



## Communication | 2015-2016 Assessment Report

1. Please give a brief overview of the assessment data you collected this year.

Included is the most relevant statistical data to this document in Appendix A. For the most part, students generally fell into the “somewhat agree” to “strongly agree” levels of the Likert scale for each question, with only one outlier response in each case. The results are presented as a mean average for each question, where 1 represented “Strongly Disagree” and 7 represented “Strongly Agree”. The sample size was 25 respondents, a limited number compared to our number of graduates.

Generally speaking, we found our focus on group projects was mostly well received. – Most students agreed that group projects were a vital part of their experience (6.04), and generally also agreed the expectations for collaborative work were clearly set in lower-level courses (6.0), signifying that we are doing a good job setting expectations for our students. Most students saw that these projects would benefit them to some extent in their professional career, as well (6.04).

Results on whether students learned management skills were a little more varied but still positive (5.88); nonetheless COMM students across the board seemed to feel better prepared for collaborative work than other majors (6.12). Students also generally felt these projects helped them more effectively collaborate with others and continuously improve (5.96 and 5.48 respectively). Most at least somewhat agreed with the idea that we should continue focusing on group projects (5.84).

However, it is worth noting that the qualitative data did not always fully line up with the picture painted by the quantitative data. When we asked for words to describe the projects, some words popped up that suggest some areas of improvement. For example:

- Vague descriptions
- Ridiculous expectations
- Frustrating
- Excessive
- Unfair
- Overabundance
- Time-consuming

The survey elaborated, suggesting some students felt particular courses did not need a group project – Communication Law, Information and Technology, and Information, Media, and

Society were specifically called out. Moreover, one student suggested that as a working student they felt group projects were difficult to balance and felt overburdened, seeing them as a hindrance that could potentially harm their outside work and income. Frustration over imbalances of group work were also present in these responses, with some students feeling that some group members did less work and were allowed to coast by. Many students requested more individual projects. By the same token however other students genuinely appreciated the focus on group work in the major, and encouraged us to keep it.

## Appendix A – Data

### Group projects were a vital part of my experience in the Communication program.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	1	4%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
5	Somewhat agree	5	20%
6	Agree	8	32%
7	Strongly agree	11	44%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	6.04
Variance	1.71
Standard Deviation	1.31
Total Responses	25

### 2. The expectation of collaborative work was clearly expressed in my lower-level courses.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	1	4%
3	Somewhat disagree	1	4%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	1	4%
5	Somewhat agree	1	4%
6	Agree	11	44%
7	Strongly agree	10	40%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	7
Mean	6.00
Variance	1.67
Standard Deviation	1.29
Total Responses	25

**3. The group projects in which I participated during my time in the COMM program will benefit me in my professional career.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	1	4%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
5	Somewhat agree	5	20%
6	Agree	8	32%
7	Strongly agree	11	44%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	6.04
Variance	1.71
Standard Deviation	1.31
Total Responses	25

**4. I learned a lot about managing others in group projects.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	1	4%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	1	4%
5	Somewhat agree	3	12%
6	Agree	15	60%
7	Strongly agree	5	20%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	7
Mean	5.88
Variance	0.86
Standard Deviation	0.93
Total Responses	25

#### 5. I feel better prepared for collaborative work than my friends with other majors.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	1	4%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
5	Somewhat agree	2	8%
6	Agree	12	48%
7	Strongly agree	10	40%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	6.12
Variance	1.53
Standard Deviation	1.24
Total Responses	25

#### 6. I learned a lot about myself in group projects.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	1	4%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	3	12%
5	Somewhat agree	4	16%
6	Agree	7	28%
7	Strongly agree	10	40%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	7
Mean	5.88
Variance	1.44
Standard Deviation	1.20
Total Responses	25

### 7. My group experiences enhanced my ability to collaborate with others.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	1	4%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
5	Somewhat agree	4	16%
6	Agree	12	48%
7	Strongly agree	8	32%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	5.96
Variance	1.54
Standard Deviation	1.24
Total Responses	25

### 8. I have learned about the mechanics of creating an effective group.

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	1	4%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	1	4%
5	Somewhat agree	3	12%
6	Agree	14	56%
7	Strongly agree	6	24%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	7
Mean	5.88
Variance	1.19
Standard Deviation	1.09
Total Responses	25

**9. I helped other students continuously improve through group projects.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	0	0%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	3	12%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	1	4%
5	Somewhat agree	4	16%
6	Agree	15	60%
7	Strongly agree	2	8%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	7
Mean	5.48
Variance	1.26
Standard Deviation	1.12
Total Responses	25

**10. I feel the COMM program should continue its focus on group projects and collaborative efforts.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Strongly disagree	1	4%
2	Disagree	0	0%
3	Somewhat disagree	0	0%
4	Neither agree nor disagree	0	0%
5	Somewhat agree	7	28%
6	Agree	9	36%
7	Strongly agree	8	32%
	Total	25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Mean	5.84
Variance	1.64
Standard Deviation	1.28
Total Responses	25

2. How will you use what you've learned from the data that was collected?

The biggest takeaway from these findings is that we need to focus on developing a curriculum that uses group projects where appropriate and potentially scales them back in courses that potentially do not merit them. While we remain committed to the benefits of group projects for developing effective professional communicators, accommodating the demanding schedules of students and empowering them to learn through other means may be worth considering at a department-wide level. A more uniform and clear approach to the pedagogic impact and design of group projects would also potentially be useful.