Academic Year: 2013-14
Program: Communication

STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: GEORGE CHEATHAM, ACTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2015

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE AND HOW ARE DATA AND DOCUMENTS USED TO GENERATE THIS REPORT BEING STORED:
Documents on which this report are based are kept in a file cabinet in my office, room 2003 of Gailhac Hall

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

List all of the program’s learning outcomes: (regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Year of Last Assessment</th>
<th>Year of Next Planned Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate theoretical knowledge in communications field based on established theoretical traditions or schools of thought</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate oral and written communication skills, and an understanding of diverse audiences, and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings and attitudes to a target audience.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate effective use of research skills and gathering data from diverse sources.</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
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Describe how the program’s outcomes support Marymount’s Mission, Strategic Plan, and relevant school plan:
The Communication major—in support of the university’s mission as well as the strategic plan and the A&S school plan—is designed for students seeking a program emphasizing writing, speaking and relevant technological skills. Graduates are prepared for career opportunities in the mass media (print, broadcast and digital journalism), public relations and related fields (law, politics, business) as well as graduate studies.

Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including strengths, challenges and planned improvements:
Faculty provide the department’s chair with exam grades, evaluations of research papers and projects and employer evaluations of internships. The courses included in this data collection range from Freshman to Senior years. In addition the results of a survey of graduating seniors are evaluated. The chair then compiles numerical summaries of the data used in preparing this report. A clearer set of rubrics needs to be developed to show specific skill growth, such as in critical thinking, which is not currently directly assessed. Adding a portfolio component in the senior year would also enhance assessment.

Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:
The program has undergone a significant reconfiguration during that will take effect in Fall 2015. The programs in Communication and Graphic Design will merge into a single program, Communication and Media Design. As a result, the combined programs will review their learning outcomes and assessment processes for the 2015-16 assessment period.
Provide a response to last year’s University Assessment Committee review of the program’s learning assessment report: (List each recommendation and provide a specific response to each).

- The program failed to submit a learning assessment report last year.
Outcome and Past Assessment

Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate the effective use of research skills and gathering data from diverse sources.

Is this outcome being reexamined?  □ Yes  x No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</td>
<td>Define and explain acceptable level of student performance.</td>
<td>Discuss the data collected and student population</td>
<td>1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM 425 Sr. Seminar In Communication - Research paper evaluation by faculty (Direct)</td>
<td>A score above the average grade based on “Research Paper Evaluation Criteria.”</td>
<td>The faculty evaluation of the 31 seniors who took the course were analyzed</td>
<td>Ten criteria were used in grading the papers. Please see the data sheet attached</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):
More than half of the students in Senior Seminar scored above the average and achieved ratings of “Excellent” or “Very Good.” Thus the outcome was achieved.

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:
As the majority of our students reach their senior year they clearly have amassed a broad base of theoretical knowledge about the field of Communication and are able to marshal that knowledge and conduct research to produce an effective paper. No one criterion stood out as being particularly weak. The weakest performance categories were use and documentation of sources/methodology and writing/formatting. The seminar instructor will pay particular attention to these items. In addition, the CMD curriculum to take effect in 2015-16 has an increased writing requirement.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:
The CMD curriculum to take effect in 2015-16 has an increased writing requirement.
Outcome and Past Assessment

Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate theoretical knowledge in communications field based on established theoretical traditions or schools of thought.

Is this outcome being reexamined? Yes ☐ No ☑

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

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COM 425 Sr. Seminar in Communications: Final Exam (direct)

A score of better than average on the final exam.

The final exam grades of the 31 senior students taking the class were analyzed.

The total of all grades was divided by the number of students—leading to an average. The median exam grades in both the fall and spring semesters were higher than the average grade and were in line with previous results. Please see data attached.

Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):

A majority of students scored above the average grade on the exam, thereby demonstrating a satisfactory understanding of appropriate theory. The outcome was achieved.

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:

In this outcome students in the program can demonstrate their broad theoretical knowledge of the field. It is a multiple-choice test which doesn’t always demonstrate critical thinking. Other ways of assessing this knowledge are under consideration.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:

As the CMD curriculum is implemented, outcomes and measures will be reviewed.
Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate oral and written communication skills; and an understanding of diverse audiences, and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings and attitudes to a target audience.

Is this outcome being reexamined? ☑ Yes ☐ No

If yes, give a brief summary of previous results (including trends) and any changes made to the program.

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<td>COM 101 Public Speaking: Faculty evaluation of Midterm and final exams (direct)</td>
<td>A score above average on exam grading criteria</td>
<td>Student grades on the two exams were analyzed. Most of the students taking this class are freshmen.</td>
<td>The grades on the exams were totaled and both median and average grades were determined. The number of students scoring above the average was then noted. Please see data attached.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Graduating Communication Student Survey (indirect)</td>
<td>A response of satisfaction at or above other A&amp;S departments</td>
<td>Survey evaluating student career preparation conducted by the office of institutional assessment</td>
<td>21 students responded for 2013-14. The survey included 18 items with responses on a 5-point scale (1=poor; 5=excellent). Students responded with a mean of 4.0 or above on 13 of the items (over 80% responses “good” or “excellent”).</td>
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Interpretation of Results

Extent this Learning Outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):
On the COM 101 exams, a majority of students scored above average on both exams. Thus the direct measure suggests that the outcome was achieved. The indirect measure, the Graduating Student Survey, is less clear. First, the comparison data named in the performance standard is not clear. The program needs to clarify what “response of satisfaction” means exactly. Second, the items with the lowest mean responses, less than 4.0, have to do with employment—find a job in your field, succeed in a job in your field, attain a promotion within your existing employment situation, pursue more education in your field. The most recent of the program’s reports did not include graduating student survey data. The current data can establish a baseline.
Academic Year: 2013-14
Program: Communication

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:
Scores on COM 101 tests seem an ineffective way to assess oral and written communication skills. Other direct measures need to be identified. In addition, the survey data suggest that more attention could be given to employment issues.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome:
The coming CMD curriculum has an increased emphasis on writing and presentation. The review of outcomes and assessment processes will need to account for these skills.