



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
The Graduate School
G-1 Communications
Box 353770
Seattle, Washington 98195-3770

Telephone: (206)543-5900

Fax: (206)685-3234

November 1, 2018

To: Robert Stacey, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
George Lovell, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences

From: Rebecca Aanerud, Interim Dean *Rebecca Aanerud*
Kima Cargill, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Planning *Kima Cargill, Ph.D.*

RE: Review of the Department of Communication (2017-2018)

This memorandum outlines the Graduate School's final recommendations from the Department of Communication academic program review. Detailed comments on the review can be found in the documents that were part of the following formal review proceedings:

- Charge meeting between review committee and administrators (October 17, 2017)
- Self-Study (March 1, 2018)
- Site visit (April 5-6, 2018)
- Review committee report (June 4, 2018)
- Department of Communication response to the report (August 15, 2018)
- Graduate School Council consideration of review (November 1, 2018)

The review committee consisted of:

Resat Kasaba, Professor and Director, UW Jackson School of International Studies (Committee Chair)

William Kunz, Professor, UWT School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

Barry Brummett, Professor and Chair, Communications Studies, University of Texas at Austin

Prabu David, Professor and Dean, College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State University

The Department of Communication offers the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Master of Communication, and Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Graduate School Council presented findings and recommendations to the full Council at its meeting on November 1, 2018. A summary of this report, composed by Graduate School Council Members, is attached to this document.

Graduate School Council Recommendations

The Graduate School Council commends the Department of Communication on the strength of its programs, faculty, and students. After discussion, the Council recommended the following:

- Full academic program review in 10 years (2027-2028)
- Limited interim report in 5 years (2022-2023) to provide updates on the Department of Communication's work on the following challenges cited by the Review Committee:
 - Impending change in departmental leadership as the current Chair departs
 - Reassessment of the areas of study within the MA/PhD programs to ensure sustainability and availability of support and courses for graduate students
 - Budgetary concerns about transparency and sustainability, and that the entrepreneurial strategy of using funds generated by the Department's lecture series is not sustainable

We concur with the Council's recommendations.

cc: Mark Richards, Provost and Executive Vice President
Patricia Moy, Associate Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost
David Domke, Chair, Department of Communication
Becky Corriell, Director, Academic Program Review & Strategy, the Graduate School
Academic unit Review Committee Members
Members of the Graduate School Council
GPSS President

Attachment

University of Washington | Graduate Council

Degrees/Certificates Included in the Review:

Bachelor of Arts in Communication
 Bachelor of Arts in Communication-Journalism
 Master of Communication in Digital Media
 Master of Communication in Communities & Networks
 Master of Communication in Native Voices
 Master of Arts in Communication
 Doctor of Philosophy in Communication

Program Strengths

- The Department of Communication is doing well in fulfilling its mission. The Department teaches a large number of students, supports an impressive group of faculty that is spread across various ranks, and is doing a good job of responding to a rapidly changing environment.
- The Department of Communication has an exceptionally strong record of public scholarship.
- In addition to the talented tenure track faculty, the Review Committee lauded the exceptionally capable group of full time lecturers, which has included Distinguished Teaching Award winners.
- The undergraduate programs are popular and growing. Small class sizes, intensive skill training, clear progression of courses in the curriculum, dedicated instructors interested in student careers, and opportunities for experiential learning were identified as strengths.
- Faculty take pride in the fact that the Department of Communication offers the only accredited journalism program in the State of Washington.
- Students are generally very satisfied with the quality of the course work offered by the Department, once they are enrolled in a course.
- Faculty and staff praised the Chair for his entrepreneurship and ability to insulate the department from some of the budget cuts that have hit the College of Arts & Sciences over the last few years. While the Chair has announced his impending departure following the 2018-19 academic year, the Review Committee suggested that there might be several promising successors from within the Department.

Challenges & Risks

- The large number of areas of study declared for the MA/PhD programs (Communication and Culture, Communication Technology and Society, Global Communication, Journalism Studies, Social Interaction, Political Communication, and Rhetoric and Critical/Cultural Studies) is problematic.
- The number of graduate areas in the Department is believed to historically reflect the strengths and passions of former faculty and the prior contemporary interests. At present, having so many areas is likely not as relevant or sustainable today, particularly in an environment of more limited resources.
- The broad array of options for study in the MA/PhD programs sets up unrealistic expectations for graduate students who specifically choose to come to UW to pursue one of seven identified areas, only to find they are not realistic or well supported. All too often graduate courses are cancelled because of a lack of demand in a given area. This raised questions about “truth in advertising” when the seven areas are described. Given this, reconsideration of some of these programs and streamlining some program

requirements is recommended.

- Reassessment of the seven areas noted above needs to also include a consideration of which new, emerging disciplinary areas, such as health communication, may need to be emphasized. This, in turn, would facilitate the drive for a research portfolio that is increasingly focused and relevant. This process should help to clarify the Department's identity, a matter the Department is interested in addressing.
- The entrepreneurial strategy of using funds generated by the Department's lecture series to offset permanent reductions in support from the College of Arts and Sciences is not a sustainable way to address fiscal shortfall on an ongoing basis.
- Doctoral students identified a lack of course offerings (i.e., cancelled courses) and the lack of predictability of course offerings as concerns. Additionally, losing members of faculty in the areas of political communication and communication technology was highlighted as a concern by students who came to UW because of its storied reputation in these areas. Adding faculty in health communication and the Center for Communication and Difference were seen as opportunities for doctoral students.
- At the undergraduate level, lack of seats in entry-level courses and in the research methods course, in particular, was mentioned. Further, some students were disappointed by lack of a coherent curriculum that leads to careers in communication. Students also expressed dissatisfaction with few courses in communication technology and public relations. That said, the Department has already made changes in undergraduate requirements to reduce bottlenecks for students in entry-level courses.
- Non-tenured faculty expressed that at times they felt excluded from the curricular discussions, which makes them feel less valued and that they do not have a voice in issues that relate directly to their work.
- "While the MC Leadership Program is well run and growing at an impressive pace, a case can be made for a better integration of this program into the broader department. The creation of a self-sustaining program within the University of Washington requires the establishment of some walls between what are viewed as self-funded programs and state-funded programs, so such barriers are not unexpected. There are, however, possible links between the Communication Leadership offerings in Digital Media and Communities and Networks and the graduate and undergraduate programs. In particular, undergraduates outside the journalism cohort expressed a desire for some skills based courses and it might be possible to share resources, including equipment and/or technology. Funds from the Communication Leadership program, moreover, are supporting various initiatives within the department, so better integration and additional transparency would make it a greater part of the whole."
- One clear concern identified was the lack of transparency related to the Departmental budget. At the time of the review there was no formal mechanism through which the Chair consults with faculty on the department budget and the allocation of discretionary funds. The reviewers suggested calling on the Department's Executive Committee to work with the Chair to improve budget transparency
- While the faculty members have enjoyed the freedom in choosing the courses they teach, it appears that the curriculum is shaped to accommodate this freedom. The Review Committee suggested this freedom would better be practiced in the framework of a more cohesive and articulated curriculum. Further discussion of balancing the "wants" of faculty and "needs" of the curricula for undergraduate and graduate programs should be a continuing conversation.

Areas of Concurrence

- The Department of Communication offered their thanks to the Review Committee for their thoughtful review and expressed concurrence with the recommendations made in the Review Committee Report. The Department, through their prior strategic planning and in their work since the report of June 4, 2018 has

already begun to address concerns identified in the report. The only point corrected by the Department in their response was the Review's Committee's acknowledgement of Distinguished Teacher Awards was to clarify that three lecturers from the Department have been honored with this award, not two, as the report stated.

Graduate School Council Recommendation

The Department of Communication is fulfilling its mission, making strong contributions to the University of Washington and the community at large through its sought after undergraduate and graduate student education programs that are taught by an impressive group of faculty, in a range of ranks and tracks (i.e., tenure and non-tenure), with an exceptionally strong record of public scholarship, and well supported by dedicated staff. Evidenced by its self-study, the Review Committee Report, and the Department's response to it, it appears that the Department of Communication is well poised to continue its strong trajectory and be responsive to a rapidly changing environment. Consistent with the unanimous recommendation of the Graduate Review Committee, it is the recommendation of the Graduate School Council that the Department of Communication continue its valued work toward its mission with the next regularly scheduled Graduate Program Review to occur in ten years, in 2028. The Graduate School Council requests that a limited Interim Report be submitted in five years (2023), focusing on the specific issues described in the Final Recommendations Letter attached to this document.