

a. Program Name - Communication Arts

b. Report prepared by – Julie Allee

c. Who is the current assessment contact for your program? Julie Allee

d. Should assessment information be sent to anyone else in your department? No

1. What are the program's educational goals? (Please take goals directly from your program's assessment plan, and highlight any changes made this year.)

The following are the goals for students majoring in both Speech and Mass Communication. *No changes were made in the 2008-2009 academic year.*

By the end of a student's final year, Communication Arts majors will be able to:

1. Recall the history of Communication as a social scientific discipline.
2. Explain the basic assumptions and techniques of research methodology in the study of Communication.
3. Define the components involved in a standard Communication model.
4. List a variety of different functions Communication serves in society.
5. Demonstrate application of training, skills and knowledge of Communication processes and functions to the student's career and intellectual interests.
6. Understand and appreciate the importance of Communication in both personal and professional realms of the student's life.
7. Demonstrate the principles of Communication in a speaking environment.

In addition, Speech Communication students will be able to:

1. Apply communication skills appropriate to the interpersonal, organizational and public advocacy realm of communication.
2. Identify and demonstrate awareness of major theoretical and rhetorical concepts associated with human communication.

In addition, Mass Communication students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to produce written or visual communication pieces which reflect concepts learned in journalism, public relations or electronic media.
2. Apply both theoretical and practical skills toward the critical evaluation of mass-mediated culture.

These goals are designed to allow Communication Arts majors the ability to have a mutual foundation in basic principles, as well as a specialization in either Speech or Mass Communication. This ensures both a theoretical and practical knowledge of communication, as well as area-specific experience in their chosen track.

2. What assessment techniques did the program use? (Please take assessment techniques directly from your program's assessment plan and highlight any changes made this year.)

1. Pre-Arts Codes

Upon entering the Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts, students are assigned a specific code: Pre-Mass or Pre-Speech major. This code identifies them as designated majors within Communication Arts until such time that they pass their upper divisional process, making them either full majors either in Mass or Speech Communication.

2. Upper Divisional Process

A Pre-Mass or Pre-Speech student may apply for an Upper Divisional review when the following criteria have been met:

1. Completing a minimum of 56 credit hours.
2. All Pre-Speech and Pre-Mass students must pass S121 Public Speaking and W131 Principles of Composition with a C – or above.
3. Students wishing to be Speech Communication majors must pass C200 Introduction to Mass Communication and S205 Introduction to Speech Communication with a C – or above.
4. In addition, Pre-Speech students must pass one of the following courses (depending on their chosen track):
 - a. Public Advocacy track majors must complete S324 Persuasion
 - b. Organizational track majors must complete S223 Business and Professional Communication
 - c. Interpersonal track majors must complete S322 Advanced Interpersonal Communication or S380 Nonverbal Communication
5. Students wishing to be Mass Communication majors must pass C200 Introduction to Mass Communication and J200 Reporting, Writing and Editing with a C – or above.
6. In addition, Pre-Mass students must pass one of the following courses (depending on their chosen tracks):
 - a. Public Relations track majors must complete J219 (formerly 319) Introduction to Public Relations
 - b. Electronic Media track majors must complete T336 Digital Video Production
 - c. Journalism track majors must complete J341 Newspaper Reporting

3. Encounter Questionnaires

Information regarding student interests, success, and overall program quality will be assessed at three points in a student's academic career:

Pre-Encounter Questionnaire

In Freshman Orientation, Transfer Orientation, or in a student's first academic advising session, they will be surveyed for the following information:

1. Their reason(s) for majoring in communication.
2. Expectations of the discipline / faculty.
3. How they heard about the major.
4. Future career goals the degree will provide them the opportunity to pursue.
5. What area students came from (if transferring).

Encounter Questionnaire

Mid-way through a student's academic career, they will be surveyed for the following information:

1. Strengths of the program (to date).
2. Areas of difficulty they have encountered.
3. Whether the program is meeting their initial expectations, and if not, what can be done to improve it.

Post-Encounter Questionnaire

Once a student has graduated from the program, they will be surveyed for the following information:

1. Overall general experience in Communication Arts
2. Strengths of the program.
3. Areas for improvement.
4. Field they will be pursuing upon graduation.
5. Future goals.

4. Capstone Course

Speech Communication majors are required to take S400 Senior Seminar in Speech Communication prior to graduation. The capstone course synthesizes material discussed throughout the student's upper level years. In addition, the capstone course is designed as a way to practically apply theory to practical experiences. As such, S400 has the following goals:

1. Review and expand a student's knowledge of different theoretical approaches to communication studies.
2. Apply a variety of communication-related, theoretical approaches to a student's personal and/or professional life.
3. Develop, research and produce high quality assignments.
4. Help prepare students for either a graduate education or a career in a communication-related discipline.

5. Course Surveys

All courses in the Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts require faculty members to administer instructor / course evaluation forms to their classes at the end of the semester. These forms include both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data comes in the form of constructive comments about the class or instructor. Quantitative data comes in the form of 47 questions which provide student demographics (e.g., year, g.p.a., expected grade, preparation time, and attendance record), course content, readings / text, instructor qualities (teaching style, preparation, organization, etc.), examinations / assignments, and overall course experience.

6. Alumni Survey

Every two years, Communication Arts will conduct a survey of new program alumni to note their professional engagements, how their degree has helped or hindered in manifesting their career, and suggestions for developing the program further in order to better serve the student population. Questions will elicit both quantitative data (e.g., demographics, closed-ended questions) and qualitative data (open-ended questions). Future dates: Spring 2006, Spring 2008, and Spring 2010.

In addition, every five years, an overall alumni survey will be distributed which provides alumni to update their information and provide new demographic data or comments to Communication Arts. Faculty will be able to track and maintain more accurate records of alumni for a variety of purposes. Future dates: Spring 2006, Spring 2011, Spring 2017.

The Capstone Course goals have been updated to represent what is currently taught in the course.

Communication Arts has begun handing out both Pre-encounter and Post-encounter surveys during academic advising sessions with students. Freshmen and transfer students are given the survey at their first advising session. Graduating seniors are given a survey at their last advising session. This spring is the first time that the Encounter Questionnaire has been sent out. Logistically, the simplest and most cost effective way to do this was via email. As such, the Assessment Liaison sends out the survey via email and asks for it to be returned by email or printed out and returned.

3. What has your program done with assessment information this year? (i.e. communicated results to faculty, staff, alumni and students, made changes in the curriculum, made changes in the budget, added new courses. . .)

Assessment information is shared with Communication Arts faculty at faculty meetings and via email discussions about topics of importance between meetings. Additionally, the results of the alumni survey, minutes from meetings, and other assessment information are posted on the shared School of the Arts drive, available to all School of the Arts members. As a result of information from graduating student surveys, we have begun emailing upperclassman about internship possibilities. We have also modified the internship program so as to make it more effective for the students enrolled. As a result of communication from employers about the evaluation process, we have changed the evaluation forms, the assignments, and the value of each assignment.

In response to the student and alumni comments that our Journalism majors need more layout and design training, this spring a course was taught for the first time at this campus to address that need (JOUR-J 463 Graphic Design I: V.T. Desktop Publishing for Non-Design majors). This course is also scheduled for the fall semester and is likely to become a regularly offered class.

Students have commented on surveys and in informal conversation about the need to be more involved on campus and know more about events that are going on that would be valuable to them. In an attempt to connect with students, Communication Arts has set up Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In sites that will be maintained by our faculty.

4. After reflecting on assessment activities in your unit, as a result of assessment what are two issues you would like to address?

Although we do not have the funding, the most common comment on the exit surveys was that we need a broadcasting program. Although that is not currently a possibility (and is not a

possibility in the foreseeable future), students need opportunities to align their Communication Arts education with their career goals more closely. Although the improvement of the internship program is one step towards this, students also need to be made more aware of the ways in which their degrees can be used.

Our website has improved from last year (now we have one). At the moment, however, we have very limited information on our campus website including faculty bios and the degrees offered. We will be adding assessment information and information about internships to the website so as to better communicate with faculty, staff, alumni, students, and potential employers. These items will hopefully be added to the website this summer.