

Project Title: How Survey Data's Credibility in Press Releases is Perceived by Public

Student Authors: Kleinman, Danielle & Weseman, Krista

Department of Communication

Faculty Sponsor: Svetlana Kulikova

Abstract: The data collected and analyzed during this process will be presented at a public relations conference in Atlanta, GA during March of 2013. The purpose of this experiment is to grasp a better understanding of how survey data is perceived as credible or not credible based on the public's understanding of who conducted the survey. The survey data is presented to the participants in the form of a public relations press release. The Georgia State University student-participants are asked to read about the results of the survey. The survey inspected tuition and financial aid at GSU in the fall of 2012. For the experiment, the researchers produced two similar forms of the same press release. The first press release claimed the presented data to have been collected and analyzed by students in a public relations class, the second press release gave credit to the Communications Department instead of the public relations students. The data presented to the readers in the press release is supported by a survey conducted by public relations students who interviewed a total of 251 GSU students regarding tuition and financial aid. The press release not only offers the results of the survey, but also summarizes how the survey was conducted and data analyzed, as well as provides a brief overview of the surveying entity. Students in the faculty advisor's class will be chosen to participate in this experiment. Each student in this class will be randomly given one of the two versions of the press release, either from the Communications Department or from public relations students. After going through the press release, each student will be asked to evaluate several pieces regarding the overall quality and credibility of the press release. The results of this experiment will be analyzed using ANOVA or a t-test to determine whether perceived credibility is linked to the source of the survey.