Program **Minor: Communication Studies**

Department **Communication Studies**

Number of students enrolled in the program in Fall, 2011 **83**

Faculty member completing template **Kimo Ah Yun**  
(Date 1/19/2012)

1. *Please describe your program’s learning-outcomes trajectory since 2006-07: Has there been a transformation of organizational culture regarding the establishment of learning outcomes and the capacity to assess progress toward their achievement? If so, during which academic year would you say the transformation became noticeable? What lies ahead; what is the next likely step in developing a learning-outcomes organizational culture within the program?*

In a 2011 summer retreat, the Department of Communication Studies met to discuss the need to revise our assessment plan. It was decided that the assessment plan in place was outdated, labor intensive, and no longer fully reflected our expectations for what we wanted students to know upon graduating from our program.

As a result of our retreat, we shifted a majority of the day-to-day information covered in faculty meetings to our listproc. As a result of this shift, we were able to spend our entire normally scheduled fall 2011 faculty meet times devoted to assessment. Starting from the ground up, we revamped most of our learning outcomes and completely changed the methods used to collect data. Shifting from using portfolios to using AAC&U’s rubrics to assess oral communication enabled us to use a validated rubric to assess student oral presentations. To make the process sustainable over time, we also generated an assessment to measure student discipline content. Taken as a whole, our efforts enabled us to produce outcomes that are assessable, align with the Baccalaureate Learning Goals (BLGs), and use a validated rubric. The revised data collection process is sustainable, less labor intensive and relies on the efforts of a broad cross-section of faculty, rather than a small committee. Our learning outcomes were created with assistance from the University Faculty Assessment Coordinator (Amy Liu).

As a result of our efforts, there has been a noticeable and positive shift in embracing assessment efforts at the department level. Pilot data was collected in the fall 2011 to reflect changes in our assessment plan. Additional data will be collected in the spring 2012 semester to complete the cycle.

2. *Please list in prioritized order (or indicate no prioritization regarding) up to four desired learning outcomes (“takeaways” concerning such elements of curriculum as perspectives, specific content knowledge, skill sets, confidence levels) for students completing the program. For each stated outcome, please provide the reason that it was designated as desired by the faculty associated with the program.*
*Note: The learning outcomes listed below do not indicate prioritization.

a) **Students will have knowledge of communication discipline principles and facts**
   *Demonstrate a mastery of general discipline knowledge:* Identify how context affects the communication situation, distinguish differences between hearing and listening, understand value of feedback in the communication process, and apply ethical principles as a communicator.

b) **Students will communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.**
   *Demonstrate proficiency in oral communication:* determine presentation needs in different situations, correctly use visual aids, make appropriate language choices, use proper structure, and effectively deliver presentations.

3. **For undergraduate programs only, in what ways are the set of desired learning outcomes described above aligned with the University’s Baccalaureate Learning Goals? Please be as specific as possible.**

The Department’s learning outcomes for this program aligns nicely with the BLGs. The BLGs include five areas and the outcomes adopted for this program overlap with two of them, including: Competence in Discipline and Intellectual and Practical Skills.

Particular emphasis is placed on Intellectual and Practical Skills. You will note that the Department’s learning outcomes are geared specifically to engage students with respect to oral communication (see for example, learning outcome “b” in question three).

4. **For each desired outcome indicated in item 2 above, please:**

   a) **Describe the method(s) by which its ongoing pursuit is monitored and measured.**

   1. **Students will have knowledge of communication discipline principles and facts**
      *Demonstrate a mastery of general discipline knowledge:* Identify how context affects the communication situation, distinguish differences between hearing and listening, understand value of feedback in the communication process, and apply ethical principles as a communicator.

      For this learning outcome, students complete an examination that was constructed, vetted, and approved by the faculty. The examination is an 8-item discipline competency measure (see Appendix A).

   2. **Students will communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.**
      *Demonstrate proficiency in oral communication:* determine presentation needs in different situations, correctly use visual aids, make appropriate language choices, use proper structure, and effectively deliver presentations.
For this learning outcome, upper-division presentations from senior level classes are randomly sampled. Faculty members use the AAC&U’s VALUES Oral Communication rubric (see Appendix B) to score these selected presentations. The rubric is comprised of five dimensions that include: Organization, language, delivery, supporting material, and central message. Each dimension is scored on a five-point scale that ranges from a value of “0” indicating that it does not meet the benchmark to “4” indicating Capstone or complete proficiency.

b) Include a description of the sample of students (e.g., random sample of transfer students declaring the major; graduating seniors) from whom data were/will be collected and the frequency and schedule with which the data in question were/will be collected.

All data is a random sampling of program minors. Data collected is spread across the entire academic year. All learning outcomes are included in the annual data collection.

c) Describe and append a sample (or samples) of the “instrument” (e.g., survey or test), “artifact” (e.g., writing sample and evaluative protocol, performance review sheet), or other device used to assess the status of the learning outcomes desired by the program.

An examination and grading rubric is used for assessment purposes. Each of these tools is attached to this document. Attachments are labeled appropriately.

d) Explain how the program faculty analyzed and evaluated (will analyze and evaluate) the data to reach conclusions about each desired student learning outcome.

The Department began its pilot study of the current assessment plan in Fall 2011. Data has been collected and will be reviewed by the entire faculty in the spring 2012 semester. Additional data will be completed in spring 2012, which will cover all learning outcomes presented here.

5. Regarding each outcome and method discussed in items 2 and 4 above, please provide examples of how findings from the learning outcomes process have been utilized to address decisions to revise or maintain elements of the curriculum (including decisions to alter the program’s desired outcomes). If such decision-making has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

As indicated throughout this document, the Department is in the process of collecting data to reflect the refined learning outcomes that have been approved in Fall 2011. In the Spring 2012 semester, the entire faculty will meet to review collected data on all of the learning outcomes. Patterns will be reviewed and discussions regarding perceived deficiencies in the department will be undertaken. It is anticipated that any changes to curriculum deficiencies will be implemented in Fall 2012.
6. Has the program systematically sought data from alumni to measure the longer-term effects of accomplishment of the program’s learning outcomes? If so, please describe the approach to this information-gathering and the ways in which the information will be applied to the program’s curriculum. If such activity has not yet occurred, please describe the plan by which it will occur.

The department has not previously gathered data from alumni. One difficulty for collecting such data is the ability to reach a sufficient sample of former students. In the fall 2011 semester, the Department sponsored an event at the Alumni Center to revive the Communication Studies Chapter for the university. From those attending the fall event, several indicated a desire to be part of the leadership team to revive the chapter and a meeting is scheduled on February 1 in the Alumni Center. While this group might eventually form a base to assist in engaging in assessment through alumni, such a possibility is in the distant future.

7. Does the program pursue learning outcomes identified by an accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization as important? Does the set of outcomes pursued by your program exceed those identified as important by your accrediting or other professional discipline-related organization?

The Communication Studies Minor is not related to a professional organization. Our discipline’s national governing body, the National Communication Association provides guidelines for recommended outcomes for graduates. The Department’s adopted learning outcomes align nicely with the expectations of our parent organization.

8. Finally, what additional information would you like to share with the Senate Committee on Instructional Program Priorities regarding the program’s desired learning outcomes and assessment of their accomplishment?

The Department of Communication Studies has made great progress in adapting our Learning Outcomes to the BLGs. Working with the University Assessment Coordinator during all iterations was helpful in refining our expectations. It is a priority for the University to maintain this support and it was invaluable to our Department.

The Department is also somewhat frustrated with how programs have been defined for this process. During our assessment revision process, we consulted multiple agents to determine what was meant by the term, “program” for assessment purposes. Using hegis codes as designated by the Chancellor’s office seems to be recent standard. While we understand the logic, we did not design our revised assessment efforts around such a division. Although our approach is nimble, it does take additional work to refine some of our program areas to meet this designation.
Appendix A: Communication Studies Department Assessment Survey

As part of its assessment efforts the Department of Communication Studies periodically requests that students complete a brief assessment survey. Below you will find a nine-item assessment survey.

You are to mark your responses on the survey. (You may select more than one.)

Item 1: What is your concentration?
- _____ Criticism and Public Communication
- _____ Digital Video
- _____ Interpersonal and Small Group
- _____ Intercultural & International
- _____ Mass Communication
- _____ Other: ______________________

For the items below circle your response

Item 2: Listening is a(n) ____________________________ process, whereas hearing in a(n) ____________________________ process.

a) voluntary, automatic
b) typical, atypical
c) passive, active
d) automatic, voluntary

Item 3: Which of the following scenarios best demonstrates how different contexts can affect communication?

a) After a meeting, Jonah’s supervisor asks her, “How about lunch?” in front of everyone. Jonah hesitates about how respond, even though when her friend asks her the same thing she immediately replies with “sure.”

b) Maya made lunch for all her classmates and brought it to class. She then asked if anyone is willing to switch speech dates with her the following week.

c) Juan finds out that he has to drop out of school and move out of state. He does not tell his friends about this when he sees them.

d) None of these have to do with context
Item 4: One basic underlying principle of all forms of communication is ethics. Which of the following statements best explains what ethics in communication means?

a) whether or not you agree with a statement someone makes

b) a code of conduct about which information to share, how, when and with whom

c) your views about politics, religion and society

d) how you vote in elections

Item 5: In communication, the response to a message is known as:

a) babble

b) answer

c) truth

d) feedback

Item 6: The process of listening differs from hearing because listening:

a) requires very little effort

b) requires some kind of response from the listener

c) makes the speaker feel agitated

d) knowing what you should say before the speaker starts talking

Item 7: Joanne usually speaks less, in a lower tone, and uses less direct eye contact when interacting at family gatherings. When she is around her friends and co-workers, she speaks more, holds direct eye-contact, and speaks louder. This demonstrates how _________________ can impact communication.

a) self-concept

b) context

c) listening skills

d) language

Item 8: Selecting how much to self-disclose when meeting someone for the first time, a journalist omitting information from an article, or giving information about one friend to another friend, are all examples of which of the following?

a) effective communication strategies

b) demonstrating tolerance

c) ethical decisions in communicating

d) ways to create romantic relationships

Item 9: Feedback in communication:

a) can demonstrate that you are listening actively

b) can be verbal or nonverbal, intentional or unintentional

c) impacts further communication

b) all of the above describe feedback
APPENDIX B: ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aaau.org

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

The type of oral communication most likely to be included in a collection of student work is an oral presentation and therefore is the focus for the application of this rubric.

Definition

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners’ attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Framing Language

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. For panel presentations or group presentations, it is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials and includes a purposeful organization. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- Central message: The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.
- Delivery techniques: Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at his/her speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).
- Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- Organization: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that supports the effectiveness of a presentation typically includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the content of the presentation easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.
- Supporting material: Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that supports the principal ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speakers credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare, but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.
**ORAL COMMUNICATION VALUE Rubric**

for more information, please contact value@aaau.org

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**Definition**

Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

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<th>Capstone</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
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<th><strong>Organization</strong></th>
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<th><strong>Supporting Material</strong></th>
<th><strong>Central Message</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable and is skillful and makes the content of the presentation cohesive.</td>
<td>Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.</td>
<td>A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)</td>
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<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.</td>
<td>Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.</td>
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<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.</td>
<td>Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.</td>
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<td>Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.</td>
<td>Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.</td>
<td>Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.</td>
<td>Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.</td>
<td>Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.</td>
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