

**Southern Utah University
Communication Department
Report of Assessment Plans for 2001-2002**

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Assessment Criteria and Activities

Entire Department

1. The SUU Curriculum Committee will evaluate the communication department general education offerings with the accepted general education criteria and determine whether the courses fulfill the requirements or not. Acceptance by the Curriculum Committee indicates assessment and positive evaluation of the communication general education courses by a university committee in addition to the department assessment.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? The department is disappointed that the Dean's Council voted to move COMM 1010/1011 from the core general education requirements to a humanities menu option. However, the department has attempted to continue to contribute to the general education courses and elected to contribute two additional courses to the general education offerings. An existing photography course was accepted as a Fine Arts elective and a new ethics course was accepted in the Humanities menu. All of the courses submitted to the University Curriculum Committee were accepted as general education courses.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? The department is offering only one-third of the COMM 1010/1011 sections it had previously offered. This is a significant change to the department's general education offerings. The department faculty will monitor enrollment in the current general education offerings to determine viability.

2. Students who do not pass courses in the major with at least a C- will not be allowed to count the course in their major. Students may take the course again and a C- or better grade can be counted toward the major.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? Students with a grade in a communication major course that was lower than a C- were not allowed to count that course toward graduation. There were several students retaking courses in order to count them toward graduation.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? Faculty will continue to offer rigorous courses requiring at least a C- performance for students to graduate in communication.

3. Skill demonstrating activities will be available in each of the areas of emphasis, and will be conducted primarily in the laboratories that are available

in each area. Students who may have low skills will be counseled on how a greater skill level may be acquired.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? The department offered skills courses in advertising, broadcasting, forensics and journalism. The department took steps to incorporate the student newspaper into the department in order to improve opportunities for journalism students. Forensic students continue success as a nationally competitive program. Broadcast student continue operating both Power 91 (radio) and SUTV (cable TV) as a means to learn broadcasting skills. Advertising students hope to expand work and offerings through the Centurium Consulting Group (CCG). There is no evidence that formal "counseling" occurred other than individual instructor to student discussion during the course of the class.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? Through senior exit interviews students indicate they are pleased with the hands-on nature and practical use of these skills classes. The department may need to consider skills courses and practicum for the Interpersonal emphasis.

4. Students in the core communication classes of COMM 2750 Interpersonal Communication, COMM 4010 Persuasion, and COMM 4350 Communication Theory will pass those classes with a minimum of a C-. Instructor evaluations of grades determine proficiency in principles, methods and theories of communication.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? Students could not graduate with less than a C- in these classes.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? The policy of requiring all communication students to pass not only the required core courses but all their major courses with a minimum of a C- will be continued. Results from the senior exit interviews may lead to more rigor, organization, and focus in some of these courses.

5. Communication Theory is a required course for all majors in the department. Each upper division course in the department requires at least one major written assignment. The written assignment in the Communication Theory course will be of a more intense nature and will demand more attention to content, form and style.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? Papers are required for all upper division research related courses. To improve the quality of the major written assignment for Communication Theory a competitive paper program was initiated this year. All the papers were submitted to the course instructor who selected the top papers. Those top papers were then critiqued and ranked by other communication department faculty members. The top four papers were presented at the first ever SUU Communication Department Research Symposium during graduation week. The session was attended by communication department faculty, students, and students' families.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the

program? The Research Symposium was determined to be highly successful and a good opportunity for students to publicly present their research. The Symposium will be planned for the end of both fall and spring semesters.

6. The departmental newsletter will provide a vehicle for pose graduation surveys which will be tabulated and evaluated to determine if high levels of satisfaction are maintained by our students after they have entered the work force.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? No

Was the assessment criterion achieved? No

What were the results? The software for producing a newsletter has not be installed on the department chair's computer. However, faculty will be assigned articles for the newsletter.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? Better communication between the department and current students, former students, and potential recruits will improve assessment procedures. Plans will continue publish the newsletter with intentions of sending out the first issue in the Fall of 2002.

7. The student survey will be administered each year when senior students come to have their graduation papers signed. First, the student will complete the written portion of the survey, then the department chair will conduct the oral interview, after which the person's graduation papers will be signed.

Was this assessment criterion implemented? Yes

Was the assessment criterion achieved? Yes

What were the results? All graduating seniors filled out a form allowing documentation of permanent address and other contact information. Somehow through weak organization only 68 of 83 graduates filled out the survey. However the 68 survey provide a rich data base for departmental critique. Questions were asked in relation to the overall department, the effectiveness of instructors, and the effectiveness of the curriculum. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest, the department scored an average of 4.25, the instructors scored an average of 4.21, and the curriculum scored an average of 4.23. When asked whether they would recommend the department to others seeking a communication degree, the average answer was 4.51. These scores indicate overall satisfaction with the program well above 80%.

How will the results be used to improve the curriculum and/or pedagogy of the program? The results of the survey were submitted to the department in the first department meeting of the 2002-03 school year. The faculty noted that in several areas such class organization and effective use of class time improvement could be made. Importance of a well structured syllabus and being well prepared for class will be reinforced during the coming year. Department members suggested that the survey method did not fully protect a students anonymity and the survey will now be administered by the department secretary in advance of the visit with the department chair.

