Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Communication Studies, B.A.</th>
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<td>Department</td>
<td>COMMUNICATION STUDIES</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>URBAN AFFAIRS</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>6/29/2016</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
This report includes data from 2014 and 2015, since we were in transition on the Assessment process in the first of those years. The undergraduate program includes three required lower division classes and three required upper division courses.

The three lower division classes are part of the Department’s pre-major which students must complete with grades of C or better before they can gain admission to full major status. Pre-test and post-test data are used to gauge student progress in all three classes.

COM 101 Oral Communication

The primary method for assessing student learning of theory and concepts in this course is administration of a 25-item pre-test in the first week of the term, and integration of the same items into the Final examination. In all four terms reported here, progress was significant.

Spring 2014: 156 students were randomly selected from among the 636 enrolled to take the pre-test. The mean for the pre-test was 10.8/25. This improved to 16/25 on the Final. The Basic Course Director reported a slight difference for students in 25-student sections taught entirely by one teacher (from 9.2/25 to 17.5/25) as opposed to large lecture sections with 250-plus students in lecture, attached to 20-25 student “breakout” sections in which graduate teaching assistants tutored, evaluated speeches, etc. The 8.3 point improvement in the small classes is the largest net gain since we began collecting data in Fall 2009.

Fall 2014: 237 randomly selected students, from a total of 962 enrolled in the course, took the 25-item pre-test and post-test. The mean for the pre-test was 11.2/25. The post-test, integrated into the final, progressed to 17/25.

Spring 2015: 238 students of 1031 enrolled took the pre-test, earning a mean of 11/25. The same students’ scores on those items on the final improved to 17/25.

Fall 2015: 202 of 1024 students, randomly selected for the task, earned 9.7/25 on the pre-test. They improved to 16/25 on the final.

COM 102 Introduction to Interpersonal Communication

Spring 2014: Data were collected from large lecture (140 students) section and one 27-student section of the course. Students completed a 25-item pre-test in the first week of the semester, and responded to the same 25 questions embedded in the final examination. Students in the small section improved from 11.8/25 to 17.2/25, while the average in the large lecture class progressed from 11.7/25 to 18/25).
Fall 2014: The Department offered two large lecture sections and one online section in this term. Of the 377 enrolled in large lecture classes, 328 completed the pre-test and the final examination. One large lecture section scored 11.5/25 on the pre-test, and 20/25 on the post-test. The other section started at 12.24/25, and improved to 18.39/25 on the final. Scores for the online class were nearly two points higher, for which there is no immediately evident explanation.

Spring 2015: Twenty-eight of 30 students enrolled in one small section of the course took the pre-test, averaging 11.57/25. Twenty-two of the 28 took the final, which included the 25 items from the pre-test. Scores rose to 20.41/25. The results were similar in the two large lecture classes, with one progressing from 11.4/25 to 19.78, and students in the other moving from 12.05/24 to 19.71.

Data are available only for three sections, as the primary instructor of this class was on maternity leave in fall 2015 and her substitute was not aware early that the pre-test needed to be administered.

**COM 216 Survey of Communication Studies**

Spring 2015: Data collection began with the calendar year 2015 for this class, and took place only in this section. Our intention is that at least one section will engage in pre- and post-testing each term from now on.

This term, 87 of 119 students (in two sections) took the pre-test and post-test. The exam structure is like those in COM 101 and 102, in that the pre-test includes 25 items, which appear again in the final exam. This semester students in section 1001 averaged 10.47/25 on the pre-test, and 16.56/ on the pre-test questions that appeared in the final exam. Section 1002 scores were slightly higher, as students progressed from 11.14/25 on average to 17.62.

**Assessment of the three upper division classes** is a work in progress. All students are required to take COM 400, Human Communication Theory, and COM 409, The Rhetorical Tradition. Based on their interest, students then take one of two methods classes, COM 408, Rhetorical Criticism, or COM 435, Quantitative Research Methods. COM 435 or COM 408 also serve as the options for students’ Capstone class requirement. Both classes afford students opportunities to develop original research projects, with the potential for submission and presentation to larger audiences.

Until this evaluation cycle the Department reported final grade data from the core classes. When 75% of the class earned C or higher grades the course was deemed a success. As we are told that is no longer an acceptable measure, faculty revised modes of Assessment for these classes. We created an Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award; have encouraged—and support with travel resources—submissions to research symposia, professional conferences, and similar outlets; and have begun
tracking progress from these classes to graduate school. Across 2014 and 2015 our undergraduate students have participated in the UNLV Undergraduate Research Symposium; presented papers at the National Communication Association convention, the Western States Communication Association conference, and at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, among other outlets; and continued their educations as students in our Master’s program or in graduate school elsewhere.

We recognize there remains a need to make more systematic the nature of “data collection” for the upper division classes, but we believe we have a good start. Faculty will revisit the issue in extended discussion at the Fall 2016 Retreat on August 22, as well as during curriculum meetings in Spring 2017.