

ASSESSMENT REPORT (REGULAR TEMPLATE)

NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT/MAJOR OR MINOR/CERTIFICATE
<INSERT HERE>

ACADEMIC YEAR 2019 - 2020

REPORT DUE DATE: December 4, 2020

This is our regular assessment template.

Given the unusual circumstances of the 2019-2020 academic year, each program/department/major/minor/certificate has two options of assessment:

- (a) Usual assessment report based on this template OR
- (b) Alternative assessment reflections on distance learning pivot based on the alternative attached template

Every program/department/major/minor/certificate can choose ONE of the two alternative reports to submit

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- **Who should submit the report? – All majors, minors (including interdisciplinary minors), graduate and non-degree granting certificate programs of the College of Arts and Sciences.**
 - **Programs can combine assessment reports for a major and a minor program into one aggregate report as long as the mission statements, program learning outcome(s) evaluated, methodology applied to each, and the results are clearly delineated in separate sections**
 - **Undergraduate, Graduate and Certificate Programs must submit separate reports**
 - **It is recommended that assessment report not exceed 10 pages. Additional materials (optional) can be added as appendices**
 - **Curriculum Map should be submitted along with Assessment Report**

Some useful contacts:

1. Prof. Alexandra Amati, FDCD, Arts – adamati@usfca.edu
2. Prof. John Lendvay, FDCD, Sciences – lendvay@usfca.edu
3. Prof. Mark Meritt, FDCD, Humanities – meritt@usfca.edu
4. Prof. Michael Jonas, FDCD, Social Sciences – mrjonas@usfca.edu
5. Prof. Suparna Chakraborty, AD Academic Effectiveness – schakraborty2@usfca.edu

Academic Effectiveness Annual Assessment Resource Page:

<https://myusf.usfca.edu/arts-sciences/faculty-resources/academic-effectiveness/assessment>

Email to submit the report: assessment_cas@usfca.edu

Important: Please write the name of your program or department in the subject line.

**For example: FineArts_Major (if you decide to submit a separate report for major and minor);
FineArts_Aggregate (when submitting an aggregate report)**

I. LOGISTICS

1. Please indicate the name and email of the program contact person to whom feedback should be sent (usually Chair, Program Director, or Faculty Assessment Coordinator).

Brandi Lawless, Chair, Communication Studies Department, bjlawless@usfca.edu

2. Please indicate if you are submitting report for (a) a Major, (b) a Minor, (c) an aggregate report for a Major & Minor (in which case, each should be explained in a separate paragraph as in this template), (d) a Graduate or (e) a Certificate Program

This is an aggregate report of our major and minor.

3. Please note that a Curricular Map should accompany every assessment report. Has there been any revisions to the Curricular Map since October 2019?

No.

II. MISSION STATEMENT & PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Were any changes made to the program mission statement since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? 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.

COMS Major and Minor 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.

2. Were any changes made to the program learning outcomes (PLOs) since the last assessment cycle in October 2019? 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.

Note: Major revisions in the program learning outcomes need to go through the College Curriculum Committee (contact: Professor Joshua Gamson, gamson@usfca.edu). Minor editorial changes are not required to go through the College Curriculum Committee.

PLOs (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

No.

COMS Major Program Learning Outcomes:

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 test hypotheses.
4. Students will identify and assess the social context for their messages and craft effective messages for specific audiences.
5. Students will be able to identify how communication produces, reinforces, and critiques social inequalities and power relations.

Because there are only 7 declared COMS minors, our understanding is that we do not need to submit a full assessment report.

3. State the particular Program Learning Outcome(s) you assessed for the academic year 2019-2020. PLO(s) being assessed (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

For the COMS major, we finished the assessment of PLO 3 during the 2019-2020 academic year. Because we only have 7 COMS minors, this is an aggregate report.

III. METHODOLOGY

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.”

Important Note – WSCUC advises us to use “direct methods” which relate to a direct evaluation of a student work product. “Indirect methods” like exit interviews or student surveys can be used only as additional complements to a direct method.

For any program with fewer than 10 students: If you currently have fewer than 10 students in your program (rendering your statistical analysis biased due to too few data points), it is fine to describe a multi-year data collection strategy here. It would be important to remember that every 3 years, we would expect you to have enough data to conduct a meaningful analysis.

Important: Please attach, at the end of this report, a copy of the rubric used for assessment.

Methodology used (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

We have a two-part process for assessment. The first involves work products identified by students that we use to develop and test our rubric. As part of our COMS 496: Communication Studies Internship course, students complete a “Learning Assessment and Skills Translation” assignment where they explain what each of our PLOs mean to them and upload a work product from a class that they think demonstrates how they

meet each PLO. We find this is a great way to get students aware of the learning outcomes for our major and have them reflect on the coursework they have completed. They also then work on translating the material into skills they could talk about on a resume or in a job interview. For the first part of the assessment of each PLO, we use the materials that students have uploaded. These are used to help us practice with the rubric we have developed and do an initial test of our interrater reliability. For the second part of the assessment of each PLO, we randomly select 10% of students in each class that professors have identified as meeting a specific PLO (via our curriculum map). Professors then pull the work products of the randomly selected students that they think are the best ways to assess the PLO for that particular class. Our PA then redacts any identifying information. The COMS Assessment Committee then trains all of the other faculty on the use of the rubric.

The PLO 3 rubric was developed and practice rating occurred in the fall. Then training of all faculty and rating occurred in January.

We had 192 students enrolled in the Fall 2019 in courses that met PLO 3 (including COMS 204, 252, 253, 302, 315, 344, and 358) and XX students in Spring 2019 (COMS 204, 252, 253, 254, 300, 344, 352, and 364) for a total of 186 students. We rated work products from 34 randomly selected students, representing 12% of the students enrolled (as recommended we aim to rate at least 10%). Each work product was rated three times (by three different faculty members). Cronbach's alpha was .78, which indicates that an acceptable level of reliability was reached.

We would like to point out a few things about our assessment plan. All COMS faculty rotate on to the COMS Assessment Committee and serve for two years (with the Department Chair serving as Chair of the COMS Assessment Committee and serving for the duration of their term as Chair). This past year (2019-2020), the COMS Assessment Committee was made up of Marilyn DeLaure, Allison Thorson, and Bryan Whaley, with Eve-Anne Doohan chairing the committee. Fay Chen joined the COMS Assessment Committee in the Spring of 2019 and will serve on the Assessment Committee as she

oversees our Public Relations Minor. For this coming year (2020-2021), the COMS Assessment Committee is made up of Fay Chen, Marilyn DeLaure, and Bryan Whaley, with Brandi Lawless chairing the committee. Also, all of the faculty serve as faculty raters. We had 100% faculty involvement this past year, which we think is impressive.

Methodology used (Minor):

This is an aggregate report of the COMS major and the minor.

IV. RESULTS & MAJOR FINDINGS

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.**

To address this, among many other options, one option is to use a table showing the distribution, for example:

Level	Percentage of Students
Complete Mastery of the outcome	
Mastered the outcome in most parts	
Mastered some parts of the outcome	
Did not master the outcome at the level intended	

Results (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

The rubric we developed allows us to indicate what level of achievement was met and to map whether this is the appropriate level of achievement for that particular course (e.g., our foundation course, COMS 204 is supposed to meet PLO 3 at the Introductory level,

while one of our methods courses, COMS 254 is supposed to meet PLO 3 at the Mastery level). The results for PLO 3 are below:

Introductory Level (COMS 204):

2 students = 3

1 student = 4

These results indicate that all of the students in COMS 204 are surpassing expectations for PLO 3 by moving beyond the introductory level.

Developing Level (COMS 252, 253, 302, 344, & 364):

2 students = 1

5 students = 2

5 students = 3

2 students = 4

These results indicate that the majority of the students in these classes are meeting the expectations for the developing level, with a few students falling short. It is notable that the students who are meeting at an introductory level are all in COMS 253 and 302—it is worth revisiting the curriculum map for these classes.

Mastery Level (COMS 254, 300, 315, 352):

4 students = 3

8 students = 4

According to our new rubric, most of the students in our sample are satisfying requirements for mastery of PLO 3. Those who are not mastering the PLO are at least achieving Development. None of the students in this sample fall short of Developing,

which indicates that students are indeed developing their skillsets as they move through the major, with many mastering the skills we lay out in our outcomes.

V. CLOSING THE LOOP

1. 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.

Closing the Loop (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

In a previous report, we articulated the observation that it was too easy to score at the introductory level and too difficult to score at the mastery level. The COMS Assessment Committee worked to revise our rubric so that a score of 4 or 5 indicates mastery. These revisions led to a rubric that still includes the level of achievement but more accurately reflects students who are able to achieve mastery, rather than perfection.

(See new rubric, attached)

Additionally, the assessment indicated that we may want to revisit our curriculum map for PLO 3. Two classes (COMS 253 and COMS 302) may not orient students toward PLO 3 at a developing level. We will discuss changes to these classes on the curriculum map, in particular.

Next year we will assess PLO 4: “Students will identify and assess the social context for their messages and craft effective messages for specific audiences.” The COMS assessment committee will be chaired by Brandi Lawless and include Fay Chen, Marilyn DeLaure, and Bryan Whaley. We will pull work products from the mapped courses in Fall 2020 (for Fall 2020 and Spring 2020 courses). The assessment committee will draft rubrics. In Spring 2021, we will train the faculty on the rubrics and rate the work products previously collected.

2. What were the most important suggestions/feedback from the FDCD on your last assessment report (for academic year 2018-2019, submitted in October 2019)? How did you incorporate or address the suggestion(s) in this report?

Suggestions (Major/Graduate/Certificate):

Our report last year indicated that we are doing an excellent job with assessment in our department. Indeed, we were very pleased when our efforts were recognized two years ago with the “Star Assessment Award” by Dean Camperi. We were complimented on the rigor of our methodology “which exceeds best practices.” It was also noted that our report “meets the highest expectations.” We did not have any suggestions of things that should be changed or that we needed to implement.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

(Any rubrics used for assessment, relevant tables, charts and figures could be included here)

1 Insufficient	2 Introductory	3 Developing	4 Mastery	5 Exceptional
Students do not do these things or do so incorrectly or with excessive errors.	Students do one or the other: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data OR Analyzing Text(s)/Data	Students do both: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data	Students do all three: Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data AND Offering Research Insight	Students do all three <i>with exceptional skill</i> : Selecting Text(s)/ Collecting Data AND Analyzing Texts/Data AND Offering Research Insight