**2017-2018 Annual Program Assessment Report**

Please submit report to your department chair or program coordinator, the Associate Dean of your College, and to james.solomon@csun.edu, Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review, by September 28, 2018. You may, but are not required to, submit a separate report for each program, including graduate degree programs, which conducted assessment activities, or you may combine programs in a single report. **Please identify your department/program in the file name for your report.**

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

**Department:** Communication Studies

**Program:** B.A. & M.A.

**Assessment liaison:** Dr. Aimee Carrillo Rowe

1. **Please check off whichever is applicable:**

**A.** \_\_\_\_ **Measured student work within program major/options.**

**B**.  **Analyzed results of measurement within program major/options**

**C**. X  **Applied results of analysis to program review/curriculum/review/revision major/options.**

**D.** \_\_\_\_ **Focused exclusively on the direct assessment measure of General Education Natural Sciences learning outcomes.**

1. **Overview of Annual Assessment Project(s).** On a separate sheet,provide a brief overview of this year’s assessment activities, including: (The italicized items are those relevant to the department’s assessment activities this year.)
* *an explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, application, or GE assessment) that it enacted*
* if your department implemented assessment **option A**, identify which program SLOs were assessed (please identify the SLOs in full), in which classes and/or contexts, what assessment instruments were used and the methodology employed, the resulting scores, and the relation between this year’s measure of student work and that of past years (include as an appendix all relevant materials that you wish to include)
* if your department implemented assessment **option B**, identify what conclusions were drawn from the analysis of measured results, what changes to the program were planned in response, and the relation between this year’s analyses and past and future assessment activities
* *if your department implemented* ***option C****, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities*
* if your department implemented **option D**, exclusively or simultaneously with options **A, B, and/or C,** identify the basic skill(s) assessed and the precise learning outcomes assessed, the assessment instruments and methodology employed, and the resulting scores
* in what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university’s commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups
* any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments

**3. Preview of planned assessment activities for 2018-2019.** Include a brief description and explanation of how next year’s assessment will contribute to a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

2. **Overview of Annual Assessment**

AY 2017-2018 was a year of revision. The department reviewed and revised its entire assessment plan, including substantially revising its Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs). We undertook this revision under the following conditions: (1) the Department engaged (and continues to be engaged in) a revision of the undergraduate curriculum; (2) the department completed a five-year assessment cycle in AY 2015-2016 that had started in AY 2011-2012; and (3) the department completed assessment of general education SLOs in three courses (COMS 151, COMS 225, and COMS 309) in AY 2016-2017.

The revision of the assessment plan dovetailed with a review and revision of the department’s undergraduate curriculum. During this process we added new courses, revised existing courses, and added a fourth band to the undergraduate major. In conjunction with curriculum development, faculty developed five new PSLOs to replace the existing PSLOs and to better align its PSLOs with the revised curriculum (see Appendix B). The faculty also began the process of preparing a new five-year assessment plan, which includes updating the alignment matrix and rotation plan, and establishing new assessment teams. We are relying on assessment data and a 2016 External Reviewers Report to inform the process of developing our undergraduate curriculum and new five-year assessment plan. This process and the Department’s history of utilizing assessment data to inform curricular and hiring decisions evidences our commitment to maintaining a continuous program of ongoing assessment.

***2.1*** *An explanation for why your department chose the assessment activities (measurement, analysis, and/or application) that it enacted.*

The department conducted assessment each year of our five-year assessment cycle from AY 2011-2012 to AY 2015-2016. (**Appendix A** **“Summary of Results”** summarizes the assessment results for this most recent five-year cycle.) Assessment of our General Education (GE) SLOs in three courses (COMS 151, COMS 225, and COMS 309) in AY 2016-2017 delayed the drafting of the next five-year assessment plan until this year’s assessment cycle.

The revision of the assessment plan is meant both to inform and be informed by our revision of the Department’s undergraduate curriculum. The faculty spent much of the year revising the undergraduate curriculum. The most significant change to our major is the addition of a fourth band. We also revised our core course requirements. The faculty attended a department retreat over a weekend in early 2018 to reach a general consensus around the revised curriculum and to design a new set of the PSLOs to align with the revised curriculum (**Appendix B “Undergraduate PSLOs”** sets forth the new undergraduate PSLOs as compared to the previous undergraduate PSLOs.) At that time, faculty are discussion revisions to the graduate PSLOs as well (**Appendix C “Graduate PSLOs”** includes current graduate PSLOs, as revisions are not yet finalized).

The faculty reached consensus on new PSLOs in Spring 2018, and since then the assessment team has begun working to create a new alignment matrix and rotation plan to serve as the basis for a new five-year assessment plan. That work continues through AY 2018-2019.

***2.2*** *If your department implemented* ***option C****, identify the program modifications that were adopted, and the relation between program modifications and past and future assessment activities*

Based on previous assessment reports and the 2016 External Reviewers Report, COMS faculty revised the undergraduate curriculum and PSLOs AY 2017-2018. Faculty reviewed the assessment reports from AY 2011-2016 to inform our revision process. (Appendix A summarizes the results of these reports.) Our assessment plan gives faculty an opportunity to serve on the assessment committee on a rotating basis. This direct experience also informed our curricular and PSLO revisions. Having served inside the assessment process, administering tasks and evaluating student work, faculty were more adept at designing new PSLOs. For instance, we focused on using a single action verb and evaluative terms of varied intensity. As an example of our improved PSLOs, our previous PSLO 1 read: “identify, describe, and explain the role of communication in constructing reality through practices, concepts and rituals.” In contrast, revised PSLO 1 states: students should be able to “explain key concepts in Communication Studies” (See Appendix B Undergraduate PSLOs). This new PSLO is more amenable to accurate and efficient assessment.

The revised undergraduate curriculum develops a series of courses directed at further developing students’ research and writing skills. Additionally, the revised undergraduate curriculum requires all majors to take COMS 150 (Introduction in Communication Studies), which provides an overview of the variety of study in the discipline thereby introducing them to the department’s divisional bands. This modification reflects one of the recommendations of the 2016 External Reviewers Report. Additional revisions to the undergraduate curriculum that respond to the External Reviewers Report include: moving more of our electives courses into divisional bands; renaming the Community Involvement divisional band to “Communication and Civic Engagement” to better represent the student learning objectives of that requirement; and adding a Health Communication course to the curriculum.

The revised undergraduate curriculum also includes a new program track (Critical Cultural Studies), in addition to the three existing tracks: Rhetoric, Performance Studies, and Social Science Studies (renamed from Communication Theory). While Performance and Cultural Studies were combined on the previous curriculum, we have sufficient student and faculty interest in developing Cultural Studies and Performance Studies as distinct bands of study. We drew on data from our AY 2013-2014 assessment report in which we implemented a written task in which students analyzed a “culture jam.” Students’ strong participation and ability to conceptualize the content of PSLO 3 (to analyze the “relationship between communication and culture”) demonstrated that our students are prepared to engage the nuanced distinctions between the fields of performance and cultural studies. The data demonstrated student interest in the field of performance studies and suggested a desire to use performance studies frameworks (such as Judith Butler’s theory of performativity) to analyze cultural performances. Based on strong student performance and interest as well as faculty expertise, we are in the process of developing an independent Performance Studies band. In these various ways, modifications to the department’s undergraduate program reflect findings from past assessment and external review activities.

We are in the process of organizing the teams for the upcoming assessment cycles. New and returning tenure/track faculty will be organized into teams of four and will serve in rotation to facilitate assessment each year for the pending five-year cycle. This year, the Assessment Liaison will organize a workshop to introduce Lecturers to the revised PSLOs and to complete the alignment matrix by obtaining their input on the alignment of the PSLOs with the revised undergraduate curriculum. Upon completion of the alignment matrix, the plan for the next assessment cycle will be continue to revise it and prepare for implementation in AY 2019-2020, pending completion of the undergraduate major revision.

***2.3*** *In what way(s) your assessment activities may reflect the university’s commitment to diversity in all its dimensions but especially with respect to underrepresented groups*

As explained in previous reports, the Department of Communication Studies PSLOs relate to issues of diversity because questions of power are at the center of communication-based approaches to social life. Additionally, the assessment tools used throughout this past assessment cycle indicate that for this department, the evaluation of student learning is inseparable from the evaluation of students’ engagement with and competency in issues of diversity.

***2.4*** *Any other assessment-related information you wish to include, including SLO revision (especially to ensure continuing alignment between program course offerings and both program and university student learning outcomes), and/or the creation and modification of new assessment instruments*

The department’s other assessment-related information includes the following activities:

**A**. Drs. Sakile Camara and Dave Keating, working with Data Champs, identified the courses within the undergraduate curriculum with high DFUs rates. Dr. Camara found that a high degree of correspondence between how students perform in the core prerequisites (COMS 301, COMS 327, COMS 351) and their performance in subsequent classes linked to those prerequisites. For instance, performance in COMS 351 was highly associated with performance in COMS 320, COMS 350, COMS 431, COMS 451, and COMS 453. Given that COMS 351 has historically produced the lowest overall GPA among the core courses, we identified that course as one on which we need to focus attention. We have implemented several strategies since then to address student performance in COMS 351. For instance, we aim to create more consistent faculty treatment of the subject matter taught in COMS 351 as well as other courses in the communication theory/social science band by ensuring these courses are taught be faculty with social science training.

**B.** Another strategy arising from Dr. Camara’s research was expanding the department’s student advising program to work more closely with students and their career goals. This expanded program involves training lecturers to assist with the advising. Through this program, lecturers, designated as career coaches, would assist students with scheduling and selecting courses that supported their career goals.

**C**. An Open Educational Resource (OER) textbook was developed for COMS 151 (Fundamentals of Public Speaking) and was made available to students at no-charge through Canvas. This OER textbook was used by Teaching Associates, Faculty, and Lecturers during AY 2017-2018. Students were surveyed at the end of the course about the use of the textbook and the course structure. Those survey results are to be collected and reviewed this year.

**D**. After serving for six years as the department’s Assessment Liaison, Dr. Aimee Carrillo Rowe resigned and Dr. Melissa Brough took over this assignment for this upcoming AY 2018-2019. At the spring 2018 workshop, faculty learned about the details of an upgrade to the department’s assessment software, which aided in the transition to a new Assessment Liaison.

**3. Preview of planned assessment activities for next year.** *Include a brief description and explanation of how next year’s assessment will contribute to a continuous program of ongoing assessment.*

This next academic year (2018-2019), the department will complete its preparations for the next assessment cycle through the following activities:

* Meet the University’s GE assessment requirement by assessing COMS 104 in Spring 2019 semester.
* Consult with faculty to work toward consensus on the IED (Introduced, Emphasized, and Developed) values detailed in the alignment matrix.
* Hold a workshop with Lecturers to introduce them to the revised PSLOs and curriculum and to obtain input on the alignment matrix.
* Continue to hone the assessment plan through ongoing discussion with faculty and lecturers to reach shared understanding and consensus about the PLSOs, alignment matrix, rotation plan, and assessment teams in preparation for implementation in AY 2019-2020, beginning with PSLO #1.
* Create an online clearing house for shared material (alignment matrix, rotation plan, sample syllabi and assignments) to support the new curriculum and PSLOs (CSUN Box).