Communications and Media Studies Program
Program Review Report

Prepared by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee
February 18, 2010

The Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee (CEPC) reviewed the Communications and Media Studies Program on February 18, 2010. Dr. James Neuliep was present on February 18, 2010, to provide an overview of the Program and answer questions from the members of the Committee. This report provides a summary of the strengths, observations, concerns and recommendations of the Program Review as identified by the CEPC.

Strengths
- Communications and Media Studies (CMS) is to be complimented on adopting a curriculum that combines both theory and practice. (II)
- CMS remains a popular program amongst students and does a good job at graduating its majors. (IV)
- Three faculty members of the discipline have received the Leonard Ledvina Award for excellence in teaching. (V)
- CMS makes a strong contribution to General Education and other programs at the College. (VI)

Observations
- The meaning of the phrase “an integrated study of several areas of Communication” (p.2 section II.A.) is unclear. It is difficult to determine if it is the responsibility of the student to integrate the curriculum or if the curriculum itself is designed to be integrative. Moreover, this would not be considered an objective of the program rather a description. (II)
- The report does not specify who is responsible for coordinating assessment of the program. (II)
- The discipline does not appear to rotate the coordinator position nor does the report include a plan for that rotation in the future. (II)
- The average class size of CMS courses is very large. (IV)
- The report does not clarify what “performance based” means and how it distinguishes this discipline from other heavily enrolled disciplines. (IV)

Concerns
- Learning outcomes are not placed within the body of the report but rather they are included as an appendix. (II)
- The report states that the curriculum follows best practices, but it does not identify what those best practices are or the source in which they are identified. (II)
- It is not made clear in the report how each member of the discipline shares administrative responsibility. (II)
• Learning outcomes data are included but the report does not provide an analysis or interpretation of the data. (III)
• Indirect evidence of student learning outcomes is provided but there are no benchmarks for comparison, which makes it difficult to analyze the data. (III)
• No documentation of program improvement efforts based on assessment is included. (III)
• Although a curriculum plan is included in the report, staffing needs are not prioritized. (III)
• All instructors, part time and full, are not included together in the list of FTE program faculty. (IV)
• Although the program was given disaggregated data, the report shows only aggregated data by concentration, which does not highlight trends in majors. (IV)
• The report shows the ratio of number of students to only tenure track faculty rather than to all instructional FTEs. (IV)
• Course enrollment and grade distribution data for CMS courses are included but the report does not include comparative data. (IV)
• The report does not make curricular comparisons with our peers and aspirants. (IV)
• The program review contains limited SOOT data from the CMS discipline. (V)
• Given the centrality of teaching to our institution, the section of the report on teaching is surprisingly lacking in data showing student success. (V)
• No description of advising practices is presented in the report, nor does it seem that the discipline provides career planning for its majors and minors. (V)
• Although CVs are provided, which list collegial and community service, no summary of faculty members’ contributions is included in the report. (V)
• Although information is presented on the high quality of students within the program, no evidence is given of how the discipline attracts and retains quality students. (VI)
• The report does not describe the uniqueness of the program to the state or region nor does it indicate specific advantages its uniqueness affords the College. (VI)
• A curricular plan is provided but needs further focus and prioritization in order to become part of a strategic plan. (VI)

Recommendations
• Place student learning outcomes within the body of the report rather than simply including them as an appendix. (II)
• Identify specifically how the program follows current best practices for the program’s curriculum as well as the source of these best practices. (II)
• Establish a plan for equitable sharing of administrative responsibility within the discipline. (II)
• Provide benchmarks for comparison of indirect evidence of student learning such as college averages. (III)
• Look at current student, alumni, and future students’ needs, as well as best practices, to bolster curricular development. Additionally, provide documentation of program improvement efforts based upon assessment. (III)
• Prioritize staffing needs in curriculum plan. (III)
• Include a complete list of all instructors, part time and full, in the record of FTE program faculty. (IV)
• Utilize the disaggregate data by concentration already provided for the discipline to show trends in majors. (IV)
• Report out the number of students per all instructional FTEs, not just tenure track appointments. (IV)
• Include comparative data of course enrollment and grade distribution for the division and the College. (IV)
• Include curricular comparisons with our peers and aspirants and assess what they can tell us about your program. (IV)
• Include more SOOT data than just two questions. (V)
• Further develop the section on teaching by giving specific examples of student success. (V)
• Include a description of advising practices as well as supportive data on career preparation. (V)
• Include a summary of faculty members’ contributions to collegial and community service in the body of the report. (V)
• Provide evidence of how the discipline attracts and retains quality students. (VI)
• Describe the uniqueness of the program to the state or region and the specific advantages this uniqueness affords the College. (VI)
• Further focus and prioritize the curricular plan and develop it into a strategic plan. (VI)
• Articulate the discipline’s activities with regard to career planning for majors and minors. (VI)

Statement from the CEPC
At this stage of assessment on our campus, the CEPC is very concerned that the CMS assessment plan has yet to begin to close the loop. Additionally, it is not clear whether or not the discipline has fully developed a strategic plan. Lastly, as a discipline that serves a large number of students and is vital to the future of the College, more of CMS’ progressive efforts should be highlighted in future program reviews.