2015-2016 Yearly Assessment Report
College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)

NOTES:

- Yearly Assessment Reports for all CAS Majors and Graduate Programs are due by 07/01/16; early submissions are welcome. [COMS extension, Sept. 1 2016]

- Reports, as well as two Curriculum Maps (one that maps Program Learning Outcomes to Institutional Learning Outcomes and one that maps Courses to Program Learning Outcomes) should be submitted as three separate documents to the Program Assistant; he/she will upload these three documents to Gnosis.

- This template is intended to be an outline for the Yearly Assessment Report; it is in word format so that faculty can modify and delete as needed, and use whatever space is necessary to respond to the questions

1. **Identifying Information**
   Name of Program: **Communication Studies**
   Type of Program (Major, Minor, Graduate Program, Non-Degree Granting): **Major/Minor**
   College of Arts and Sciences Division (Arts, Humanities, Sciences, or Social Sciences): **Social Sciences**
   Name/Title/Email Address of Submitter: **Allison Thorson, Associate Professor/Director of Assessment/athorson@usfca.edu**
   Name/Email Address of Additional Individuals Who Should Receive Feedback: **Allison Thorson**, athorson@usfca.edu; **Eve-Anne Doohan**, edoohan@usfca.edu

2. **Mission Statement:**
   The Department of Communication Studies is a community of scholars whose mission is to empower students to achieve their personal and professional goals through becoming clear, effective, and ethical communicators. Communication Studies graduates will be educated in understanding, critiquing, and producing arguments and texts with the goal of fostering a sense of civic responsibility and a shared commitment to social justice.

   Has this statement been revised in the last few years?
   Yes. Our mission statement was revised after attending the University workshop of Mission Statements. Our mission statement was shortened and addressed the broader goals and wishes of our department.

3. **(Optional) Program Goals:**
   Program Goal 1: Students will be able to understand critically how communication shapes the contemporary world.

Program Goal 2: Students will be able to use a variety of methodological tools to analyze communicative practices in both our public and private lives.
Program Goal 3: Students will develop and exercise the skills to effectively communicate messages to particular audiences.
Program Goal 4: Students will apply their knowledge of communicative practices to issues of social justice.

Have these goals been revised in the last few years? No.

4. **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**
   1.1 Students will articulate and identify how reality is socially constructed through verbal and nonverbal communication.
   1.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts used in the study of communication.
   2.1 Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.
   2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and test hypotheses.
   3.1 Students will identify and assess the social context for their messages and tailor their messages to specific audiences.
   3.2 Students will craft effective messages.
   4.1 Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.
   4.2 Students will implement communicative strategies that address social injustices.

   Have these PLOs been revised in the last few years? No.

5. **Brief Summary of Most Recent Assessment Plan**

   From our 2013-2014 Self-Study/Program Review:
   Our department is developing a comprehensive Student Learning Assessment plan during the 2013-14 academic year. This has been a challenging endeavor, since students take such varied paths through our major, given their wide degree of choice in selecting upper division courses. We have considered different versions of a senior capstone course, but currently do not have sufficient faculty to staff such a course. We are developing an idea of having students create e-portfolios of their best work in the major. To support this, the university is getting ready to provide the software support for such an endeavor.

   The e-portfolio model has several potential benefits. We believe it can help students take ownership of their academic planning early on, and to think about their potential pathways through the major as that relates to potential career interests. Second, having an e-portfolio should be very useful when students apply for internships, jobs, or graduate programs. Finally, the e-portfolios should allow us to review student

progress through the major, and see how well our graduates are attaining the learning outcomes for our major.

Marilyn DeLaure and Evelyn Ho are taking the lead investigating e-portfolio platforms during the 2013-14 academic year. The department is working together during this year to craft a vision for what the portfolios might include, and how we can assign pieces of the portfolio along students' way through the major. We think that an initial reflection assignment can be given in the methods courses (or in two of the three methods courses); in Fall 2013, Professors DeLaure and Lawless piloted that reflection assignment in COMS 252 and 254. We also think that the best place to include the substantive completion parts of the e-portfolio would be in the Communication Studies Internship course. This is the upper division course taken by the largest number of our majors, and they usually take it during their last few semesters at USF. The Communication Studies Internship course already has a significant career-planning component (resume, cover letter, interviewing practice, industry research, self-reflection), and so adding work on the e-portfolio would make sense. Also, it would benefit students to create some kind of public evidence documenting how their coursework in COMS has culminated in their internship experiences (in the e-portfolio), to be used for future job searches. As we develop plans for the e-portfolio and assessment, we have also fine-tuned our department's learning goals and outcomes. However, we may make adjustments based on the University's new Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs).

6. **Academic Program Review**
   Date of most recent Academic Program Review's External Reviewer Visit: November 5-7, 2014
   Date of most recent Action Plan Meeting: Aug. 11, 2016
   Brief Summary of the most recent Action Plan: We will be addressing the following issues in department retreats and/or meetings in the upcoming year.

   1. Curriculum Review
      - Intro or 100-class exploration
      - Renumbering courses for 300 and 400 level upper division
      - Addressing transfer-friendliness of major
      - Online courses (internship?)
      - Honors Program
   2. Interdisciplinary Communication
      a. Overall:
         - Clusters of classes maybe in Applied areas (strat comm, but maybe also in non-profit/advocacy work too?)
      b. Connections w/ ADVT:
         - What shared classes
         - Strat Comm overlap?
   3. Connections w/ Rhet/Lang:
      a. Are there faculty we'd like to invite to teach for us?

     b. MAPC: Teaching for them, Term lines to help us do that

     c. 4+1 as a track that we own w/in MAPC?

   4. Connections w/ Media Studies

     a. Are there classes that we'd allow MS students to take w/o the pre-req?

     b. Could we share methods courses?

7. Methods

What did you do with regard to assessment of your program/department in 2015-2016?

We collected student data online as a required part of our internship course "Learning Assessment & Skills Translation Assignment" over the course of 6 semesters. For this round of assessment, we were interested in determining whether students' reported that a particular PLO was achieved in the courses that we identified as fulfilling that PLO. Analysis was conducted to compare student and faculty identification.

The instructions for the assignment were as follows: As you prepare for your careers, it is important to be able to articulate the skills and knowledge that you have gained at USF in your Communication Studies major. In each of your courses, there is a set of learning outcomes that appears on the syllabus. By the end of the course, you should be able to complete the tasks listed in the learning outcomes. The department also has a set of learning outcomes for all COMS majors, as does the University for all USF students.

This assignment asks you to look at each of the COMS learning outcomes, demonstrate how you have fulfilled them in the COMS classes you have already taken, and translate them into your own words for use on resumes, in job interviews, or for general networking purposes.

What were your questions?

Students offered answers to each of the following 3 questions for each PLO:

1.1 Students will articulate and identify how reality is socially constructed through verbal and nonverbal communication.	1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, in words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.
	2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!
	Course Title:
	Professor:

Semester Course Taken:

Paper Title:

Explain in 2-3 sentences how your work demonstrates the learni

3. Offer two to three bullet points that translate what you have le
specific knowledge, or methods that might be important for you
career plans. Spend some time crafting these bullets as they can
interviews, or networking.

1.2 Students will articulate and identify how reality is socially constructed through verbal and nonverbal communication.	1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, e words what you understand the outcome to be measuring. 2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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specific knowledge, or methods that might be important for you
career plans. Spend some time crafting these bullets as they can
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2.1 Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.	1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, e words what you understand the outcome to be measuring. 2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and test hypotheses.

1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, e words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.

2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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3.1 Students will identify and assess the social context for their messages and tailor

1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, e words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.

their messages to specific audiences.

2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succe: this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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3.2 Students will craft effective messages.

1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, e words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.

2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succe: this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

Course Title:

Professor:

Semester Course Taken:

Paper Title:

Explain in 2-3 sentences how your work demonstrates the learni

3. Offer two to three bullet points that translate what you have le specific knowledge, or methods that might be important for you career plans. Spend some time crafting these bullets as they can interviews, or networking.

4.1 Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.

2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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Explain in 2-3 sentences how your work demonstrates the learni

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4.2 Students will implement communicative strategies that address social injustices.

1. In 1-2 sentences, interpret what the outcome means. That is, words what you understand the outcome to be measuring.

2. Attach a short paper (or a section of a paper) that you have co your Communication Studies courses as evidence of your succes this learning outcome. Copy/paste a section of the paper you are Hint: If you have lost your old work, try logging into Canvas as there!

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career plans. Spend some time crafting these bullets as they can interviews, or networking.

How are these questions related to your most recent Academic Program Review and/or Action Plan?

These questions were in line with our most recent Academic Program Review and Action Plan.

For this round of assessment, we were interested in determining whether students' reported that a particular PLO was achieved in the courses that we identified as fulfilling that PLO. Analysis was conducted to compare student and faculty identification.

What PLOs are these questions related to?

These questions are related to all of our PLOs.

What direct (most important) and/or indirect methods did you employ?

DIRECT:
We collected direct measures for assessment. However, for this round of assessment we have not fully analyzed these data yet because we wanted to make sure that our PLOs were appropriate before analyzing these direct data. In addition, in examining the data that we did collect, we may have to make small adjustments to this assignment. Students provided the department with full or partial sections of a research paper, term paper, case study, or research project report which they believe was direct evidence of their successful completion of each PLO.

INDIRECT:
Using a survey, we asked students to indicate a COMS paper they had written that met each PLO, specifically asking information about the (a) Course Title; (b) Professor; (c) Semester Course Taken, and; (d) Paper Title.

Students provided the department with 1-2 sentences for each PLO where they interpreted what they understood each outcome to mean / measure, 1-2 sentences for each PLO where they explained how their work demonstrated each PLO, and offered 2 - 3 bullet points that translated what they have learned as it related to each PLO into skills, specific knowledge, or methods that might be important for post-graduation career plans. Each of these serve as reflection essays to indirectly assess each PLO.

8. Results

What were the direct data results?
N/A

What were the indirect results?

For each PLO, we compared the course a students reported as meeting each PLO to the courses we (the professors in the Department of Communication Studies) said would meet each PLO.

Table 1 below illustrates these results. The far Left column states our original PLO. The next column indicates the courses "we" anticipated meeting each PLO. Column three identifies the percentage of time that students' reported a course meeting the PLO which matched those courses designated by the Dept. of Communication Studies. Last, the far Right column outlines the Department of Communication Studies' plans for keeping, revising, combining, or omitting each PLO. As noted in the feedback from you, Prof. Chakraborty, and the University Assessment Committee, it is likely that we have too many PLOs.

Table 1: Findings from initial Communication Studies PLO assessment data and plans for each PLO

Program Learning Outcome	Courses designated to meet each outcome by the Dept. of Communication Studies	% of the time that students' reported a course meeting the PLO which matched those courses designated by the Dept. of Communication Studies	Plans for keeping, revising, combining, omitting PLO.
1.1 Students will articulate and identify how reality is socially constructed through verbal and nonverbal communication.	COMS: 202, 203, 204, 252, 254, 300, 302, 306, 314, 315, 335, 336, 337, 344, 350, 352, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364, 365, 366, 368, 370, 372, 375, 373	100% agreement (n = 58, 58 agree)	KEEP (possibly revise and combine with 1.2)

1.2 Students will articulate and identify how reality is socially constructed through verbal and nonverbal communication.	COMS: 202, 203, 204, 252, 253, 254, 300, 302, 306, 314, 315, 320, 322, 323, 326, 334, 335, 336, 337, 344, 350, 352, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364, 365, 366, 368, 370, 372, 373, 375, 496	98.1% agreement (n = 55, 54 agree, 1 disagree)	KEEP (possibly revise and combine with 1.1)
2.1 Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.	COMS: 203, 252, 253, 254, 300, 302, 306, 314, 315, 366, 350, 352, 360, 365, 370, 372, 375	80% agreement (n = 55, 44 agree, 11 disagree)	KEEP
2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and test hypotheses.	COMS: 204, 252, 253, 254, 300, 302, 306, 315, 337, 344, 350, 352, 356, 358, 360, 364, 365, 366, 370, 373, 375	90% agreement (n = 50, 45 agree, 5 disagree)	KEEP
3.1 Students will identify and assess the social context for their messages and tailor their messages to specific audiences.	COMS: 202, 202, 204, 252, 254, 300, 302, 306, 314, 315, 320, 322, 323, 326, 337, 344, 350, 352, 356, 358, 360, 362, 365, 366, 368, 373, 496	88% agreement (n = 52, 52 agree, 7 disagree)	Keep (possibly revise and combine with 3.2)
3.2 Students will	COMS: 202, 203,	88% agreement (n	Keep

craft effective messages.	204, 252, 253, 254, 300, 302, 306, 314, 315, 320, 322, 323, 326, 344, 350, 352, 356, 360, 362, 366, 368, 496	= 52, 46 agree, 6 disagree)	(possibly revise and combine with 3.1)
4.1 Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.	COMS: 204, 252, 254, 314, 335, 336, 337, 356, 362, 364, 368, 375	82.7% agreement (n = 51, 43 agree, 9 disagreement)	KEEP
4.2 Students will implement communicative strategies that address social injustices.	COMS: 204, 314, 337, 344, 362, 364, 366, 368, 375	36.5% agreement (n = 52, 19 agree, 33 disagree)	OMIT (this is part of our mission/ goals – not a PLO).

What surprised you?
Some of the courses that faculty marked as addressing PLOs did not match those that students chose. Students also selected classes that fulfilled PLOs that were not marked by faculty.

What aligned with your expectations?
Most of the courses that faculty marked as addressing PLOs did match those that students chose.

What do you understand these results to mean?
From our initial data analysis we determined that our initial 8 PLOs were not entirely clear, as some of the courses students' listed as meeting some PLOs were not accurate. As a result, we have now reduced the number of PLOs to 5 (from 8). As we revise our PLOs we will work to ensure that there is no overlap, that each PLO is conceptually different, and that each PLO is actually an objective being met and not part of our larger vision/goals for what we "hope" students will take-away from our major.

What are the implications of the data?
These results indicate that our original 8 PLOs must be revised.

Revising our PLOs means that all the data were have collected to date cannot be used for future analyzes. Rather, we will revise our instrument and begin to collect new data based on our "new" and "revised" 5 PLOs.

9. **Closing the Loop**

   What might you do as a result of these assessment results? What curricular or programmatic changes might you implement?

   Indirect assessment has led us to revise our PLOs. Specifically, we have reduced the number of PLOs from 8 to 5 and separated out goals. This revision has better prepared us to start conducting direct assessment.

Revised Mission:
- The Department of Communication Studies is a community of scholars whose mission is to empower students to achieve their personal and professional goals through becoming clear, effective, and ethical communicators. Communication Studies graduates will be educated in understanding, critiquing, and producing arguments and texts with the goal of fostering a sense of civic responsibility and a shared commitment to social justice.
- Our department's purpose aligns well with the mission and strategic vision of the University and College. Like the USF Mission, our program goals 1-3 were created to provide graduates "with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed as persons and professionals," and our program goal 4 is aimed at "the values and sensitivity to be men and women for others."

Revised Program Goals:

- Students will be able to understand critically how communication shapes the contemporary world.
- Students will be able to use a variety of methodological tools to analyze communicative practices in both our public and private lives.
- Students will develop and exercise the skills to effectively communicate messages to particular audiences.
- Students will apply their knowledge of communicative practices to issues of social justice.

Revised Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

1. Students will articulate and define major theories and concepts used in the study of communication.
2. Students will design a research project that engages scholarly literature to address significant and appropriate questions/issues.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to select and analyze text(s), collect and analyze data, and answer research questions and/or test hypotheses.

4. Students will craft effective messages by identifying and addressing social context(s)/specific audiences.
5. Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

In addition to revising PLOs we will also be creating rubrics for each PLO. We will begin with assessing (#2, 3, and 5 above as these did not change in the revision process and therefore we have the most data on these PLOs).

Immediate next steps:

- Develop and refine our survey tool to collect student data based on our new PLOs. This new online survey will replace the current survey used to collect data in our Internship in Communication Studies course.
- Before creating our rubrics, we intend to attend one of the University workshops on Rubrics and reference the rubrics developed by the National Communication Association for further guidance (https://www.natcom.org/uploadedFiles/Teaching_and_Learning/2%20Drawing%20Learning%20Outcomes%20in%20Communication.pdf . We intend for the Department of Communication Studies Assessment committee (a committee comprised of Allison Thorson, Evelyn Ho, Brandi Lawless, Eve-Anne Doohan and other COMS professors who teach the Internship in Communication Studies course) to develop these rubrics.
- Analyze direct measurement for one PLO (2, 3 or 5). Specifically, we plan to examine 10% of the data to be collected as a way to test one of rubrics (this data will consist of both close- and open-ended written work collected as part of the Internship in Communication Studies course that is offered each semester).

Long term plans:
- Create PLO assessment rubrics for PLO 1 and 4 to ensure that operational definitions are specific and concrete.
- Finalize all rubrics for PLO 2, 3, and 5
- Complete analysis of student PLO data for PLO 2, 3, and 5 (those unchanged from our initial data collection)
- If initial validity and reliability are achieved, we will train the remaining communication faculty member on using these rubrics and will continue to check them for validity and reliability (alpha or kappa - depending on the final rubric).

Have you or will you submit any course or program change proposals as a result of these results? Not at this time.