

2007-2008 Program Assessment Report: Communication Studies

Name of Department/Unit: Communication Studies

List of Programs: Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts

Department/Unit Mission: The Department of Communication Studies exists to offer strength-based curriculum that embraces a range of traditions in the discipline and adequately prepares students for knowledge that advances communication theory and practice in ways that serve the needs of the region and the discipline.

Department/Unit Goals: Communication Studies graduates learn to ask how, why, and with what consequences people communicate. Studying communication in everyday relationships, groups, and organizations reveals how those systems are created negotiated and maintained. Comparing American cultural patterns and communication styles with those of other societies prepares them to engage in competent communication with citizens of diverse backgrounds both at home and abroad. Analyzing the messages in advertisements, television programs, and political speeches enhances their understanding of society and the impacts those messages have in day-to-day interactions. By becoming competent communicators, graduates of our program gain valuable technical tools for lifelong learning.

Student Learning Objectives

Name of Assessment Liaison: Sakile K. Camara, Ph. D.

Name of College: Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communication

2007-2008 Program Assessment Report
Assessment Activities for Communication Studies Program

Student Learning Outcomes (which SLOs were assessed?)	Assessment Dates (when was SLO assessed)	Assessment Procedures (what did you do?)	Summary of Findings (what did you learn?)	Use of Findings for Program Improvement (what recommendations for program improvement did you make?)
<p>SLO 3: Articulate the reciprocal relationship between communication and culture.</p> <p>SLO 7: Understand and apply communication competencies in civic engagement for a multicultural, global society</p>	<p>FA 2007 thru SP 2008</p>	<p>Assessed Coms 356 Intercultural Comm. Faculty were asked to align their student learning objectives to the program SLOs matrix and to list the assignments or test questions used to measure the objective in the course. Seven common student objectives were found across sections. Faculty were asked prior to the start of spring 2008 semester to add the SLOs 3 and 7 along with student learning objectives to their syllabi along with the course description according to the catalogue</p> <p>In SP2008 the following data was collected: (1) The average of exams administered in 7 sections of Coms 356, (2) a comprehensive assessment exam from 6 sections (3) The average of written papers in 7 sections and (4) Instructor scored rubrics of field experience papers from a sample of 30 papers from 5 sections.</p>	<p>Overall averages of exams, written papers indicate that students performed lower on exams with an average of 75% than on written assignments which averaged 84% across sections. Students performed well in the course with an average of 80% on all assignments.</p> <p>The success criteria set for SLO3—projected that 50% of students would score at least 21 (70%-C-) or better on the comprehensive assessment exam.</p> <p>Results indicate that the overall average of combined sections was an 18 -60% D. Out of the 207 students taking the exam, 62 students scored a 21 or better. Only 29% of students passed the exam successfully versus the 50% projected. The success criteria set for this measure was not met.</p>	<p>1.) Instructional Training: The department needs to develop clearer and more consistent criteria for course content development for COMS 356 that links course objectives to the Department’s SLOs. Additionally, the department needs to take the initiative to work collectively and collaboratively with instructors teaching this course to ensure thorough and consistent coverage of content supporting the SLOs. Mini-seminars or training sessions throughout the semester are recommended.</p> <p>2.) Develop Departmental Assessment Culture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) Minor changes to faculty syllabi to demonstrate the value of assessment to students. b.) Instructors need to incorporate at least one assignment used to measure students’ ability to meet SLO 3 and 7. This assignment should specifically ask students to address the questions developed for the rubric from course objectives c.) The assessment exam should be added to each syllabus for credit toward the final course grade. Perhaps the exam can be administered online for classroom and student flexibility. Scores can be sent directly to the professor indicating who took the exam and who did not. d.) The writing component. We recommend that greater attention be given to assisting instructors with incorporating a writing assignment into the curriculum that specifically addresses the content of the rubric. <p>3.) On-going Assessment: Longitudinal data will be helpful. Another progress report should be generated regularly that will compare data from 2008, giving time for implementing suggestions from this report and giving a more accurate picture of departmental and instructor learning <i>over time</i>, which can lead to establishing benchmarks for the class. Since this report is the first formal assessment of this class, we need additional data to improve instructional methods and student assessment.</p>

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<p>SLO 3 Demonstrate the ability to identify and comprehend scholarly writing in the field.</p>	<p>Sp 2008</p>	<p>Assessed 3 thesis projects and 8 comprehensive exams administered in spring 2008 through COMS 697: Directed Comprehensive Exams and COMS 698: Thesis or Graduate Project.</p> <p>Assessment utilized committee member scores on common rubrics and written comments to determine if the written portion of comprehensive exams or theses met SLO #3.</p> <p>Assessment for COMS 697/698 included the following: Quantitative rubric scores for the written portion of the comprehensive exam. Quantitative rubric scores for the written portion of the thesis. Qualitative responses based on faculty perception of comps and thesis.</p> <p>Success Criteria: 70% of graduate students would score a 29 or better on scored rubrics to determine if graduates met SLO.</p>	<p>Based on a total of 36 points, the overall average score of students taking the comprehensive exam was a 28 meaning that students approached the SLO. Individually, two students exceeded the SLO, four students approached the SLO, one student met the SLO and one student did not meet the SLO. No student exceeded the SLO.</p> <p>The overall assessment results related to the three theses completed indicate that students exceeded the SLO with an average score of 33. Individually, one student exceeded the SLO, while 2 students met the SLO.</p> <p>The results suggest that the program culminating experiences (COMS 697 and COMS 698) are effective in achieving graduate learning objective #3:</p> <p>Qualitative responses:</p> <p><i>Strengths</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -integrated/synthesized theories diverse theories -application of theories -identified ambiguities and contradictions in theories -awareness of arguments in multiple areas of the field -well prepared <p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -unable to analyze some of the scholarly writing well -needed prompting to get to deeper levels of analysis -couldn't summarize written answers -confidence level of student was low -lack of knowledge beyond topic studied 	<p>The department has already initiated curriculum changes to improve performance in this area, however. Beginning fall 2009, a new MA program will be in place that requires students to take a graduate level methods course, which presumably will improve students' ability to identify and comprehend scholarly writing in the field.</p>