

CLAS Deans' comments on BA Communication Studies (non-accredited) report
Reviewer: Christopher J. Mitchell, Ph.D., Associate Dean

Last report submitted by department: Fall 2020 (Initial Assessment Plan)

Documents submitted for this review:

- SLO Table for Program

Comments:

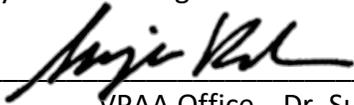
In the initial assessment plan of 2020, we noted that the SLOs for the Communication Studies BA are clear and measurable, and that seems to be bearing out nicely as the assessment plan evolves. The measures/instruments in some areas seem to be developing (e.g. SLO #1 with the rubrics to be created) and, in other areas, seem to be reflecting the challenges of the COVID period (e.g. SLOs #2 and #3). However, in SLO #3, good data appears to be emerging from the existing rubrics that allow trends to be analyzed, and the School evidences solid plans in place to address these trends in forthcoming semesters. Furthermore, it is very encouraging that core course results are exceeding expectations, as you note.

Two suggestions here for the 4-year report in 2024: (1) for every SLO, make the target rubric/survey scores (and expected distribution of “minimally competent,” “competent,” and “highly competent” score ranges) clear in the “How Used” column; and (2) attach as an appendix the most recent rubrics— to be fair there were rubrics included with the initial (FA20) report, but it wasn’t clear if they had been revised since.

Academic Affairs—Review & Feedback

B.A. Communication Studies

The B.A. in Communication Studies has taken several steps towards developing a reliable mechanism for ensuring the best capture of learning outcomes from 2000-level to senior-level students. These steps include a new senior capstone course with a final portfolio, which will perform the work of allowing students to demonstrate their growth across all four learning goals. For more targeted results and better comparison across years, the program has decided to limit the data collected to Communications majors only in the capstone course in order to measure gains in social and ethical responsibility (learning goal 4). The report recognizes that while learning outcomes are exceeding expectations in the sophomore-level courses, they could improve at the senior level. Many of the program’s changes stem from a desire to reorganize and cull data from courses that are deliberately tiered and conscientious in their capacity to measure growth in student learning.



VPAA Office Dr. Suzie Park

2/28/23

Date

**SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM
DIVISION OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

**Year Two
Non-accredited Programs Only
Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Academic Programs**

Please list all of the student learning outcomes for your program as articulated in the assessment plan.

1. Students will acquire communication studies disciplinary knowledge. This includes, an understanding of the discipline and its central questions, as well as the ability to apply communication theories and engage in communication inquiry.
2. Students will also improve their critical thinking skills. This includes developing critical questioning skills, and learning to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize data in a variety of contexts.
3. Students will be able to create and implement message strategies in a diverse range of contexts, which includes an emphasis on writing and speaking.
4. Students will cultivate a sense of social and ethical responsibility, and multicultural sensitivity.

Overview of measures/instruments

SLO(S)	ULG	Measures/Instruments	How is the instrument used?
1	NA	CMN 4680 will debut in SP24: Senior capstone project for traditional degrees; CMN 4720 Workplace Relationships (revised SP22 to CMN 4950); Final project for students in the Communication in Organizations online degree program. In both programs, the final project will be assessed for disciplinary fluency using rubrics developed by the Assessment Committee and approved by the faculty.	The portfolios and final projects will be assessed by the instructors for the courses. A representative sample will also be assessed by the Assessment Committee. The goal is for the average student to be assessed as at least minimally competent (60%) according the rubric to be established by the Assessment Coordinator, and approved by the faculty. The trend should be to improve competency for an average of highly competent (80%+). In the spring 2023 semester, the Assessment Coordinator will develop disciplinary rubrics to be used in both CMN 4680 and CMN 4950. Our initial goal was for CMN 4680 to be offered for the first time in SP23, but we believe the course will not make with so few seniors qualifying to take the course in their catalog year. So we will adjust our goal to offer it in SP24. CMN 4950, formerly CMN 4720, will be offered in SP23 for the first time with the higher course number, and the final project will be evaluated to be included in the 22-23 assessment report.

2	C	<p>In order to assess critical thinking, all core classes, and a representative sampling of classes across the curriculum, will be assessed by the instructors using a critical thinking rubric approved by the faculty.</p>	<p>The rubric scores for critical thinking were competent across all class levels. Due to COVID restrictions, sampling across the curriculum was small. However, one trend was observed that has already been discussed with the faculty and needs to be monitored. The 2000-level classes scored higher in critical thinking than did the 3000 and 4000-level. The 2000-level courses averaged 3.36, the 3000-level classes averaged 3.24, and the 4000-level averaged 3.16. While it is concerning to see 4000-level classes not achieve highly-competent, the small sample size may be skewing numbers down. We also believe student fatigue with COVID restrictions may have played a role in overall performance. The faculty have discussed the data and came to a consensus that we will evaluate next year's data to see if a relaxing of restrictions results in improvement.</p> <p>For the first time, we have gathered data specific to CMN core courses (e.g., CMN 2010, 2040, 3000, 3100, 3220, and 3903). The data are encouraging. In the area of CT, core courses averaged 3.33, which is the equivalent of competence for 3000-level classes. Considering the fact that core courses are comprised of 2000 <u>and</u> 3000-level classes, we are pleased with this outcome.</p>
3	SW	<p>In order to assess <i>general speaking and writing</i>, all core classes, and a representative sampling of classes across the curriculum, will be assessed by the instructors using speaking rubrics and writing rubrics that have been approved by the faculty. In addition, student assignments across the curriculum will be evaluated to specifically measure written and spoken message creation.</p> <p>In order to assess students' <i>ability to create and implement diverse message strategies</i>, seniors enrolled in the face-to-face and online capstone courses will complete the Communication Flexibility Measure in an online survey. The competency levels on the Communication Flexibility Measure are (on a 5-point scale).</p>	<p>The rubric scores for courses by class level are as follows:</p> <p>Speaking: 2000-level 3.34; 3000-level 2.84; 4000-level 3.01. The results for 2000-level classes exceeded expectations, while 3000 and 4000-level classes fell short. While, the dip in upper-division courses is concerning, but data was collected in only four courses resulting in a small sample size. We believe that the COVID restrictions in place in the 21-22 AY resulted in faculty assigning fewer speaking assignments. We anticipate this changing with restrictions relaxing.</p> <p>Writing: 2000-level 3.05; 3000-level 2.63; 4000-level 2.90. The results for 2000-level courses exceed expectations, but 3000 and 4000-level do not meet expectations. While only two courses returned writing rubrics, resulting in a small sample size, there was a large sample for 3000-level. During the faculty meeting at the beginning of AY 22-23, the faculty had a lengthy discussion about the quality of writing we are getting from junior and senior</p>

			<p>students, and suggested options for improvement, including focused faculty engagement. We do believe that COVID restriction fatigue played a role in skewing our numbers lower, but accept that faculty, too, have felt the pressure of these same restrictions. We discussed implementing faculty workshops where we could share GIFTS (Great Ideas For Teaching) with each other in the hopes of improving our students' skill in this area.</p> <p>While our speaking and writing for courses overall were not where we hoped they would be for upper-division courses, it is worthy of mention that, again, our core courses are exceeding expectations. Our core average for writing is 2.93 and for speaking and listening it is 3.46. Writing is meeting our goal of competent for 3000-level, and speaking is surpassing our goal for 3000-level. We are pleased with this outcome, considering core courses are comprised of 2000 and 3000-level courses.</p> <p>The Communication in Organizations capstone class (formerly CMN 4720) reported an average of 3.03 for writing, which does not meet our goal for this course. It is our hope that revising this course to make it eligible for graduate students, and students in the accelerated graduate program, will result in improvement. As a COVID consideration, this course did not include a speaking component this year.</p> <p>Seniors in the capstone courses taking the Communication Flexibility survey should average a score of at least minimally competent (2.50-3.49). In subsequent reporting, the goal is to see improvement to highly competent (4.49+). The capstone course will not be offered until SP24 and will be assessed at that time.</p>
4	R	<p>In order to assess social and ethical responsibility, each year seniors in the capstone courses will complete the Social and Professional Ethics Measure and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale in an online survey. The competency levels are (on a 5-point scale)</p>	<p>Seniors in the capstone courses taking the Social and Professional Ethics Measure and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale online survey should average a score of at least minimally competent (2.50-3.49). In subsequent reporting, the goal is to see improvement to highly competent (4.49+). The capstone course will be offered SP24 and will be assessed at that time.</p>

Improvements and Changes Based on Assessment

1. Provide a short summary (1-2 paragraphs or bullets) of any curricular actions (revisions, additions, and so on) that were approved over the past two years as a result of reflecting on the student learning outcomes data. Are there any additional future changes, revisions, or interventions proposed or still pending?

- Faculty approved a capstone course as a culminating experience for seniors allowing us to better measure outcomes for graduates;
- Disciplinary knowledge measurement moved to capstone course with portfolio, as opposed to measuring students' disciplinary knowledge from 2000 to 4000 levels;
- Communication flexibility, Social and Professional Ethics Measure, and the Multicultural Sensitivity Scale to be issued in capstone class targeting CMN seniors only

2. Please provide a brief description or bulleted list of any improvements (or declines) observed/measured in student learning. Be sure to mention any intervention made that has not yet resulted in student improvement (if applicable).

- Focused assessment of department core indicates students are meeting or exceeding goals;
- Outcomes at 2000-level are exceeding goals in all areas;
- Outcomes at 4000-level are not meeting goals;
- Faculty have discussed ways to improve 4000-level writing, speaking, and critical thinking outcomes. While some of the data may be skewed by COVID restrictions/exhaustion, it is also possible that our assessment instruments are not focused enough;
- Assessment rubrics will focus specifically on CMN students at the appropriate class level. For example, when assessing a 4000-level course, faculty will assess CMN students only (as opposed to PR or TVP students), and will assess seniors only. Getting more targeted data should give us a more accurate picture of progress or the lack thereof

3. Using the form below, please document annual faculty and committee engagement with the assessment process (such as the review of outcomes data, revisions/updates to assessment plan, and reaffirmation of SLOs).

History of Annual Review		
Date of Annual Review	Individuals/Groups who Reviewed Plan	Results of the Review (i.e., reference proposed changes from #1 above, revised SLOs, etc...)
8/2022	All faculty	Increase in direct writing, speaking, and critical thinking instruction, esp. at 3000 & 4000 levels.
9/2022	Chair & Assistant Chair	Better focused rubrics that differentiate student rank. For example, 2000-level classes evaluating sophomores specifically, 4000-level classes evaluating seniors specifically.