

Notes and Questions for the Communication Program Review

Accomplishments since last review:

- Added Research Methods as foundational element of curricula.
- Added new courses in conflict resolution.
- Hired a new tenure-track professor and lecturer.
- Incorporated alternative delivery of many courses through online and hybrid course formats.

Strengths of the program:

- Program's mission is very well coordinated with the University's core mission and the guiding principles of problem solving and case study approaches.
- Offers a very strong collaborative and "team" approach to learning.
- Emphasizes communication and "networking" with classmates as a requirement to matriculate through the program.
- Provides opportunity for students to broaden knowledge and skill development by learning in different areas of emphasis (e.g., organizational communication, public relations).
- Emphasizes and offers many internship opportunities for students, many of which also enhance opportunity for student's concurrent job placement after graduation.
- A well enrolled major, with expert senior faculty who facilitate and offer excellent professional models for students in their scholarship.
- Effectively connects learning to life through the emphasis on internships and service to the business and community organizations.

New challenges and continuing areas of need in the program:

- New hires of a generalist and a replacement for recent retirement. The retirement of Dr. Meyer, who was a leader and central figure of the program, presents a very notable gap and challenge for the program.
- Addition tenure-track positions to replace ad-hoc positions and enhance student learning; special consideration may be suggested for cultural/gender diversity and balance.
- Balancing of workload of faculty across the five tracks areas of expertise, or consolidating tracks.
- Effectively tracking and managing internship program.
- Continuing to develop student professional writing skills in the areas of media, business, and advertising.
- Maintaining an up to date curricula (e.g., incorporating a new course in Social Media, making adjustment to curricula requirements, etc.).

- Re-calibrating new graduate expectations about the job market and career path development, and addressing the “under-employed” issue, as well as letting employers know about the potential of graduates.
- Competition with non-academic institutions in filling open-positions with outstanding new faculty hires.
- Re-examine the role of ad-hoc faculty.
- Offer more sections of high-demand courses and reduce the number of course substitutions.
- Increased demand for the course from students in the Adult Degree Program. Working with the Adult Degree Program to strategically plan for future demands from their program students.

Questions:

- Communication has a strong appeal for students, and thus enrollment, what attracts students to this major?
- Communication offers a great model of using assessment results to improve their program. Can you discuss also how has the assessment findings have been used to revise classroom instruction methods and student learning?
- Noted as a burdensome task undertaken often by Dr. Meyer, what strategies have you considered so as to continue and enhance the management and supervision of student internships?
- It is noted that some students are screened out of the program, how often does this occur? What assistance is given for helping students find a more suitable program? What new majors do these students generally enroll in?
- In the graduation senior survey it is noted that Communication students give significantly lower ratings of becoming involved in community affairs. As communication, team-approach, and networking have been emphasized within the major, have you considered including engagement in community affairs as a goal of your mission statement? How might this expanding of the mission statement to include a broader community engagement benefit students in making the transition after graduation to working and involvement with the broader community?
- As we consider global opportunities for students during their undergraduate education and after graduation, what plans or concerns exist for placement of students in study abroad courses or international internships?
- It is noted in the senior survey that it is significantly less likely that Communication graduates to be working in a position that requires a bachelor’s degree, although job satisfaction is reported to be significantly correlated with having a job related to one’s major (see bulleted no. 8, on page 9). Are there any data indicating the percent of placements in the communication field or associated fields? What concerns do you have for student advisement given the lower levels of job satisfaction and/or opportunities for job placement with the communication field upon graduation? Given the senior survey results with regard to job satisfaction and employment in the communication field, how does the Communication

- program rank with other regional undergraduate institutions with regard to placement and career development after graduation?
- What outcomes would you like to envision with regard to meeting the demand and needs of students in the Adult Degree Program?
 - Networking and collaboration is an essential aspect of Communication program, what accounts for the significant difference in ratings by majors and minors of the statement “Students in the program help each other learn”?
 - In the presentation of the cloud analysis you note major areas of improvement, can you discuss more about how you shifted the style or roles of certain instructors so as to enhance student learning or improve the program? How was assessment feedback used in redesigning course or making improvements to the program?
 - Were there differences between Adult Degree Program students and Communication program students on the responses to the open-ended questions used in the cloud analysis, and if so how would you characterize and explain the meaning of these differences?

Editing notes:

- On page 4 of the Program Review in the “Program Description” please delete the “=” in sentence 1.
- In the third paragraph on page 6, in the last sentence, please revise sentence removing “were” so as to improve understanding; I think the statement is, “Finally, **we** view institutionally...”
- Table 1 was very, very difficult to read, please consider placing this information in a series tables, with each of the very small tables presented on a separate page.