



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
CHARLOTTE

March 30, 2023

Dr. Kevin Sightler  
Director of Substantive Change  
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097

Dear Dr. Sightler,

As required by the Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges policy, UNC Charlotte is submitting notification of its intent to terminate the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations offered by the Department of Communication Studies in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. As of December 20, 2022, students were no longer being admitted to the undergraduate certificate program.

The original aim of the certificate was to contribute to the development and training of students in the areas of international and global public relations as a specific area of concentration within our broader public relations curriculum. Unfortunately, the program has not been able to attract a critical mass of students to ensure its viability. A critical mass of students is necessary to build a cohort where deeper engagement in topics across content areas is possible.

The Department of Communication Studies agrees that the guiding principle should be that students have the opportunity to complete the certificate in a timely manner under the conditions in which they enrolled. Currently there are 12 students enrolled in the CIPR program. Of these 12 students, two are scheduled to graduate this spring (2023) with the certificate, one needs one more class to complete the certificate, one needs to complete all of the requirements for the certificate and has confirmed interest in doing so, and the other eight students who need to complete all requirements have not communicated their plans. The enclosed teach-out plan outlines the Department's strategy for ensuring that the currently enrolled students may complete their program of study.

Should you have any questions, please contact:

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Thank you for your consideration. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon L. Gaber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sharon" being the most prominent.

Sharon L. Gaber  
Chancellor

cc: Stephanie Kirschmann, Vice-President, Commission on Colleges, SACSCOC  
Alicia Bertone, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Daniel Grano, Chair, Department of Communication Studies  
Christine Robinson, Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Analytics

## **SACS Substantive Change Teach-out Plan for the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations Program**

The teach-out plan below outlines the strategy for the Department of Communication Studies in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) to terminate the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations.

### *I. Date of closure*

Due to continued low enrollment, the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations program is considered unsustainable. As a result, the Department of Communication Studies decided to terminate the program. As of December 20, 2022, UNC Charlotte no longer accepted students into the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations program.

### *II. An explanation of how affected parties will be informed of the impending closure*

In Spring 2023, the termination of the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations was unanimously approved by the faculty in the public relations concentration of the Department of Communication Studies.

Only 12 students remained in the program when the termination decision was made, and only ten of these students were affected by the decision as two students are scheduled to graduate this spring (2023). All students were informed via email about the termination of the program and that their course of study would not be effected since the necessary classes would be offered for completion.

### *III. An explanation of how students will be helped to complete their programs of study with minimal disruption or additional expense.*

Twelve of the fifteen credits required for the certificate can be completed through related coursework that the Department of Communication Studies regularly offers. However, in the 2023-2024 academic year, the faculty member who regularly teaches COMM 4147 and COMM 4050 will be on research development leave. Since one of these courses must be completed to receive the undergraduate certificate, COMM 3055 (Topics in Public Relations/Intercultural Communication) will be offered as a replacement course for these courses and students completing COMM 3055 will receive credit toward the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations. COMM 3055 is offered every semester; seating will be reserved for any student who wishes to remain enrolled in the Undergraduate Certificate in International Public Relations program so they can complete the certificate without disruption or delay in time to graduation.

### *IV. An indication as to whether the teach-out plan will incur additional charges/expenses to the students and if so, how the students will be notified.*

No additional charges or expenses will be incurred as the currently enrolled students will still be able to complete the certificate program in the manner in which they enrolled.

### *V. Signed copies of teach-out agreements with other institutions, if any.*

There are no signed copies of teach-out agreements with other institutions as no other institutions are involved in administering this program.

*VI. How faculty and staff will be redeployed or helped to find new employment.*

No faculty or staff will be terminated or redeployed by this decision. All faculty currently teach for the College of Liberal Arts & Studies at UNC Charlotte and will remain employed by UNC Charlotte.

*VII. If closing an institution, arrangement for sorting records, disposition of final resources and other assets.*

UNC Charlotte is not closing an institution; therefore, this is not applicable.