MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Department of Advertising & Public Relations
FROM: Isabella Cunningham, Lisa Dobias, Gene Kincaid and John Murphy
DATE: August 27, 2013
RE: Protocol For TAG & PRSSA Field Trips Sponsored by the Department

The purpose of this memorandum is to convey an outline of the procedures to be followed by members of our department in organizing and leading student field trips. These procedures are organized below under objectives and mechanics.

Objectives.

Faculty sponsored field trips planned in collaboration with student leaders of TAG and PRSSA are intended to achieve the following objectives for the UT participants: (1) To represent our department and university in a favorable manner to top firms in the industry; (2) To provide our students with insights into contemporary practices and trends in the industry; (3) To provide our students with opportunities to make networking contacts with UT Exes and other individuals working in the industry plus bond with other students on the trip; (4) To provide our students with first-hand experience in terms of what it might be like to live and work in a major market; and, (5) To renew and expand our department’s relationships with both UT Exes and professionals working in the business.

In addition to the UT objectives, from the host companies’ perspective, the hosts want to accomplish the following: (1) To represent their company in a positive light, showcasing great work and employment opportunities; (2) To recruit interns and full-time employees from the group and other UT students not on the trip; and (3) To establish contacts for future recruitment efforts.

Mechanics.

To help accomplish these objectives, the following procedures will be followed in planning and executing all student field trips sponsored by the department.

1. Approval of a Faculty Sponsor must be obtained from the chair of the department at least two months in advance of the trip.

2. The trip must be sponsored by a UT faculty member who will make all advanced arrangements and travel with the group with the assistance of TAG and PRSSA officers. Once approved, the faculty sponsor, in coordination with the Department, is to handle and/or supervise all contacts with: (a) potential companies that might host a visit by the UT student group; (b) hotels or other lodging options; and, (c) any transportation contractors that might be required in conducting the trip. The faculty sponsor is also to be responsible for ensuring that the lowest possible hotel charges including obtaining an educational trip waiver of hotel and other taxes, waiving baggage handling fees, etc., plus signing any contracts associated with the trip.
All official UT travel authorizations and documentations must be filed with the chair’s office in a timely manner.

3. The faculty sponsor’s and a companion’s transportation and lodging expenses are to be built into the cost of the trip plus $100 per day for expenses. If the trip includes five days of visits to companies, for example, the faculty advisor is to receive $500, two days of visits = $200.

4. The faculty sponsor, with student assistance, is responsible for planning a reception, typically on “neutral territory,” for UT Exes and the students on the trip, including the preparation and delivery of a brief departmental news update during the reception’s kickoff. The faculty sponsor should seek financial support for the reception from the local area chapter of the Exes and also request funds to help pay for the reception from other sources, such as development, the dean’s office, TAG/PRSSA, Comm Council and the department and/or a sponsoring company. Any costs for the reception above monies raised for the event should be built into the cost of the trip.

5. TAG/PRSSA in consultation with the faculty sponsor is responsible for establishing the price per student to participate. The student club is responsible for promoting the trip and collecting payment that is deposited in the club’s account. The faculty sponsor provides a full accounting of all expenses built into the price including his/her and companion travel expenses (already booked to lock in the price) plus hotel and other group expenses that may include some of the costs of the reception. As expenses are paid out-of-pocket, the sponsor presents bills for immediate reimbursement by TAG/PRSSA. Note that in the rare event that a student on the trip is being supported financially via a department or university award, they may need to have a direct billing set up for their individual portion of trip expenses following UT procedures.

6. Because participating agencies use these visits as a recruiting tool, a general outline of a typical visit to an ad or PR agency is as follows: tour of the facilities, introductory background on the agency, their philosophy and examples of their recent work; overview presentations by individuals working in the major functional areas of the agency describing their jobs, how they work with other areas, etc.; case histories that indicate how the agency works with their clients; a discussion of developments and trends in the industry; and, ample time devoted to student Q/A.

7. Only students who pay to participate as a part of the official group are allowed to attend visits to companies. However, other UT students who are in the city are welcome to attend the reception. Note that only Junior and Senior resumes are to be included in the trip’s resume book provided to the host agencies. It is also recommended that a biography book be put together with pictures of each student member in attendance.

8. By signing up to participate in the group, students agree to attend all scheduled meetings and the reception. Students also agree to accept the responsibility of representing the university and department by conducting themselves in an appropriate and professional manner.

9. Students and the faculty sponsor will not be asked to make presentations during their visits and no fund raising or development activities will be part of the visits. Fund raising and development opportunities may be appropriately included at the reception.
10. Since the trip is designed and paid for by students, the faculty sponsor will only participate as appropriate in any question/answer sessions during visits and will refrain from over-the-top promotion of the reputation of the department.

11. Note that ideally our department will host student field trips to major centers of the advertising and PR industry each year and that these visits be regularly scheduled at the same time during each academic year. The continuity of contact with our Exes and host firms adds significantly to the reputation of our programs. In addition, all faculty are encouraged to participate on a rotating basis.

12. In final preparation for the trip, the TAG/PRSSA officers will conduct a pre-departure meeting to go over details and expectations for the trip. In addition, the Faculty Sponsor will conduct a final orientation meeting the night before in the hotel. After the trip, both the faculty sponsor and a representative of TAG/PRSSA will follow-up with thank you correspondence. The faculty sponsor will also provide a brief news item with images for use on the department web site, social media and an official press release.