

University of Washington Correspondence

INTERDEPARTMENTAL

May 15, 1997

TO: Marsha Landolt, Dean
The Graduate School

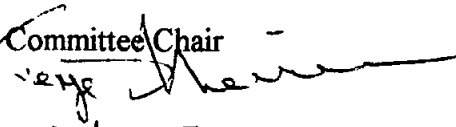
John B. Simpson, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences


Frederick L. Campbell, Dean
Undergraduate Education

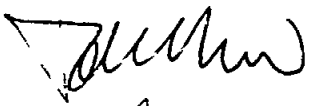
Richard Dunn, Divisional Dean
College of Arts and Sciences


Dale Johnson, Associate Dean
The Graduate School

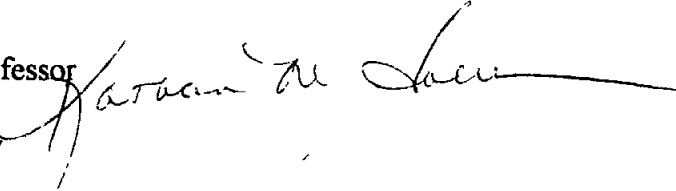
FROM: Department of Speech Communication Program Review Committee

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SUBJECT: Report of the Speech Communication Review Committee

A. Summary of the Process

The Committee members from the University of Washington campus, had the first organization meeting on January 7 with Marsha Landolt, Dean of the Graduate School; John B. Simpson, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Frederick L. Campbell, Dean of Undergraduate Education; Richard J. Dunn, Divisional Dean of Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences; and Dale Johnson, Associate Dean of the Graduate School. The Committee was informed in general terms that the review process was to be forward-looking and positive. It was further informed that the College was not interested in revisiting the past. On February 17, the Committee met with Barbara Warnick, Chair of the Department of Speech Communications, to gain an overview of the Department and to discuss the self-study document which she had prepared.

On Sunday, February 23, the local members of the Committee and the two outside members met to review the agenda for the next two days and to consider strategies for the collection of information. On Monday and Tuesday, February 24 and 25, the Committee conducted interviews with department and university personnel. We met with Professors Warnick, John Stewart, Gerry Philipsen, Ann Staton, and Haig Bosmajian; Associate Professor Robert Post; Assistant Professors Leah Ceccarelli, Raka Shome, and Isabelle Bauman; Senior Lecturer Jody Nyquist; and the Department Staff and Office Personnel--Mary Toepel, Beatrice Restoule, John Klockner, and Angela Thigpen. In addition, the Committee met with Divisional Dean Susan Jeffords, Professor Mark McDermott, chair of the 1995 Ad Hoc Review Committee which considered the proposal for Department elimination due to financial conditions, and with several graduate students and Teaching Assistants--Michael Bruner, Julie Burgess, Theresa Castor, Philip Craft, Pallen Lee, Anna Liotta-Lipscomb, Scott Lybarger, Beckie McCann, Aimee Rowe, and April Trees. The Committee also met with a group of several undergraduate students in the Department. Unfortunately, we were unable to interview Associate Professor Malcolm Parks, who was on leave, or Assistant Professor Valerie Manusov, who was ill. However, Professor Kathleen Galvin did have a subsequent opportunity to interview them by telephone and submitted a written report of their conversation to the Committee.

The Review Committee met with cooperation at every stage of its work and was aided by Augustine McCaffery, Assistant to the Dean of the Graduate School, and by the excellent Departmental Self-Study authored by Professor Warnick.

B. Findings

1. History relevant to present status

In 1994-95, the Department of Speech Communication went through one of the most traumatic experiences any academic department can face. Targeted for possible elimination due to the difficult financial situation of the College, a Review Committee

chaired by Professor Mark McDermott was appointed to evaluate the Department for possible elimination. That Committee concluded unanimously and with strong conviction that the Department of Speech Communication should be retained, noting that the Department was “an underappreciated treasure of the College.” Subsequently, the College and the University made the decision to retain the Department, although the process clearly damaged faculty and student morale and diminished departmental resources with the loss of two positions. Exceptionally resilient in the wake of the review, the Department today needs and deserves the strongest assurances from the College and the University administration that its future is secure and that it will be supported.

2. Quality

In all measurable terms of quality, the Department ranks very high in the academic training and national reputation of its faculty, its teaching effectiveness and research quality, as well as the academic standards and degree requirements.

The research quality of the Department is impressive. In recent years four members of the faculty have been promoted to full professor. Six books have been published by the faculty in the past five years. Among the untenured faculty, one was recently promoted to Associate Professor effective Autumn 1997, and the others are active and engaged scholars with promising careers. This is a department which appears to support its junior faculty, although the burdens of heavy teaching loads, a seemingly systemic burden at the University of Washington, must be carefully monitored by the Department in order to insure progress toward tenure for them. Research among the faculty in the Department falls into two research traditions: one has its origins in the humanities within rhetorical theory and criticism, social approaches to interpersonal communications, argumentation theory, and oral interpretation and performance studies, the other has its origins in the social sciences within empirical research in organizational, instructional, nonverbal and interpersonal communication. Some research overlaps the two, specifically in the area of the ethnography of communication and studies of culture codes. In spite of this disciplinary division, the Department thrives as a community of scholars. However, its breadth can leave the impression that the Department’s identity is unclear; its laudable tendency to avoid conflict may also create a tendency to avoid difficult decisions with regard to Departmental direction and definition. These are issues to be addressed internally by the Department as we will note in our recommendations. There is a strong starting point for discussion in the widespread Departmental agreement of a three-pronged research focus among faculty: Rhetoric, Communication Theory and Research, and Instructional Communication.

Within the context of scholarly excellence, it is important to point out that three of the Department’s faculty members were honored at the Speech Communication Association’s (SCA) national convention in November 1996. Two were given research

awards; the third was honored for excellence and commitment to the profession. Assistant Professor Leah Ceccarelli received the Gerald Miller Outstanding Dissertation Award for her dissertation, "A Rhetoric of Interdisciplinary Inspirational Discourse," which examined the rhetorical strategies used by scientists communicating across disciplinary boundaries. In addition, Associate Professor Malcolm Parks received the Charles Woolbert Award which recognizes a journal article or book chapter that "has stood the test of time and has become the stimulus for new conceptualizations of speech communication phenomena." Parks' 1982 essay, "Ideology in Interpersonal Communication: Off the Couch and into the World," was cited as having "had a profound influence on interpersonal communication and scholarship since its publication." A third award went to Jody Nyquist, Director of the UW's Center for Instructional Development and Research, for her years of successful teaching, her work in developing instructional communication programs in New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, and England and for her success in contributing to the Center's growing national and international reputation. Although these three were recently recognized, all members of the faculty contribute to the impressive standing and scholarly distinction of the Department

Data compiled in 1996 by the National Office staff of the Speech Communication Association (renamed the "National Communication Association"), on the reputations of doctoral programs in communication, indicates that the University of Washington Department of Speech Communication ranks in the first or second quartile in the categories of Communication Theory and Research, Rhetoric, Organizational Communication, Critical: Cultural/Media, Intercultural Communication and Communication Education. These include national rankings of thirteenth (13) in Rhetoric, seventh (7) in Intercultural Communication and second (2) in Communication Education. This is especially impressive considering that most of the other national departments have a larger number of faculty members, in some cases twice as many.

In its 1995 report, the Ad Hoc Review Committee during the possible elimination process noted that "graduate student quality is high" and that the Department is competitive with any other national program in the recruitment of students. The present Program Review Committee found this statement to be equally applicable during its investigation. Graduate students play important roles in the education of undergraduate students as well. Representatives of the undergraduate students in the Department expressed extremely positive views of the Department, only one indicated that he "would like to see professors rather than TAs do more classes." Another student's remarks, however, summarized the Committee's impression of consistently positive attitudes when she said that "there is something going on here" that makes courses in the Department "enjoyable" and "relevant."

Graduate students in the Department appear well prepared and trained for their research. Master's students, whether they choose the thesis or nonthesis option, are given the opportunity to do creative scholarly work. Doctoral students are provided the opportunity to join faculty/student research teams which can provide them data for

dissertations and/or publications. In addition, students are strongly encouraged to prepare papers for delivery at regional, national, and international conferences. In 1995-96, the self-study reported that students in the Department presented forty-nine (49) conference papers. Several students the Committee interviewed noted the importance of faculty support for graduate student research and conference participation in preparing them as scholars and teachers. An exemplary level of placement of its graduate students is a feature of the Department. Five students have completed, or will complete, their doctoral work in the academic year 1996-97. Four received tenure-track offers from Southern Illinois University, Colorado State University, Depauw University, and Babson College, while the fifth was offered a three year contract as lecturer at the University of Washington.

Undergraduate exit surveys of Bachelor's Degree recipients indicate that undergraduate majors in the Department are also well satisfied with their academic training and personal growth. Majors rated the Department above the College and other Humanities departments in their satisfaction with the training they receive in speaking effectively, their ability to analyze critically written information, defining and solving problems, their readiness for future careers and for advanced education, their understanding of the interaction between society and the environment, and in being able to recognize their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In short, undergraduates with a Speech Communication major indicate that they receive a solid and well-rounded education which prepares them well for their future careers. Equally important, perhaps, the surveys indicate that the students rank the quality of the education provided Speech Communication majors well above the average given for the College as a whole.

3. Resources

As appears to be the case generally at the University of Washington, adequacy of funding for the Department lags behind its performance and commitments. Excellent instruction and high student demand are hallmarks of the Department, which mounts the only program of its kind in the Northwest. Funding levels vary from year to year, but the College of Arts and Sciences allocates approximately fifty-one (51) quarters of funding for graduate students to whom the Department has made long-term commitments and eleven quarters to students who are not on a continuing appointment. Three quarters of RA funding supports an editorial assistant for the editor of *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*. The Graduate School supports nine quarters of RAships, and the Office of Minority Affairs in the Graduate School funds three quarters. Private sector and government funds support some research programs, but the Department, not unlike most Humanities departments, does not attract much external funding.

With respect to equipment, the nature of the discipline depends on the latest technology: audio, video, and computer. The Department has an impressive set of research laboratories for faculty and graduate student research, as well as undergraduate

instruction, but the need to keep these “state of the art” requires a continuing investment. The labs provide workstations for statistical analysis and word processing, and they contain computer equipment for high-speed WEB access as well as other research activities. Research rooms in which observation research of communication behavior can be conducted are also available and necessary. The Departmental senior computer specialist, John Klockner, has been most resourceful in stretching current resources to their limit.

Departmental staff, consisting of 2 classified staff and 2.5 professional staff, work extremely hard and efficiently to serve the Department and the needs of its faculty and students. They are highly experienced with respect to University operations, policies, and procedures.

4. Role Within the University

General education and service courses play an important role in the instructional mission of the Department, not only for undergraduate majors but for other departments as well. Speech Communication courses are recommended by several departments across campus and it has a valuable service profile within the College and University. The interdisciplinary cooperation of the Department has recently led to closer coordination and cooperation with the School of Communications through the establishment of a joint committee to coordinate the undergraduate curricula, but we are convinced that the Department of Speech Communication and the School of Communications are sufficiently different entities that any merging of the units should be considered carefully and some measure of distinct identities or administrative responsibilities be maintained. The Department of Speech Communication is a research unit, not a professional school, which focuses on the message itself rather than the medium transmitting that message. The Department also has developed some ties with other units or programs, such as the Critical Theory Program; the Departments of English, Womens Studies and Anthropology; the Center for Instructional Development and Research; but these interdisciplinary connections should be more fully developed and the list of units expanded. The role of the Department of Speech Communication within the University can, and should, be a central one. It provides broad and comprehensive training for undergraduate students while developing strong research traditions among its graduate students. By expanding its cooperation with other units, yet maintaining its own identity, the Department's centrality to the mission of the University will become increasingly clear to those outside the Department itself.

C. Recommendations

The Department of Speech Communication is a strong department with substantial interdisciplinary reach. Its commitment to undergraduate teaching is as strong and dynamic as any department in the University. On the graduate level, it is a vital center of research and teaching which, with University support and a Departmental commitment to develop its graduate focus, can reach the top level of graduate programs in the country. Below are the Review Committee's specific recommendations.

1. The College and University must continue to affirm its strong commitment to the Department. The traumatic "termination review process" has left a residue of distrust and low morale among faculty and students. Assurances given to the Program Review Committee by the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Divisional Dean for Humanities that this review is to be both positive and constructive and that the Department's future is secure, must be affirmed with positive action. At the same time, the Department must commit itself to an on-going and serious self-evaluation of its research strengths to focus on depth. This examination will only occur within a climate of trust and collegiality in the Department as well as with the College. In this context it is recommended that the College consider and the Department define appropriate additional tenure-track positions along with a competitive enhancement of salaries.
2. The Committee recommends internal Department dialogue concerning the focus of the Department. In their report, the external (subject-specialist) reviewers raise the question of whether the Department's breadth of offerings threatens its depth. The Department needs to assure itself that it is achieving a distinct graduate identity in defined areas of concentration. Most members of the Department expressed its identity in terms of its breadth within three main areas of concentration: rhetoric, communication / theory and research, and instructional communication. We recommend that any new faculty lines be used to build on existing strengths in order to develop a critical mass that will give the Department truly unique standing. Based on the faculty's productivity and research tradition, the potential for success clearly exists. Clarity on these issues can only be achieved within the context of a Departmental discussion; the Program Review Committee believes it is important that the Department engage in such a dialogue.
3. The Committee recognizes the heavy teaching burden which the faculty faces. Nationally, few peer departments must sustain either the teaching demands or the lack of resources faced by this department. This creates a particularly difficult situation for junior faculty who are faced with developing new courses, heavy teaching, and lack of time or funds for research required to gain tenure. Within University policies, the Committee recommends the Department explore ways to ameliorate the heavy demands faced by junior faculty.

4. Closer cooperation with other units and departments on campus is strongly recommended. The existing connections with the School of Communication should be strengthened where it benefits both departments intellectually and in terms of scholarship, but there are sufficiently separate missions and identities that mean both units should examine carefully any move to a closer amalgamation. In any case, the Committee believes that separate budgets and administrative structures are justified. The Department of Speech Communication should continue to establish contacts, such as joint or cross-listed courses and adjunct faculty appointments, with other units and departments as well.

5. As a part of this process, and in connection with the recent change in the name of the discipline's national organization to National Communication Association (formerly Speech Communication Association), the Review Committee recommends that, should the departmental faculty deem it appropriate, the option of changing the name of the Department be considered. Consideration might also be made by the Department and the College to transfer the Department to the Division of Social Sciences from the Division of Humanities.

6. The Department should be encouraged to develop a Visiting Committee or Advisory Board from its long list of supporters and take advantage of the immense good will evident during the previous review. Likewise, the Department might similarly consider proactive entrepreneurial moves in support of its programs. Because speech communication courses have a direct applicability to organizational and corporate life, the Department might consider developing workshops, classes, or a professional Master's degree program; these alliances can strengthen undergraduate and graduate teaching by establishing research sites and generating income to further enhance the program. Similarly, the faculty should be encouraged to be more proactive in seeking out individual and collaborative research grants.

7. Although its undergraduate curriculum is an excellent and appealing one, the Committee believes it can benefit from some revision. The undergraduates with whom the Committee spoke told of excellent advice based on quarterly offerings or the yearly plan, but they lack a strategic sense of where to go within the overall curriculum. The Department should consider developing model clusters which could guide students toward career goals or in logical curriculum planning. Outdated or underutilized courses should be revised or removed from the curriculum.

8. The College and University should commit to supporting the extensive teaching done by TAs in the Department and recognize that service courses which are over-subscribed cannot logically be taught by TAs from other disciplines. Such a suggestion suggests a lack of understanding of the field and the perception that service courses teach skills that are common to any graduate assistant in any other discipline. The Review Committee is convinced that the content of the discipline and the relationship of its scholarship to teaching are not basic or remedial skills but something which requires considerable sophistication in rhetoric and communication theory. Rather than being willing to

commit resources to other departments to teach Speech Communication courses, the College and University should support the Department's graduate assistants to teach courses in the Department.

D. Conclusions

The University of Washington is well served by the Department of Speech Communication. It has an exceptionally strong undergraduate profile and serves the needs of a broad range of students. Its graduate program will benefit from additional focus and definition and, with sufficient resources and commitment by the Department as well as the College and University, it will undoubtedly achieve ranking as one of the strongest and most dynamic speech communication programs in the country. The Review Committee believes that the faculty is aware of the commitment required and that they are prepared to act vigorously to establish the program as a premier program.

The scholarly accomplishments of the Department faculty are impressive. They are talented, resourceful, and highly motivated. This is a department with faculty members of demonstrated international status ready and capable of taking the Department to the leading rank among doctoral programs while continuing to fulfill the challenging mission of meeting the needs of undergraduates at the University of Washington.

External Reviewers' Evaluation of the Department of Speech Communication
University of Washington

April 17, 1997

No subject is more significant or central to human experience than communication. Even today, speech remains the paradigm case of social interaction. We are a product of what we say to one another. We practice politics, build communities of opinion, construct identities, and manage personal and professional relationships through speech communication--in face-to-face exchanges as well as through various other forms of symbolic mediation. The linguistic or discursive turn in academia during this century renewed the salience of speech communication among the liberal arts as a field of research and teaching at public and private universities throughout the United States and, increasingly, the world. The National Communication Association (previously the Speech Communication Association) represents over 7,000 members of the discipline. Numerous other state, regional, and international associations of communication scholars exist as well, and while communication is a topic of widespread interdisciplinary interest throughout the humanities and social sciences, no other discipline takes the act of communicating as its central concern.

The Department of Speech Communication at the University of Washington, which it has been our privilege to review, is a vital center of research and teaching in the field. It is a department that has been on the threshold of moving into the top tier of doctoral programs for a decade or more. Individual members of the faculty have provided intellectual leadership as journal editors, elected officers of scholarly associations, publishing scholars of note, and influential educators. Many of their former students are contributing scholars in the field, some teaching at leading doctoral programs. As a site of graduate education, the Department is known for its commitment to excellence of teaching, breadth of preparation, multi-methodological approaches, and sound scholarship. Working with limited resources and a relatively small faculty, the Department has promoted scholarship in the field with consistent results and greater influence than many comparable, or even larger, departments at peer institutions. It is a solid department in a dynamic field with interdisciplinary reach--a department capable of achieving added prominence in the next decade by sharpening its focus in a way that will enable it to deploy present and future resources to maximum effect. Reaching this goal will depend on faculty efforts and increased support from central administration.

The Question of Support and Focus

The current review of degree programs in speech communication--undertaken as a routine, constructive, and forward-looking assessment of how to capitalize on recognized strengths--occurs in a context highly charged by the Department's recent experience of surviving a targeted review aimed at eliminating speech communication

at the University of Washington. The legacy of the "termination review" is both positive and negative. On the positive side, the Ad Hoc Review Committee for the Department of Speech Communication concluded unanimously on March 14, 1995, with particular regard to the criteria of centrality and quality, that the Department should be retained, observing that it is "an underappreciated treasure of the College." We are pleased that the College and the University discovered the value of the Department, and we were reassured by Divisional Dean Richard Dunn's statement to the present review committee that the future of the Department is secure. Thus, the good news is that the University of Washington now recognizes this Department's worth and has affirmed a commitment to enhancing its strengths. The unfortunate legacy of the "termination review" is that it diminished departmental resources (including the loss of key positions), damaged faculty and student morale, and wrought a disincentive for confronting the issue most central to the Department's further development.

Specifically, the issue of how to enhance present strengths requires a willingness among the faculty to articulate the Department's collective identity within the field of speech communication for the preparation of doctoral students, i.e., how the qualities, characteristics, and achievements for which the Department is most noted cohere with one another, how that coherence defines the Department's current position of importance and positive regard in the discipline, and how the Department's collective identity can be advanced through present and future resources to achieve increased prominence as a doctoral program at a Research I university. This is a difficult undertaking in the best of circumstances because it requires a faculty to confront potentially divisive questions about priorities, relative strengths, and departmental focus and because it treats issues of breadth from the perspective of how to reinforce the Department's defining depth. Present circumstances of reduced resources and elevated levels of skepticism within the Department make the challenge of articulating the Department's unique and/or prominent contribution to the discipline especially difficult.

Moreover, within a context of depleted resources and reduced optimism, an otherwise positive result of the "termination review" might inadvertently become a further disincentive for elucidating the Department's niche of scholarly excellence and intellectual leadership in the discipline. The 1995 report of the Ad Hoc Committee concluded that undergraduate education is the area in which the Department is widely recognized for excellence as a result of its exemplary ability to integrate faculty research, graduate-student training, and undergraduate instruction. No one should underestimate the importance of this achievement or understate the significance of the Ad Hoc Committee's finding. By itself, however, recognition for excellence in undergraduate education is insufficient to secure the long-term reputation of an academic department at a research-oriented university; such recognition, therefore, should not deter the Department from strengthening its reputation for promoting research and graduate education at the leading edge of the discipline. Answering the question of how the parts infuse or enable one another (how they add up to a unique

and compelling whole) is a necessary step toward that end. The answer will help to convey clearly how the Department's past achievements have contributed substantially to the research and teaching mission of the university, even as it points to optimal ways of deploying present and future resources. The question of focus, which derived originally from our examination of the Department's self-study materials, emerged again in the comments of some faculty and graduate students during our visit to campus.

In order to step forward on this important matter, the Department needs and deserves strong reassurances from the College and University administration that its future is secure and that it will be rewarded for sharpening the focus of its collective scholarly agenda. Every faculty understands that open disagreement increases the risk of external attack, especially in a climate of scarce and diminishing resources, and that addressing issues of identity increases the risk of conflict. The faculty members of the Department of Speech Communication have achieved an accommodation of collegiality and mutual regard which enables them to deliver an excellent undergraduate program and an important graduate program, programs that have earned them substantial respect in the field and allowed them to place a number of their Ph.D. graduates on the faculties of leading universities. They cannot be expected to trade on that collegiality toward the end of meeting a raised standard of excellence without receiving the material and moral support of the College and University.

Similarly, the Department needs to recognize that it is faced with a unique opportunity to enhance its status in the University and to advance the discipline by choosing to respond boldly and confidently, rather than reacting defensively and conservatively, to the question of identity and leadership within the field of speech communication. It is apparent to us that the College and the University recognize the Department's present contribution more than ever before and that they understand this recognition came, unfortunately, at the expense of a hurtful review. As a result, the College and University seem poised to respond favorably to robust initiatives from the Department aimed at reinforcing its research profile by identifying, integrating, and building on present strengths. Any additional hires, for example, whether they are in organizational communication, instructional communication, rhetoric, cultural studies, ethnography of communication or other areas of communication theory and research, should be calibrated to contribute to the existing strengths of the Department rather than to develop new and separate areas of emphasis. Issues of depth should define and constrain answers to questions of breadth.

The Department's faculty, not the external reviewers or the program review committee as a whole, must settle on answers to the question of focus. Beyond underscoring the importance of addressing this question, we can only suggest foundations on which the Department may wish to build a departmental focus of superior scholarship. Toward that end, we turn next to a discussion of existing strengths, opportunities, and challenges.

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

The Department has not achieved its present position of importance in the field of speech communication without laying at least a tacit foundation of common interest and achievement. Specifically, the faculty holds in common a belief in preparing its students to cross the intellectual borders that often exist between humanistic and social-scientific scholarship in the field. This faculty collectively is more capable than most of creating a climate of intellectual cross-fertilization. It includes members interested in the philosophy of communication, which provides students with an understanding of the assumptions underlying different paradigms; it includes rhetorical scholars grounded in the intellectual history of a tradition that has been appropriated to the ends of classical, modern, and postmodern projects; it includes communication scholars interested in approaches, such as the ethnography of speaking, situated between the humanities and the social sciences in an overriding concern with issues of communication and culture; it includes faculty members concerned with questions of instructional communication that require, among other things, integrating the traditions into a teachable curriculum, preparing students to teach such a curriculum, and analyzing communication dynamics of educational institutions; it includes faculty members interested in examining interpersonal relationships from social science perspectives; moreover, it includes a departmental practice of respecting intellectual diversity and encouraging students to achieve broad exposure to the discipline. The result is students able to negotiate the boundaries of the discipline, to draw resources from different sub-fields to advance their own projects, and even to display a strong understanding of the philosophical and theoretical issues entailed in such exchanges.

The faculty's respect for each other's work and collaboration at many levels is replicated in the graduate students' appreciation of multiple methods and varied research contexts. We witnessed strong faculty support for graduate students generally. Graduate students are integrated actively on research teams, even in areas outside their specialties. Most graduate students are presenting papers at conventions, and they report receiving valuable faculty help in preparing those papers. Some graduate students are publishing, as single authors or co-authors with faculty. This is a very desirable pattern and should be encouraged since some publication is now becoming a standard for many assistant professor positions.

In short, there is a productive, albeit tacit, dialogue operating within the present culture of the Department from which the faculty could derive the explicit articulation of their collective intellectual identity--identifying the common core of their interest as well as the individuations of that interest that comprise specializations, and/or specifying the intersections of their specializations which have heuristic value and can create intellectual synergy among faculty and students. A prevailing strength of the department is its climate of mutual respect which entails exchanges across paradigmatic borders. The challenge is to find ways of transforming this promotion of academic breadth into a unity of purpose and a synergy of intellectual invention,

which is uncharted territory fraught with obstacles and danger but also teeming with opportunity for advancing the discipline and thereby raising the profile of the Department.

Presently, most members of the Department express its identity in terms of its breadth, some (including the Department Chair) specifying three separate areas of concentration: rhetoric, instructional communication, and communication theory and research. This tendency toward breadth rather than depth serves undergraduate and terminal MA students well but creates difficulties at the doctoral level where greater identification of clusters of strength is needed. When asked to identify key areas of graduate concentration, the faculty provided varied answers. At this point, we believe, the faculty must begin to ask questions such as the following: "If we now have one cultural studies position and we add one organizational communication position, are we adding areas or strengthening clusters?" The answers to such questions help to shape the Department's graduate identity. In a world of finite resources many speech communication departments are struggling with the same issue of depth and breadth for doctoral education.

Left without further elaboration, a tripartite expression of departmental focus risks reifying the borders between each focal point at the cost of undermining key linkages. For example, the category of communication theory and research presumably includes the ethnography of speaking as one of its elements, an approach to the investigation of communicative competence and culture which spans the interests of rhetoricians and communication theorists alike and could be central to research on instructional communication. To mark rhetoric apart from communication research understates the linkage between ethnography and cultural studies, including postcolonial rhetoric, and even the potential linkage to close textual analysis of rhetorical acts. One might ask instead if there is anything about the study of communicative competency as an enactment and discursive construction of social reality that overlaps and engages the interests of scholars in each of the three designated areas of departmental concentration. If this should prove to be one major point of contact, one might ask further how to take systematic advantage of the scholarly resources of faculty in other departments at the University to bolster such a thematic in its various modes of development and elaboration. Of course, the faculty must ultimately settle on its own heuristics of integration, but this brief example illustrates a potentiality for developing a common context in which areas of emphasis can operate and inform one another to advance the theory, criticism, and practice of speech communication.

This concern with identifying a common departmental project should also inform developing linkages between Speech Communication and the School of Communications. The degree to which these programs merge their identities and resources should be a function of the degree to which they can add depth to one another's scholarship. We agree generally that it is a good idea to explore closer working relationships between the two units, given that the paradigm case of oral communication is often mediated by new technologies. Relational communication has

become increasingly a phenomenon of computer-mediated exchanges. Political rhetoric is practiced largely through the mass media of television and radio, retaining much of its original orality but assuming added characteristics that require careful scrutiny. Instructional communication is expanding to distance education. Cultural hegemonies are practiced through film and television programming. Research methods and theories of mass communication can be directly relevant to speech communication, just as relational theories and rhetorical criticism, for example, can be instructive for communications scholars. Interests in communication and culture from an ethnographic perspective may prove relevant to content covered in a seminar on international communication research methods. Numerous possibilities suggest themselves, but these two units come from largely different research traditions grounded in different phenomena of communication, one taking messages as its central concern and the other taking media as its starting point. Unless the Department of Speech Communication has a sense of its own synergy, closer cooperation with the School of Communications could add greater range and breadth of intellectual interests without achieving simultaneously an increased depth of scholarship.

Unfortunately, faculty resources in the Department have been diminished to a point of threatening the critical mass of a doctoral-degree granting unit (regardless of focus) and thus delimiting its ability to develop further its research agenda. This problem exists most prominently in at least three dimensions: the relatively small number of tenure-line faculty, the minimal support for junior faculty, and depressed salaries.

Eleven lines is at least one or two short of the minimum needed to maintain critical mass, and the Department may even lose another line to retirement, leaving it in an even more disadvantaged position. The Department of Speech Communication at Indiana University shares a comparable mission with its counterpart at the University of Washington and is budgeted for thirteen tenure-line positions, twelve of which are currently filled, plus a permanent line to support a visiting assistant professor responsible for directing the service course in public speaking. Indiana maintains one of the smallest Research-I faculties for delivering a doctoral-level program in speech communication along with an undergraduate major.

Also, junior faculty at other doctoral departments in the field are typically given more support for establishing their research programs than is the case at the University of Washington. The junior faculty in the Department appear to be under excessive pressure. They have teaching and service responsibilities greater than those expected at peer institutions and less faculty development support provided by top-tier institutions. A five-course load spread across three quarters handicaps their research programs. At Northwestern University, junior faculty receive during their probationary appointments a minimum of three non-teaching quarters in the first four years, a minimum of one quarter leave of absence, one paid summer, and a four-course annual teaching load. At Indiana University, which is on the semester system, junior faculty in speech communication now receive during their probationary appointment a one-semester release from teaching prior to the third-year review, a

\$6,000 summer research fellowship for their first year, a \$1,000 research fund in their first year, and a four-course annual teaching load, typically involving very few new preparations from one year to the next. Junior faculty are typically advised at Northwestern and Indiana to participate selectively on a relatively small number of graduate committees and to take on only a limited number of independent reading/research projects with students; moreover, their service loads are limited to a few commitments within the department and some involvement in professional associations. It is also important, through mentoring and other means, to establish working relationships between junior faculty and established scholars in other departments with related intellectual interests.

Low faculty salaries in the Department is a third matter of major concern, especially among the faculty members who are at mid-career. Data available to us indicate that this is one of the lowest paid faculties, on average, at the University, exasperating some individuals already disillusioned by recent attacks on the Department and destabilizing the tenured faculty as a whole. Clearly, this condition poses a disincentive for faculty to invest heavily in potentially divisive deliberations over the intellectual capital and focus of the Department. It will be hard for UW to reach and maintain a top-tier communication department unless salaries are improved. Even within the overall context of Seattle and UW salaries, this department is out of line. The associate professor salary compression is devastating. Full professor salaries are not competitive nationally, creating alternately a recruiting problem or a new compression problem if any senior hires are to be made. Further, travel funds are low and non-competitive with many peer institutions, and a heavy teaching load (five courses spread over three quarters) makes it difficult to sustain certain research efforts at the level expected of a Research I program.

With the addition of faculty, reduced teaching loads, and some initial funding, the Department might consider some entrepreneurial moves which have benefitted similar departments across the country. Due to the applicability of speech communication courses and concepts to organizational and corporate life, this faculty could create workshops, classes, or an executive masters degree program for professionals in Washington State. An intriguing joint offering could be created with the School of Communications. This could benefit the Department in a number of ways. The contacts with professional communities would enhance traditional undergraduate and graduate teaching and create research sites. More importantly, if established, such a program would enable the Department to recapture much of the income it generates which could be used to develop a reserve of funds for individual research accounts, research assistance, travel, lecture series, etc. Some monies could be used for graduate support. On other campuses faculty have been paid for such teaching on an overload basis but within the parameters of management or business school course salaries. Such a system has worked effectively elsewhere when the curriculum and selected research programs have been enhanced and the additional discretionary department funds have provided vital academic support to all faculty and graduate students. Such a project, if undertaken, should be designed to enhance

scholarship rather than distract from it.

Beyond the problem and remedies for diminished faculty resources, the question has been asked by some administrators in the Division and Graduate School whether the Department's service courses, which are over-subscribed, could be taught by TAs from other disciplines. This question reflects, in our opinion, a misunderstanding of the field and its service courses, specifically the false perception that these service courses teach basic skills that are common to any graduate assistant in any number of disciplines. The question does not take into account that the content of the discipline--the relationship of its scholarship to its teaching--is reflected in these courses, or that it ought to be if it is not, and that the skills being taught are neither basic nor remedial but, instead, require a degree of sophistication in rhetorical and communication theory. Moreover, the question suggests a greater willingness to invest in supporting graduate students in other disciplines than in speech communication--an unfortunate, although perhaps inadvertent, expression of minimal support for the Department's graduate program. Instead of funneling more funds to graduate students in other departments for the purpose of teaching service courses in speech communication, the University should consider providing that increased support to the Department of Speech Communication. Presently, a number of the Department's graduate students are supported with temporary funding, provided on a semester-by-semester basis. Moreover, additional funds for delivering the service courses could be used by the Department to support its doctoral students for a year or two of "post-doctoral" teaching, giving them time to strengthen their publication records and otherwise increase their competitive position in a tightening market for academic positions. This use of funds would not be completely unlike the system explained to us by Dean Dunn and currently used by the Department of English at UW.

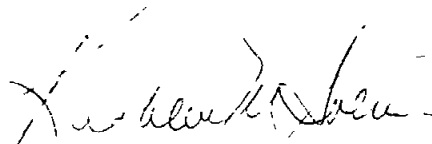
Finally, although presently an excellent curriculum, the Department's undergraduate major could benefit from some revisions. The undergraduates we met spoke eloquently about their satisfaction with the faculty's dedication and intellectual competence. Each had a unique tale of finding this major, and each appeared less than clear about a long-term plan for structuring their courses in a meaningful way. It appears as though some, perhaps even many, courses are listed in the catalog which have not been offered in recent times, leaving students unclear about their realistic options. They report receiving excellent quarter-by-quarter advice based on the immediate offerings or the annual plan, but they did not seem to experience a strategic sense of where they were going or could go within the curriculum. The department should consider developing a set of model "clusters" which could serve to guide students toward possible career directions or otherwise logical configurations. Outdated or underutilized courses should be removed from the catalog. If there is a need for flexibility, the Department could use a seminar number to offer different topics on a rotating basis. The Department might also benefit from providing the University's admissions office with a "white paper" to be used in recruiting freshmen and providing information to parents since this major does not bear a direct relation to

courses taught in many Washington high schools. We should note also the strong interest expressed by graduate students to address multicultural issues in the courses they teach, particularly the public speaking course, and their perceived need for more department support in this endeavor.

Conclusion

In sum, we believe the University is well served presently by the Department of Speech Communication. Its undergraduate and graduate programs are generally quite good and in some respects exemplary. Its faculty has weathered a storm of evaluation with remarkable fortitude and good will. This is a talented faculty challenged by diminished resources and underdeveloped focus at the doctoral level. The Department has earned the respect and now deserves the moral and material support of the College and University in sufficient degree and appropriate kind to secure the status of a first-tier doctoral program. That support should come in the form of reassurances of the Department's future at the University, restoration and addition of tenure-line positions, better support for junior faculty, improved salaries, and enhanced TA funding. For its part, the Department should commit itself to (1) articulating more precisely its intellectual foci for doctoral studies, (2) exploring further possible collaborations with other academic units, including the School of Communications, and (3) updating its undergraduate offerings and advising materials.

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