Annual Assessment Report

Department: Communication Studies
Academic Year: 2016-2017
Date of Submission: July 2017
Department Chair: Deborah Dunn (for 2016-2017)

I. Response to the previous year PRC's recommendations

Item: *Key Question Re Senior Capstone Experience*	**Response:** *Developed plan for implementing senior capstone requirement.*
Notes: See Below.	

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment
If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	*Effective Written Communication*
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Lesa Stern (Point Person) + All Departmental Faculty
Direct Assessment Methods	We gathered writing samples from all graduating seniors in the department. We discussed the rubric previously used in the department for written communication (as well as previous results), and after some minor revisions, used this tool to assess student essays. We then discussed the assessment and compared results, made minor adjustments, evaluated papers written by students in Fall 2017 to assess their written communication. We also compiled supervisor evaluations of our interns on their writing effectiveness within the context of the internship. Our form asks supervisors to evaluate how well the intern "writes clearly and compellingly." We included all intern evaluations from Spring 2014-Summer 2017. Overwhelmingly, the interns were rated as exceptional in this area. (see table in appendix).
Indirect	

Assessment Methods	
Major Findings	Four major findings: 1) We see great improvement in student writing (compared with 2011) as there were very few "flawed" marks for student writing; 2) Half the papers were end of term papers (semester long or multiple draft), showing the importance of revision and long term engagement as part of a good writing process/practice; a longer process and multiple drafts illustrates what we know – that good writing doesn't happen in first drafts off the top of the head; 3) students scored highly on "research" as we might expect with term papers; and 4) We believe much of the improvement is also due to the implementation of the "make an argument" worksheet (previous assessment work revealed student weakness in articulating and defending an argument) in several courses (6, 15, 30), including two courses required of all majors (6 & 15).
Closing the Loop Activities	We agreed to continue to use "make an argument" assignments / worksheets. Each faculty person will have some flexibility in tailoring the worksheet to suit assignments and classes. We also will send our library liaison some feedback regarding the library web page for communication studies majors (to help with selecting references, readings, etc.). Finally, we will continue to discuss ways to improve student writing. We also will spend some time in Fall 2017 auditing our own syllabi to look for the variety of writing assignments being required in each class, and will then discuss what kinds of writing assignments should be required within certain curricular structures or courses. Attention will be given to ensuring student learning outcomes, as well as to equitable distribution of workload among faculty.
Collaboration and Communication After writing was assessed using the rubric, department discussed the results, history of assessing this item, and future plans. We also regularly discuss, as a department, how to help students become better writers and construct persuasive arguments. We often share our stories of what does and doesn't work and have had numerous discussions about what best helps students learn to write well. We believe that we are becoming better teachers of writing as we encourage our students to become better writers.	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	*What shall we do about a senior capstone experience?*
Who was involved in implementation?	Deborah Dunn, Chair, facilitated discussion of all departmental members.
What was	We decided to implement a senior capstone experience that would be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of

decided or addressed?	learning approaches, vocational goals, student schedules, and staffing possibilities – and yet still provide a coherent capstone experience for all graduating majors.
How were the recommendations implemented?	The plan was submitted to and approved by the Academic Senate Spring 2017. It is effective beginning with incoming students as of Fall 2017.

Collaboration and Communication: This action is a result of departmental discussions over the course of many years, and a decidedly focused inquiry and conversation Fall 2016. For our discussions, we compared our program with other communication programs nation-wide, compared our program with other Westmont programs, reviewed and discussed alumni survey data, shared our own impressions and visions, and worked to find a way to best meet a wide variety of needs and goals.

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	Re-Visiting Program Learning Outcomes
Who is in Charge /Involved?	Deborah Dunn, Chair, facilitated discussion among all members of the department during the 2016-2017 academic year.
Major Findings	Given some feedback from the outside evaluator involved in our six-year report, and given the new Outcomes language offered by the National Communication Association, we decided to closely examine our program learning outcomes. They are not dramatically different, but we do think they are couched in more inspirational terms and provide us with a richer vocabulary for discussion.
Action	We revised our PLOs and will update the website in the next month or so.

Collaboration and Communication. This involved multiple discussions over the course of several months. It was a good conversation to have with new faculty on board.

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing

VI. Appendices

<u>Appendix A Note re Data Collection:</u>

The COM faculty identified the seniors in their classes, and we collected one writing sample for **each graduating senior** during Fall 2016 (n=21). These papers were from 4 different courses. Some were semester-long research papers.

Appendix B: Rubric to Evaluate Written Communication

		Outstanding	Adequate	Flawed
Content	*Ideas*	Fresh, purposeful	Predictable	Clichéd
	Claims	Clear, insightful (worth defending?)	Straightforward	Confusing or Unstated
	Reasons	Engagingly tied to claim	Tied to claim	Indiscernible
	Support	Relevant, telling, detailed (primary sources/examples)	General support	Inadequate
	Research	Rigorous	Adequate	Inappropriate/Misapplied
Organization	*Introduction*	Compelling	Clear	Off-Task/Omitted
	Clarity/Flow	Smooth sequencing	Discernible	Disconnected
	Transitions	Clear, thoughtful, seamless	Usually helpful	Awkward or Missing
	Conclusion	Leaves reader challenged	Repeats points	None or Unconnected
Style	*Voice/Tone*	Strong "author"	Some appeal	Bland
	Word Choice	Striking/varied	Clear but routine	Dull/vague
	Sentences	Well constructed (vary in length & structure)	Coherent	Choppy/rambling
	Creativity	Inventive	Adequate	Absent, Misguided or Uninspired
Conventions	*Mechanics*	Few edits	Moderate edits	Many edits
	Citation	Accurate & Consistent	Present; some incorrect	Incorrect or Absent
	Editing	Requires little	Some/Moderate	Many
	Appearance	Professional, follows all directions	Follows most directions	Directions ignored

Appendix C: Assessment Results of Papers in Percentages

Summary Table of Results: Assessing Written Communication

		Outstanding	*Adequate*	*Flawed*
Content	Ideas	50	41	9
	Claims	55	41	5
	Reasons	57	43	0
	Support	50	41	9
	Research	73	18	9
Organization	Introduction	59	41	0
	Clarity/Flow	48	48	5
	Transitions	36	55	9
	Conclusion	41	55	5
Style	Voice/Tone	59	41	0
	Word Choice	50	45	5
	Sentences	36	55	9
	Creativity	36	64	0
Conventions	Mechanics	50	36	14
	Citation	52	38	10
	Editing	45	41	14
	Appearance	68	32	0

Appendix D: Supervisor evaluations of interns on written communication

All intern evaluations from Spring 2014- Summer 2017 were included in this summary. 17 students participated in an internship during this time period[1]

Question on the supervisor evaluation of intern form: "Writes clearly and compellingly"

Unsatisfactory	Uncomplimentary	Fair	Commendable	Exceptional
0	0	0	25	75

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[1] We do not have the Westmont in San Francisco supervisor evaluations, so those are not included. We hope WSF will send us a copy of these in the future. One evaluation form said this element was "not applicable" and therefore the percentages are calculated based on the 16 interns who received an evaluation on this criteria.

MAKE AN ARGUMENT
Dunn's Adaption of Toulmin's Model, and Adapted from G. Spencer (Aug 2012)

THESIS/CLAIM: **What are you asserting?**
- What do you want your readers/hearers to believe/not believe or to do/not do?
- If your audience remembers **one** thing from your discourse, what would that one thing be?
- An audience member should be able to answer: "What is being asked of me?" or "How am I being asked to change my mind?"

REASONS/WARRANTS: **Why should your audience accept the assertion you are making?**
- Why should they change their beliefs or actions?
- If you were in conversation and someone heard your assertion and then said, "Interesting idea. Why should I accept it?" what would you say?
- Think in terms of "because," as in "You should believe that Hitler was a puppet of Stalin BECAUSE _____."
- A reason is a **warrant**, a premise that links the evidence/data/facts you plan to supply with the thesis/assertion/claim that you are making.

EVIDENCE/DATA: **What supports your reasons?**
- Since your audience will not accept your reasons "just because you said so," what support or data make your reasons more credible, more believable?
- Support might come in the form of 1) citations from the discourse you are analyzing; 2) authoritative experts who corroborate your ideas (preferably in more insightful or eloquent ways than you can state); 3) studies that verify that what you think is true has been substantiated empirically; or 4) ethical/biblical connections to your reasons.

Argument Worksheet Used for Persuasive Speech Outline (Dunn, Fall 2015)

I.   My Thesis (copy and paste your thesis statement here):

II.   My Audience Analysis
    A.   What are the probable attitudes toward my topic and thesis?
    B.   What are the probable attitudes toward me as a rhetor? (be specific here – roles you've played in class, your history in this class, are you repairing your ethos or building on it?)
    C.   How, specifically, am I adapting to my audience?

III.   The concrete, do-able action step is…
    A.   Here is what I did to increase self-efficacy:
    B.   Here is how I tailored this step to *this* audience:

IV.   Logos:
    A.   I provided the following good reasons to accept my thesis and act:
    B.   I used this kind of reasoning:
    C.   I used these kinds of evidence:

V.   Ethos
    A.   What I was trying to project:
    B.   What I did to enhance my ethos
        1.   Sagacity, wisdom, expertise, moral excellence, credibility, good character:
        2.   Goodwill, concern for audience:

VI.   Pathos
    A.   Specific emotions I tried to evoke:
    B.   Specific emotions I tried to stir or change (a la Aristotle): anger into calm, calm into anger, revenge into mercy, etc.

VII.   My Style
    A.   I made the language vivid by using (metaphors, narratives, mythos)
    B.   I strove for clarity by emphasizing … and being specific about …
    C.   I used phrasings and wordings that would contribute to a pleasing rhythm in these ways:

Changes in Communication Studies Major (January 2017)

We are adding a senior capstone experience. Students may choose to do an internship, a semester-long research project, or take a dedicated senior seminar course. We already offer all three of these, but they are currently all electives.

Rationale & Implications
For a variety of reasons, ranging from our survey of alumni to recommendations and best practices, coupled with an increasing focus on helping students transition well, we determined that we needed to offer a senior capstone experience. The flexibility of offering three ways to do this will serve our students well. We also believe it will increase enrollment in the internship course, which would be very helpful to students who are struggling to figure out what they want to do post-Westmont.

We currently offer a senior seminar, but it has never been required. In prior years, enrollments typically range from 6-10 students. We also offer an internship course, although in recent years enrollments have been low. We usually take on independent research projects (or honors thesis work) as additional duties. We recognize that if numbers were to rebound to previous levels in our major, we may have a lot more demand for a seminar and perhaps a lot more demand for research direction. It may be that eventually we will have to convert an existing class to an additional seminar (offered in fall for December grads) or a dedicated senior research course. As this requirement is phased in (transfer students will be affected first, obviously, but it will be four years until we see full impact), we will continually assess the best way to meet senior enrollment needs. At this time, however, we do not anticipate needing to make any changes in staffing or budgeting to accommodate this plan.

We allow up to 4 internship units to count toward the major, so students may opt to do an internship as an elective elsewhere or earlier in their academic careers, but they must then take either the seminar or the research option for the senior capstone experience.

Since we are adding an additional requirement, but we still want students to take advantage of elective choices, we are increasing the total number of units required to graduate, from 44 to 48.

Communication Studies: Major Requirements (Effective Fall 2017)
Requirements for a Major: 48 units

Foundation: 16 units
___ COM 006   Messages, Meaning, and Culture*
___ COM 015   Public Speaking*
___ COM 098   Introduction to Communication Research [pre-requisite: any COM course]
___ COM 101   Theories of Rhetoric and Communication I [pre-requisite: COM 006]*

Relationships & Conflicts (4 units, choose one)
___ COM 110   Interpersonal Communication
___ COM 127   Group Communication and Leadership
___ COM 133   Conflict and Reconciliation
___ COM 134   Conflict and Reconciliation Case Studies (off campus)*

Discourse & Society (4 units, choose one)
___ COM 125   Media and Society [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 135   Studies in Public Discourse [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 145   Organizational Communication [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 138   International Rhetoric*

Reasoning & Writing (8 units, choose two)
___ COM 103   Communication Criticism* [pre-requisites: COM 006 and any research methods course]
___ COM 130   Argumentation and Advocacy
___ COM 140   Studies in Communication Ethics
___ ENG 104   Modern Grammar and Advanced Composition

Electives (12 units of the following not taken above)
___ COM 102   Theories of Rhetoric and Communication II [pre-requisites: COM 006 and COM 101]
___ COM 103   Communication Criticism* [pre-requisites: COM 006 and any research methods course]
___ COM 107   Focus on Film – 1 unit (may be repeated up to 3x as topics vary)
___ COM 110   Interpersonal Communication
___ COM 115   Advanced Public Speaking [pre-requisite: COM 015]
___ COM 125   Media and Society [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 127   Group Communication and Leadership
___ COM 129   Persuasion and Propaganda [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 130   Argumentation and Advocacy
___ COM 133   Conflict and Reconciliation
___ COM 134   Conflict and Reconciliation Case Studies (off campus)*
___ COM 135   Studies in Public Discourse [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 140   Studies in Communication Ethics
___ COM 138   International Rhetoric*
___ COM 145   Organizational Communication [pre-requisite: any research methods course]
___ COM 148   Postmodern Narratives
___ COM 190   Internship [pre-requisites: COM 006 and COM 098; up to 4 units)
___ COM 195   Special topics [May be taken more than once as topics change]
___ COM 198   Independent Research

Senior Capstone Experience: (4 units, choose one)
___ COM 196   Senior Seminar [pre-requisite: Senior standing or instructor approval for early grads]
___ COM 197   Senior Internship [pre-requisite: Senior standing or instructor approval for early grads]
___ COM 199   Senior Research or Honors Thesis [pre-requisite: Senior standing; proposal due April of Junior Year]

Global Communication (complete at least one)
___ Academic Study Abroad experience of at least one month (Mexico, Europe, etc.)
___ Advanced or Intermediate (Level II) Modern Foreign Language (Spanish, German, French, etc.)
___ COM 138 International Rhetoric
___ Westmont in San Francisco   * Also fulfills GE requirement (see catalog)

New Program Learning Outcomes (Spring 2017)

Note: Previous PLOs included oral com, written com, disciplinary knowledge, and ethical/biblical principles. These are still the outcomes to measure. We have combined written/oral into one category, and we have explained what we mean for each category and drafted more inspirational (and aspirational) language to inspire ourselves and our students. We DO NOT plan to assess each explanatory bullet. We will continue to assess communication, disciplinary knowledge, and the exercise of biblical/ethical principles. Our website will be revised to this effect.

Graduates of Westmont's Communication Studies department:

Effectively create appropriate messages

Students learn to discern form, content, and audience issues—and to adjust their messages creatively and compellingly to achieve personal and social communication goals. This includes:

- listening critically and appreciatively as they study rhetorical situations;
- choosing evocative language, arguments, modalities, and technologies;
- presenting messages with competence, energy, and wisdom; and
- reflecting critically on their communication actions.

Knowledgeably employ communication theories and perspectives.

Students learn to see and hear how communication reflects and structures human interaction. This involves:

- understanding communication from both humanistic and social scientific points of view;
- recognizing the diversity of voices and perspectives in communication;
- encouraging healthy communication behaviors in interpersonal, organizational, and institutional systems;
- articulating their own questions and critiques of communication theories and perspectives; and
- applying communication knowledge to foster engaged and respectful discourse.

Mindfully exercise ethical and biblical principles.

Students learn what makes for wise communication. This involves:

- becoming culturally aware of their own values and perspectives;
- knowing and implementing biblical and non-biblical ethical solutions;
- naming unjust practices and striving to correct them; and
- promoting the Gospel through peace, human flourishing, and other-centered love.