

**Assessment Report  
for Southern Utah University  
Communication Department 2008-2009  
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. 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. Courses continue to have written assignments. Upper division courses show subjective improvement in research paper writing.</p>	<p>1. Written assignments will continue to be required of all students in all communication courses. Some remedial writing skills will still need to be taught but students will be expected to advance quickly to upper class writing levels.</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 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 judgments of</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 in some upper division courses. Assignments encourage critical evaluations.</p>	<p>2a. Syllabi reflect course requirements of oral and speech presentation skills. Student presented proposals, pitches, research and other oral presentations in class.  The establishment and operation of the "SUU Speech and Presentation Center" is a demonstration of the department's commitment to oral presentation and speech communication skills. The Center assisted hundreds of students in many different aspects of speech and presentation preparation and technical assistance.</p>	<p>2a. Courses will continue to require speech and oral communication skills. Most classes will required at least some form of public presentation allowing students to practice and hone public speaking skills.  The Speech and Presentation Center will continue to expand opportunities.</p>

	<p>messages in all types of social settings.</p> <p>2b.To offer students more training in oral presentations as they move from the university to the job market.</p>	<p>2b. The advanced public speaking course will continue to focus on professional presentation. Performance in the course assesses the level of professional presentations students are capable of making as they prepare for the workplace</p>	<p>2b. Students in the advanced public speaking course continue to demonstrate competent speech skills. The new Speech and Presentation Center provides additional lab space for students to prepare and practice. Dr. Brian Heuett can now incorporate more of his virtual reality equipment in discussing communication apprehension</p>	<p>2b. The course will continue to be offered and the curriculum examined and improved. The course will take advantage of the Speech and Presentation Center.</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 COMM 3020 Communication Research better prepares students for capstone communication theory and research courses. Two capstone courses include Communication Theory, and Mass Media Theory and Effects 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. The Utah Communication Association is a forum sponsored by the department that allows undergraduate research presentation.</p>	<p>3a. Faculty have observed that student research papers are of a much higher quality.</p> <p>The best papers from the theory courses were presented at the annual Communication Department Symposium.</p>	<p>3a. Expected cooperation with other Utah school to support the Utah Communication Association have not been achieved. The department could seek additional funding to facilitate these opportunities.</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>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>4a. The University Journal student staff received awards at the annual Society of Professional Journalists competition.</p> <p>Power 91 news anchor Chris Holmes won the top honors for any radio student in the nation at the Broadcast Education Association Festival of Media Arts. Angie Smith won top radio personality in the same national competition.</p> <p>Power 91 also swept the Utah Broadcasters UBEE awards bringing home 16 first and second awards in competition with non commercial and commercial radio stations</p>	<p>4a. Continue support of student competition. Plans are already in place for entering competitions next year.</p> <p>Due to the increased emphasis on peer reviewed work for faculty, the department will increase encouragement of faculty to enter competitions that will highlight and demonstrate excellence in their work.</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>4b. Summarize and critique internship supervisors final summary of student performance. Evaluate recent 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.</p>	<p>across the state.</p> <p>The faculty are excellent examples to students by winning awards as well. Faculty also won in the UBEE awards as well as in film and video festivals.</p> <p>4b. The internship files are kept on-file in the department. The total number of internships appears to be increasing. The department worked with other HSS departments to attempt to standardize the credits and format for awarding internship credit in the HSS college.</p>	<p>4b. Discussion need to be held to determine how to better monitor and account for internship activity. The department should do a year to year comparison to determine if there is an increase in completed and successful 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>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>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>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</p>	<p>5a. A moratorium on new GE classes limited any new developments in this area. The department had hoped to move the "Intro to Advertising" course forward but it did not.</p> <p>5a2. Senior exit interviews continue to show the department overall is serving the students. Specific areas such as public relations tend to show a need for improvement. A 5-year review completed this year recommended that the data from these exit interview be assessed on more quantitative and statistical levels.</p> <p>5b. Group work in courses continues.</p> <p>5c. Syllabi material shows critical thinking requirements.</p>	<p>5a. Any future general education courses will be submitted to appropriate committees. The department will continue to offer quality general education courses and evaluate the need for revision or additional offerings.</p> <p>5a2. Continue to conduct exit interviews. Based on recommendations we will do statistical analysis on these exit interviews.</p> <p>5b. Continue group work.</p> <p>5c. Continue critical thinking requirements.</p>

	5d. Ethical behavior Ethics discussions in upper division courses.	students simulate decision making.  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. Student participate in specific media ethics discussions and situational analysis of ethical behavior. For example in Journalism ethical behavior is discussed in each of the courses offered.	5d. Syllabi material shows discussions on ethics.	5d. Continue emphasizing discussions on ethics.
6. The Communication department requires a senior assessment of general knowledge of communication studies, theory and practice.	6. The two capstone courses: Communication Theory and Mass Media Theory and Effects courses are currently used for communication theory and practice assessment. The courses are used to assess the preparation students have received and evaluate their readiness to enter the job market following graduation.	6. The students are assessed by the final paper or project completed in the course and the quality of the 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.	6. Quality papers were submitted. A panel of professors read a selection of the papers in anticipation of the Utah Communication Association.  There was a request to do a project rather than a paper this year. That request was rejected at a faculty meeting because the project was very narrow and did not fulfill the standards of "general knowledge of communication studies, theory and practice."	6. Quality research papers that demonstrate a general knowledge of communication studies, theory and practice will be required as a capstone experience for all students.
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. The department did not do as intensive of internal review as desired. The results of student evaluations can give a general idea of success in this area. The mean score on Question 9 on Effective Teaching is 4.1. That is below the college and university average.  The department has not used Peer review.	7. While specific instructors do exceptional work, the department average is below college and university average for effective teaching. Overall the department needs to improve teaching and as a result student evaluation scores. There are several professors who bring the average down considerably. There have been discussion with those professors to help improve student evaluations.
8. The communication department desires to have external review of its program and courses	8. The intended outcome of this objective is to help the department move forward	8. During the five year program review process scheduled during this year, external reviewers will	8. As part of the 3-year review of new programs, the M.A. in Professional Communication was reviewed by an external	8. The M.A. curriculum is under continued examination by the Graduate Council. The financial aid and scholarships

<p>in order to continue to improve and keep up with current changes and adjustments made in similar departments of communication across the nation.</p>	<p>and adjust as necessary in order to offer the best possible education to our students. The outcome will allow us to keep the integrity of our courses and maintain and increase their rigor.</p>	<p>examine and critique the program.</p>	<p>reviewer. The general recommendations included tightening up of curriculum offerings, monitoring the financial aid and scholarships of GTAs, increased training of GTAs and other items.</p>	<p>will be better documented by the Graduate Secretary. The improved training of GTAs will occur through a GTA seminar to be held in the Fall 2009.</p>
<p>9. The department offers a masters of arts in professional communication to prepare communication practitioners and managers for increased opportunities.</p>	<p>9. M.A. students will be prepared in research and theory in the areas of advertising/public relations, interpersonal/corporate communication, and mass media.</p>	<p>9. The department initiated the program in 2005-2006 with five courses. Continued satisfactory average enrollment of 15 per class section is desired.</p>	<p>9. Enrollment was not quite as high as expected especially as accounting issues surfaced between identical courses on-campus and off-campus.</p>	<p>9. Continue fine-tuning the M.A. program as instructors and administrators learn improved strategies.</p>