

Master of Arts in Professional Communication
and
Certificate in Professional Communication

AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT REPORT ACADEMIC YEAR 2017 – 2018

October 25, 2018

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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Master of Arts in Professional Communication Program
Certificate in Professional Communication Program
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2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? 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.

MAPC Mission Statement:

The Master of Arts in Professional Communication (MAPC) program provides students with theoretical grounding and practical experiences to apply rhetorical and ethical communication concepts needed to succeed in a range of professions, including organization, industry, business, and academic communities.

This mission statement and PLOs were vetted late Fall 2016 and early spring 2017 by the MAPC Steering Committee and were submitted on 3/31/17.

Certificate in Professional Communication (CPC) Program Mission:

The Certificate in Professional Communication program provides students with the practical experiences to apply rhetorical, ethical, and communication concepts needed to succeed in a

range of professions, including organization, industry, business, and academic communities.

3. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2017? 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.

No.

MAPC Program Learning Outcomes (PLO):

Our four PLOs are:

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

These PLOs were reviewed, revised, and submitted by the MAPC Steering Committee in spring 2017.

CPC Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Core Knowledge: students will define, identify, and apply the rhetorical conventions and strategies appropriate to communicating effectively and ethically to varied audiences;
2. Professionalism: students will produce written, oral and digital communication of high quality consistent with their professional concentration and focus.

4. Which particular Program Learning Outcome(s) did you assess for the academic year 2017-2018?

MAPC: PLO #2: Scholarly Communication.

CPC: no assessment was conducted. There were no students enrolled last year. However, because we have two certificate students enrolled this year, we will conduct an assessment next year.

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.”

The MAPC Steering Committee is responsible for the yearly review. Volunteers from this committee formed a Review Committee. This year, the Review Committee decided to assess three MAPC core courses in relation to PLO #2. The courses are listed below.

- PC 600 Foundations of Communication
- PC 602 Ethics of Communication
- PC 604 Research Methods.

We opted not to include the work products of our fourth core class PC 608 Capstone/Culminating Experience because capstone projects are lengthier and different in composition to our other work products. The committee decided that capstones are worthy of a separate and dedicated assessment at another time.

The Review Committee decided to evaluate PLO #2 (Scholarly Communication) by using direct methods. We identified three Core courses from Summer 2017, Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 as our best choices to collect 30 work products from PC 600, PC 602, and PC 604. All courses are required of MAPC students. Most incoming students take 600 and 602 their first semester while 604 is taken more closely to 608 Capstone/Culminating Experience.

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We agreed to read and rate the final paper/project for each of these three courses. All direct student identifying data were redacted from the papers by the MAPC program assistant.

We agreed to use the UIDM (unsatisfactory, introductory, developing, mastery) codes derived from our curriculum map to rate the papers; we use a “U” (for unsatisfactory) to signify work products that fall below the IDM spectrum and revised our rating form from last year to rate for PLO #2.

Led by one of our steering committee members, the review team normed by reading two work products. This session allowed each rater to understand the terms and definitions related to the UIDM codes and apply them in a synchronous training session. In this process, the raters asked questions about the codes (its meaning, significance, etc.) and discussed the strengths/challenges of the two papers (using reflecting think aloud protocol). This process not only allowed the team to test the usability of the revised rating forms but also establish the inter-rater reliability (IRR) of the codes.

After the norming session was completed, our assessment team of six reviewers read and rated 24 papers in a double-blind review in a week and a half. Our method of rating was

asynchronous. All raters accessed their assigned work products and rated these products in a Google Spreadsheets by reading randomized papers.

Afterward, the ratings were aggregated and averaged in a shared document for discussion. There were no rating discrepancies in the rating process that required a third read.

Post-Process: after the rating period was over, the MAPC Steering Committee discussed the results to help craft this response.

Note: we did not use any indirect methods of assessment.

Summary of Methods used: randomization of work products, close-reading of the text (interpretation, evaluation) to establish content analysis, focused coding (UIDM) to establish inter-rater reliability (IRR), and reflective discussion to merge reflection with organizational goal setting.

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.

We chose 24 work products from three core classes. Each of the three Core classes are designed to meet PLO #2. Here is how the work products were divided.

<u>Courses</u>	<u>PLO #2</u>	<u>Work Products</u>
● PC 600 Foundations of Communication	I-D	8
● PC 602 Ethics of Communication	I	8
● <u>PC 604 Research Methods</u>	<u>I-D</u>	<u>8</u>
	Total:	24

The results are encouraging. Of the 24 work products, 22 were rated as meeting the I-D competencies for PLO #2 while only two work products were deemed Unsatisfactory (please see the chart below).

Competency Levels: UIDM	Percentage of Work Products
Completely met the I-D competencies for PLO #2 (22/24)	91.6%
Did not meet the I-D competencies for PLO #2 (2/24)	8.3%
Breakdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PC 600 Foundations: 6/8 ● PC 602 Ethics: 8/8 ● PC 604 Research Methods: 8/8 	75% 100% 100%

One key takeaway is that our number of unsatisfactory products was lowered by half from the previous year. Last year, we had four unsatisfactory work products when we examined 12 work products from our Foundations class in relation to PLO #1. In short, we broadened the scope of our inquiry and the unsatisfactory index was lowered by half.

Last year, we were surprised that four papers scored a “U” rating, so we are pleased that our student competencies are moving in the right direction. Though PLO #1 and #2 are different, reducing unsatisfactory work products by 50% is satisfying.

The work products for this year’s assessment come overwhelmingly from our second cohort. As we have observed previously, professional communication is a pluralistic field that draws students from a wide variety of disciplines, so we recognize that only some of our students have previous training in rhetoric or come from a communication studies background.

In this varied experiential context, we appreciate the interpretive and evaluative challenges our students face when reading foundational and canonical texts (focused on the core scholarly knowledge of professional or work-related communication) and writing thesis-centered papers composed for a graduate-level, academic audience. Expecting students to have mastered the four assessment criteria (the rubric is presented in our Additional Notes section) in their first year is neither a desirable nor a reasonable expectation, so expecting students to achieve either an introductory (I) or developing (D) competency makes the best programmatic sense for these three core classes.

We chose 20% of the available work products from last academic year to meet the constraints of our timeline, and our sampling of student work products helps us understand how students are using varied scholarly constructs to engage in content analysis of foundational, ethical, and research-related communication topics.

These variables stated, the 22 papers that scored within the ID range tell us that our three core classes relate directly with PLO #2. By reading and rating their work products, we learned that

our students are demonstrating a range of critical sensitivities toward achieving an introductory and developing understanding of scholarly communication that give us an emerging confidence that PLO#2 is being met.

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 the past four years, we have spent our administrative energies developing and implementing our program to best serve our staff, faculty, and students. Because our program is in our third year of offering courses, our attention has turned to improving our approach to assessment as an organic instrument in the continued development of our program. Our organizational approach to assessment is to use the results to improve the framework of standards, practices, and processes intended to engage students and motivate staff and faculty to deliver learning experiences that fulfill program requirements within administrative expectations.

With the experience gained from last year's assessment, MAPC implemented a few initiatives designed to bring greater continuity and performative excellence to our program. Below are two important examples:

- **Align CLO and PLO:** improved the alignment between CLOs and PLOs by increased faculty dialog that works to improve the articulation between course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes; this initiative works to improve pedagogical practices between individual classes and program outcomes by focusing on developing course content (heuristics, assignments, etc.);
- **Linked courses:** this past year, MAPC faculty made a deliberate effort to link our Core classes. For example, faculty teaching 600 and 602 worked to link these two courses while faculty teaching 604 are working to align CLOs with the culminating 608 Capstone. The idea is to create work products in 604 that better prepare students for the capstone.

Creating a greater continuity among our core courses not only means courses share established learning outcomes but also share faculty who rotate between teaching these courses. This shared responsibility means faculty increase their understanding of the similarities, the differences, the boundaries, and the linkages among the courses. This shared commitment leads to faculty better utilizing their skills while developing new ones. With faculty teaching different core courses, they increase their understanding of how our curriculum can better meet the needs of our students.

The result is a focused delivery of courses, more concentrated instruction, and better work products from students.

Otherwise, our Steering Committee will continue to explore and study the different ways to improve how we read and rate our work products.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2016-2017, submitted in October 2017)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

The most important suggestion was to integrate assessment as an organic part of our duties. The routinization of assessment as an organizational activity often means focusing on creating programmatic initiatives meant to better serve faculty, staff, and students. This suggestion helped us develop the initiatives mentioned in Section 7. The second suggestion was to include assessment rubrics for this report. The rubric is attached in the Additional Materials Section.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

2018 MAPC Steering Committee Members:

- Myojung Chung, MAPC
- Eve-Anne Doohan, Communication Studies
- Michelle LaVigne, Rhetoric and Language
- Ted Matula, Rhetoric and Language
- David Ryan, Academic Director, MAPC, Rhetoric and Language
- Porter Shreve, Administrative Director, MAPC

2018 MAPC PLO Review Committee Members:

- Myojung Chung, MAPC
- Tika Lamsal, Rhetoric and Language
- Michelle LaVigne, Rhetoric and Language
- Ted Matula, Rhetoric and Language
- David Ryan, Academic Director, MAPC, Rhetoric and Language
- Porter Shreve, Administrative Director, MAPC

MAPC PLO Assessment Form for PLO #2: Scholarly Communication

Directions: please read your assigned papers individually and rate each paper based on the criteria below. Rating scores are at the bottom.

	M	D	I	U	PLO #2:	
Criteria	Mastery: 4	Developing: 3	Introductory: 2	Unsatisfactory: 1	Scholarly Communication	Definition of Scholarly Comm.
1. Context of Scholarly Communication: includes considerations of audience (i. e. a reader in the stated field or genre), purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the communication task(s).	Content clearly, correctly, and thoroughly defines, identifies, and/or applies rhetorical conventions and/or strategies appropriate for the communication task that demonstrates a thorough attention to audience and/or scholarly purpose.	Content adequately defines, identifies, and/or applies rhetorical conventions and/or strategies appropriate for the communication task that demonstrates a thorough attention to audience and/or scholarly purpose.	Content sufficiently demonstrates an awareness of rhetorical conventions and/or strategies appropriate for the communication task that demonstrates a thorough attention to audience and/or scholarly purpose.	Content minimally defines, identifies, or applies rhetorical conventions and/or strategies appropriate for the the communication task that demonstrates a thorough attention to audience and/or scholarly purpose.	"Graduate students will write and edit a substantial amount of revised prose, meeting standards and applying conventions defined by the field of communication."	Scholarly communication can be defined as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication, such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, and informal channels, such as electronic listservs." (Association of College & Research Libraries, "Principles and Strategies for the Reform of Scholarly Communication," 2003)
2. Effective communication: achieves stated purpose; pattern of reasoning works toward purpose.	Purpose is thoroughly articulated; argument/main idea/purpose is compelling and/or complex; pattern or organization of reasoning supports and enhances argument/main idea.	Purpose is adequately articulated; argument/main idea is somewhat compelling and/or complex; pattern of reasoning assists	Purpose is sufficiently articulated; but is discernable or can be inferred; argument/main idea is noticeable; pattern of reasoning is noticeable.	Purpose is minimally or not clearly articulated; argument/main idea is not noticeable; pattern of reasoning is not noticeable.		This definition emphasizes the system that compels students to create products for a scholarly community and the process by which these products are disseminated.
3. Ethical communication: uses evidence thoroughly and correctly; demonstrates awareness of assumptions/bias; avoids fallacies and/or other unreasonable strategies.	Uses evidence properly and thoroughly; demonstrates clear and focused awareness of own assumptions and/or bias in relation to others' assumptions; argumentation employs sound reasoning and avoids fallacies.	Uses evidence properly and thoroughly; demonstrates awareness of own assumptions and/or bias in relation to others' assumptions; argumentation mostly employs sound reasoning and avoids fallacies.	Uses evidence properly most of the time; demonstrates sufficient awareness of own assumptions and/or bias in relation to others' assumptions; argumentation might contain some unsound reasoning or fallacies.	Uses evidence improperly; does not demonstrate awareness of own assumptions and/or bias in relation to others' assumptions; argumentation is not sound.		
4. Writing Mechanics: conventions of writing follow accepted practices in related communication field or genre, including, but not limited to sentence structure, organization, grammar, etc.	Uses graceful, clear, fluent language that thoroughly communicates meaning to readers and is virtually error-free. Writing clearly exhibits refinement/revision of voice.	Uses language that adequately communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, with few language errors. Writing adequately exhibits refinement/revision of voice.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors. Writing sufficiently exhibits refinement/revision of voice.	Uses language that sometimes impedes understanding because of usage or other errors, lack of evidence and specificity, etc. Writing minimally exhibits refinement/revision of voice.		

Directions: please input your criteria scores to receive the average. Each field is defaulted to zero (0) to show a live field. As you input your individual scores, the column totals will average your score. If you encounter any problems, let David Ryan know: ryand@usfca.edu.

Papers	1. Paper #1.2	2. Paper #1.4	3. Paper #1.6	4. Paper #1.8
Criteria #1	0	0	0	0
Criteria #2	0	0	0	0
Criteria #3	0	0	0	0
Criteria #4	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0
Papers	5. Paper #2.1	6. Paper #2.3	7. Paper #2.5	8. Paper #2.7
Criteria #1	0	0	0	0
Criteria #2	0	0	0	0
Criteria #3	0	0	0	0
Criteria #4	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0

Post-Assessment: once you've completed rating your papers, please inform David Ryan: ryand@usfca.edu