

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION ASSESSMENT PLAN
FOR MIDDLE STATES EVALUATION (revised November 2011)**

1. Goals for student learning *:

1. Apply rhetorical principles to design and evaluation of mediated and non-mediated messages
2. Explain relationships among components of communication process
3. Explain types, functions and relationships of verbal and nonverbal symbols in mediated and non-mediated communications
4. Identify major communication technologies, explain functions and apply specialization technologies to the design, production and distribution of messages
5. Recognize and explain the relevance of key historical and socio-cultural phenomena to the evolution, development and effects of communication, mediated and non-mediated
6. Understand and apply ethical principles to the practice of communication

These goals apply to the departmental core curriculum as well as courses in the specialized majors. Each syllabus lists the department goal or goals covered in that course.

*These goals were generated by the Communication Department faculty during the late 1990s. There have been many changes in the department (including the addition of Public Relations and Journalism majors), in the relevant fields, and at SUNY Fredonia. For these reasons, the review and modification of these goals is one of the tasks to be addressed by the department in the near future.

2. Descriptions of method:

By the end of Spring semester, the communication faculty as a whole reviews the curriculum map for accuracy and then decides which goal(s) will be assessed the following year. (The purpose of early dates is to allow faculty the greatest flexibility in determining the optimum time to develop and administer the assessment instrument.) The department's assessment subcommittee then consists of faculty members whose courses address the chosen goal. In the case that the number of faculty whose courses fulfill the chosen goal exceeds five, a subset of those faculty will be chosen to serve on the assessment committee.

The faculty whose courses address the chosen goals will individually determine their specific course objective(s) relevant to that goal and the methods of assessing the objective(s). Faculty should include a grading rubric when creating the assessment instrument, keeping in mind that the scale for evaluating the assessment instruments should be dependent on where the objective being assessed falls in Bloom's Taxonomy and the type of instrument used. For example, with application of knowledge in a camera operation test the scale of pass/fail is appropriate. With the

higher order objectives, the scale used should be excellent, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory.

Two weeks after the goal is chosen, the faculty will then submit the assessment instrument (i.e., written assignments, written test questions, exercises, practicum tests, projects) to the assessment committee. The assessment instruments should be required, evaluated coursework.

The assessment committee will review all assessment instruments and provide feedback.

Assessments should be administered by the end of the fall semester. Faculty are encouraged to complete the assessment write-up immediately.

Each faculty member whose courses address the chosen goals will collect the data from their assessment instrument, apply the rubric, interpret the results and submit an assessment report form to the assessment committee in the spring semester. The assessment committee will compile the results, write a preliminary assessment report and share it with the faculty in a department meeting. The faculty will discuss ways to utilize the findings of the assessment exercise to improve teaching and student outcomes. The assessment committee will include the faculty discussion in the final report and submit it to the department chair and the dean of Arts and Sciences.

3. Time line:

- a. Before the end of Spring semester - communication faculty as a whole decides which goal(s) will be assessed the next academic year.
- b. Third week of September - faculty whose courses address the chosen goals will individually determine test methods of assessing the goal and submit the assessment instrument and rubric to the assessment committee.
- c. Prior to midterm examinations - the assessment committee will review all assessment instruments and provide feedback.
- d. End of fall semester - assessments will be administered.
- e. First week of February - faculty will submit the assessment results to the assessment committee.
- f. Mid-spring semester - assessment committee writes the official assessment report by and shares it in a department meeting.

4. Assignment of responsibility:

Once the full time faculty decide which goal to assess, the primary responsibility for assessment rests with the faculty whose courses address the chosen goal. All full time faculty are responsible for engaging in a discussion of assessment results and implementing any applicable changes that result from that discussion.

5. Record keeping:

During the second half of the Spring semester, the assessment committee submits a final report to the department chair. It is forwarded to the Dean of Arts and Sciences

by the end of the academic year. The data is kept by the chair of the assessment committee and the department chair. It is available to all those with a demonstrable need to know.

6. Processes for using assessment results to improve learning:

The full time faculty and department chair are privy to the findings of the assessment committee and use those findings to strengthen areas of weakness and make adjustments to the curriculum. One of the reasons for revising the timeline so that the preliminary assessment report is finished early in the second half of Spring semester is so there is time for the department to devote a department meeting to the discussion of the results and to make adjustments to the curriculum before the next academic year.

The most fruitful aspect of assessment seems to be the self-reflection it encourages. Most of the faculty taking part in assessment for the academic year 2010-2011 made changes due the outcomes. For example, the faculty in the Public Relations major decided the concept of campaign evaluations needed to be introduced in the introductory course and reexamined in all subsequent courses.

In the video major, assessment of production skills in 2004 revealed a need for students to hone their skills as videographers. There was major curriculum revision that allowed us to free faculty to teach an elective course Camera and Lighting in 2010. Indirect assessment occurs at the end of every semester with End of Term screenings of student work. These screenings last Spring showed a marked improvement in videography and lighting from the previous years.

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