

**Assessment Plan and Report  
for Southern Utah University  
Communication Department 2004-2005  
Communication Department Mission Statement**

The Southern Utah University Department of Communication provides opportunities for its students to learn and apply the principles, theories and skills of human communication, including mass communication, in situations that simulate the professional world. The department operates in a student centered environment that fosters the essential skills needed for effective human interaction and prepares students for successful careers.

**Communication Department Goal Statement**

The department operates in a student-centered environment to foster communication skills in 1) writing, 2) speech and oral presentations, 3) researching and understanding theoretical aspects, 4) specific media practices, and 5) interpersonal communication situations requiring leadership abilities, critical thinking, and ethical behavior.

**Five-Step Assessment Plan and Report**

Communication Dept. Goal Statement	Program intended Education Outcomes	Means of Program Assessment and Criteria for Success	Summary of Data Collected	Use of Results
<p>1. The Communication department fosters skills in writing that enable effective human interaction and preparation for career success.</p>	<p>1. Writing proficiency- Superior writing skills including, grammar knowledge and demonstrated writing ability. Students will learn appropriate style, effective research presentation, structure, documentation, attribution, logic and reasoning ability. Specifically students learn: the ability to adapt a message to different audiences; execute a proper news release; write and prepare theoretical essays; create messages for mass campaigns; properly document and credit material created by others; write properly organized media messages for different media applications.</p>	<p>1. Written projects including term papers are required in lower division courses and all upper division courses. A pre-core course is required of students in the fall of 2004 to improve writing skills of all Communication majors as they begin their course work. Instructors use various means of assessment including written feedback to assignments, critique of messages written for different audiences, evaluation of group projects, journal writing and activities where writing assignments are prepared, planned, organized and completed. Live writing exercises are used in journalism courses. Pre-requisites are required for upper division courses skills and writing courses.</p>	<p>1. A new course in writing has yet to be developed and approved. Delays in implementing the course are due to upper division changes and initiation of the M.A. degree. We had discussions with the English department about having a communication specific course be taught in that department but that did not work out.</p> <p>Writing assignments continue to be offered in the various classes.</p> <p>A proposal was made by the English department to move COMM 4240 Technical Writing to English. A counter proposal was sent to the Dean and the Provost to increase the Comm FTE faculty by one and have the Comm dept. teach all sections for all departments.</p>	<p>1. The department still wants to improve writing but is split in how to bring it about. Some want a new lower division course that will improve writing while others want across the board in classes and depend on high schools and the English department to improve writing. Paul Huselbee was assigned to develop a possible course or find a standardized writing test to use to measure incoming and outgoing students. The department will continue to discuss the possibility of proposing and offering a new lower division "intro to writing" class. Paul developed some ideas but has put that on hold due to lack of interest by other faculty.</p> <p>All classes will continue to require some writing requirements.</p> <p>The department will continue debate and discussion about where the Technical Writing course should be on the campus.</p>
<p>2. The Communication department promotes skills in oral presentations and speech communication enabling effective human interaction and preparation for career success.</p>	<p>2a. Students are to be skilled in speech communication, research, writing, delivery modes and critical evaluation of oral presentations. Research: The intended outcome is for students to be able to synthesize material from research on the Internet, from library sources and personal sources and cite these sources properly. Students analyze the research</p>	<p>2a. In class performances are required in all upper division courses and most lower division courses. These vary according to the course. For example in Organizational Communication and other courses, students report on final research projects at the end of the course work. Students are given opportunities to evaluate presentations</p>	<p>2a. Upper division courses successfully required performances from students.</p>	<p>2a. Faculty will increase emphasis in the upper division classes to perform and critique and evaluate public presentations.</p>

	<p>they collect for value from each source. Delivery modes: students learn to deliver messages in a variety of settings including public, mass media, group and interpersonal communication situations. Evaluation: Students will know how to deliver and evaluate persuasive and informative messages and make critical judgements of messages in all types of social settings.</p> <p>2b. Students in the Forensics program practice and perform oral presentations.</p> <p>2c. To offer students more training in oral presentations as they move from the university to the job market.</p>	<p>in some upper division courses. Assignments encourage critical evaluations.</p> <p>2b. National team and individual rankings and success at tournaments is a means of assessment for the forensics program.</p> <p>2c. A course that focuses on professional presentation has been created and is available for majors. The course assesses the level of professional presentations students are capable of making as they prepare for the workplace</p>	<p>2b. The Forensics funding was eliminated this year. Even under adverse circumstances, Sherry Nay, a forensic competitor was selected as one of 15 All American Debators.</p> <p>2c. A new course, COMM 3810 Advanced Public Speaking was added to the department curriculum. During Spring 2004 it was actually taught under COMM 4505. The course enrollment was 19. A good size for actual performance of speeches. The mean score from ten questions concerning the effectiveness of the course was 4.52 out of a possible of 5.0. The students delivered six speeches in the classroom. The students received evaluation and analysis from fellow students and the instructor. The students also prepared a research paper on some aspect of communication apprehension. Open-ended response to the class indicated positive responses.</p>	<p>2b. The department may consider alternatives to the nationally competitive forensics teams such as intramural or "club" competition.</p> <p>2c. The new course is now well established and has good enrollment. The students are receiving additional oral communication training.</p>
<p>3. The Communication department fosters research and understanding of theoretical concepts of human and mass communication.</p>	<p>3a. The students demonstrate that they know and understand research methods and the basic theories in human and mass communication. Students are required to learn to construct surveys and are taught to use SPSS. They learn to write quality papers or scripts in upper division courses. Students prepare and present oral presentations and are expected to pass examinations on theoretical material. Many students demonstrate case analysis proficiency.</p>	<p>3a. Students conceive, plan, research and write term papers in the upper division courses which are graded and critiqued by their professors. For example, at the present time the Communication Theory course serves as a capstone course for majors. The students are assessed on entering the Communication Theory course on the knowledge they have gained in the department prior to entering the class. To do this a 195 item pretest is administered. This is an assessment of the departments teaching and the knowledge gathered by</p>	<p>3a. All communication theory students were required to submit a major research paper on some theoretical concept of human and mass communication. The papers were graded by the individual professors for class grades. The papers from all students from the entire year were then ranked. The best four papers were awarded plaques and the students presented that papers at the department's annual research symposium. Ranking the papers proved to be laborious and other methods of selecting outstanding student work may need to be developed.</p>	<p>3a. The new course COMM 3020 Communication Research better prepares the students for research and theory. Faculty want to continue to recognize outstanding student work. The idea of having all the students present exhibits or do a "poster session" of their work in an open forum was discussed and may be implemented. That way more students would be required to prepare presentations.</p>

		<p>students to this point. Students write a theory paper and these are submitted and graded and reviewed by faculty. The best papers are selected as competition papers. These papers are read and reviewed and then ranked by department professors to determine the quality of each for presentation. Top papers are presented in a session attended by majors and faculty.</p>		
<p>4. The Communication department provides simulations of real world experience and job preparation through intense practical courses and internships.</p>	<p>4a. Practicum courses in specific media allow students to learn the best practices and produce professional quality work in newspaper, radio, television, advertising and public relations and in speaking situations.</p> <p>4b. The department advises students to complete at least three hours of internship credit. The department's connection with industry practice lends itself to internships.</p>	<p>4a. We track success in student competitions. Students are assessed in various ways by the instructors as they complete projects in the different practicum classes offered by the department. For example stories are published in the Journal and packages are aired on SUTV and on Power 91-radio. Also press releases and advertising campaigns are used by local media.</p> <p>4b. Summarize and critique internship supervisors final summary of student performance. Evaluate has recently tracked internships so students can seek positions which offer the best learning experiences. The department requires that students filling internships be at least of junior standing in order to understand and learn during the internship most effectively. the strength of each internship used for intense practical learning on the job.</p>	<p>4a. Communication students received national recognition in their various fields of "practical" experience.</p> <p>PR students provided information to local media resulting in several articles in the Daily News.</p> <p>4b. Sixty six communication majors and minors completed or were completing internships during 2003-2004. All supervisors are required to submit an evaluation sheet before a final grade is submitted. SUU students routinely rank a 4s and 5s on a five point scale on areas such as writing skills, promptness and whether the supervisor would like to have that student back again as an intern.</p>	<p>4a. The department will increase support for student competition by using non-state appropriated accounts. The price of entry fee should not deter students from entering competitions.</p> <p>Various classes will continue to practice "real world" situations by working with local clients and media.</p> <p>4b. Some students want and have completed internships before their junior year which contradicts current department policy. A new university wide internship policy will be examined and compatibility with the department's current practice will be determined. The department will increase emphasis on internships and continue to monitor student participants. The department may need to designate an internship supervisor who would increase contact with supervisors in the field and continue to manage the documentation of internships.</p>
<p>5. The Communication department promotes skills in interpersonal communication, leadership, critical thinking, and ethical behavior.</p>	<p>5a. Useful interpersonal communication skills applicable to all areas of life.</p>	<p>5a. 1. Review of Gen. Ed. Course material by University General Education Curriculum Committee.</p> <p>5a.2. Senior exit interviews with graduation seniors. We are using a survey instrument plus a short answer qualitative sheet to assess their satisfaction and suggestions as graduating comm. majors.</p>	<p>5a. General education courses have not been reviewed recently by the University General Education Committee. The faculty continue to want COMM 1010/1011 returned to the original format of smaller classes and moved back into the GE core.</p> <p>5a2. On the surveys the graduating seniors indicated in general they were pleased with the preparation in communication skills.</p>	<p>5a. Based on pressure for statewide numbers for all GE courses, COMM 1010/1011 was changed back to the single class without the lab 1011 in order to match other institutions.</p> <p>5a2. Senior exit interviews will continue.</p>

	<p>5b. Leadership Students take on leadership roles in various settings in communication courses. This experience allows students to simulate workplace features and be prepared for leader/member roles in the workplace.</p> <p>5c. Critical thinking Successful participation in classes and practicum demonstrates proficiency in critical thinking and analysis of problems.</p> <p>5d. Ethical behavior Ethics discussions in upper division courses.</p>	<p>5b. Leadership- The practicum and upper division courses offer leadership experience in working with other students and carrying out the functions of the groups. Students assess the groups progress in some of the courses as do faculty members in the practicum and upper division courses.</p> <p>5c. Critical thinking. Courses call for discussion and questioning exercises which allow for critical thinking by students in Communication courses. In the critical thinking and listening course, test questions are keyed to learning objectives described in the syllabi materials and have students</p> <p>5d. Ethical Behavior. The desired outcome is for students to understand what ethical behavior is both personally and in the various disciplines taught in the Communication department. encounter previously unknown situations to apply critical thinking/listening skills.</p> <p>5d. Ethical behavior. Specific media ethic discussions and situational analysis of ethical behavior. For example in Journalism ethical behavior is discussed in each of the courses offered.</p>	<p>5b. Students participated in a variety of leadership roles in the classes and practicum.</p> <p>5c. All communication courses have components of critical thinking. Many have small groups exercises that require students to interact with others and develop improved critical thinking.</p> <p>5d. At times some students still have issues with plagiarism and understanding other ethical concepts.</p>	<p>5b. Leadership opportunities will continue to be offered.</p> <p>5c. Emphasis on critical thinking in all classes will continue.</p> <p>5d. Some faculty would like to see an stand alone ethics class while others believe we do not have the faculty or room in the current curriculum to allow that. Discussions on a stand alone class will continue but ethics discussions in all appropriate classes is strongly encouraged.</p>
<p>6. The Communication department requires a senior assessment of general knowledge of communication studies, theory and practice.</p>	<p>6. The Communication Theory course is currently used for this purpose. The Communication Theory course offers a pre-test and post-test for students. The outcome of each is first to assess the student's knowledge on entering the capstone course and then again on leaving the course with the results of the post-test. The course is used to assess the preparation students have received and evaluate their readiness to enter the</p>	<p>6. The pre-test is used as an assessment of student learning to this point and is also used to assess the overall learning in previous courses taken from the Department of Communication. The post-test requires a 70 percent success percentage in order for the student to pass the communication theory course. The students are assessed by the final paper or project completed in the course and the quality of the</p>	<p>6. The difference between pre and the same level of post test scores is dropping. One possible explanation is that the lower division courses are preparing the students better for the capstone course.</p>	<p>6. Fine tuning of the testing process will continue.</p>

	job market following graduation.	paper written using communication theories learned. Students must earn a 70 on a scale of 0-100 to pass the course. Papers are read for excellence by a panel of professors.		
7. The Communication department wants to protect the integrity of its programs and to solidify the content of the courses taught in the department through internal review.	7. The internal review is a tool to be used to assess what is being taught in courses in the department and to increase and improve the rigor of courses and the integrity of courses. The intended outcome of the review is to examine the content of the body of knowledge that needs to be delivered especially in courses that are being taught by multiple instructors. The intended outcome is not to diminish in any way the academic freedom of the communication faculty.	7. Assessment of course syllabi is an important method used plus common course discussions and the sharing of information between colleagues. Assessment criteria are: 1) Learning objectives clearly and correctly stated that address appropriate course content. 2) Assessment from objective to objective that is clearly specified and 3) that all course activities that are evaluated will relate to the objectives for the course. Peer review will be a part of this assessment so professors can learn from each other in the department. 1) Classes visited by invitation each semester once this is in place. The department chair will make assignments. 2) Syllabi success will be mentored by senior faculty and the department chair and the department administrative council.	7. Informal evaluation of several general education courses took place during department meetings.  Peer evaluation did not occur.	7. More extensive evaluation must be conducted.  A system of peer evaluation needs to developed. Some faculty were concerned that "certain other" faculty not evaluate them due to personal conflicts. That problems needs to be addressed.  The faculty voted to not utilized the student evaluations for LRT decisions. The department will develop other peer and department evaluation techniques. The department chair will be visiting and critiquing classes.
8. The communication department desires to have external review of its program and courses in order to continue to improve and keep up with current changes and adjustments made in similar departments of communication across the nation.	8. The intended outcome of this objective is to help the department keep moving forward and adjusting as necessary in order to offer the best possible education to our students. The outcome with allow us to keep the integrity of our courses and maintain and increase the rigor of the courses.	8. Following a year of preparation, we would allow an outside group from an equivalent regional university to come and evaluate the department to assess the needs of the SUU department of communication.	8. Northwest spent time on campus, reviewing self-study information.	8. The department will continue to support the NW suggestions.
9. The department offers a masters of arts in professional communication to prepare communication practitioners and managers for increased opportunities.	9. M.A. students will be prepared in research and theory in the areas of advertising/public relations, interpersonal/corporate communication, and mass media.	9. The department initiated the program in 2005-2006 with five courses. Enrollment was satisfactory.	9. Classes are being offered in the fall of 2005 and measurements are not complete.	9. Classes will be scheduled and modified based on student demand.