



Master of Arts in Professional Communication  
and  
Certificate in Professional Communication

## AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2024 – 2025

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### I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

**1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent:**

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**2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current mission statement below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current mission statements of both the major and the minor program.**

No. We did not revise our Mission Statement last year because we revised our Mission (and added a Values Statement) the previous year (reported in our last annual assessment). Both are listed below for context.

#### Values Statement

The Master of Arts in Professional Communication Program is dedicated to cultivating responsible, versatile and creative communicators pursuing success in diverse professional contexts. Guided by a commitment to actively engage ethics and pursue excellence, we strive to empower our students with advanced skills in written, verbal, visual, and digital communication.

#### Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a dynamic learning environment that encourages critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and cultural sensitivity. Through rigorous academic pursuits, experiential learning opportunities, and a supportive, professional community, we aim to produce graduates to become strategic, adaptive and creative communication leaders who are capable of driving positive change, building meaningful connections, and thriving in today's diverse, globalized, and interconnected world.

**3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle? Kindly state “Yes” or “No.” Please provide the current PLOs below. If you are submitting an aggregate report, please provide the current PLOs for both the major and the minor programs.**

Yes, we revised our PLOs. For context, following the conclusion of our Program Review, the MAPC Steering Committee elected to use last year as a structured period of reflection to revise our Mission Statement and add a Values Statement before turning to our PLOs. After our Mission was revised, we used Spring 2025 and early Fall 2025 to assess, revise, and ratify our new PLOs.

For clarity and comparison, the new PLOs appear below, followed by the previous set.

### **New MAPC Program Learning Outcomes (PLO):**

**1. Ethical and Culturally Aware Communication**

Graduates will apply ethical decision-making frameworks to professional communication challenges, integrating cultural awareness, stakeholder accountability, and ethically responsible practices in business, social, and crisis contexts.

**2. Leadership in Communication Strategy and Management**

Graduates will lead communication projects, teams, and organizational strategies by applying leadership and management skills, demonstrating expertise in both content creation and content oversight.

**3. Professional Multimodal Communication**

Graduates will create polished, audience-focused communication across oral, written, visual, and digital media, demonstrating proficiency in content development, revision, and strategic messaging.

**4. Strategic Communication Execution and Innovation**

Graduates will develop and implement strategic communication initiatives across industries and media, integrating ethical considerations and data-driven decision-making to achieve impactful results.

**5. Research, Reflection, and Knowledge Contribution**

Graduates will conduct original or applied research in professional communication, critically reflecting on findings and contributing knowledge that advances the field.

**6. Applied Professional Development and Career Integration**

Graduates will communicate their professional development through applied learning experiences—such as coursework, portfolios, research projects, internships, or industry collaborations—while engaging networks and gaining practical experience that supports career growth.

### **Existing MAPC Program Learning Outcomes (PLO):<sup>1</sup>**

1. **Core Knowledge:** graduate students will define, identify, and apply the rhetorical conventions and strategies appropriate to communicating effectively and ethically to varied audiences;

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<sup>1</sup> These original PLOs were reviewed, revised, and submitted by the MAPC Steering Committee in Spring 2017. These PLOs will sunset at the end of Spring 2026.

2. **Scholarly Communication:** graduate students will write and edit a substantial amount of revised prose, meeting standards and applying conventions defined by the field of communication;
3. **Professionalism:** graduate students will produce written, oral and digital communication of high quality consistent with their professional concentration and focus;
4. **Research:** graduate students will conduct skilled and ethical research in the field of communication and contribute original knowledge in their chosen industry and profession.

#### 4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2024-2025?

All of them. Please see above.

## II. METHODOLOGY

**5. Describe the methodology that you used to assess the PLO(s). For example, “the department used questions that were inputted in the final examination pertaining directly to the <said PLO>. An independent group of faculty (not teaching the course) then evaluated the responses to the questions and gave the students a grade for responses to those questions.”**

Assessment process for AY 24-25: MAPC Steering Committee is responsible for the Annual Review, and to assess the viability of our PLOs, the committee (Randa Ghnaim, Larry Kamer, Tika Lamsal, Ted Matula and David Ryan) used small group discussion as well as polling data to measure the relevancy of each original PLO (we have four) during the Spring 2025 semester. Using this mixed methods approach, the committee concluded to recast all PLOs. Because creating new PLOs is a significant process, we decided to complete this recasting by the end of Spring 2025 (and beginning of Fall 2025) for implementation in AY 26-27.

To create new PLOs, our Steering Committee used data from previous annual assessments, Program Review feedback, insights from our experiences as administrators and faculty—and using our newly formed Values and Mission Statements as frames—to guide our discussion and creation of PLOs. We also consulted relevant industry reports on important work-related communication needs, themes, and patterns.

Below is our timeline:

- Fall 2024: assess current PLOs
  - Result: recast all of them
- Intersession 2025: begin invention process of recasting PLOs
  - Result: data collection is ongoing
- Spring 2025: created a draft of PLOs
  - Discussion: both synchronous and asynchronous
  - Formalize final list
  - Final Vetting of new PLOs by Steering Committee
- Fall 2025:
  - Final discussions

- Ratify new PLOs via vote by quorum
- Academic Director composes this report

### III. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

**6. What are the major takeaways from your assessment exercise? This section is for you to highlight the results of the exercise. Pertinent information here would include:**

- a. how well students mastered the outcome at the level they were intended to,**
- b. any trends noticed over the past few assessment cycles, and**
- c. the levels at which students mastered the outcome based on the rubric used.**

The major accomplishment is the revision of our PLOs. Because assessment is an ongoing process, the Steering Committee's decision to revise them by the end of Spring 2025 and beginning of Fall 2025 has worked well. We took our time to ensure the PLOs are based on MAPC as a functioning program, feedback from our PR review team, success of our alumni, input from our Steering Committee and our administrative staff.

Our assessment process highlights the critical importance of internal cohesion among MAPC's administrative members. When leadership teams communicate clearly and operate with a shared understanding of goals, processes, and outcomes, the program functions more efficiently and adaptively. The exercise underscored that alignment among staff and faculty is essential to sustaining strategic momentum and supporting program success, particularly when engaging in the kind of strategic planning that aligns values, mission, and assessment with curricular objectives and administrative goals.

**Discussion:** as a brief historical and program note, our Program Reviewers rated MAPC as VERY GOOD with a few recommendations for program refinement and improvement. One area was to improve our Mission Statement, so we created a new Mission last review cycle while our PLO revision better prepares us for more reflective thinking, program planning, and curriculum changes for the years ahead.

Our reflective methodology has many cumulative points, including those that require looking at program and curricular factors that impact recruiting, admissions, and enrollments. Because we examine application numbers, charting informational session attendees, engaging prospects in 1:1s, responding to digital inquiries, monitoring social media growth, attending CAS Graduate Program Directors meetings, and talking to the Office of Marketing and Communications, this methodology (and plurality) is constant and dynamic. What we have tentatively concluded is that MAPC will have to change programmatically due to declining enrollment numbers, so we have begun this process with revising our Mission and PLOs—and adding a Values Statement. Thereafter, curricular changes to make the program leaner will have to take place in the face of declining domestic undergraduates and contracting enrollment numbers.

**Marketing and Recruiting Background:** though applications and submissions are up for MAPC, the overwhelming majority of interest is from applicants who are not financially able to afford the costs of our program, many of whom are looking for full scholarship funding. Thus, the admission-to-deposit-to-enrollment yield is down considerably. Our core prospects (Bay Area natives, California residents, non-California domestic students) are not enrolling at the

yield they were 5-10 years ago. In addition, applicants from India and China are not enrolling as they have 5-10 years ago. Though USF programs like Targeted Country Scholarships and Double Dons Scholarships, as well as federal benefits for service members, and the surging commercialization and professionalization of college athletes (NIL deals) have permitted more athletes in MAPC and our Certificate programs. Though these instruments have kept us afloat, MAPC has not met its enrollment budget for a few years.

Our efforts to increase touchpoints and engage prospects have been quite robust, however. For example, we regularly engage OMC, OGA, and ISSS to best ensure our materials, processes, knowledge, and organizational competencies are all up to date. We doubled our information sessions for prospects from once a month to twice a month, offering sessions alternating at noon and 5 pm to better accommodate international students. Our 5 pm sessions dovetail into our 6 pm classes, so we strategically invite prospects to sample these courses, watch guest speakers, talk to faculty and students. We also invite prospects to talk with alumni. These collective efforts at strategic communication implementation have strengthened our program; however, the results have not produced enrollment that meet budget numbers.

#### **IV. CLOSING THE LOOP**

**7. Based on your results, what changes/modifications are you planning in order to achieve the desired level of mastery in the assessed learning outcome? This section could also address more long-term planning that your department/program is considering and does not require that any changes need to be implemented in the next academic year itself.**

For recasting our PLOs, our plan is to have our new PLOs in place for AY 26-27. With our new Values and Mission Statements, these organizational statements will help guide our curricular planning for the short and long term. Our next steps are to eliminate courses from our catalog that we no longer schedule; rebrand certain courses to better reflect not only course content but market-based skills and needs; and think of different ways to continue to make MAPC relevant to establish these relevancies in accordance with industry and market data. For our next review cycle, we plan to assess our Certificate Program in Professional Communication.

**8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?**

Affirmation that our revision of our Mission statement and creation and inclusion of our Values statement were supportive and helpful.