



2015-16 End-of-Year Report Academic Department Success Plan

Department: Communication

Department Chair: Debra Israel

Person Primarily Responsible for Preparing this Report:
Debra Israel, Interim Chairperson

Please answer the following questions in two or three pages and submit to your Dean by October 3. Your Dean will review and advance to Academic Affairs by October 10¹ and will offer you feedback by Oct. 17. This report will help inform your 2016-2019 Student Success Plan update that will be due to your Dean by Nov. 4.

1. Specific accomplishments/achievements this past year (briefly explain using bullet points, noting any changed/adapted):

- **Bring guest speakers to better explain career opportunities for students with a Communication major.** For Comm. 101 brought in a guest speaker who is also an alumnus of the university to speak on themes and to skills related to the Job Application Portfolio assignment. All Comm. 101 students were invited to this special presentation – fall 2015 (responsible person: Dr. Johnston, Comm 101 Director). For Comm. 204, Dr. Johnston also brought in guest speakers.
- **Coordinate at least one networking event per year.** Society for Professional Journalists also brought in an alumnus speaker in Spring 2016 (advisors, Dr. Lori Henson and Terry Nelson). PRSSA students (advisor, Jennifer Mullen) also attended a networking event: Half Day with a Pro, an annual event for a morning of job shadowing at PR agencies, nonprofits and corporate offices. Students sit side-by-side with industry professionals to learn their day-to-day responsibilities, office environment and entry-level insights.
- **Further develop relationship with CAS liaison in the Career Center to build internship base.** Internship Coordinator (Dr. Kopaczewski) has continued to build relationships with the career center. Enrollments in internships are steady (some semesters higher than others but overall fairly steady between 5 and 10 each semester) despite the decreasing number of majors under the old program where it was a requirement. Additionally, efforts are in place to build more support within the department for continued building of the internship program as an option for students even though it is no longer required.
- **Develop monthly Communication Department newsletter with scholarship and internship opportunities, to be distributed via e-mail to all majors.** Internship coordinator has not developed an internship newsletter but is happy to discuss that possibility with other faculty when group meets regarding internships this semester. Internship opportunities are regularly posted on the Communication Majors and Minors Blackboard site.
- **Continue delivering College Challenge courses in Comm 101.** Increased our number of college challenge teachers from 1 (2014) to 8. All Comm. 101 instructors included in this process to cultivate a more collegial relationship by way of site visits. Annual workshop held for our college challenge teachers. Responsible person: Dr. Johnston, Comm 101 director

2. Objective/Actions Not Achieved (briefly explain using bullet points):

- **Institute a call campaign for all declared first-year Communication majors to check-in and answer any questions about the program.** While this specific intervention (phone calling) did not occur, it may be considered for next year, among other communication mechanisms, such as close contact with UC advisors of Communication majors. In Spring 2016 all Communication majors (including first-years) were invited to our open house, with information about internships, student groups, and student success information available.

¹ Note that the Dean will request a refinement to the report if it is not suitably addressing the questions.

- **Assess learning outcomes in Comm 202.** The assessment committee did NOT assess COMM 202 as it was determined that COMM 202 is not part of the department curriculum and therefore is under the purview of the Foundational Studies assessment plan rather than our own assessment plan.
 - **Work with University College (primarily with advisors to Communication majors) to develop pre-entry academic profiles that identify any ongoing preparatory deficiencies.** While this specific examination of preparatory deficiencies did not occur, to my knowledge (Debra Israel), the department benefited in AY 2015-16 because a Communication professor (Dr. Hantzis) was advising many of the UC Communication majors through her work as Faculty Fellow with the University College. This has helped the department learn more about advising challenges, and we are working to update our four year plans to better accommodate student schedules.
 - **Institute degree audits for all Junior Communication majors. Institute degree audits for all Senior Communication majors. Identify underperforming students (through the mechanism of Junior and Senior degree audits) and work to find the best academic placements for their individual abilities and talents.** While specific information on formal degree audits was not centrally collected, more communication with advisors on key stumbling blocks for students was initiated to proactively reach out to juniors and seniors, particularly those on the old curriculum, since MYSAM does not accurately reflect the courses they still need to graduate. These students have also been mainly assigned to one advisor (Dr. Kopaczewski) to better communicate options for graduation.
 - **Engage in Course Transformation Academy (if application is accepted) to rethink two related core courses that are currently impediments to student success.** This participation in the Course Transformation Academy didn't happen. However, departmental discussion of course modification will occur for the research methods courses referred to in this point.
 - **Establish a more structured information system for prospective students. Create brochures that explain clear steps that students need to take in order to obtain degrees.** One brochure exists for the Journalism concentration, but needs to be updated. This will be considered this year, although the focus has been on up-to-date information on the website.
 - **Continue to circulate brochures at various recruiting occasions, including recruitment fairs at local high schools.** Uncertain to what extent this was utilized in Fall 2015. Will research the best use of our time for recruiting this year. As mentioned previously, the College Challenge teachers are a great resource in this respect.
- 3. Looking ahead, briefly describe changes, additions, or subtractions that need to be made to your goals and/or action steps, including with respect to their linkage to student learning outcomes.**
- a. Expand opportunities for students in research and creative work, experiential learning, and community engagement.
 - b. Internships – continue to encourage, have students share their experiences with each other; increasing collaboration among faculty, cooperating with Internship coordinator, possibly developing a funding source to help students to complete internships
 - c. Continue to identify learning outcomes through assessment process and conduct additional workshops to increase communication among faculty teaching multiple sections of courses in the CORE and concentrations.
 - d. Offer a new Health Communication Concentration. This will benefit Communication majors interested in careers in health-related businesses and organizations, a growing area in Indiana and the United States.
 - e. Continue to improve departmental advising, including information about minors in other departments and colleges that will combine well with a Communication major.
 - f. Develop additional Foundational Studies courses.
 - g. Reaching out to Alumni—increasing networking opportunities for students
 - h. Plans to continue bringing in speakers. Continue current collaborations and expand to others to increase student and faculty engagement on campus and in the community.

- i. Proposing an additional learning/course objective be added to Comm. 101 that is related to professional development – since the job application portfolio assignment is a requirement.

4. Do you see opportunity for this project to work more closely with another department, college, or unit such that greater impact might be possible (*briefly explain*)?

- Continue to collaborate with Student Media as both of our units grow our programs.
- Continue to cooperate with other departments throughout the university (for example, providing classes in Health Communication for AHS majors)

5. Is there anything else about your initiative you feel important to detail?

Other Student Success related accomplishments from AY 2015-16 included:

- Fall Learning Community for new first semester Communication Majors, where students are enrolled in both Comm 202 and Comm 204 continues to be an excellent retention tool for new Communication majors. (Dr. Hantzis and Dr. Johnston)
- Comm 101 continues to be an excellent retention tool for new first semester non-Communication majors, and we accommodated the larger numbers of new first-year students by offering more sections in Fall 2015, and were asked to do so again this fall.
- OER Textbook that increases the caliber of knowledge and skills training in Comm. 101 while saving our 2016-17 Comm. 101 students more than \$424,000.00 and our College Challenge students more than \$40,000.00. (Project manager, Dr. Johnston)
- Job Application Portfolio Assignment was developed, launched, and assessed in Comm 101 (Dr. Johnston and Comm 101 instructors)
- Started a department newsletter, The Link, that features student success to inspire more student success and alumni success and support. (Dr. Johnston's project)
- The department held a successful open house this spring with information about internships, student groups, study abroad, student success, Student Media opportunities, and research posters (one undergraduate, one graduate, and one faculty).
- As in past years, faculty participated in the CAS Community Semester in Spring 2016.
- The end of the year awards ceremony and reception was well-attended by students, family, faculty, and staff, with standing room only. Recognition was given to our outstanding seniors (overall and by concentration), scholarship recipients, and Lambda Pi Eta honor society inductees (30 students).
- Dr. Kray initiated a brown bag seminar series on Fridays during the spring semester. This provided a venue for faculty to present their research in an informal setting. Students from the PRSSA also shared with faculty about their experiences at a conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin.