

## Comprehensive Program Review Report

Academic Program Name: MAPR

School: Arts and Letters

Department: MCA

CPR Review Schedule AY24-25

### Provosts Response:

I concur with the assessment of the Dean of the School of Arts & Letters regarding the Master of Arts in Public Relations. Since its launch in Fall 2022, the program has demonstrated a clear upward trajectory in both enrollment and degree completion. Enrollment has increased by 56% since inception, and completions have more than doubled—from four graduates in 2022–2023 to ten in 2023–2024—indicating growing interest and sustained momentum. The program effectively serves early-career professionals and communication practitioners seeking to increase their marketability and leadership potential in a robust and evolving field.

To support the program's continued growth, I endorse the School's plan to expand its marketing and outreach beyond the current geographic radius. Exploring strategies such as SEO optimization, Meta advertising, and the integration of professional digital portfolios represents a forward-looking approach that aligns with the media-savvy nature of the discipline. These efforts—targeted toward academic advisors, prospective students, and employer partners—will help strengthen the program's visibility and enrollment pipeline. The program's current performance and future potential warrant sustained investment and strategic support as part of MGA's graduate portfolio.

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program.

#### **X Program MEETS Institution's Criteria**

- ☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.
- ☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.
- ☐ Program PARTIALLY MEETS Institution's Criteria and will be re-evaluated in
- ☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria
- ☐ Program will be placed on a 1 year monitoring status.
- ☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.
- ☐ Program will be deactivated.
- ☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.
- ☐ Other (identify/add text):

Provost or VPAA Signature:

Date:



9/18/25



## Comprehensive Program Review

AY 2024 – 2025

**Institution:** Middle Georgia State University

**Academic Program:** M.A. in Public Relations

**College or School:** School of Arts and Letters

**Department:** Media, Culture and the Arts

**CIP Code:** 90900

**Date of Last Internal Review:** N/A

**Faculty Completing Report:** Andre Nicholson

**Current Date:** 4/3/2025

### 5 Year Enrollment by Campus and Graduation Trends *(data available in Deans and Chairs Dashboard)*

#### Enrollment

Campus	Fall 2020	Fall 2021	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	3 YR Growth	Fall 2022 compared to Fall 2024 only
Macon							
Cochran							
Warner Robins							
Dublin							
Eastman							
Online	N/A	N/A	16	26	25	29.33%	56.25%
Off Campus							
Total	N/A	N/A	16	26	25	29.33%	56.25%

#### Graduates

- For data consistency, the fiscal year is in which the degree was awarded. For example, academic year 2020 includes degrees conferred in Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020. *(data available in Deans and Chairs Dashboard)*

AY 2020	AY 2021	AY 2022	AY 2023	AY 2024	2 YR Growth	AY2023 compared to AY2024 only
N/A	N/A	N/A	4	10	150%	150%

## Program Purpose and Mission Alignment

The MAPR is designed as a fully online, technology rich, professionally focused graduate degree program created to serve a growing need across Georgia's media, communications, marketing, and advertising arenas. The program prepares students to effectively utilize multimedia channels to strategically manage communication between individuals, organizations, and the public. The program includes study in crisis communication, foundational theories of communication, principles of public relations writing and research, campaign planning and practice, and the craft of production and design. Other topics include social media and advertising, digital writing and publishing, news writing and reporting, and web development. The program has been designed with input from various community partners including Macon-Bibb County, Navicent Health, and the Miner Agency and with additional input from alumni, and MGA's Office of University Marketing and Communication.

The program supports the mission of Middle Georgia State University to educate and graduate lifelong learners who will enhance their community through professional leadership, specifically in the state's media, communication, marketing, and advertising sectors. The program additionally supports the mission of MGA's Office of Graduate Studies to develop and offer graduate degrees suitable for working adults that address the needs of the region and anticipate a growing economy.

The MAPR addresses MGA's institutional imperative to grow enrollment with purpose and its strategic focus on developing academic pipelines and expanding degrees. As part of MGA's highly successful MGA Direct online academic portfolio, the Public Relations program also supports the University's institutional strategy to expand and enrich online instruction into new markets.

## Program Age, Tracks, Concentrations

This is the first comprehensive program review for the Master of Arts in Public Relations program. The MAPR matriculated its first set of students in spring 2023. The following fall we began the graduate certificate in Strategic Business Communication as a bridge to the master's degree. The MAPR is 30 credit hours, with eight core classes, and two electives. The curriculum has remained steady with only one notable change of swapping an elective with a core course; MCOM 5020 Media Relations and Ethics with COMM 5200 Data Storytelling. Since the program's inception, we were approved to offer an additional five electives providing our students with more options.

## **Accreditation Information/Status**

The MAPR was granted SACSCOC approval in December 2021 and the program started in spring 2022. There is no external discipline-specific accreditation process.

## **Method of Delivery**

The MAPR is an asynchronous online program that offers classes in eight-week sessions. Students can enroll in the program at any point in the academic year: fall first session starting in August or second session in October; spring first session starting in January or second session in March; and one eight-week session in the summer. Students have the potential to complete the program in one year.

## **Benchmarks of Progress**

The MAPR projected an initial program enrollment of 13 students in 2022 but matriculated 16. There has been steady growth in the program with enrollment reaching 26 and 25 students respectively in 2023 and 2024. This growth is not overwhelming, but it is sustainable and manageable by our limited number of graduate faculty.

The program produced its first set of graduates in 2023, four students, and produced 150% increase in graduates to 10 students in 2024. The hope and expectation are that graduation rates will continue to follow the growth of enrollment. Since the program is interdisciplinary, we have adjusted the semester of certain course offerings to better accommodate student demand. For example, MGMT 5610 is an elective offered each semester by the School of Business, so shifting one of our mass communication electives to the summer allows us to move two of our core courses from summer to fall. This move balanced out the number of core courses being offered in spring and fall. For those students who don't desire to take summer courses due to financial or personal reasons, they can still take electives during the spring and fall semesters.

## **Plans for Action**

The MAPR program has seen steady enrollment, but to ensure those numbers remain level or on an increase, some options being considered include:

- Develop a more robust recruitment plan now that the Graduate Admissions Office has been established and a dedicated recruiter is in place. Refine and expand our marketing outside of Georgia.
- Hire additional faculty with expertise in the field who can help grow the program through their networks and connections in the discipline.
- Build upon the foundation we have established in awarding our first Graduate Assistantship.
- Revamp MCOM 6020 PR Practicum to offer more flexibility for students. The practicum has proven to be a bit challenging in an online environment. A thesis or comprehensive exam option are viable considerations.

- Recruit from the undergraduate pool through a more targeted approach. A 4 + 1 program that allows undergraduates to earn a B.A. and M.A. in five years is being considered.

## Trends and Market Forces Impacting Program Demand

The program aligns with the everyday working adult, while also addressing a growing need in Georgia for high-level professionals in media, marketing, advertising, and related fields. The program will appeal to MGA alumni and others who have completed undergraduate degrees in media, business, interdisciplinary studies, and English who currently work in communication and marketing and to those who want to make a career change into these growing fields. More broadly, students with a BA or BS in most disciplines could facilitate a career change by completing this program. Notably, the MAPR is the only free-standing Public Relations graduate program in the state of Georgia.

**Using IPEDS data, list the supply of graduates in the program and related programs in the service area:**

Similar or Related Degrees/Programs	CIP Code	Supply* (Graduates/Completers)	Competitor Institutions**
MS in Digital Media	090702	12	Georgia Tech
MA in Communication	090102	11	Valdosta State Univ.
MS with major in Digital and Social Media Communication	090702	8	Univ. of West Georgia
MA with major in Communication	090909	7	Columbus State Univ.

*\*Supply = Number of program graduates last year within the study area*

*\*\*Competitors = List other USG institutions that offer this program of a similar program in the area*

## Labor Market/Career Placement Outlook/Salary:

Based on the program's study area, what is the employment outlook for occupations related to the program?

The table below supports the need for the MAPR program. At the national level, public relations employment is growing at a steady rate at about 6%. Those working entry-level jobs can expect to earn between \$60,000 to \$70,000. Managers and supervisors can expect to earn almost \$135,000.

But for Georgia, the public relations industry is expected to outpace the national numbers. Employment is growing at about 15%. Those working entry-level jobs can expect to earn almost \$70,000 while supervisors can expect to earn slightly more than \$130,000. According to USG data, graduates with a master's degree in communication and media – public relations adjacent and only data available on Georgia Degrees Pay – can expect to earn \$78,831 one year after graduation; \$94,883 five years after graduation; and \$112,322 10 years after graduation. These data show that a master's degree in public relations within the state of Georgia is a step toward socioeconomic class ascension.

Lastly, the advertising and promotions manager occupation was included for several reasons: 1) The MAPR includes courses such as COMM 6610 Social Media Communication and Advertising that expose students to concepts in advertising. Other courses teach skills such as writing, production design, and data storytelling that can all be applied within an advertising context. 2) Advertising employment at the national level is shrinking but the Georgia employment data point to growth that keeps pace with public relations. Perhaps this is because traditional advertising hubs such as New York are losing grip on the industry while other regions are attracting significant investment. In any case, demand appears to be robust in Georgia and this is something that the MCA Department should track. 3) The lines have blurred between public relations, advertising and marketing over the last few years. The catch-all term is strategic communication and those working in this profession can be asked to write a news release, develop a social media advertisement, and produce an email marketing campaign in the same day. Programs such as the Integrated Marketing and Communication master's degree at Ole Miss reflect this development. MGA's MAPR designates courses from the School of Business such as MKTG 5000 Marketing Communication and MGMT 5610 Leadership in Theory and Practice as electives. The Master of Business in Professional Leadership includes MCOM 5030 Crisis Communication, COMM 6610 Social Media Communication and Advertising, and MCOM 6000 Production and Design for Public Relations as electives. More integration between disciplines could potentially meet demand in the advertising arena.

Occupation	O*Net <sup>1</sup>	Current Employment	% Growth	Average Salary (O-Net data)	Future Earnings Potential (O-Net data)
Public relations managers	(2/13/2025)	78,400 (U.S.) 2,730 (Ga.)	6-8% (U.S.) 17% (Ga.)	\$134,760 (U.S.) \$131,490 (Ga.)	Communication and media professions: 1 yr: \$78,831 5 yr: \$94,883 10 yr: \$112,322
Public relations specialists	(2/13/2025)	308,000 (U.S.) 6,200 (Ga.)	6% (U.S.) 14% (Ga.)	\$66,750 (U.S.) \$69,990 (Ga.)	
Advertising and promotions managers	(2/13/2025)	22,200 (U.S.) 700 (Ga.)	-3% (U.S.) 13% (Ga.)	\$131,870 (U.S.) \$152,980 (U.S.)	

<sup>1</sup>National Center for O\*NET Development. *O\*NET OnLine*. Retrieved [include date] from <https://www.onetonline.org/>

---

**Note: The narrative areas should be as direct as possible, address all the areas/elements referenced above, and be of sufficient length to represent your academic program holistically since the last review. In drafting the CPR note the principle function is to “address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution’s mission.”**

---

## **Data Utilization Reporting Instructions**

As part of **Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)** and annual academic program/administrative assessments, include the following:

### **1. Identify Data Sources Used**

- **USG Dashboards** (similar degree data)
- **MGA Dashboards** (five-year enrollment and graduation data)
- **O\*Net** (occupation and salary data)

### **2. Demonstrate Data-Driven Decision-Making**

- Provide specific examples of how data informed **curriculum changes, resource allocation, faculty support, or student success initiatives.**

### **3. Align Findings with Strategic Priorities**

- Show how data supports **institutional goals, accreditation, workforce alignment, and student career readiness.**

## **Collaboration & Support**

Work with **administrative colleagues, Academic Affairs leadership, and Institutional Research and Data Strategy** for data access and interpretation.

---

USG Academic and Student Affairs Handbook 2.3.6 “consistent with efforts in institutional effectiveness and strategic planning, each USG institution shall develop procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of its academic programs to ***address the quality, viability, and productivity of efforts in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution’s mission.*** Institutional review of academic programs shall involve analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, and institutions must demonstrate that they make judgments about the future of academic programs within a culture of evidence”

## IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation

**Date Reviewed: April 30, 2025**

**Program Reviewed: MA in Public Relations**

**Contextual Notes:** Summarize any demographic or environmental factors described in the introduction that might significantly impact assessment of the program

This program is a fully asynchronous online graduate program. It began in Fall 2022, and has grown steadily in both enrollment and graduation rates since its inception.

Area of Focus	Exemplary Area	Satisfactory Area	Area of Concern	No Evidence	Notes
Enrollment	<i>This program has experienced 56.25% growth since its inception in 2023.</i>				There has been steady but sustainable growth in enrollment.
<b>Graduation Trends</b> USG benchmark:  <b>Bachelor's Degrees:</b> 10 graduates/year  <b>Graduate, Associate's or Certificates:</b> 5 graduates/year  Programs falling under these benchmarks are designated as "low performing"		<i>The program has graduated 4 graduates in its first year and 10 in its second year.</i>			Program graduation rate has increased by 150% in only 2 years. Expectation is that graduation rates will continue to grow with enrollment.



## **IEB's Comprehensive Program Review Rubric and Evaluation**

**Program Strengths of Note:** The program has only been in existence for 3 years, but has experienced steady growth and graduation rates.

**Areas of Concern:** None noted.

**Other Comments:** Appears to be a vibrant, growing program.

## Comprehensive Program Review Report

**Academic Program Name:** MA in Public Relations

**College or School:** The School of Arts and Letters

**Department:** MCA

**Date of Last Internal Review:** April 3, 2025

**Outcome of Previous Program Review (brief narrative statement, if applicable):**

**Current Date:** May 29, 2025

**Executive Summary:** *Provide a summary related to the academic program's **quality, viability, and productivity of efforts** in teaching and learning, scholarship, and service as appropriate to the institution's mission. If this is the initial review of the program address how the program is/is not meeting the enrollment and credit hour projects contained in the original program proposal.*

The MA Program in Public Relations is on an upward trajectory. Since its FA 2022 inception, enrollment has increased and remained steady (56% growth). Degree completion has also increased – from four graduates in the inaugural year of 2022/2023 to ten in 2023/2024 (150% growth). However, there is room for improvement. The field of PR is robust, and the potential to attract entry level employees who want to increase their marketability, rank, and salary are prime recruitment targets. We must explore better marketing efforts to maximize our reach beyond our 100 mile radius. The Dean of SoAL and the Chair of MCA are exploring SEO optimization, Meta Advertising, and digital portfolios that can be targeted to college advisors.

### Categorical Summation

Check any of the following to categorically describe action(s) the institution will take concerning this program. *Include a statement of plans for action based on the overall categorical summation contained in this section.*

X Program MEETS Institution's Criteria (also indicate 1 subcategory below)

☐ Program is critical to the institutional mission and will be retained.

X Program is critical to the institutional mission and is growing or a high demand field and thus will be enhanced.

Required statement of plans for action: We must explore better marketing efforts to maximize our reach beyond our 100 mile radius. The Dean of SoAL and the Chair of MCA are exploring SEO optimization, Meta Advertising, and digital portfolios that can be targeted to college advisors, with the goal of increasing enrollment by 25% over the next academic year.

☐ Program DOES NOT MEET Institution's Criteria (also indicate 1 subcategory below)

☐ Program will be placed on a monitoring status.

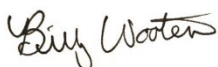
☐ Program will undergo substantive curricular revisions.

☐ Program will be deactivated.

☐ Program will be voluntarily terminated.

☐ Other (identify/add text):

Required statement of plans for action:

Academic Dean Signature: 

Dean of Graduate Studies signature (when applicable):

Date: 05/29/2025