UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO | College of Arts and Sciences

Master of Arts in Professional Communication
and
Certificate in Professional Communication

AGGREGATE ASSESSMENT REPORT
ACADEMIC YEAR 2018 – 2019

December 11, 2019

I. LOGISTICS & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

David Ryan
Academic Director and Faculty Chair
Master of Arts in Professional Communication Program
Certificate in Professional Communication Program
101 Howard St., Suite 207
SF, CA
1-415-422-5524 | ryand@usfca.edu

2. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2018? 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 Statement:
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 2018? 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 2018-2019?

MAPC: PLO #3: Professionalism: graduate students will produce written, oral and digital communication of high quality consistent with their professional concentration and focus.

CPC: for this year, no assessment was conducted. We have two students in our certificate program, and we are collecting work products for our assessment next year. By then, both students should have earned their certificates.

II. METHODS AND 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 our Review Committee (RC). This year, the Review Committee (four faculty members who teach in MAPC) decided to assess PLO#3 using the work products from the program's capstone courses. They chose PLO#3 because PLOs #1 and #2 had been previously reviewed.

The capstone course was chosen for three reasons: (1) previous review committees had assessed the work products from other core MAPC courses; (2) because capstone products are lengthier and different in composition to other work products, they are worthy of a focused assessment separate from other products; and (3) there was enough accumulated capstone projects to assess.

The MAPC Review Committee opted to divide our capstone assessment into two parts and assessed over a two year period. Because our communication program is professionally focused, we require that all students complete the capstone course by (A) presenting their capstone orally and (B) turning in a written product. As a matter of documentation, we attempt to record all oral presentations while each instructor collects written work from their capstone students. To be clear, though the oral and written products are separate products, they are not separately conceived artifacts. The oral presentation is a representation of the written project.

Rather than assess both modalities in one year, we chose to divide our assessment in two parts: (A) this year, the spoken capstone presentation; and (B) next year, their written products. Our two-part assessment allows us to better manage these lengthier and more complicated products and enlarges the potentiality to better understand how our students achieve PLO #3 as expressed in spoken and written forms.

The Review Committee decided to evaluate PLO #3 Professionalism by using direct methods. We identified four Capstone courses from Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters (at seven sections taught by three different instructors) as our best choices. We collected 35 work products that possessed both oral and written artifacts. We then decided to take 20 products (10 from Cohort #1 and 10 from Cohort #2), randomize them, and evenly divide them using four raters who viewed each speech twice.

Normally, we would utilize a double-blind review; however, we could not use a blind review for the oral work products because the identities of the speakers are visibly apparent. The safeguard we used was to have raters assess the product only if they did not serve as primary capstone advisers.

Our voluntary raters agreed to use the UIDM (unsatisfactory, introductory, developing, mastery) codes derived from our curriculum map to rate the speeches.

The Review Committee conceived of two criteria (on p. 5) to assess the speech work products; after vetting the criteria and the usability of the rating sheet, the RC was led by one of our steering committee members to norm a sample work product. This session allowed each rater to understand the criteria, the terms and definitions related to the UIDM codes, and apply them in a synchronous training session (sample rating form is in Appendix A). In this interpretive process, the raters commented on implementing the codes (its meaning, significance, etc.) and discussed the strengths/challenges of the work product. 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, four reviewers rated 20 speech/presentations over a three week period. Our method of rating was asynchronous. All raters accessed their assigned work products and rated these products in Google Spreadsheets by viewing assigned videos. Afterward, the ratings were aggregated and averaged in a shared document for discussion (Appendix B).

There was only one rating discrepancy in the rating process that required a third reader.

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

Summary of Methods used: gathered oral and written capstone work products (from our first two cohorts) and arranged into general categories (oral and written), randomized oral work products in relation to raters, close-reading of the text (interpretation, evaluation) to establish rhetorical-content analysis, focused coding (UIDM) to establish inter-rater reliability (IRR), and discussion to merge reflection with organizational problem and 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.

Of the 20 work products from PC 608 Capstone/Culminating Experience, one achieved Master; four reached an Introductory competency; 15 were rated as Developing; and zero were marked as Unsatisfactory. In binary analysis, 5% achieved Mastery level while 95% did not.

For additional breakdown, please see the charts below:

Figure 1:

Competency Levels: UIDM	Percentage of Work Products
Met the Mastery competency for PLO #3 (1/20)	5%
Did not meet the Mastery competency for PLO #3 (19/20)	95%

Figure 2:

Competency/Codes	Work Products	Percentage
Unsatisfactory	0	0%
Introductory	4	20%
Developing	15	75%
Mastery	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Major Findings: we will submit our major findings next year when we complete our holistic assessment of our capstone work products.

Discussion:

As we have observed in previous assessments, 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—even fewer who relish public speaking.

Because we are a graduate communication program, we prioritize the teaching and learning of professional speaking and writing in all our courses to further develop the communication competencies of our students. Though every course requires writing, two core classes PC 600 Foundations of Communication and PC 608 are dedicated writing classes. Though every class requires some form of oral communication, only PC 629 Reputation Management possesses public speaking learning outcomes.

Because this review focuses on PC 608 Capstone/Culminating Experience in relation to PLO #3 Professionalism, we offer the Course Learning Outcomes for PC 608 below:

> At the end of this course, a successful student will have gained mastery in the following areas by completing a successful capstone project:
>
> ● Disciplinary Problem-Solving: identify an idea, method, or concept from professional communication studies and able it within the context of their major field of study.

- Concentration Competency: demonstrate professional competency in area of chosen concentration, whether strategic, technical or health communication.
- Research Design: demonstrate key concepts, terms and debates that form research and research planning.
- Project Management: demonstrate ability to communicate ethically and effectively with an ability to design, compose, and produce a professional project, working cooperatively with peers and collaboratively with faculty, presenting project within established timelines.

Though all four CLOs focus on achieving measurable outcomes that relate to our Program Learning Outcomes, the final CLO focuses on delivering the project. It is within this outcome that our assessment divides communication into two parts spread over two years: oral presentation this year and the manuscript delivery for next year.

As a program that focuses on the ethical and effective communication of information, we realize that *professional effectiveness* is an ill-defined term. For this reason, our Review Committee focused on narrowing this definition by composing two criteria for oral presentation:

> 1. Professional awareness of occasion and purpose: speaker articulates purpose of capstone speech and organizes speech in a manner that meets audience needs and expectations, including use of conventional components, such as introduction/body/conclusion, or specialized categories like significance of study, literature review, research questions, methods, results,etc.

> 2. Professional presentation includes effective (1) vocal delivery, such as tonal variety, proper enunciation, useful projection, and varied cadence; and (2) effective non-verbal delivery, such as appropriate eye contact and facial messages, hands, arm and foot positioning.

When these criteria were applied to orally-focused capstone work products, one work product rated an M; 15 rated a D; and four an I.

Our initial assessment is that though one student scoring an M seems low, the fact that 15 other presentations scored within the Developing range gives us a good confidence that our students are demonstrating a higher range of professional presentation competencies and are reaching toward achieving a mastery of this outcome.

In terms of our assessment objectives, what is important is that this data will be contextualized with an assessment of the written work products for the same students next year. By delineating and contextualizing the oral and written assessments, our Review Committee believes that this holistic approach will provide a balanced insight into the effectiveness of the Capstone course in relation to PLO #3, potentially other PLOs, and our other courses.

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.

Our organizational approach to assessment is to use the results to improve the curricular framework and teaching practices for our program. As indicated earlier, this assessment is the first of two parts, so our Review Committee is delaying recommending and implementing changes until our assessment of our Capstone course is completed next year.

Yearly assessment inquiries are not achieved in a vacuum. Rather, effective assessments are conducted in conjunction with previous inquiries as a way to create a continuum of improved program practices.

Below, we offer a summary of the outcomes and initiatives that sprang from our previous assessment efforts these past four years:

- Aligning Outcomes: we have continued to improve the alignment between CLOs and PLOs by increasing faculty dialog in formal and informal ways. Regular meetings and workshops improve the articulation between course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes; this initiative also relies on improving pedagogical/andragogical practices between individual classes by focusing on developing course content (heuristics, assignments, etc.) that improve the alignment between outcomes;
- Linked Courses: MAPC faculty have explicitly linked our Core classes. For example, faculty teaching PC 600 Foundations of Communications and PC 602 Ethics of Communication have improved the linkage between these courses while faculty teaching PC 604 Research Methods are directly creating assignments (capstone proposals, drafts of literature review, etc.) that link to PC 608 Capstone/Culminating Experience. This practice delineates the work among the courses but also links the courses thematically and practically to create work products that better prepare students for the capstone.
- Rotating Core Teaching Faculty: as an initiative, MAPC teaching faculty have voluntarily agreed to rotate teaching between core classes. This personnel decision helps faculty better understand the relationships between the courses, broadens their skills and knowledge by teaching linked courses, provides greater insight into assessment, and improves their advising of MAPC students.

Rotating core faculty in our linked courses means faculty share in the responsibility of understanding the similarities, differences, boundaries, and linkages among the courses. This shared commitment leads to faculty better utilizing their skills as teachers while improving their knowledge of advising. This enhanced perspective of our program better serves our students and improves the program's long-term ability to meet the PLOs.

8. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2017-2018, submitted in October 2018)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

We appreciate the continued feedback offered by FDCD and the support from the College of Arts and Sciences.

From our last assessment report, the most important suggestion was to assess separately our capstone from other work products. We used this suggestion to focus on assessing the capstones by dedicating the next two years to studying these products because it's the only course where Mastery is the expected competency.

On a separate note, we recognize that assessment is an important part of our program, and we also acknowledge the importance of accountability. Because of the collegewide initiative related to increasing course capacities, however, MAPC (similar to other programs) has had to balance best practices in relation to complying with new capacity standards. The result is that we are offering fewer core sections and concentration courses.

This significant change has impacted the linkage between when, for example, Research Methods (RM) and Capstone courses, are offered. As a best practice, we advise students to take RM the semester before their Capstone so students can develop their capstone projects over two semesters. We have determined that this linked sequence is a best practice.

However, because we have had to prioritize increasing our course capacity over our best teaching and learning practices, our newest students are taking RM either a year prior to the capstone or will take the courses during the same semester. In addition, increasing the capacity for PC 600 Foundations of Communication (a dedicated writing class) means that the instructor has more drafts and final papers to assess.

Though we have yet to measure the effectiveness of the new policy, this scheduling practice for RM is at odds with what we believe to be the best experience for instructors and students, and we worry that the swelling of class populations will impact the learning of students and the quality of their work products.

In light of this concern, we ask the FDCD to either advocate for or conduct a measurable inquiry into how the administrative priority of raising course capacities has impacted and/or will impact the quality of student work products. In addition, it might be helpful to broaden the scope of the assessment inquiry by collecting key micro-data (related to class size, kind of course, and semester length related to the work products, for example) to better contextualize assessment of the work products as well as provide more kinds of supportive suggestions for improving assessment. No doubt, examining the work products themselves is key to discovering useful data; however, work products are not created in vacuums. Work products are the dynamic outcomes of key variables that are worth exploring themselves in context to the products, especially if the FDCD's assessments are meant to help programs determine and improve the practices of programs to better meet their learning outcomes.

V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

2019 MAPC Steering Committee Members:

- Eve-Anne Doohan, Communication Studies
- Michelle LaVigne, Rhetoric and Language
- Ted Matula, Rhetoric and Language
- David Ryan, Academic Director, MAPC, Rhetoric and Language

2019 MAPC PLO Review Committee Members:

- Tika Lamsal, Rhetoric and Language
- Michelle LaVigne, Rhetoric and Language
- Ted Matula, Rhetoric and Language
- David Ryan, Academic Director: MAPC, Rhetoric and Language

Appendix A

MAPC PLO Assessment Form for PLO #3: Professionalism: oral presentation

Directions: please view you speeches individually and rate each speech based on the criteria below. Rating scores are at the bottom.

Key Performance Indicators

Criteria:	Mastery: 4	Developing: 3	Introductory: 2	Unsatisfactory: 1	PLO#3:
	M	D	I	U	Professionalism
1. Professional awareness of occasion and purpose: speaker articulates purpose of capstone speech and organizes speech in a manner that meets audience needs and expectations, including use of conventional components, such as introduction/body/conclusion, or specialized categories like significance of study, literature review, research questions, methods, results,etc.	Speaker clearly and thoroughly articulates purpose, uses appropriate organizational components to arrange material in a way that meets audience needs and expectations; speaker effectively and consistently reveals organization through transitions.	Speaker adequately articulates purpose, uses clear patterns of arrangement, and uses transitions and organizational signals to keep audience aware of rhetorical purpose throughout the speech.	Speaker reveals purpose and organization sufficiently for audience to follow along, though organizational signals and explicit discussion of purpose, organization may be minimal.	Speaker minimally addresses purpose, arrangement and transition, leaving audience unclear about organization and specific purpose.	Professionalism: graduate students will produce written, oral and digital communication of high quality consistent with their professional concentration and focus;
2. Professional presentation includes effective (1) vocal delivery, such as tonal variety, proper enunciation, useful projection, and varied cadence; and (2) effective non-verbal delivery, such as appropriate eye contact and facial messages, hands, arm and foot positioning.	Speaker thoroughly uses the varied parts of vocal production, such as appropriate tonal pattern, audible projection and proper enunciation to achieve appropriate volume and clarity, and Uses all aspects of non-verbal communication properly and thoroughly, including facial messages and eye contact, demonstrates clear and focused awareness of using supportive non-verbal behavior.	Vocal delivery is adequately utilized: vocal production utilizes some aspects of varied tonal patterns, enunciation and projection to achieve proper volume and clarity; Uses aspects of non-verbal communication adequately; demonstrates awareness of non-verbal communication, employing aspects of facial messaging, eye contact directed at audience.	Vocal production sufficiently achieves useful variance: enunciation is mostly appropriate and projection achieves sufficiency; uses some aspect of non-verbal communication infrequently, demonstrating sufficient awareness of own non-verbal communication.	Vocal production minimally utilizes vocal variety pertaining to tone, cadence and projection, or production lacks sufficient variety in delivery; uses non-verbal communication minimally, speaker either lacks intent to use non-verbal communication to support spoken words or unintended non-verbals give wrong messages.	

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.

Videos	1. Video #1.5	2. Video #1.7	3. Video #1.9	4. Video #1.11	5. Video #1.15
Criteria #1	0	0	0	0	0
Criteria #2	0	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0	0

	6. Video #2.2	7. Video #2.3	8. Video #2.6	9. Video #2.10	10. Video #2.16
Criteria #1	0	0	0	0	0
Criteria #2	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0

Post-Assessment: once you've completed rating your four work products (videos), please inform David Ryan: ryand@usfca.edu

Appendix B

	Tika	David					Michelle	Ted					
Video #1	Video #1.5	Video #1.5	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #11**	Video #1.3	Video #1.3	Average Total	UIDM		Assessed Core Classes	PLO #3
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	3	2	2.5	I		608 Capstone/Culminating E	M
Criteria #2	3	2	2.5	I		Criteria #2	3	3	3	D			
Total:	3	2.5	2.75	I		Total:	3	2.5	2.75	I			
Video #2	Video #1.6	Video #1.6	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #12**	Video #1.7	Video #1.7	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	4	4	4	M		Criteria #1	4	4	4	M			
Criteria #2	3	2	2.5	D		Criteria #2	4	4	4	M		**QUICK FACTS:**	
Total:	3.25	3	3.125	D		Total:	4	4	4	M		Competency/Codes		Percentage
												Unsatisfactory	0	0%
Video #3	Video #1.8	Video #1.8	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #13**	Video #1.10	Video #1.10	Average Total	UIDM		Introductory	4	20%
Criteria #1	4	4	4	M		Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Developing	15	75%
Criteria #2	3	3	3	D		Criteria #2	3	3	3	D		Mastery	1	5%
Total:	3.5	3.5	3.5	D		Total:	3	3	3	D		Total	20	
Video #4	Video #1.9	Video #1.9	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #14**	Video #1.15	Video #1.15	Average Total	UIDM		**Summary**	Ave. per Criteria	UIDM
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	3	3.5	D		Criteria #1	3.352173913	D
Criteria #2	4	3	3.5	D		Criteria #2	4	4	4	M		Criteria #2	3.380434783	D
Total:	3.5	3	3.25	D		Total:	4	3.5	3.75	D		Total Ave.	3.366304348	D
Video #5	Video #1.19	Video #1.19	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #15**	Video #1.17	Video #1.17	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	4	4	M			
Criteria #2	3	3	3	D		Criteria #2	3.5	3	3.25	D			
Total:	3	3	3	D		Total:	3.75	3.5	3.625	D			
Video #6	Video #2.1	Video #2.1	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #16**	Video #2.7	Video #2.7	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	4	4	4	M		Criteria #1	4	3	3.5	D			
Criteria #2	4	3	3.5	D		Criteria #2	4	3	3.5	D			
Total:	4	3.5	3.75	D		Total:	4	3	3.5	D			
Video #7	Video #2.2	Video #2.2		UIDM		**Video #17**	Video #2.8	Video #2.8	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	3	3.5	D			
Criteria #2	3	3	3	D		Criteria #2	4	4	4	M			
Total:	3	3	3	D		Total:	4	3.5	3.75	D			
Video #8	Video #2.5	Video #2.5	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #18**	Video #2.9	Video #2.9	Video #2.9	Ave. Total	UIDM	Required a Third Rater
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	3	3	3.333333333	D	
Criteria #2	2	3	2.5	I		Criteria #2	4	2	3	3	D	
Total:	2.5	3	2.75	I		Total:	4	2.5	3	3.166666667	D	
Video #9	Video #2.6	Video #2.6	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #19**	Video #2.10	Video #2.10	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	3	3.5	D			
Criteria #2	2	2	2	I		Criteria #2	4	3	3.5	D			
Total:	2.5	2.5	2.5	I		Total:	4	3	3.5	D			
Video #10	Video #2.14	Video #2.14	Average Total	UIDM		**Video #20**	Video #2.11	Video #2.11	Average Total	UIDM			
Criteria #1	3	3	3	D		Criteria #1	4	3	3.5	D			
Criteria #2	4	4	4	M		Criteria #2	3.5	3	3.25	D			
Total:	3.5	3.5	3.5	D		Total:	3.75	3	3.375	D			