L. McLean, (*Sales Dir. HealthWay*)  
*2nd Vice Pres.:* Angie Mercer, (*Human Res. Mgr., ValleyLINK*)

CAMPUS MEDIA *Campus Update* . . . A monthly campus-wide newsletter produced by the Public Affairs Office. Distributed in boxes located in all campus buildings, including dorms.  
*AlumNotes* . . . . . Magazine produced and mailed quarterly to all alumni.  
*CC Commentator* . . . The student association newspaper published weekly during normal semesters. Distributed in boxes in the library, student center, commuter lounge, dining halls and dormitories  
*WCCR* . . . . . Campus-based cable TV station broadcasting M-F between 7 and 11 p.m. to all campus dormitory rooms and to Othertown residents whose cable subscription includes local access Channel 23.  
*WCCT* . . . . . Campus-based FM radio station operating daily between 5 pm and midnight on broadcast band 106.2  
*Electronic:* . . . . . Students have computer accounts through which they can send and receive e-mail and access college web sites.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES *Athletics* — *Department Contact and Sports Information:* Alumni Fieldhouse. CC is a member of the YourState independent college athletic conference, fielding men's teams in football, soccer, basketball, baseball, golf, tennis, swimming, cross country and track, and women's teams in soccer, basketball, softball, tennis, cross country, track, gymnastics, golf and swimming, all at the IAAA level. Over 60 percent of the student body participates in one or more of our intramural programs.  
*Community Service Program* — *Contact: Director of Community Studies.* All CC students are required to participate in a minimum of 12 credit hours of approved community service activities prior to graduation. Projects approved for this program are listed monthly in the *CC Commentator* and on the bulletin board in the Community Studies Office. Approval may also be given on an individual basis for projects proposed by students. All projects must be undertaken in a 50-mile radius of Yourcity, YS.



Central College is a private, non-denominational, liberal arts college founded in 1902 to provide quality higher education to the citizens of Anytown, YourState. Today CC enrolls over 4,500 full-time students at our main campus in Anytown and an additional 825 at our campus annex in Othertown. Over 1,200 students also participate annually in our part-time, evening and weekend-seminar programs. Over 75 percent of our students live within a 150-mile radius of the college; 40 percent reside in Anytown itself. Sixty percent live on campus.

#### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES

Central College was the first institution of higher education in Anytown. Thirty-five students enrolled in its first term, all of them in education. By 1915 we had added majors in English and mathematics. Our first science lab opened in 1935; today our science programs in plant biology, anatomy, and applied chemistry are housed in the \$8 million Miller-Johnson Science Center which opened in 1995.

Responding to the needs of WWII veterans who applied under the GI Bill, CC offered the valley's first courses in business administration and marketing. These programs are now combined in the Adams School of Business Management which has graduated many of the city's most prominent business and civic leaders.

Under a grant from the YourState Department of Educational Resources and a consortium of in-state software designers, CC launched the first college computer program in the valley in 1979. Originally the basis for a state-sponsored program to train local teachers in computers in the classroom, the lab is now the center of on-line technology in the valley, including both PC and Macintosh training as well as programs in software development and systems design.

#### CAMPUS GROWTH

The first president of Central College was retired Congressman Wilfred C. Kenwood, who donated the land for the first campus and led a campaign among Central Valley residents to fund construction of the first dormitory. Kenwood Hall, home of the Alumni Office, is the original estate of Congressman Kenwood. Additional property has been acquired by donation, purchase from the Auburn City Council and through a 200-acre trade with the Anycity Power Authority.

The Alumni Property Endowment, begun in 1952 to mark the college's 50th anniversary, provides funding for campus and building maintenance and makes it possible for CC to consistently rank among the most beautiful campuses in the region.

#### ANNEX CAMPUSES

In 1990, CC opened an annex campus in Othertown to service the particular needs of central YourState residents. For example, the Othertown campus offers full-time day-care at a site adjacent to the campus and there is an emphasis on after-hours degrees. Through a sophisticated on-line network annex students participate in classes at the Othertown campus and work interactively with professors at the Anytown campus. This program has been the model for similar experiments in on-line education throughout the state.



## PROFILE

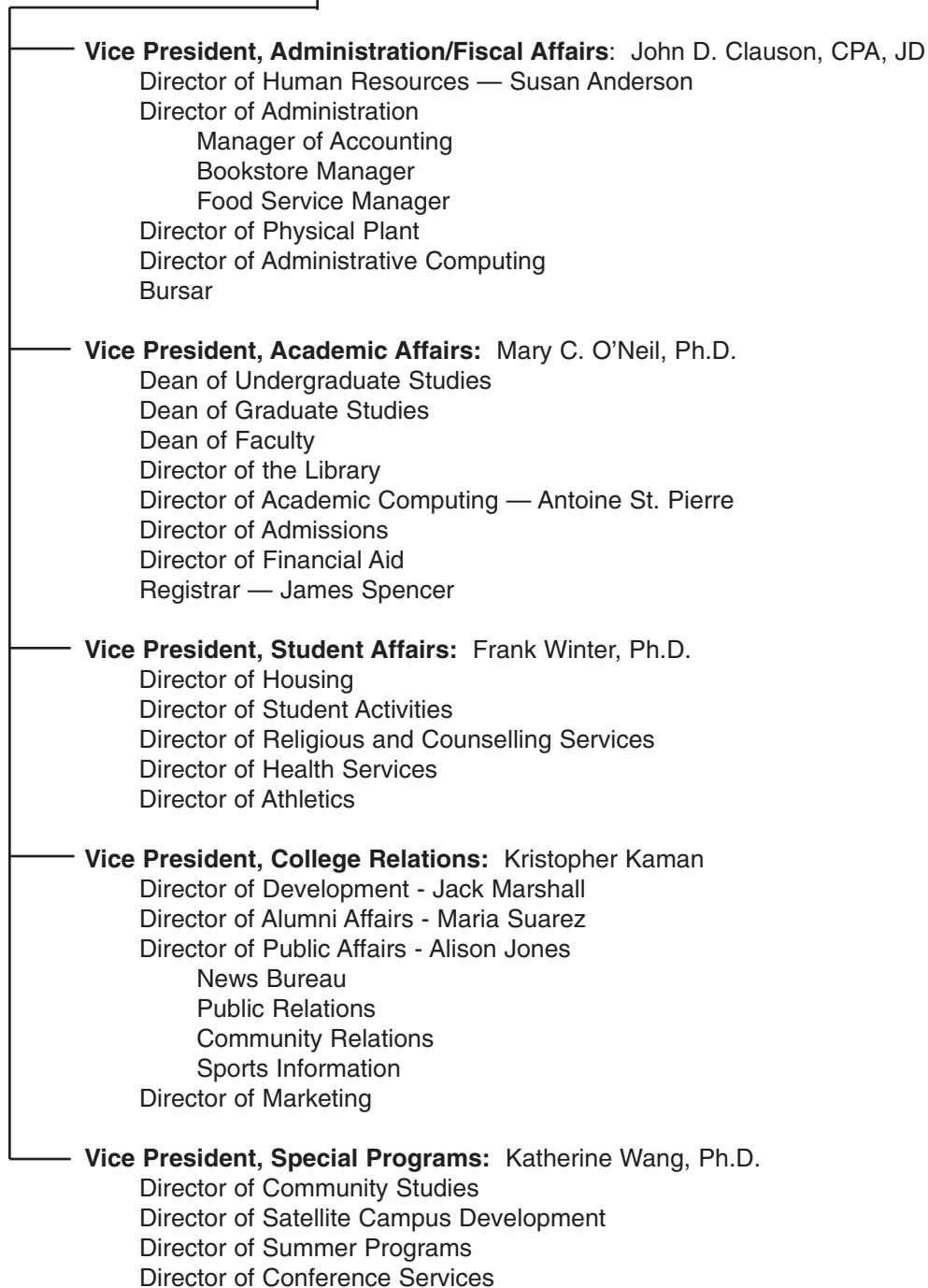
### COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

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#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**PRESIDENT** ——— **Legal Counsel**

Leon C. DeWitt, Ph.D







## PROFILE

### FINANCIAL INFORMATION, GROWTH STATISTICS AND WEB SITES

#### FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND GROWTH STATISTICS

	This Year	Last Year
<b>INCOME</b>		
Student tuition and fees	\$ 33,500,000	\$ 31,000,000
Fundraising		
Alumni	325,000	270,000
Corporations and foundations	75,000	50,000
Other fundraising	25,000	20,000
Other	<u>1,500,000</u>	<u>1,000,000</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$35,425,000</b>	<b>\$ 32,340,000</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Instruction (salaries, insurance)	\$14,250,000	\$14,000,000
Administration	6,000,000	5,750,000
Facilities (rent, insurance)	3,900,000	3,400,000
Athletic Department	3,400,000	2,900,000
Advertising and promotion	500,000	450,000
Interest on long-term debt	300,000	375,000
Auxiliary expenses	6,250,000	5,500,000
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b><u>34,600,000</u></b>	<b><u>32,375,000</u></b>
<b>NET Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 825,000</b>	<b>(\$35,000)</b>

Annual Fund Growth	Growth in Student Numbers	
	Full time	Part time
6 years ago . . . . . \$243,000	4,400	750
5 years ago . . . . . \$260,000	4,500	800
4 years ago . . . . . \$295,000	4,700	900
3 years ago . . . . . \$282,000	4,800	1,000
2 years ago . . . . . \$310,000	5,100	1,000
Last year . . . . . \$350,000	5,000	1,100
This year . . . . . \$425,000	5,385	1,200

#### Web sites:

*To get you started:*

ScholarStuff Web page: [www.scholarstuff.com](http://www.scholarstuff.com)

You can search by state for colleges/universities. There is also some financial aid, testing and job search info that you might find useful.





## PROFILE

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### POLICY MANUAL

#### DEFINITION

Administrative staff are defined as all personnel employed by the following departments: President's Office, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, College Relations, Admissions, Financial Aid, Alumni, Financial Services (including Bursar) and the technical/secretarial support staff for academic departments.

#### OFFICE HOURS

All administrative offices of Central College are open Monday - Friday from 8 am to 5 pm. Summer hours are 7 am to 4 pm. The Admissions Office and Financial Aid Offices are also open by appointment between 8 am and noon on Saturdays from October through May.

All administrative employees are employed to work a 40-hour week. You may be required to work outside the normal office hours, such as to staff an Alumni Weekend. If so, you may claim an equal amount of compensatory time within the month following the event. You must obtain the approval of your supervisor prior to taking the compensatory time.

Lunch hour for administrative staff is from 12:30 to 1:30. Offices will be open during this time to accommodate students and visitors. Department managers are responsible for ensuring that sufficient staff are on duty to handle the expected traffic and it is expected that all staff will participate in this duty by rotation.

#### PERSONAL SPACE

The offices of administrative staff are public areas and they present the public with an image of the college. The CC Art Department has put together a collection of posters, paintings, photographs and student artwork that may be loaned to employees for their offices. This selection represents traditional to modern art and offers pieces that should appeal to all staff. Administrative employees may not hang any artwork except from this selection. To view the selection, please contact the receptionist at the Phillips Art Gallery in Logan Hall. The Maintenance Department should be contacted to hang the selected pieces.

You may bring personal photos and small mementos for your desk, however, CC is not responsible for the safety or security of any personal objects you bring to the office.

#### BREAK ROOMS

Administrative staff may eat in the dining commons or campus snack and juice bars for lunch and breaks. There is also a central campus "Staff Room" located in Bates Hall. It has sofas and a television set as well as a microwave oven and refrigerator. This room is cleaned nightly. The refrigerator is cleaned each weekend and all food left there over the weekend will also be disposed of unless clearly marked.

Many individual departments and offices also have coffee, tea and hot chocolate mix for their staff. Each of these "coffee clubs" have their own rules of organization and are not the responsibility of the college. The college requires that coffee pots and microwaves are kept out of public areas where visitors could see them. The equipment must be checked by the Maintenance Department before installation to ensure that it complies with campus fire codes.

# BACKGROUND TO WRITING ASSIGNMENTS – CENTRAL COLLEGE

Following is background information you will need for some of the writing exercises in this workbook. Instructions for the exercises can be found in Part Two of the workbook.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISE 4-2

The Central College Director of Human Resources has received the following memo from college president, Dr. DeWitt.

President's Office

Memo to: Susan Anderson  
Director of Human Resources  
From: Leon DeWitt  
President  
Re: Dress standards for administrative staff

Susan:

I was walking around campus yesterday afternoon and stopped in the bursar's office to see Jim Spencer. There were several groups of people and I couldn't decide which ones were students and which were staff. I wanted to see if Jim was in and I didn't know whom to ask.

I think it's time we instituted some level of dress policy for administrative staff so that we present a more professional image. I know we can't do anything about the faculty because their union would scream "academic freedom," and the maintenance and food services people already have their own dress requirements. Besides they aren't the ones to give me the problem; and for the most part they aren't in the public eye either.

I think "corporate casual" is the word the business community uses to describe what I have in mind. No t-shirts or jeans or other clothes that look like they belong on a playing field. And be sure you make it clear that the policy includes student workers in the administrative departments. It won't hurt them to understand that the "real world" has standards. Let's avoid issues like skirt lengths and necklines unless you think it's really necessary. VPs and department heads also need to know that for special functions coats and ties or dresses and heels or whatever — you know what I mean — are still a must.

Please think this through and give me a draft by next week. You probably have some samples in your files to help. I don't want this to be onerous, but I don't think we're sending an appropriate message about our college, and we've got the accreditation committee coming through in a few months.

Thanks for your help with this. I look forward to seeing what you come up with.

## NEWS WRITING

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISE 9-4

Good News! The president of Central College has just received the following notice from the director of the YourState Educational Research Foundation (YSERF).

**YourState Educational Research Foundation**  
Foundation Place, Addison YS 01234

Dr. Leon C. DeWitt  
President  
Central College  
100 College Avenue  
Anytown, YS 11111

Dear Dr. DeWitt:

Congratulations! The YourState Research Foundation (YSERF) is pleased to notify you that Central College is one of five institutions of higher education selected to participate in "Early Support", a four-year pilot study of long-distance remedial education funded jointly by the YSERF and the YourState Department of Education. The other institutions are: (*you may name*).

These institutions have been selected because of their demonstrated capabilities in electronic learning and expertise in one or more subject areas to be included in the program. Although final designation of the subject matter programs to be developed by Central College is pending, it is expected that you will be responsible for programs in computer skill development and basic English, including writing.

The first meeting of the college and university participants will take place at the Capitol on the fifteenth of this month. At that time we will discuss the high schools with which each college will be partnered and the basic course curriculum to be developed. At a minimum, please send to the meeting your institutional project director and at least one of the participating professors or program developers. Further details will be sent directly to these people.

Ms. Joanne Robinson, education officer, has been assigned as foundation liaison for this project. If you require any assistance from our office, please contact her directly at (200) 929-0744.

Sincerely,

J.D. Philips  
Research Director

*Continued....*

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO CENTRAL COLLEGE?

The following information will help you determine what public relations strategy, if any, should be pursued as the result of this announcement.

1. PROGRAM DETAILS: The five participating colleges/universities will be linked with each other and with a network of high schools in their region. Together they will develop remedial education programs to bring high school juniors and seniors deemed to be academically marginal up to college level in reading, writing, math and computer skills *before* they enter college. It is expected that helping these students begin college at the same level as, rather than behind their peers, will markedly improve the graduation rate of these students.

The students will be identified by a joint team of high school and college counselors and foundation analysts at the end of their sophomore year in high school and will participate exclusively in the on-line program for the final two years of high school. Courses will be developed and taught on-line by college personnel. Their progress will also be monitored and reported at the high school level.

Students will attend classes at interactive classrooms set up throughout YourState. All equipment for these classrooms will be provided under a grant from the Federal Educational Resources Commission.

CC has agreed to accept for admission, and to provide financial aid to all applicants from the participating high schools who perform satisfactorily in the program.

An oversight panel from the YSERF will monitor the program and allocate funds to participating institutions.

2. CC RESPONSIBILITIES: The CC proposal commits you to appointing the Director of Academic Computing, as full-time director of the grant project. The college also committed to appointing a team of five support staff, including three program developers/professors to the program. All of these personnel will be supported by the grant.
3. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION: The CC Board of Trustees has approved a directive to the Admissions Department to raise the admission standards of incoming freshmen over the next five years. This would make CC more competitive with "Ivy-League" caliber institutions.

The effect of this test program on the GPA/SAT/ACT scores of entering students, and on the overall admissions level of the College will not be known until the end of the study and the college is committed to accepting all students who pass the course.

4. SCHEDULE: Central College will execute the program by working with the following schools: (*you may name*).

# FEATURE WRITING

## BACKGROUND TO EXERCISE 10-2

The following information is the raw material for a feature story that the Central College Development Office wants to use in its annual report to annual fund contributors who are primarily alumni but also include parents, friends and faculty. The Director of Development believes this article will add some “human interest” to the report.

The basis of the story is the “Early Support” pilot program, the long-distance remedial education program in which CC is one of five participating institutions named to participate and on which you previously wrote a news release. The information below should give you a wide range of options for writing this story.

### PROGRAM DATA AND STATISTICS

- The program began with the following courses offered. Faculty for the courses were selected from the five participating colleges. The curriculum and course content were decided jointly by the teaching faculty and high school representatives.
- Classes were “taught” by participating faculty using the interactive classroom at each college, with the class transmitted to the interactive classrooms at the participating high schools. Professors and students were required to communicate regularly on-line.
- To manage the program, the participating colleges also worked with local schools to resolve computer issues and evaluate the program.

- CC personnel taught classes using the interactive classroom facilities at the anytown campus.

CC was responsible for teaching writing and computer skills courses. Teaching faculty were provided by the English, Communication and Computer Departments.

- Faculty and academic counselors at the participating high schools nominated a total of 100 high school seniors who they believed would benefit from the program. English is the second language for approximately 25% of the students.

The selected students had placed below average on a sample SAT test but were believed by faculty to be able to benefit from remedial programs in writing, history and computing as well as individualized attention in other subjects.

- Results: end of year 1

The average SAT scores of students in the program increased by 200 points over their previous score. The greatest increases were in reading comprehension and writing skills, but this is believed to also be the basis for increase in other areas.

This was sufficient to allow 85 of the seniors in the program to be accepted by an institution participating in the program. Five others opted to remain in high school and spend another year in the program in order to improve their scores and abilities more. The rest did not increase their SAT scores and were not accepted by the participating institutions under the terms of the original agreement between the students and institutions. An abnormally high number of absences were blamed for the problems experienced by these students.

### Spokespersons

The following people could be expected to be the subject of this article and/or would comment for this article, depending on the topic and theme you choose to pursue. It is your responsibility to select the appropriate

ate spokespersons and to write any quotes from them. Next to each person we have identified the attitude this person would likely have toward the project. This attitude should be reflected in his or her words.

Except for the CC personnel and the mayor (whom you have previously identified), you may name any of the people. You may assume that anyone in an official capacity has agreed that his or her name may be used, but it is possible some of the private citizens may not wish to be named. How can you deal with this?

<u>Possible spokesperson</u> .....	<u>Attitude/message</u>
* Central College president .....	Positive; credit staff, city, community; aware of public relations opportunity, mission-driven
* Early Support program director .....	Positive; credit staff
* Anytown Mayor .....	Enthusiastic; political; take some credit
* Heads of affiliated high schools .....	Positive; appreciative, forward-looking
* Faculty that participated in the program .....	Positive; focused on students
* Students who participated in the program ....	Enthusiastic; positive; inspired
* Representative of YSERF .....	Positive, political, forward-looking

## NEWSLETTERS

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISES 10-4 AND 10-5

You are responsible for compiling the monthly campus newsletter and quarterly alumni newsletter. In each case it is the first issue after the new calendar year. The following stories are the raw material for both newsletters.

Completing the exercise in the text for this assignment will help you determine which articles to include in each document. Be aware that these items are presented “as you received them.” They are not necessarily grammatical or consistent in style. That is your job.

- Dress code announcement: It has been approved as you wrote it. The HR Director wants to see a draft of the article for the newsletter as soon as possible. (*Note: She is concerned staff will react badly to this perceived threat because it is not also aimed at faculty and students*). *HINT: What tone should you take? Why? Can you think of another way to handle the subject?*
- Alumni Association President’s Message: He wants suggestions on a topic for this month.
- CC selected for “Early Support” program: The news story you wrote in Exercise 9-4 will be the basis for the lead news story for the newsletters. Exercise 10-5 will guide you through adapting this story to newsletter style.
- News sent in from annex campuses: *Note: You will get this type of information from department/annex correspondents, even chairs and directors. What to use is always a tough decision without hurting anyone’s feelings or discouraging future contributions.*
  - Othertown staff celebrated the first anniversary of opening of their campus center with morning doughnuts provided by receptionist \_\_\_\_\_ and an after-work party at the Mountain View Restaurant. Thanks to Dr. DeWitt for joining us and for his kind words of congratulations.
- Births: *Following are notices you saw on the bulletin board in the staff room in Alumni Hall:* “Maintenance supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ is passing out pink cigars; His girlfriend \_\_\_\_\_ had a baby girl.” “Football trainer \_\_\_\_\_ and his wife \_\_\_\_\_ new baby is a real bruiser, just like his Dad. 9 lbs. 4 oz.”

- Engagements: Following is a phone message from “Sandy” in Othertown. “\_\_\_\_\_ got engaged. The ring is huge! Can it go in the newsletter?”
- Accounting News: W-2 tax forms will be out to all employees by the end of the month. If you have any questions refer them to the business office, Extension 447.
- Weddings: (You may name)
- Long Service: Following is a memo from the HR Vice President. “The following staff and faculty have received long service awards Please feature in next newsletter.”
  - Fifteen years: \_\_\_\_\_, Assoc. Prof., Communications
  - Ten years: \_\_\_\_\_, Trainer, Athletic Department
  - \_\_\_\_\_ , Mail clerk
  - Five years: \_\_\_\_\_, Dept. Sec., English
  - \_\_\_\_\_ , Accounting
  - \_\_\_\_\_ , Asst. Prof., History
- Faculty Notes:

The annual commencement art show will be works by \_\_\_\_\_, prof/art. He does mixed media work, usually acrylics and natural fibers. The theme of the show will be “CC: one man’s Vision of the future”.

\_\_\_\_\_, assoc. prof/history, published article in *Historical Monographs*, Fall edition. Article titled “Internet Resources for Historical Research: Treasures Uncovered”.
- Sports Notes: (You can decide as appropriate to your audience and the season)
- Illness: \_\_\_\_\_’s father is recovering from surgery. \_\_\_\_\_’s son, \_\_\_\_\_, broke his leg.
- Suggestions: The following were found in the Suggestion Box during the last month.
 

“I think we should have a special recognition for the Employee of the Month in each office. How about reserving the parking spot closest to the door for that person.”

“The cleaning lady should wash the dishes if they are left in the sink.”
- Alumni Calendar: (You may decide)
- New Employees: \_\_\_\_\_ – Admin. ass’t, Alumni Office. She will be responsible for updating alumni files and compiling the Class Notes section of the alumni newsletter.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ – Purchasing. She has replaced Joan Talbot who transferred to the bookstore. Sondra is the new contact for supplies.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ – Assistant professor, business management
- Newsletter Staff: Editor - You
  - Others: (You may name)
  - Student intern: \_\_\_\_\_ (public relations major)
- Alumni Newsletter: Editor: You
  - Board: Maria Suarez, *Alumni Director*
  - Allison Jones, *Director of Public Affairs*
  - \_\_\_\_\_, *Alumni Fund*
  - Class Notes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cartoon: Note scrawled on a fax from the Bursar. “Found this cartoon in my file the other day. Hope it is clear enough for you to use.”
- Admissions Update The Admissions Department wants to thank alumna \_\_\_\_\_ (include graduation year) for hosting an open admissions forum at their home in Othertown on December 28th with high school seniors, CC students and some faculty. This is a new admissions thrust.



## CRISIS WRITING

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISES 12-1 AND 12-2

Sometimes it is necessary to publicly address issues that may embarrass or otherwise show your employer in a “less than favorable” light. Many public companies have been faced with this situation when their administrators were charged with financial malfeasance, processes were shown to be environmentally irresponsible or promotions suspected of deliberately violating “truth in advertising” laws, for example. Following is a scenario in which you must publicly address a situation that has the potential to impact relationships with one or more of your organization’s key publics.

#### Important Background Information:

Central College has always prided itself on the level of support it receives from its alumni, 75% of whom live in the greater Anytown community. Annual fund contributions have nearly doubled over the last three years as alumni and the community alike have responded to requests to “join a partnership for a better community.” Alumni contributions are especially valuable as foundations look for evidence of support from within the organizational family as part of their funding criteria.

The Development Office (i.e., fundraising office) has put special effort into developing donor incentive programs and especially into cultivating alumni and several high-profile, wealthy citizens as the foundation for a scholarship campaign that the college plans to launch in three months. The goal of the capital campaign is to raise \$15 million for the scholarship endowment. It will be the largest fundraising campaign ever undertaken by Central College.

#### The Situation:

Two months ago, Central College development officer Albert Mathison was terminated for falsifying expense reports. Now, on the eve of the capital campaign, a disgruntled Mathison has written a letter to the editor of the Anytown daily newspaper. The letter charges the Central College administration with “extravagant expenditures” including luxury dinners and annual administrator “retreats” at five-star holiday resorts and that President DeWitt routinely takes his wife, at college expense to conferences. Mathison claims that these expenditures were made possible by diverting a percentage of the contributions made to the Annual Fund into the Central College president’s “discretionary budget”.

The newspaper editor has assigned a reporter to follow up on the charges and determine if they are true and if it is indeed, a story. The reporter intends to file the story with or without college comment. Your inquiries show that the story is indeed true. A percentage of the Annual Fund monies had been put under the control of the president’s assistant. The account is being used to pay for the items Mathison mentioned. Ms. DeWitt, who holds a Ph.D. in English, pays her own way to conferences at which she is a participant.

Reaction: The Central College president’s reaction is that all funds have been accounted for (which is true) and that he uses the account to effectively develop contacts who will contribute to future projects for the college. A case in point is the current capital campaign for which Central College has already secured \$5 million in donations from a charitable foundation and two Anytown businessmen. The relationships on which these donations are made, he argues, cannot be developed by mail or over a cup of coffee. He also argues that part of the cultivation process often involves social occasions at which his wife’s presence is appropriate.

Also, you know that the staff retreat in question was held at the lakeside estate of a board member who offers the facility to all of the charitable organizations she supports.

## PERSUASIVE MESSAGES

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISES 14-3 AND 14-4

This background information will be used for three assignments in Chapter Fourteen. It is a scenario in which Central College might feel compelled to issue a persuasive message.

NOTE: CommunicAID, another of the text clients, will be writing in opposition to your message. For the “Letter to the Editor” assignment you should assume that the Anytown newspaper has printed an editorial supporting the retention of funds that pay for social services for the needy and homeless rather than funds for education.

#### The Situation

The economic crisis in YourState does not abate, and Governor \_\_\_\_\_ continues to make cuts in the grants to non-profit and educational institutions. Central College receives 40% of its funding through subsidies and grants from YourState government agencies. The most recent round of cuts reduced their administrative budgets by over \$600,000, and rumors abound that more cuts will come. Word on the street is that the cuts will hit either higher education or social services for the needy and homeless.

These cuts have already impacted the staffing levels for several of the college’s community initiatives and additional cuts will likely result in reduced hours for the public athletic facilities and library. The cuts have also affected the ability of Central College to increase fundraising activities in the private sector that would reduce the effect of the cuts to its programs.

You have been working with the team that is developing the organization’s response to these cuts. Among other tactics, you have recommended to President DeWitt that the College should make a greater effort to persuade the Anytown legislative representatives to vote against any cuts to higher education and to carry your message to the governor and state legislature.

You have recommended a two-pronged strategy:

1. Contacting the legislators directly; and
2. Getting the community to add its voice to the cause.

The Central College president has directed you to draft the letter to the legislature and “letter to the editor” of the Anytown newspaper for this campaign.

*Note: You are free to determine some details of the effects of the cuts, but do not assume that the college is in danger of closing based on current projections.*

## TRADE FAIRS AND CONFERENCES

### BACKGROUND TO EXERCISE 16-8

Central College will participate in the educational recruitment fair sponsored by the YourState Association of Colleges and Universities (YSACU). Vendors typically include approximately 80 YS colleges and universities, 60 institutions from neighboring states plus 25 banks and other suppliers of services and equipment. The conference attracts over 2,500 high school juniors and seniors (and their families) plus 1,200 students currently enrolled in college.

Conference Details: Date: .....Friday Oct. 2 (4-8 p.m.) and Saturday Oct. 3 (9 a.m. -8.p.m.) at the Colony Crest Hotel, Othertown, YS.

Theme: .....The theme for the conferences will be “Education for All”

Display Details: Booths: .....8' x 8' spaces, Booth #34 at both conferences will be reserved as the YSACU information booth.  
Standard: .....Each booth will include one 3' x 6' table with gray skirt plus gray backdrop, three electric outlets.  
Extras: .....Television and video monitors, VCRs at additional cost.  
Food Service: ..Coffee, tea, soft drinks and sandwiches will be available at designated locations throughout the fair.  
Program:.....Conference organizers produce a program that includes a listing of the names and addresses of all vendors. They will also accept ads for this program.

Vendor Schedule: The official drawing for any prizes offered by individual vendors will be held at the YSACU booth at 6 p.m. on Saturday evening.

Media Coverage: Local press and TV stations are likely to attend both conferences for photo and story potential. In addition, the Anytown newspaper's annual educational supplement is published in August, two weeks before the Education Fair, and advertising space is available.

CC Focus: Central College's purpose in attending this conference is to attract new students, both high school students and transfers from other colleges.  
The focus will be on a new initiative called "Tradition and Technology", the college's mission for the early 21st century. Under this program, the college will explore how technology can be used to support traditional disciplines. The "Tradition and Technology" program will begin as part of a new bachelor's concentration in Educational Technology and expand into other departments over the next three years, ending with a campus in which technology is fully integrated into all other disciplines.  
CC will use its participation in the "Early Support" program as evidence of its technological expertise, including the seven-minute video and brochure you have produced on the program.