Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet

Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term

Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Communication Studies, M.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>
<td>DAVID HENRY</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
<td>6/30/2016</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 graduate program includes four required courses. COM 710, Survey of Communication Studies, and COM 730, Theories of Communication, establish the evolution of the field’s theoretical foundations. COM 711, Rhetorical-Critical Research Methods, and COM 712, Empirical Research Methods, build on the “theory” classes as students develop their own original research projects. Material from these courses underlies the work students do in the remainder of their course work and in their culminating experience, whether that is a thesis, a professional paper, or completion of the comprehensive exams.

Department Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the Master of Arts program in Communication Studies, students should be able to:

1. Define communication in interpersonal and rhetorical contexts.

2. Analyze and evaluate messages and interactions in interpersonal and rhetorical settings.

3. Identify and explain historical developments and key theories in interpersonal and rhetorical communication.

4. Recognize and explain self-reflexivity in interpersonal and rhetorical contexts.

5. Evaluate critically research studies and published articles.

6. Recognize and explain multiple perspectives in interpersonal and rhetorical communication.

7. Conduct original research in interpersonal and/or rhetorical communication at a level appropriate for undergraduate students.

8. Recognize and assess ethical vs. unethical rhetorical and interpersonal communication.

Assessment of Student Success, 2014 and 2015

Indication of successful inculcation of the Department’s Learning Outcomes is reflected over these two years in four measures.
1. **Graduation rates.** Eight students began the M.A. program in Fall 2012 and all eight earned their degrees by the summer of 2014. Four students began the program in Fall 2013 and three of them completed the degree by the summer of 2015. The 2015 class actually is an anomaly with so few students. The next two are at 11 and nine.

2. **Post-graduation tracks.** Four of the eight continued in doctoral programs; three are pursuing the Ph.D. in Communication Studies at the Universities of Kansas, Minnesota, and Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the fourth is working toward a doctorate in the UNLV College of Education. A fifth member of that cohort spent one year as a visiting lecturer in our department, worked for the Hotel College for a year, and will be a visitor with us again next year. Two of the 2015 graduates spent 2015-present teaching at the University of Hawaii and at CSN, respectively; both are applying to PhD programs in Communication for fall 2017. The third graduate that year took a position in Sen Harry Reid’s Office of Communications, has received two promotions since, and is likely to stay in Washington in a similar position.

3. **Research presentations and publication.** The doctoral student at Minnesota co-authored a regional journal article with her UNLV mentor. The student at Wisconsin-Milwaukee has published two national journal articles and a third in progress. They, as well as the other two from their cohort who are pursuing a PhD have presented multiple competitively refereed conference papers at national, regional, and specialized (thematic) professional meetings. The student at Kansas received a four-year fellowship deemed one of the most prestigious honors awarded. Years one and four are free of teaching obligations, and the stipend is roughly double that of mainstream graduate teaching assistantships. This is a campus wide competition with 10-12 recipients. All three of the 2015 graduates presented competitively selected papers, one has published a co-authored article with a thesis committee member, and another has submitted a journal manuscript co-authored with his thesis advisor.

4. **Graduate portfolios.** These are all excellent students who may have met with similar successes as MA students/graduates at other universities or in other disciplines. They attribute their success, career paths, ability to research, write, and argue, though, largely to the graduate education begun here. The testimony is in their graduate portfolios, required of all students. The portfolio encompasses narratives on teaching and research, samples of their scholarship and of their work in the classroom, and a program assessment completed in the fourth semester. Faculty have used the assessment comments in discussions of the program’s strengths, challenges, and prospective remedies for the challenges.