STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROGRAM: Communication
SUBMITTED BY: Kimberly Meltzer, with assistance from Bridget Murphy
DATE: September 28, 2016

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 Arts and Science Dean’s office, room 2003 of Gailhac Hall, in a file cabinet in the department chair’s office, room G106 of Gailhac Hall, and in electronic files on the former department co-chair’s computer. In the future, electronic assessment data and documents might also be kept in a secure, password protected computer file or drive.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program description from the Course Catalog: Please copy and paste the current year’s catalog description of this program. This is generally a one-two paragraph description immediately following the name of the program. Please be sure to include the listing of program outcomes as printed.

The Department of Communication and Media Design offers a cross-disciplinary course of study leading to a bachelor's degree in either communication or media design. The curriculum is grounded in design and communication theory and supports the development of research, writing, critical thinking, and creative practice skills. Students develop the conceptual and practical skills that enable them to create design and communication solutions for the contemporary media environment.

Graduates are prepared for entry-level positions in a range of communication media and design organizations. In addition, the major in communication provides excellent preparation for graduate study in communication, public relations, corporate communication, law, and journalism.

Upon successful completion of the communication major, students will be able to:
• demonstrate the effective use of research skills and the ability to gather data from diverse sources;
• demonstrate an understanding of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
• write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
• demonstrate oral communication skills and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings and attitudes to a target audience; and
• apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.
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>Assessed This Year</th>
<th>Year of Next Planned Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the effective use of research skills and the ability to gather data from diverse sources</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate oral communication skills and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings and attitudes to a target audience</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work</td>
<td></td>
<td>no</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 to foster engagement and intellectual curiosity through active learning and community resources for students seeking a program emphasizing writing, speaking, and relevant technological skills. Graduates complete the Liberal Arts Core as a foundation for developing intellectual as well as practical skills. Our students become critical thinkers who value, pursue, and apply knowledge. The curriculum promotes career preparation and is grounded in communication theory and application of theory and skills to research and professional work. It supports the development of research, writing, and critical thinking. Students develop the conceptual and practical skills that enable them to create, design, and communicate solutions for the contemporary media environment. Students are prepared for career opportunities in mass media (print, broadcast and digital journalism), corporate communications, public relations, and related fields (law, politics, business) as well as graduate studies. The program also offers courses designated as Inquiry (INQ) and Writing Intensive (WI) which support the University’s core competencies. The program also regularly enrolls students in the Internship course (CMD 400) which enables students to gain practical industry experience and apply their academic knowledge in a professional communication setting.

NOTE: The reference for these LO is the ACEJMC (https://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/2012%20Assessment%20Guide.pdf) A suggestion is for the COM program to discuss these in relation to it being more of a Mass Communication program. Perhaps the mission and direction for the new department should be discussed. This is addressed in the next item.
Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including strengths, challenges and planned improvements and provide evidence of the existence of a culture of continuous improvement based on assessment:

Faculty provide the department’s chair with exam grades, evaluations of research papers and projects and employer evaluations of internships. Per the Assessment Committee’s recommendation from its review of last year’s report, this report ensures outcomes are assessed in upper division (sophomore through senior level) classes where it is appropriate for students to demonstrate mastery. In addition, the results of a survey of graduating seniors are evaluated. The chair, and the report preparer, then compile numerical summaries of the data used in preparing this report. The decision of which course data to use to assess learning outcomes is based on the learning outcomes that were selected for assessment in that academic year’s previous student learning assessment plan, and reflect a decision at the time of the plan to either re-assess the same learning outcomes that were assessed the previous year, or to prioritize and select different outcomes for assessment.

The 15-16 year was the first in which the new reconfiguration of the department was in effect. The previously separate programs/departments of Communication and Graphic Design merged into a single department of Communication and Media Design with two distinct B.A. majors and programs of study. In the 15-16 year, the department, and Communication major in particular, undertook a successful search for two full-time tenure-line Communication faculty, and adopted new learning outcomes from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) (https://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/2012%20Assessment%20Guide.pdf).

With the new faculty composition of the Communication program, and with the new curriculum in its second year, the COM program should discuss whether these learning outcomes best reflect the goals of the program, or whether perhaps learning outcomes from another communication association, such as the National Communication Association (NCA), should be used instead. This should be part of a broader discussion about the mission and direction for the new department. This discussion has already begun (in September 2016) and will be ongoing in the 16-17 year.

Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:

As stated above, the program underwent a significant reconfiguration that took effect in Fall 2015. As a result, the program reviewed and changed its learning outcomes and assessment processes for the 2015-16 assessment period. As the reconfigured program continues to be implemented by the new and returning COM faculty, it will again reconsider the learning outcomes and assessment processes. The table below shows the old vs. new learning outcomes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome (14-15)</th>
<th>Planned Improvement (Outcome 15-16)</th>
<th>Update</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate the effective use of research skills and the ability to gather data from diverse sources</td>
<td>Demonstrate the effective use of research skills and the ability to gather data from diverse sources (LO#1)</td>
<td>Assessed in 15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate theoretical knowledge in the communications filed based on established theoretical traditions of schools of thought.</td>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information (LO#2)</td>
<td>Assessed in 15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate oral and written communication skills; an understanding of diverse audiences; and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings, and attitudes to a target audience</td>
<td>Demonstrate oral communication skills and an ability to articulate ideas, feelings and attitudes to a target audience (now LO#4)</td>
<td>NOT assessed in 15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate competency in using computer technologies and various software programs.</td>
<td>Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work (now LO#5)</td>
<td>NOT assessed in 15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve (now LO#3)</td>
<td>Assessed in 15-16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Provide a response to last year’s University Assessment Committee review of the program’s learning assessment report:

Based on the University Assessment Committee’s review of last year’s (14-15) COM assessment report, the COM program adopted new learning outcomes, and is attempting to develop a cleaner, clearer set of rubrics, as suggested. In particular, the new learning outcomes respond to the Assessment Committee’s concerns/critiques about the old learning outcomes #2 and #3. In addition, the Committee’s review of the 14-15 report suggested that for LO#2, it would be helpful to include the exam so as to see how the questions on it related to the outcome. The 15-16 report does this for LO2. The current report also continues to use the internship evaluations, and adds the suggested data from the Graduating Student and Alumni Survey.
Outcomes and Past Assessment

Learning Outcome 1: Demonstrate the effective use of research skills and the ability to gather data from diverse sources

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.

Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</th>
<th>Performance Standard Define and explain acceptable level of student performance.</th>
<th>Data Collection Discuss the data collected and student population</th>
<th>Analysis 1) Describe the analysis process. 2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMD 209 Contemporary Journalism: final project (news article) evaluated by faculty (direct)</td>
<td>Journalistic research techniques to include primary and secondary sources, correct use of citations, and appropriate research methodology. 75% of students should be rated ‘Average’ or above on the following criteria (see Assessment rubric): • Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the list of sources and references • Correct and balanced use of primary and secondary sources</td>
<td>The faculty evaluations of the 29 students who took the course were analyzed.</td>
<td>Four criteria were used in assessing student performance on this LO. 26/29 (89.6%) students were evaluated on their final project (news story) as ‘Average’ or above (5 Average, 21 Above Average).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Facility with APA parenthetical citations (Last Name, Year, p. #) or Chicago endnotes
• Appropriateness and soundness of research methodology

CMD 425 Sr. Seminar In Communication - Research paper evaluation by faculty (direct)

Communication research techniques to include primary and secondary sources, correct use of citations, and appropriate research methodology.

75% of students should be rated ‘Average’ or above on the following criteria (see Assessment rubric):
• Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the list of sources and references
• Correct and balanced use of primary and secondary sources
• Facility with APA parenthetical citations (Last Name, Year, p. #) or Chicago endnotes
• Appropriateness and soundness of research methodology

The faculty evaluations of the 25 students who took the course were analyzed.

Four criteria were used in assessing student performance on this LO.
Please see detailed breakdown below.

**Interpretation of Results**

**Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):**

CMD 209 Contemporary Journalism: The performance standard for this outcome measure was met and exceeded. According to the CMD 209 faculty instructor:
Area(s) of strength: Most students demonstrated an understanding of the need for accuracy, clarity and brevity.

Area(s) of improvement: Most students now have an understanding of the importance of facts instead of opinions and feelings, even their own.

Additional Comments: The passive voice is still written by too many students. And while some students understand the importance of writing but one thought a paragraph composed of short sentences written in the active voice, most student writing remains overly verbose and wordy, at times redundant, often resulting in lengthy sentences and paragraphs laden with several thoughts, run-on sentences and phrases which are neither clear or brief.

CMD 425 Senior Seminar in Communication - Research paper evaluation by Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensiveness and appropriateness of the list of sources and references</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct and balanced use of primary and secondary sources</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility with APA parenthetical citations (Last Name, Year, p. #) or Chicago endnotes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness and soundness of research methodology</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the CMD 425 faculty instructor: Area(s) of strength: --Choice of research topics; use and explanation of theories; development of research questions. Area(s) of improvement: Improvement is needed in writing style, use of primary sources, and citations within the text. Additional Comments: --One-quarter to one-third of students enrolled in CMD425 are poorly prepared for the rigors and requirements of a major research assignment.

Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome: to be discussed with program

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome: CMD 209 Contemporary Journalism is being taught by a new faculty member this year, with some adjustments to assignments and instruction from last year.
Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information

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.

### Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CMD 425 Sr. Seminar in Communications: Final Exam</strong> (direct)</td>
<td>75% of students should score above a ‘C’ or (Average) on the final exam (see notes below)</td>
<td>The final exam grades of the 25 students who took the course were analyzed.</td>
<td>The final exam has 100 questions. Please see detailed breakdown below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CMD 400 Internship: Performance evaluation by site supervisor; (indirect)</strong></td>
<td>75% of students should be rated ‘Average’ or above on the COM Internship Evaluation Sheet for:</td>
<td>The performance evaluations by the internship site supervisors for the 4 students who completed internships were analyzed.</td>
<td>All 4 students (100%) who took the internship course were evaluated as Excellent or Good (3 excellent, 1 good) on the performance standard “Apply Academic Knowledge to the Workplace.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: This assessment needs to be reviewed. Normally exam grades are not used in assessments, but since the final exam is all about theory, it was determined by the Director of Assessment and previous department Co-Chair that it can be used. We are submitting a description of the exam and some sample questions with the report (in the Appendix) so the committee can understand the measure.
**Interpretation of Results**

**Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students (Use both direct and indirect measure results):**

**CMD 425 Senior Seminar in Communication -- Final Exam Grades:**
22/25 students, or 88%, scored a ‘C’ or better on the final exam. (12 out of 14 students in Fall ‘15 scored a ‘C’ or better on the final exam. 10 out of 11 students in Spring ‘16 scored a ‘C’ or better on the final exam). 19/25 students, or 76%, scored ABOVE a ‘C’ on the final exam across both semesters.

The performance standard for the final exam was that 75% of students should score above a ‘C’ or (Average) on the final exam. This standard was met in ‘15-'16 but there is room for improvement.

**CMD 400 Internship – Site Supervisor Evaluations:** The performance standard for the internship for LO2 was met and exceeded at 100%.

**Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome:** to be discussed with program.

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

- Eventually a portfolio can be evaluated for the application of theories in the use of images and information. Currently, no COM majors take portfolio (not required yet)
- A senior capstone exit survey or a supplemental Graduating Student Survey could be created to be used as a measure for the LO
Learning Outcome 3: Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve

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.

### Assessment Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Performance Standard</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve | Define and explain acceptable level of student performance. | Discuss the data collected and student population | 1) Describe the analysis process.  
2) Present the findings of the analysis including the numbers participating and deemed acceptable. |

**CMD 425 Sr. Seminar In Communication - Research paper evaluation by faculty (direct)**

Communication professionals must be able to develop a coherent written argument. 75% of students should be rated ‘Average’ or above on the following criteria (see Assessment rubric):
- Relevance of the topic/thesis to communication studies
- Quality and presentation of ideas; nature of the argument; logic and reasoning
- Quality of the writing: style, structure, grammar, organization, spelling, vocabulary

The faculty evaluations of the 24 students who took the course were analyzed.

Three criteria were used in assessing student performance on this LO. Please see detailed breakdown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMD 400 Internship: Performance evaluation by site supervisor; (indirect)</th>
<th>75% of students should be rated ‘Average’ or above on the COM Internship Evaluation Sheet for:</th>
<th>The performance evaluations by the internship site supervisors for the 4 students who completed internships were analyzed.</th>
<th>All 4 students (100%) who took the internship course were evaluated as Excellent or Good (2 excellent, 2 good) on the performance standard “Written Communication.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduating Communication Student Survey and Alumni survey (indirect) | A response rate of 75% agree for:  
- Develop a coherent written argument  
21 responses to this item on the '15-16 Graduating Student Survey for Communication majors were analyzed.  
23 responses to this item on the 2015 Alumni Survey Results for Communication majors were analyzed.  
71.4% of graduating students who answered this question on the survey about “how well you believe your education prepared you to:” “Develop a coherent written argument” said “good or excellent.”  
78.3% of alumni who answered this question on the survey said “good or excellent.”

### Interpretation of Results

**Extent this learning outcome has been achieved by students** *(Use both direct and indirect measure results)*:

CMD 425 Senior Seminar in Communication - Research paper evaluation by Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Above Average</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance of the Topic/Thesis to Communication Studies</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality and Presentation of ideas; Nature of the Argument; Logic and Reasoning</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the Writing: Style, Structure, Grammar, Organization, Spelling, Vocabulary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the CMD 425 faculty instructor, **Area(s) of strength**: Choice of topic; and building an argument; **Area(s) of improvement**: Quality of the writing; sentence structure; agreement of subject and verb; spelling. **Additional Comments**: Sixteen of these students come from non-English speaking homes and/or inner-city environments which—for some students—affected their use and writing of correct standard English.

CMD 400 Internship – Site Supervisor Evaluations: The performance standard for the internship for LO3 was met and exceeded at 100%.

Graduating Communication Student Survey and Alumni survey: While the Alumni survey results met the 75% performance standard, the Graduating Student survey results for this item were slightly below the standard. There is room for improvement on this outcome measure.
Program strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to assessment of outcome: to be discussed with program.

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

In the 16-17 year, the COM program is seeking approval for two additional courses to be designated Writing Intensive (WI). These courses are CMD 209 (Contemporary Journalism) and CMD 315 (Writing for Digital Media). It is the department’s belief that these courses should carry the designation as they meet the WI requirements and support LO3.