

Department of Communication Studies, 2007-2008 Cycle
College of Social Sciences
Program Planning Committee Report to the Provost
March 11, 2011

The Department of Communication Studies offers the following programs:

B.A. in Communication Studies

Minor in Communication Studies

Minor in Legal Studies

Minor in Communication in the Information Age

Teaching credential program (in conjunction with the English and Comparative Literature Department)

M.A. in Communication Studies

The Program Planning Committee commends the Department of Communication Studies on a focused, informative, and well-written Program Plan. The program plan, along with the external reviewer's report, highlight the excellence of department offerings, services, faculty commitment, and the professional timeliness and academic suitability of the degrees offered.

Both reports highlight that a majority of the department's teaching efforts are concentrated toward serving the university, the community, and other specific majors. The department has addressed a growing need for student/faculty interaction/advising by piloting innovative online and group methods outside traditional formats and should be commended. Additionally, the department has successfully involved students in community fundraising processes making certain functions self-supporting.

The program plan and the external reviewer report both highlight challenges in student advising, adequate course offerings, time-to-graduation, and better use of T/TT faculty efforts, all of which are currently being addressed.

The College report highlights the progress and continued efforts made in establishing a progressive plan in the areas of peer-to-peer tutoring (retention), internship opportunities, SLOs, and program streamlining (time-to-graduation). The Communication Studies department has made great use of current, although spartan, resources to address the areas listed above and continues to seek additional resources, when available. We encourage the department, where appropriate, to:

1. Continue to work with the Department of Institutional Research to determine and evaluate quantitative data regarding student retention (pre-graduation) and outcomes (pre- and post-graduation);
2. Continue to identify and use non-faculty resources, as much of faculty time seems to be dedicated to areas that could be better served elsewhere;
3. Identify external funding for much of the community service.

Unfortunately no student learning assessment information is included in the program plan. Please note that program planning guidelines stipulate sections on student learning.

Based on public reports it appears that the B.A. has gotten back to assessment, with new student learning objectives, after the reorganization of the curriculum. It is great that the department made efforts to establish inter-rater reliability, and unfortunate, but not unusual, that faculty found student writing to outweigh all other problems. In response the faculty made efforts to improve student writing. In the spring 2010 assessment report, a survey of faculty found improvements in student writing. The percentage of students now meeting department standards is not included in the report. Please note that WASC requires programs to report data on improvements and for student work to be archived. Random

sampling of student work is permitted, but makes more work for faculty than using a common rubric and reporting results for all students. Please consult with your college assessment facilitators, for help with designing an assessment plan that allows for reporting direct evidence of student work, and perhaps lightening the faculty workload in the process. The university Director and Coordinator of Assessment are also available and happy to help. Interestingly, neither written nor oral communications are in the learning objectives for the program. Since improved writing has become a faculty goal for students, we wonder whether you might want to include it in the learning objectives.

The only assessment report posted for the graduate program was in fall 2008. The graduate program needs to resume assessment of student learning immediately.

The final step in the program planning process is a scheduled meeting with Provost Selter (or his designee), AVP of Undergraduate Studies Jaehne, AVP of Graduate Studies and Research Stacks, Dean Bienenfeld, and Department Chair Coopman. The Chair may invite directors of programs within the department. The department should contact the Office of Undergraduate Studies to schedule this final meeting. The following topics for discussion are summarized from the reports:

- Determine appropriate resources for undergraduate/graduate programs and strategies for maintaining stability;
- identify strategies for course cohesion, blended curriculum, and sustaining coordination of multi-departmental GE;
- distinguish strategies for managing space limitations, particularly when introducing/incorporating emerging technologies within the major and;
- manage the need for balanced faculty/non-faculty resources.

If the Department wants to propose additional issues for the meeting, please discuss the appropriateness of the topics with Dean Bienenfeld beforehand and submit to UGS.

The Program Planning Committee recommends acceptance of the Program Plan. The Program Plan provided a good examination of current, and ongoing, issues and an explanation of plans for subsequent reviewers. The next Program Plan will be due to Dean Bienenfeld in spring 2014.

Spring 2011 members:

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| Debra Caires, Chair | Susan McNiesh | Elaine Collins |
| Charles Whitcomb | Shailaja Venkatsubramanyan | Alaka Rao |
| Dennis Jaehne | Chunlei Wang | Annabel Prins |
| Pam Stacks | Robert Cooper | Jinny Rhee |
| Sutee Sujitparapitaya | Yanai Yasue | Lisa Oliver |
| Jackie Snell | Gary Stebbins | Stephen Chen |
| Ashwini Wagle | Tina Peterson | |

CC: Stephanie Coopman, Interim Chair, Department of Communication Studies
Charles Whitcomb, Vice Provost for Academic Administration & Personnel
Sheila Bienenfeld, Dean, College of Social Sciences
George Vasquez, Associate Dean, College of Social Sciences
Lynda Heiden, Chair, Curriculum and Research
Dennis Jaehne, AVP Undergraduate Studies
Pam Stacks, AVP Graduate Studies and Research

Description of the Department and Programs:

Program Plan Submitted: November 5, 2009

Communication Studies contributes to General Education courses, particularly in the Core/Basic Skills areas (A1 Oral Communication and A3 Critical Thinking). In fall 2008, their 35.5 FTEF produced 739.23 FTES; in spring 2009, 723.1 FTES. Communication Studies awarded a total of 87 B.A. degrees (85 in Communication Studies and two in Preparation for Teaching Emphasis) and 20 M.A. degrees in 2007-2008.

Program Modifications

Since the last program review, fall 2002, department faculty implemented a new program of study for majors in 2005. The new program expanded the core curriculum, adding a qualitative methods course and a senior capstone seminar. Elective units were reduced to 18 units - maintaining a 42 unit total.

The program shifted from 3- to 4-unit courses, resulting in 11, rather than 14, courses. Three units of each course are currently delivered in "seat time" (either face-to-face or online) with a fourth unit used for student engagement.

During this review period, the department reduced its number of SLOs from 20 to 6, and consolidated those six into the three areas of Foundation-Inquiry-Practice (F-I-P); consequently, every 4-unit COMM course now meets at least one of the six SLOs. For final assessment, the department uses e-portfolios to assess program level outcomes.

Although the department routinely evaluates individual student culminating experiences, assessment in the M.A. program lags behind that in the B.A. program. Therefore, the department developed a standardized rubric to assess graduate program outcomes across all three types of culminating experience: thesis, project, and comprehensive examinations.

Faculty

Tenured and tenure-track faculty include eight women and seven men: two are assistant professors, four associate professors, and nine full professors. Three are Asian American, one is African American, one is South Asian American, one is Latino, and nine are white. The department recently hired two tenure track faculty (four since 2007) in the areas of Communication Pedagogy and Performance. Estimated retirements are: one in 2010 and five in, or around, 2012. There are no FERP or PRTB faculty.

Scholarly, University, and Professional Activity

Department faculty are productive scholars (e.g., 34 peer-reviewed journal articles during this review period), are active in serving SJSU's campus (e.g., GEAP advisory panel, course certification committee, and Academic Senate), the surrounding and extended community (e.g., consulting with local government, non-profits, and

corporations, as well as international government agencies and organizations), and their profession (e.g., faculty serve on editorial boards, as division officers in regional and national professional affiliates).

Department faculty created or participated in International study-abroad programs, either as visiting faculty or hosts (i.e., Chiba University in Japan, Salzburg International Seminar, and SJSU semester in Bath, England). The department runs an Oral English Skills Program for visiting students from Chiba University. The forensics team participates in debates in Argentina and a faculty member works to organize international conferences for Latin American Federation of Schools of Communication (FELAFACS) and consultants for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to Guatemala.

Faculty members work with government, arts, business, and industry often giving students applications of communication concepts. These community activities help faculty teach students how to network outside the classroom and after graduation.

Part-time Faculty/Lecturers:

Among 24 current lecturers: 11 are women and 13 are men; four have Ph.D.s, two have a J.D. degree, and the remainder hold M.A. degrees. Two are Asian American, one is African American, four are self-described as “other,” and 17 are white. Additionally, part-time faculty members participate in course level assessment surveys and work with T/TT faculty members on assessment plans.

Internal and External Funding

Department faculty secured both internal and external grant funds in the period under review. External funds include \$100,000 from the Ford Foundation (Spano), \$30,000 from the Ford Foundation (Halualani), \$26,000 from the University of California San Francisco (Gao), and \$2,500 from Hawai'i Committee for the Humanities, a division of the National Endowment for the Humanities (Halualani). Faculty members were awarded numerous SJSU and CSU grants.

The department received a bequest from the estate of former chairperson, Marie B. Carr, and four endowments (The Michael and Betty Sproule Fund for Communication Excellence, Minnie Carr Scholarship, Emeritus Faculty, and Broyles Gilbertson – Forensics). Due to the current financial market, these funds are not being used at present.

The college has a new development officer who is working to improve fund raising. Historically, direct department-to-alumni fundraising has been attempted (generating ~\$2000) and the department's largest fundraising effort is through the COMM Club's annual department commencement ticket sales, which is entirely self-sustaining.

Clerical Support

The department office is staffed with two positions: one full-time Administrative Analyst (non-exempt) and one full-time Administrative Support Assistant II.

Use of Technology, Equipment, and Facilities

Department technology integration, such as weekly e-messages to students, online syllabi availability, and a redesigned department website, has enabled the department to progress toward meeting SJSU's Accessible Technology Initiative. The department schedules optional workshops for faculty members to obtain training and assistance in creating MS-Word™ documents, pdf files, websites, and PowerPoint™ slides that meet mandated accessibility standards.

Faculty incorporate SMART classrooms for student assessment and evaluation by using digital video recording and playback equipment, both in the COMM Lab and in the classroom; over 40 sections (each semester) of GE oral performance courses require students to tape speeches or debates for subsequent analysis and improvement.

Student Demographics

At the time the Program Plan was written, the B.A. program was impacted, reducing the target size of the major to 310 students (there were 410). During this time, about 80 students were pursuing a minor (not impacted). Communication Studies majors are predominately female (matching the discipline's national profile); gender and other demographic imbalances are even more marked in the department's graduate program: 45% white, the remainder comprising a number of ethnicities.

The M.A. program has seen a record increase in applications (~30/40 to 66), but the size of the program has not grown (~40-50). The department added additional requirements such as a higher GPA (3.0 and above) and a passing GRE score (beginning fall 2009) to decrease the number of applications.

Student Engagement

Students are required to participate in Forensics, internships, COMM Lab, and/or directed research; these activities facilitate students meeting the *practice* SLOs for the major. The COMM Club organizes department reading groups/events, sells tickets for commencement, and operates recruitment events at local community colleges each year. Each semester, approximately 25-50 students engage in service learning activities with non-profits in the Silicon Valley and San Jose. Students in GE classes maintain the department's Facebook page and work with the campus radio station to air debates, write and present PSAs, and arrange panel discussions.

College Committee Summary:

COSS's General Comments:

The COSS's Program Plan Review Committee applauds the department for being vigorous, enthusiastic, and engaged; however, the committee feels that the

department's Program Plan, at times, does not reflect departmental attributes and, in fact, is difficult to navigate/understand departmental goals and objectives.

Applicable and clear data were missing with regards to student learning outcomes and assessment. Plotting a reduction of the original 18 learning objectives to the newly reduced six student-learning objectives was not clearly discussed and explained. The committee suggests that, in the future, the department make use of and include figures, charts, and tables in order to clearly define reportable data.

Additionally, "double-count" analysis for the reduction/elimination of selected courses was not included (though reported in the Program Plan); this decision was a departmental consensus and, yet, the Program Plan does not demonstrate how the decision came to fruition.

With the restructuring of COMM studies, the committee is concerned that the faculty-to-lecturer ratio (below 80/20) and student course enrollment caps (25) are seen as having a possible negative impact on the department and overall student learning outcomes. Therefore, the committee would like the department to compare their current program to other "typical" communication programs. Additionally, they would like to see quantitative data as to the positive and/or negative impact these variables have on their current program(s).

In regards to the External Reviewer's report (Dr. Gerianne Marrigan), the committee felt that it was "much too rosy-colored" and contained too many "miniscule recommendations." In the future, an overview is warranted.

External Reviewer (Key Points—Abridged from 30)

***Reviewer: Gerianne Merrigan, Professor/Chair of Communication Studies,
San Francisco State University, March 4, 2010***

1. Examine retention rates and time to graduation with the new program relative to the B.A programs in place in 2002 and 2005.
2. Does the current model of advising work or is additional enforcement of course sequencing needed?
3. Identify the links between the three required units in applied communication activities and one unit in the student engagement unit in F-I-P courses.
4. The department and the College of Business should assess the relative effectiveness of the offered COMM 100W courses since the Department's assumption of those 12 sections.
5. SJSU Office of Institutional Research report, "Spring 2010 Bottleneck Courses" on March 1, 2010, identified 14 such courses in Communication Studies; determine the extent that COMM majors and minors compete for the same scarce number of seats in required courses.

6. Identify ways to offer enough sections of lower-division GE courses, such that students' timely progress toward graduation is not impeded
7. "Create an Advisory Board of Alumni/ae, that could lead to internship opportunities, funding of department activities, or increased opportunities for career advice and networking between current students and alumni/ae.

Dean's Report (May 21, 2010)

1. How can faculty respond to the need of other departments by designing "more practical aspects of communication study?"
2. What is the department's proper niche within the College of Social Sciences?
3. How should the department be responsive to the region and Silicon Valley?
4. If the department is opposed to a new media hire, is there a better reason than possible conflict with another field?
5. The committee encouraged the department to find the proper venues to share its innovative assessment approaches. Sister departments across the university are struggling with some of the same assessment issues. They might want to know how the approaches taken by Communication Studies have worked out.