

Weber State University
Annual Assessment of Evidence of Learning

Cover Page

Department/Program: Master of Professional Communication Program (Housed within the Communication Department)

Academic Year of Report: 2015/16

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A. Brief Introductory Statement:

Please review the Introductory Statement and contact information for your department displayed on the assessment site:

<http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if this information is current, please place an 'X' below. No further information is needed. We will indicate "Last Reviewed: [current date]" on the page.

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

Update:

B. Mission Statement

Please review the Mission Statement for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed. If the information is not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

C. Student Learning Outcomes

Please review the Student Learning Outcomes for your department displayed on the assessment site:

<http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if they are current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.

If they are not current, please provide an update:

Information is current; no changes required.

Information is not current; updates below.

Measurable Learning Outcomes

At the end of their study at WSU, students in this program will:

- 1) ...
- 2) ...
- 3) ...
- 4) ...
- 5) ...
- 6) etc.

D. Curriculum

Please review the Curriculum Grid for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if it is current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed: [current data]”. No further information is needed. If the curriculum grid is not current, please provide an update:

- Information is current; no changes required.**
 Information is not current; updates below

(We added two new courses, MPC 6350 Visual Comm in the Workplace and MPC 6450 Advanced Organizational Comm.)

Curriculum Map

Core Courses in Department/Program	Department/Program Learning Outcomes						
	Writing/editing	Presentation skills	Critical thinking	Research	Knowledge in cognate area		
MPC 6000 Into to Graduate Studies	I,E		E, A	I, E			
MPC 6100 Team Building and Facilitation	E	E	E		E, A		
MPC 6150 Writing for Professional Communicators	E,A						
MPC 6210 Presentational Speaking in the Workplace		E, A	E	E			
MPC 6300 New Media in Professional Communication					E,A		
MPC 6350 Visual Communication in the Workplace MPC 6400 Leadership Communication MPC 6450 Advanced Organizational Comm	U	U	E		E,A		
MPC 6600 Strategic Communication		E	E, A		E,A		
MPC 6700 Research Methods for Professional Communication	E		E,A	E, A			
MPC 6900/6950 Thesis/Project I and II	A		A	A	A		

Core Courses in Department/Program	Department/Program Learning Outcomes						
	Writing/editing	Presentation skills	Critical thinking	Research	Knowledge in cognate area		

Note^a: Define words, letters or symbols used and their interpretation; i.e. 1= introduced, 2 = emphasized, 3 = mastered or I = Introduced, E = Emphasized, U = Utilized, A = Assessed Comprehensively; these are examples, departmental choice of letters/numbers may differ

Note^b: Rows and columns should be transposed as required to meet the needs of each individual department

Additional Information (if needed)

E. Assessment Plan

Please review the Assessment Plan for your department displayed on the assessment site: <http://www.weber.edu/portfolio/departments.html> - if the plan current, please indicate as much; we will mark the web page as “Last Reviewed [current date]”. No further information is needed.

The site should contain an up-to-date assessment plan with planning going out a minimum of three years beyond the current year. Please review the plan displayed for your department at the above site. The plan should include a list of courses from which data will be gathered and the schedule, as well as an overview of the assessment strategy the department is using (for example, portfolios, or a combination of Chi assessment data and student survey information, or industry certification exams, etc.).

Please be sure to include your planned assessment of any general education courses taught within your department. This information will be used to update the General Education Improvement and Assessment Committee’s planning documentation.

Assessment plan: only very minor changes this year.

F. Report of assessment results for the most previous academic year:

There are a variety of ways in which departments can choose to show evidence of learning. This is one example. The critical pieces to include are 1) what learning outcome is being assessed, 2) what method of measurement was used, 3) what the threshold for ‘acceptable performance’ is for that measurement, 4) what the actual results of the assessment were, 5) how those findings are interpreted, and 6) what is the course of action to be taken based upon the interpretation.

A. Evidence of Learning: Courses within the Major

(this is a sample page for purpose of illustration only; a blank template can be found on the next page)

*Can be a mix of direct and indirect measures, but at least one measure must be direct

Evidence of Learning Worksheet: Courses within the Major

Course:

Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement*	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
Learning Outcome 1: Write and edit at a level commensurate with a communication leader or manager	Measure 1: Sample of MPC theses and projects from 2014-15	Measure 1: 75% of students will score “strong” in this area	Measure 1: 78% of student theses and projects scored “strong” and 22% scored adequate	Measure 1: The majority of students are graduating with strong writing skills, although there are some students who could improve in this area	Look at grading rubrics in classes to see how writing is evaluated. See if we are giving enough weigh to things like organization of ideas, ability to write a persuasive argument, ability to demonstrate and apply conceptual knowledge.
	Measure 2: Papers in MPC 6500 Special Topics Gender and Comm in the Workplace	Measure 2: 75% of students will score “strong” in this area	Measure 2: 60% of students scored “strong” and 40% scored “adequate”	Measure 2: This year several first year students took the class, in addition to students who were nearing completion of the program. We believe the mix of	

Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement*	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
				students skewed the results to be lower than expected.	
Learning Outcome 2: Oral presentation skills necessary for professional level presentations	Measure 1: Quality of presentation in MPC 6900 and 6950 Thesis/Project I	Measure 1: 75% of students will score "strong" in this area	Measure 1: 86% of students scored "strong" in this area. 14% scored adequate.	Measure 1: Most students graduate with strong presentation skills, appropriate to a professional context.	Continue to emphasize presentations in MPC classes. Lower the enrollment cap in MPC 6210 Presentation Speaking so students have more opportunities to be graded on in-class presentations. (Note: we are pleased with the assessment results, but were already planning to make this change to the course cap.)
	Measure 2: Quality of presentation in MPC 6500 Special Topics Gender and Comm in the Workplace	Measure 2: 75% of students will score "strong" in this area	Measure 2: 70% scored "strong" and 30% scored "adequate"	Measure 2: Most students have developed strong speaking skills, although first year students who took the class as an elective may have skewed the data.	
Demonstrate critical thinking in applied communication contexts	Final papers in MPC 6600 Strategic Communication	75% of students will score "strong" in this area	72% of students scored "strong" in this area; 28% scored "adequate"	Students may need a little more practice learning how to apply theoretical concepts in applied communication situations	Look at term projects in classes and see if students are getting adequate "building block" assignments along the way.
	Measure 2: Final papers and rubric in MPC 6500		60% scored "strong" and 40% scored "adequate"		

Measurable Learning Outcome	Method of Measurement*	Threshold for Evidence of Student Learning	Findings Linked to Learning Outcomes	Interpretation of Findings	Action Plan/Use of Results
	Gender and Comm in the Workplace				

*Direct and indirect: at least one measure per objective must be a direct measure.

Additional narrative (optional – use as much space as needed):

This year we assessed an elective course, MPC 6500 Special Topics Gender and Comm in the Workplace. We were hoping the class would be composed of second year students and it would be a good measure to evaluate the coursework track. However, this year more first year students took this elective than in past years. There were not as many students in the “strong” category as we had hoped, but we believe the first year students may have skewed the data downward. The assessment of MPC 6900/6950 Thesis/Project I and II, is clearly a measure of students’ knowledge and skills as they near completion of their master’s program. Comparing the results of MPC 6900/6950 with MPC 6500 is a bit like comparing apples and oranges. Some of the difference may be explained by the class composition. Perhaps the difference in the percentages that score “strong” in MPC 6900/6950 v. MPC 6500 are an indication of the value added between the first and second years in the program. Because students in the coursework track choose three electives, it is hard to find a single class to assess that is indicative of their knowledge and skills in their last semester before graduation. Elective courses are open to both first and second year students. We believe that assessing MPC 6500 was a good start, however the course enrollment didn’t reflect the student population we were intending to measure. We’ll continue to look for ways to assess the coursework option in the future.

b. Evidence of Learning: High Impact or Service Learning

If you provide students with high impact or service learning opportunities briefly describe those opportunities and explain how you assess their impact on student learning. This [excerpt](#) from George D. Kuh provides a brief overview of high-impact practices.

NA, although students complete applied projects as part of their graduate coursework.

G. Summary of Artifact Collection Procedure

Artifact	When/How Collected?	Where Stored?
2014-15 Theses and projects	End of semester/school year	Electronic copies in WSU Library
Signature assignments with rubrics in MPC 6600 Strategic Communication	Class papers and projects, feedback to students/once year, assessment rubric completed by instructor	Canvas
Signature assignments with rubrics in an elective course for the coursework track, MPC 6500 Special Topics Gender and Communication in the Workplace	Class paper and projects, feedback to students/once a year, assessment rubric completed by instructor	Canvas

Summary Information (as needed)

Appendix A

Most departments or programs receive a number of recommendations from their Five-Year Program Review processes. This page provides a means of updating progress towards the recommendations the department/program is acting upon.

Date of Program Review: 2014-15	Recommendation	Progress Description
<p>Recommendation 1 Keep the applied focus. Embrace the MPC focus rather than trying to become an MA in Communication.</p>	<p>Since this is a specialized Masters program, it might be expected that forces could inadvertently direct it toward conformity with more traditional Masters programs. Examples might include a greater emphasis on conference presentations than professional activities in assessment or an increase in incoming students from academic rather than professional areas. The program has discovered an especially important niche and needs to continually keep its eye on its mission.</p>	<p>1. We currently track the number of students and alumni who get new jobs or promotions while they are in school and after graduation. We also track the number of students who present papers at academic and professional conferences. We will give equal weight to both kinds of student successes in future reports.</p>
		<p>2. We created a Facebook page for the MPC program that features news about current students and the successes of our alumni. The Facebook page allows us to show our students and alumni actively engaged in professional activities.</p>
		<p>3. We have created promotional materials using our students and alumni as spokespersons to promote the program. We feature their name and professional job title to demonstrate the successes of our graduates.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 Assessment for coursework track</p>	<p>Develop measures to assess the newly implemented coursework option in lieu of a thesis or project.</p>	<p>1. This year we assessed a signature assignment and asked the instructor to complete an assessment rubric in MPC 6500 Special Topics Gender and Comm</p>

		<p>in the Workplace. This elective course is taken in the second year by many of the students on the coursework track.</p> <p>The program director will contact faculty teaching these courses and ask them to complete a short assessment instrument regarding the student's work after grades have been submitted for the semester. The assessment instrument will ask the faculty member to rate the student on writing, critical thinking, research methods (if applicable) and demonstrated knowledge in the subject matter. The assessment will be used for the purpose of program evaluation and will not affect the student's graduation status or grade in the course.</p>
		<p>2. We collected assessment data in one core course this year, MPC 6600 Strategic Comm (See data reported above)</p>
<p>Recommendation 3 Recruiting</p>	<p>Recruit a larger applicant pool. When resources become available for additional staff positions, hire a professional staff member to help with recruiting.</p>	<p>1. The program director plans to meet with employers in the area to build awareness of the program among organizations with a tuition reimbursement program. We are tracking the organizations where our students and alumni work to determine where to best focus our efforts.</p>
		<p>2. We sponsor the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) spring conference each year as a recruitment and promotion opportunity. The sponsorship includes a recruiting table</p>

		at the event, along with inclusion of our name and logo on materials promoting the event. We are looking for other conferences to attend or sponsor that would be relevant for communication professionals along the Wasatch Front.
		3. We are planning to try an internet ad campaign in 2015-16.
Recommendation 4 External advisory board	Present evidence of the contributions of the external advisory board in the next program review.	1. As mentioned in the program review report, the external advisory committee was created in Fall 2015 and had only met one time before the report was due. Now that we have created an external advisory board, we will seek their input and report on their recommendations and subsequent actions taken in the next program review.
		2. The external advisory board is meeting again on December 2, 2016.
Recommendation 5 Student and faculty travel budget	Allocate additional resources for student travel to present at conferences and for faculty to travel to professional conferences for professional development and to enhance teaching.	1. We have budgeted for student travel to conferences for the past two years. So far two students have used these travel funds.
		2. We have a faculty travel budget, but so far we have used it for travel related to recruitment rather than professional development.
		3. Create a process for faculty to apply for professional development travel funds. These funds should be earmarked for professional conferences that enhance teaching (beyond the scope of the academic conferences that are funded through other means).

Additional narrative:

Appendix B

Please provide the following information about the full-time and adjunct faculty contracted by your department during the last academic year (summer through spring). Gathering this information each year will help with the headcount reporting that must be done for the final Five Year Program Review document that is shared with the State Board of Regents.

Note: There are 20 full-time faculty in the Communication Department. We counted all of them in this chart, even though some full-time faculty do not teach in the MPC program. Although the Department of Communication employs many adjunct or part-time faculty, only one adjunct teaches in the MPC program, so we only counted one for this purpose.

Faculty	
Headcount (in COMM/MPC)	20
With Doctoral Degrees (Including MFA and other terminal degrees, as specified by the institution)	14
Full-time Tenured	7
Full-time Non-Tenured (includes tenure-track)	7
Part-time	
With Master's Degrees	7
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-Tenured	6
Part-time	1
With Bachelor's Degrees	NA
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Other	
Full-time Tenured	
Full-time Non-tenured	
Part-time	
Total Headcount Faculty	21
Full-time Tenured	7
Full-time Non-tenured	13
Part-time	1

Please respond to the following questions.

- 1) Based on your program's assessment findings, what subsequent action will your program take?

We are developing a rubric to be used for assessment that is separate from the term project rubric in classes. We used part of the rubric this year to assess writing, speaking and critical thinking skills in two core courses, MPC 6600 Strategic Comm and MPC 6400 Leadership Comm.

- 2) Are there assessment strategies within your department or program that you feel are particularly effective and/or innovative? If so, what are those strategies and what do you learn about your students by using them?

Assessing student projects gives us feedback about how well we are accomplishing the applied mission of the program. We will continue to assess projects and use that data to make curriculum decisions.