PSM 407 Emergency Medical Services Public Information and Community Relations

Course Description: This is an upper-level baccalaureate course for students interested in public information and community relations in Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This course introduces the EMS professional to benefits of community information and community relations. Students explore issues in marketing, crafting the message, identifying the audience, developing programs, and creating press releases.

Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives:
Module 1: Value of Public Information, Education and Relations
1. Define the meanings and importance of public information, education and public relations.
2. Describe the various audiences to keep informed.
3. Identify the qualities of a successful public information officer.

Module 2: Principles of Marketing
1. Develop core concepts of marketing and how they relate to EMS agency operations.
2. Describe the different marketing environments that exist within an agency’s jurisdiction.
3. Develop a SWOT analysis.
4. Discuss how to perform marketing research.
5. Explain how to target messages to markets.

Module 3: Public Information and Education Tool
1. Explain the four steps of creating a Public Information and Education (PIE) Tool.
2. Adapt a model PIE Tool to a specific department.

Module 4: Audience Identification
1. Define the four main groups of audiences.
2. Identify different audiences within each of the four main groups of audiences.
3. Explain the difference between reporters, editors and columnists.

Module 5: students will:
1. Recognize the different types of incoming and outgoing messaging needs in an EMS agency.
2. Match message topics and content with targeted audiences.
3. Recognize, create and capitalize on opportunities to inform and educate different audiences.

Module 6: Craft the Message
1. Explain what message content different audiences require.
2. Discuss how to write effectively for the delivery method chosen to be used.
3. Describe the tools and techniques to blend data with other elements to improve messages.

Module 7: Deliver the Message
1. Describe how to use different written, oral and electronic methods to effectively deliver information to audiences.
2. Discuss how to give effective oral presentations.
3. Explain how to maintain relationships with print and electronic media.
4. Describe how to use electronic media and social networking to inform and educate audiences.
Module 8: Press Releases
1. Describe the different reasons and ways to use press releases.
2. Discuss the essential elements of a lead.
3. Explain the fundamentals of clear writing.
4. Describe the difference between hard news and features.

Outcomes: Upon completion of this course:
The student will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of public information and community relations as they pertain to EMS.
2. Describe public information modes of communications.
3. Develop a public education plan to satisfy a specific need targeting a specific audience.
4. Identify the role of EMS in community risk-reduction programs.
5. Explain the various components of the public information and community relations:
   a. Marketing.
   b. Messaging.
   c. Audience identification.
   d. SWOT analysis.
   e. Press releases.
6. Compare and contrast the role of EMS public education as it relates to fire, police and city administration public education programs.

Textbooks:

Supporting References:
Public Information, Education and Relations manual from U.S. Fire Administration

Assessment:
Students will be evaluated for mastery of learning objectives by methods of evaluation to be determined by the instructor.

Method of Instruction:
Lecture, class discussion, audiovisual, demonstration, illustration, practical application by students.

Course Grade: (What it takes to earn the grade)
The course grade will be based on the following distribution:
Attendance Policy:
The faculty of Southern Illinois University Carbondale affirm the importance of prompt and regular attendance on the part of all undergraduate students. Quality instruction clearly depends upon active participation in the classroom or its equivalent learning environment. This concept is further expounded upon in the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Undergraduate Catalog. Students who are absent from more than one-third (1/3) of a course’s instructional hours will seriously jeopardize their grade for the course. Students who stop attending or never attend a class without officially dropping that class will be awarded a grade of WF for the class. The WF grade is designed for students who enroll in a course but don’t attend or quit attending and do not drop the course. When awarding the WF grade the last date of attendance or nonattendance must be reported along with the grade.

Academic Dishonesty Policy:
Students may be subject to disciplinary proceedings resulting in an academic penalty or disciplinary penalty for academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion.

ADA Statement for Students Requiring Special Accommodations:
As per Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if accommodations are needed, inform your instructor as soon as possible.

Safety Instructions:
Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency. If you are located on a military installation, and depending on the type emergency a senior military member may take control; of the situation and direct you on the action to take. Please follow their instructions and do as asked. Similarly, if you are at a community college, their security personal may arrive and take control of a situation please follow their instructions as well.