2009-2010 Assessment Plan Report

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT
AY 2009-2010

Report Date: **June 1, 2010**

School/College: Arts & Sciences

Department/Program: Communication Studies

Person completing the Report: Eve-Anne Doohan & Evelyn Ho

1. **Overview Statement**: Briefly summarize the assessment activities that were undertaken this academic year, indicating:

   a. which program learning outcomes were assessed this year.

   Learning Outcome 3

   Students will practice the skills of speaking and writing.

   1)   Students will articulate a clear and defensible thesis.

   2)   Students will use appropriate evidence to defend their thesis.

   3)   Students will demonstrate adaptation (of written and spoken work) to an audience, the purpose, and the situation.

   4)   Students will use proper citation.

   Learning Outcome 4

   Students will assess, from a communicative perspective, the ethical and socio-cultural issues as they rise in communicative environments (from face-to face interactions to public debates and discussions), identifying the possibilities, problems, and history of communication in social settings. Furthermore, they will employ their communicative skills to develop their own recommendations for how communication can reduce social inequality.

   b. who in your department/program was involved in the assessment of the above learning outcomes

   Faculty teaching the introductory level courses in Spring 2010 including COMS 202, 203, 204, 205. Evelyn Ho, Allison Thorson, Marilyn DeLaure, Marco Jacquemet, and Bryan Whaley.

2. **Please Answers the Following Questions for Each of the Student Outcomes Assessed:**
    a. <u>**What did you do?**</u>
        Describe clearly and concisely how you assessed the learning outcomes that were evaluated this year (e.g., measures, research methods, etc.). [please use bullet points to answer this question]

        -   We continued to randomly select 25% of our majors for a total of 67 students. We did this so that we could follow students throughout their undergraduate career as they progressed through the major. For each entering class we plan to randomly select another 25% from that group.
        -   We assessed performance of these 67 students in our four foundational courses for Spring 2010 (one section of Communication and Everyday Life, two sections of Communication and Culture, one section of Rhetoric and the Public Sphere, and one section of Research Methods). Note: some of these students were not currently enrolled in any foundational courses and some were enrolled in multiple courses.
        -   The faculty developed measures for each learning outcome and defined them along a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 = very poor, 3 = the benchmark, and 5 = superior.
        -   Exam answers and papers were collected as evidence of student performance. Each professor evaluated this evidence to determine if each of the learning outcomes was met and to what degree.

    b. <u>**What did the faculty in the department or program learn this year**</u>?
        Summarize your findings and conclusions as a result of the assessment indicating strengths and weaknesses in student learning demonstrated by this assessment.

        For learning outcome 3.1 across all three courses, we had 11 students meet or exceed the benchmark standards, and 2 students below the benchmark. For learning outcome 3.2, 13 students met or exceeded the benchmark. For 3.3, 13 students met or exceeded the benchmark. For 3.4, 6 students met or exceeded the benchmark, 1 student fell below the benchmark, and one course did not measure this learning outcome.

        For learning outcome 4.1, all 13 students met or exceeded the benchmark. For 4.2, 10 students met or exceeded the benchmark, and 3 fell below the benchmark.

        Students demonstrate mixed performance levels. The third learning outcome essentially measures the application of communication skills and the fourth learning outcome measures the connection between communication and social justice. Learning outcome four is not applicable to two of our foundational courses. For the

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most part, our students are above the benchmark, however, it would be useful to know where students begin (i.e., are our students improving over the course of the major?).

We also learned the following:
i. It does not make sense for us to assess student learning outcomes for our foundational courses because these are the first courses that students take in our major. We need to continue to develop our assessment plan in conjunction with making changes in individual classes and/or overall curriculum.
ii. Some faculty members found it difficult to assess our learning outcomes. For example, some assignments did not easily map on to the learning outcomes, learning outcomes are very broad and therefore students could have partially met an outcome through one assignment and fall short on another. Faculty are also unclear on whether the benchmarks are consistent across courses.
iii. Many of our learning outcomes do not account for our public relations and advertising courses, of which there are many in our major.
iv. We learned that the goal of assessment is not necessarily to follow students over time as they progress through the major. Instead, it may be more beneficial to assess students as they enter and exit our major.
v. It is difficult to do assessment in the spring semester, so next year we will assess fall courses during spring semester.

c. **What will be done differently as a result of what was learned this year?**
Discuss how courses and/or curricula will be changed to improve student learning as a result of the assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty will help students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

1. After doing a complete assessment of all of our learning outcomes, we have decided we need to re-examine our curriculum and how we do assessment in our major. We have scheduled a retreat for August to discuss the possibility of creating a course for students to complete their senior year which would allow for assessment at the end of their course of study within our major. Even after having improved our assessment tools this past year, more improvements still need to take place.

d. **What actions were taken this academic year "to close the loop" relative to what was discovered from last year's assessment activities?**
Discuss how courses and/or curricula changed to improve student learning as a result of last year's assessment. Include a discussion of how the faculty helped students overcome their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

As a result of last year's assessment, we re-examined our learning outcomes for assessment for this year. However, we have not made any changes to our curriculum or teaching. We did not feel comfortable making larger changes because we did not receive feedback on last year's assessment report and were unsure if any proposed changes would actually be useful.

3. **Attach a copy of the components of the department/program assessment plan that have been modified since its initial submission:**
    a. Program Mission
    b. Program Learning Goals
    c. Program Learning Outcomes
    d. Program Learning Rubrics aligned with outcomes
    e. Curriculum map that shows the courses that pertain to the outcome

A, B, and E have not been modified. C and D are attached.

Please return to: Provost Office by June 1, 2010

You can send your replies as either a Word attachment (to: marin@usfca.edu) or as a hard copy to: Provost Office, Lone Mountain Rossi Wing 4th floor.

If you have any questions, please contact: William Murry, Director of Institutional Assessment (wmurry@usfca.edu or x5486).

Program Goal 3: Students will develop and hone the skills to be effective communicators.

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement Of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
3.1. Students will articulate a clear and defensible thesis.	3.1. Student writing will not have a thesis.		3.1. Student writing will have a clear and defensible thesis.		3.1. Student writing will have a creative and/or innovative thesis.
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02** **COMS 205-01**		**2 students**	**2 students** **2 students** **3 students**	**2 students** **2 students**	
3.2. Students will use appropriate evidence to defend their thesis.	3.2. Students will not have evidence or use inappropriate evidence.		3.2. Students will use appropriate and convincing evidence to defend their thesis.		3.3. Students will provide use appropriate and convincing evidence and innovative ways of relating and interpreting that evidence to defend the thesis.
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02** **COMS 205-01**			**4 students** **2 students** **3 students**	**2 students** **2 students**	
3.3. Students will demonstrate adaptation (of written and spoken work) to an audience, the purpose, and the situation.	3.3. Student work will not fit the audience, purpose and situation		3.3. Students will demonstrate adaptation (of written and spoken work) to an audience, the purpose, and the situation.		3.3. Same as benchmark
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02**			**2 students** **6 students** **2 students**		

COMS 205-01			**3 students**		
3.4. Students will use proper citation.	3.4. Student work will have improper or missing citations.		3.4. Students will use proper citation		3.4. Same as benchmark
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02** **COMS 205-01**	**NA** **1 student**	**NA**	**2 students** **NA** **1 student** **3 students**	**NA**	**NA**

Program Goal 4: Students will assess, from a communicative perspective, the ethical and socio-cultural issues as they rise in communicative environments (from face-to face interactions to public debates and discussions), identifying the possibilities, problems, and history of communication in social settings. Furthermore, they will employ their communicative skills to develop their own recommendations for how communication can reduce social inequality.

Outcome	Very Poor Achievement Of Outcome	Poor Achievement of Outcome	Average Achievement of Outcome [Benchmark Standard]	Good Achievement of Outcome	Very Good Achievement Of Outcome
4.1. Graduates will be able to assess, from a communicative perspective, the ethical and socio-cultural issues as they rise in communicative environments (from face-to face interactions to public debates and discussions).	4.1. Students show little understanding or awareness of the role of communication in ethical and socio-cultural issues.		4.1. Students demonstrate the ability to identify the role of communication in ethical and socio-cultural issues.		4.1. Students are able to not only identify the role of communication but can also see across issues to weave together a more complex view of the role of communication in and across various issues.
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02** **COMS 205-01**			**2 students** **4 students** **2 students** **3 students**	**2 students**	
4.2. Graduates will be able to develop recommendations for how communication can work for social justice and reduce social inequalities.	4.2. Students articulate that social inequalities are the status quo.		4.2. Students will be able to develop recommendations for how communication can work for social justice and reduce social inequalities.		4.2. Students not only develop recommendations for others but also articulate a personal set of recommendations for how to work for social justice and reduce social inequalities.
COMS 202-01 **COMS 203-01** **COMS 204-01** **COMS 204-02** **COMS 205-01**		**2 students** **1 student**	**3 students** **2 students** **3 students**	**2 students**	