

\*We have taken this opportunity to relook closely at our previous assessment plan. As a result, we have redesigned the learning objectives and expanded some of the assessment tools we are now using. Much of our previous plan relied solely on student feedback and perceptions. We believe this is important, but the new plan adds some more direct measures. The data we report in other sections is based on the information we have been collecting. New data will be gathered starting with the 2016-2017 academic year.

### **Learning Objectives for Communication Studies:**

Students will be able to:

1. **Objective:** Design and deliver effective messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.

**Method of Assessment:** Each graduating student will be assessed by faculty using the Oral Communication Rubric for an extended oral presentation (20-25 minutes). Effectiveness is demonstrated by being able to score a 15 or higher using the Oral Communication Rubric adapted from one of the VALUE rubrics designed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (which is recommended by the National Communication Association). We will also assess student perceptions of our success in accomplishing this objective through an alumni survey.

**Timing:** Each semester with senior students in the Capstone class. A copy of the rubric is provided in Appendix A. The survey will be sent out to graduates each summer.

2. **Objective:** Effectively explain and apply communication concepts, theories, perspectives, and principles to their personal experiences.

**Method of Assessment:** Each graduating student will be assessed by faculty based on a written discussion of influential concepts in the communication field (11-16 pages long). Effectiveness is demonstrated by being able to score a 15 or higher using the Written Communication Rubric adapted from two of the VALUE rubrics designed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (which are recommended by the National Communication Association). Components of the written communication and the integrative learning rubrics were adapted and combined to produce this rubric. We will also assess student perceptions of our success in accomplishing this objective through an alumni survey.

**Timing:** Each semester with senior students in the Capstone class. A copy of the rubric is provided in the Appendix B. The survey will be sent out to graduates each summer.

3. **Objective:** Feel confident in their understanding of how to 1) Build lasting and mutually positive interpersonal relationships; 2) Effectively communicate in organizational settings; 3) Sensitively understand and bridge cultural differences when interacting in a culturally diverse society; and 4) Recognize, plan, and implement strategies of persuasion that are effective and ethical.

**Method of Assessment:** Using a survey targeting the specific components noted in objective three, all graduating seniors will be contacted and asked to provide feedback on

how well they feel their undergraduate program in Communication Studies prepared them in these four fundamental areas covered in our program. These four areas are associated with major divisions within the National Communication Association: interpersonal communication, organizational communication, intercultural communication, and social influence and rhetoric. Students will be asked to evaluate their experience and knowledge with each of these areas on a five point scale, ranging from strongly agreeing that the goal has been achieved to strongly disagreeing that the goal has been achieved.

**Timing:** Every summer all students who have graduated the previous year (summer, fall or spring semester) will be given the opportunity and be encouraged to fill out an alumni survey. A copy of the alumni survey that covers all areas is provided in Appendix E.

4. **Objective:** Effectively, critically and systematically analyze messages.

**Method of Assessment:** Each graduating student will be assessed on their ability to effectively analyze communication messages. Senior students will be presented with a series of communication messages and asked to analyze these in terms of potential meanings, potential questions for gathering more information from multiple perspectives and potential action items based on this analysis. Effectiveness is demonstrated by being able to score a 6 or higher using a rubric designed in the department to assess a student's ability to examine and explore the potential meanings and implications for new knowledge associated with contextualized messages. We will also assess student perceptions of our success in accomplishing this objective through an alumni survey.

**Timing:** Each semester with senior students in the Capstone class. Results will be combined for each academic year. A copy of the rubric is provided in Appendix C. The survey will be sent out to graduates each summer.

5. **Objective:** Demonstrate understanding of how to engage in communication inquiry.

**Method of Assessment:** The students' final projects in all of our "Research Methods" courses will be assessed on a Communication Inquiry Rubric adapted from one of the VALUE rubrics designed by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (which is recommended by the National Communication Association). A score of 15 will be considered to have demonstrated a foundational understanding of how communication inquiry is done. The "Research Methods" courses are 4460 - Communication Criticism; 4470 - Qualitative Research in Communication Studies; and 4570 – Quantitative Communication Studies Research Methods. We will also assess student perceptions of our success in accomplishing this objective through an alumni survey.

**Timing:** Majors must take at least one of the three listed courses in their program of study. One of these courses is offered every semester. Each time one of these courses is taken by a major their final project will be assessed using the Communication Inquiry Rubric. At the end of the academic year the scores for all majors will be combined across each course to provide an overall average score for communication studies majors. A copy of the rubric is provided in Appendix D. The survey will be sent out to graduates each summer.

## Appendix A

<b>Oral Communication</b>	<b>Excellent / = 4 Superior</b>	<b>Very Good / = 3 Effective</b>	<b>Good / = 2 Competent</b>	<b>Fair / = 1 Questionable</b>
<b>Organization</b>	Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions are clearly, consistently, and skillfully observable providing a cohesive presentation.	Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions are clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions are intermittently observable within the presentation.	Specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions are either rarely observable or not found within the presentation.
<b>Language</b>	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, and compelling. They consistently enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is appropriate to audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. Language in presentation is not appropriate to audience.
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, vocal expressiveness, and any use of technology) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, vocal expressiveness, and any use of technology) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, vocal expressiveness, and any use of technology) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, vocal expressiveness, and any use of technology) detract from the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable.
<b>Content and supporting material</b>	A variety of content materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) clearly and consistently engage the audience and strongly support the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.	Content material, such as explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities often engage the audience and generally support the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.	Content materials, such as examples, explanations, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities at times engages the audience and partially support the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.	Content materials, such as explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities rarely engages the audience and only minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/ authority on the topic.
<b>Central Message(s)</b>	Central idea(s) is compelling. It is clearly tied audience interests, precisely stated, appropriately reinforced, memorable, and strongly supported.	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material. Connection to audience could be strengthened.	Central message is basically understandable but is not well reinforced and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

### Appendix B

<b>Written Communication</b>	<b>Excellent / = 4 Superior</b>	<b>Very Good / = 3 Effective</b>	<b>Good / = 2 Competent</b>	<b>Fair / = 1 Questionable</b>
<b>Purpose and Organization</b>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the purpose of the assigned task and skillfully guides the reader through the material.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of the purpose of the assigned task and organizes the material in a clear format with a preview & summary.	Demonstrates awareness of the purpose of the assigned task. Preview and summary need work, but is organized in a reasonable way.	Demonstrates minimal attention to the purpose of the assigned task. Lacks an preview and summary in minimal. Organization is hard to follow.
<b>Mechanics</b>	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to the readers. The language in the paper has few errors.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of frequent errors in usage.
<b>Connections to Discipline</b>	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the discipline by fully and clearly explaining concepts and connecting concepts to each other in insightful ways.	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the discipline by fully and clearly explaining concepts. Makes tentative or few connections across concepts.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of the discipline by explaining concepts in ways that are generally accurate and clear	Demonstrates only a partial understanding of the discipline. Concepts are explained only partially and at times may contain errors.
<b>Connections to Experience</b>	Meaningfully synthesizes connections between concepts and a variety of experiences outside the formal classroom to deepen and broaden one's own points of view.	Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences from a variety of contexts to illuminate basic concepts in the communication field.	Compares life experiences to academic knowledge to infer basic connections and demonstrate some new understanding of the material covered.	Identifies superficial connections between life experiences and the academic concepts discussed with only limited discussion of how connections bring increased insight.
<b>Reflection &amp; Self-Assessment</b>	Demonstrates a clear sense of the self as a learner, a person who is willing to take on challenging concepts and build on past experiences in subtle and productive ways.	Demonstrates the ability to evaluate and recognize changes in one's own learning. Able to articulate basic changes in self and identify patterns of behavior.	Demonstrates a basic ability to articulate self-reflection. Changes to self and evolving perspectives are only minimally recognized.	Demonstrates no or very limited self-reflection and awareness of personal growth and reflects on concepts in very vague and general terms.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

## Appendix C

<b>Message Analysis</b>	<b>Accomplished = 3</b>	<b>Emerging = 2</b>	<b>Novice = 1</b>
<b>Communication Complexity</b>	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of potential meanings by articulating three or more potential meanings and motivations behind the analyzed messages. Potential meanings and motivations are clearly linked to specific details within the message or situation.	Demonstrates awareness of potential meanings by being able to articulate two possible meanings or motivations behind the analyzed messages. Potential meanings are at least partially connected to specific details associated with the message or situation.	Demonstrates a minimal awareness of the potential meanings by only being able to articulate one possible meaning or motivation behind the analyzed messages. Limited tie in to specific aspects of the message in the analysis.
<b>Informed Curiosity</b>	Be able to articulate a series of questions that would skillfully guide a person to better understand the message and/or similar future messages from multiple perspectives.	Be able to articulate a limited range (2-3) group of questions that would guide a person to better understand the message and/or similar future messages from multiple perspectives.	Unable to articulate multiple questions that would guide a person to better understand the message and/or similar future messages from multiple perspectives.
<b>Communication Sophistication</b>	Able to provide multiple suggestions for how improve the message grounded in communication concepts with a recognition of potential benefits and dangers associated with these suggestions.	Able to provide at least one suggestion for how improve the message that is grounded in communication concepts with limited recognition of any potential dangers associated with the suggestion.	Unable to provide one suggestion for how improve the message that is grounded in communication concepts. No recognition of any potential dangers associated with any suggestion.

*Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.*

## Appendix D

<b>Communication Inquiry</b>	<b>Excellent / = 4 Superior</b>	<b>Very Good / = 3 Effective</b>	<b>Good / = 2 Competent</b>	<b>Fair / = 1 Questionable</b>
<b>Topic and fit with method of inquiry</b>	Identifies a creative, focused, and manageable topic that addresses potentially significant issues and is appropriate to the method under study.	Identifies a focused and manageable/ doable topic that appropriately addresses a relevant issue and is appropriate to the method under study	Identifies a topic that while potentially manageable/doable, is too narrowly focused or only partially appropriate for the methods under study.	Identifies a topic that is far too general and wide-ranging as to be manageable and doable. It does not align well with the method under study.
<b>Existing Knowledge, Research, and/or Views</b>	Synthesizes in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents in-depth information from relevant sources representing various points of view/approaches.	Presents information from relevant sources representing limited points of view/ approaches.	Presents information from irrelevant sources representing limited points of view/ approaches.
<b>Design Process</b>	All elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are skillfully developed. Appropriate methodology or theoretical frameworks may be synthesized from across disciplines or from relevant sub-disciplines.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are appropriately developed, however, more subtle elements are ignored or unaccounted for.	Critical elements of the methodology or theoretical framework are missing, incorrectly developed, or unfocused.	Inquiry design demonstrates a misunderstanding of the methodology or theoretical framework.
<b>Analysis</b>	Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence to reveal important patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.	Organizes evidence, but the organization is not effective in revealing important patterns, differences, or similarities.	Lists evidence, but it is not organized and/ or is unrelated to focus.
<b>Conclusions, Limitations and Implications</b>	States a conclusion that is a logical extrapolation from the inquiry findings. Insightfully discusses in detail relevant and supported limitations and implications.	States a conclusion focused solely on the inquiry findings. Discusses relevant and supported limitations and implications.	States a general conclusion that, because it is so general, also applies beyond the scope of the inquiry findings. Presents relevant and supported limitations and implications.	States an ambiguous, illogical, or unsupported conclusion from inquiry findings. Presents limitations and implications, but they are possibly irrelevant and unsupported.

**Appendix E**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED**  
**WITH A COMMUNICATION STUDIES MAJOR**  
Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies  
Utah State University

1. Name

2. Please list any minors or double majors.

3. Please evaluate your communication classes regarding each of the following objectives:

Objective 1:

Develop and strengthen your ability to design and deliver effective messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 2:

Develop and strengthen your ability to explain and apply communication concepts, theories, perspectives, and principles to your personal experiences.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Objective 3:

Develop your ability to critically, effectively, and systematically analyze messages.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 4:

Develop and strengthen your understanding of how to engage in methods of inquiry and research appropriate to the discipline.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 5:

Develop and strengthen your understanding of how to sensitively understand and bridge cultural differences when interacting in a culturally diverse society.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 6:

Develop and strengthen your understanding of how to effectively and appropriately communicate in organizational settings.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 7:

Develop and strengthen your understanding of how to recognize, plan, and implement strategies of persuasion (that are effective and ethical).

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 8:

Develop and strengthen your understanding of how to build lasting and mutually positive interpersonal relationships.

With respect to this objective my classes were effective:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4. What are your post-graduation plans? Please include information concerning a job, graduate school, or professional school.

5. Please provide post-graduation contact information, if possible. This information will be confidential.

a. E-mail address:

b. Postal address:

c. Phone number:

6. We are very interested in your feedback. Please include any general comments you would like to make about your experiences in the Communication Studies program and the Department of Languages, Philosophy, and Communication Studies.