Communication Studies Program Assessment Report
2017-2018

I.   Communication Studies Program Mission and Educational Objectives

A. Program Mission

The Communication Studies Program prepares students for the challenges of a society that is shaped by communication. As participants in the program, students develop and integrate knowledge, creativity, ethical practice, and skills. Students also examine and produce work in oral, written, and visua

II. Program Description and History

The Communication Studies program fills a niche in Communication programs nationally. Rather than focus on content production within a specific medium (e.g. television or radio broadcast) or on the dynamics of interpersonal communication, the Communication Studies B. S. gives students the flexibility to craft their own program of study through the use of 36 "focused sequence" credits, chosen and justified by the student. Students do gain experience in content production through courses like COM 248: Digital Media Production and COM 309: Communication Technology in Use, and they do gain experience in interpersonal communication through OIT's general education requirements and courses like COM 205: Intercultural Communication and COM 347: Negotiation and Conflict Resolution. However, these experiences are the foundations for students to develop their specific professional interests.

A. Program History: AY 2014 to Present

The Communication Studies program was revised and approved by the CPC in Winter 2014. All

Community College programs (37 current students) or from other programs at OIT, common retention data focused on first-time freshmen would not accurately describe our retention figures.

D. Program Graduates

In AY 2017, 13 students graduated with a Communication Studies B. S.

E. Industry Relationships

The Communication department as a whole does not maintain industry relationships beyond its advisory board, which includes school board members, Jeld-Wen employees and members of the community.

During AY 2017, the Communication department joined the MadCap Scholar Program, gaining access to the professional MadCap Flare suite of technical writing applications for students (normally $1,799 per license).

F. Learning Experiences

In April of 2018, four students presented papers at the Northwest Communication Association's annual conference in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. These students experienced an academic conference in its entirety, networking with faculty from colleges and universities around the Pacific and Inland Northwest. Their work was presented at the same level as graduate students and faculty.

G. Program Changes

The Communication Studies B. S. has no programmatic changes from AY 2016 to AY 2017 due to assessment data. Some programmatic changes are occurring due to changes in the faculty body, but the results will not be known until AY 2018 or AY 2019.

III. Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

A. Program Education Objectives

Upon completion of the Communication Studies program, students should be able to:

1. Apply appropriate communication skills across settings, purposes, and audiences.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and application.
3. Practice critical thinking to develop innovative and well

4. Understand opportunities in the field of communication.
5. Use current technology related to the communication field.
6. Respond effectively to cultural communication differences.
7. Communicate ethically.
8. Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges.

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3) Coordinated Indirect Assessment: Academic Performance in Research and Analysis Courses

However, the responses above can be coordinated with class performance in courses that emphasize critical thinking and analytical thinking (Table 2). As this measurement is inexact and cannot fully abstract critical thinking ability from other course grading criteria, it should only be viewed as a rough measurement of agreement between students (who all rated their critical thinking ability highly as a result of their time in the Communication Studies program) and faculty.

Due to scheduling, staffing limitations and transfer credits, some students receive alternative credit for upper division courses. While lower division courses in this list see a spread of academic performance from outstanding work (A) to minimally acceptable (C or D), students have largely shifted to outstanding work in upper division courses and in their general education report writing course.

It is important to remember that grading and assessment are two entirely different processes. However, these grades indicate that time spent in the Communication Studies program does correlate with better performance in courses that reinforce or expect critical thinking.

	Students in Exit Survey (n=3)				All Communication Students
Course	A	B	C	<C	

COM 326: Communication Research is described above. Students spend a full term gathering, analyzing and presenting data pertaining to a research question of their own design.

WRI 227: Technical Report Writing is a general education course taught by Communication faculty. Students spend a full term gathering and organizing information pertaining to a research question or professional problem, ideally with the intent of delivering it to a supervisor or other individual who can put that information into action. Performing well in this course requires significant pre-planning and audience awareness.

4) Discussion: Critical Thinking

Data indicate that Communication Studies students are performing at least as expected in PSLO 1: Critical Thinking.

While more direct assessment would yield more detailed results, this report would note that significant staffing changes in the Communication department will result in changes to several critical-thinking–oriented courses. Faculty scheduled to teach courses like COM 106: Introduction to Communication Research COM 309: Communication Technology in Use are already reviewing prior course content and student performance to further reinforce or emphasize this outcome. This report advises that future assessment plans consider tracking student critical thinking longitudinally, particularly in course sequences that allow students to revisit projects over several terms, as that would provide greater detail in measuring growth rather than snapshots of performance.

B. PSLO 3: Communication Theory

1) Indirect Assessment: Student Exit Survey

Similar to the Exit Survey results discussed above, all students rated themselves with "High Proficiency" in PSLO 3: Applying communication theories, as well as PSLOs related to applying communication theories (PSLO 6: Respond effectively to cultural communication differences, PSLO 7: Communicate ethically and PSLO 8: Demonstrate positive group communication exchanges). Likewise, all students credited their experience in the Communication Studies program "very much" in developing this knowledge.

In terms of program curricula, all students "strongly agreed" that the program provided "sufficient depth of information about specific topics." While "topics" does not directly indicate theories of communication, all students at least "agreed" that the curriculum (a) was properly scaffolded, with "lower-division courses provid[ing] a foundation for upper division courses" (2/3 strongly agree) and (b) provided "sufficient breadth of information about Communication Studies" (2/3 strongly agree), a field that is strongly theory

In commenting on the program overall, one student discussed clear connections between the theoretical or abstract knowledge discussed in the classroom and the hands-on application they developed later (emphasis added):

> 1. The training and development class was very helpful in showing how to run a training class. Something I could be doing in the future. 2. The professors all do a great job in explaining how the course material could be applied in real world situations. Being a COM major in general. We go to a tech school where everyone is either complaining about doing math, or memorizing the body. As a COM major I enjoyed a majority of my work, and doing them will help me in the future as well. Let's see those engineer majors

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C. Direct Assessment of Inquiry and Analysis ESLO

The Inquiry and Analysis ESLO was also assessed in COM 326: Communication Research (described above). As elements of Inquiry and Analysis align with Critical Thinking, this is also a direct assessment of PSLO 1: Critical Thinking. However, as noted above, the small sample of students and a long project development process both result in data that skews strongly1 (t)2trongD-2 (y)2 (a)1 (nd

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Appendix: Inquiry and Analysis ESLO Rubric

Inquiry & Analysis Rubric (2017-18 Assessment)

DEFINITION
Inquiry and analysis consists of posing meaningful questions about situations and systems, gathering and evaluating relevant evidence, and articulating how that evidence justifies decisions and contributes to students' understanding of how the world works.

CRITERIA				
	HIGH PROFICIENCY (4): The work meets listed requirements for this criterion; little to no development needed.	PROFICIENCY (3): The work meets most requirements; minor development would improve the work.	SOME PROFICIENCY (2): The work needs moderate development in multiple requirements.	LIMITED PROFICIENCY (1): The work does not meet this criterion: it needs substantial development in most requirements.
IDENTIFY: Identify a meaningful question or topic of inquiry.	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses			