

**Texas A&M International University
Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review (AIER)
for Academic Programs**

Program: BA Communication

Assessment Period Covered: March 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009

Program Coordinator (Preparer of Report): Lynda Brown

List Other Program Faculty:

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The Annual Institutional Effectiveness Review for Academic Programs is directed at Goal 1: Academics of the Texas A&M International University 2006-2010 Strategic Plan:

Develop, maintain, assess, and improve academic programs, administrative/educational support services and student services, to admit, retain, and graduate students who achieve established learning outcomes designed to prepare them for success in their chosen careers.

Institutional Mission

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, prepares students for leadership roles in their chosen profession in an increasingly complex, culturally diverse state, national, and global society ... Through instruction, faculty and student research, and public service, Texas A&M International University embodies a strategic point of delivery for well-defined programs and services that improve the quality of life for citizens of the border region, the State of Texas, and national and international communities.

Academic Program Mission

In unison with the institutional mission, this Department is dedicated to the promotion of intellectual and personal growth in students, with an emphasis on endowing them with flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing social, professional, economic, cultural, and political environments ushered in by this era of rapid technological change, information proliferation, and global interdependence. To achieve these aims, the Department is committed to the retention of a productive, professionally diverse and highly competent faculty involved in a wide range of academic endeavors.

Provide summary of the last cycle's use of results and changes implemented

Program faculty should evaluate the former cycle. This statement should specify if the outcomes addressed were a continuation of previous ones, new outcomes, or modified versions of previous outcomes. In addition, the statement should include a concise analysis of the assessment data collected during the previous year, a brief explanation of actions taken to address specific outcomes, an evaluation of how these actions contributed to the improvement of the program, and any recommendations

formulated. Assessment data—including actual samples of student work—must be viewed and discussed by program faculty during this process.

Last year senior thesis papers were evaluated using the QEP rubric. The average score was above the minimum program acceptable benchmark. The faculty evaluation committee had seen an improvement from the 2006 papers. Even though the average of the scores were above the minimum threshold, the committee agreed that the program should continue to place a strong emphasis on writing as good writing skills are critical for a majority of communication careers.

Selected list of program-level intended student learning outcomes (*It is recommended that programs rotate through their entire set of outcomes over a multi-year period. Programs may focus on one or two outcomes each year, as deemed appropriate*).

1. Graduates will successfully write an essay that demonstrates their theoretical knowledge, research and writing skills while analyzing a practical topic or professional problem.
2. Graduates will produce a portfolio consistent with professional standards.
3. Graduates will demonstrate communicative competence in public and social contexts.

Section I: Planning and Implementation

Outcome(s): *Identify the outcome(s) that will be focused upon this year.*

1. Graduates will successfully write an essay that demonstrates their theoretical knowledge, research and writing skills while analyzing a practical topic or professional problem.

*Yes **Please indicate if the outcome(s) is (are) related to writing (QEP).**

Methods of assessment to be used: *The explanation should identify and describe the type of assessment(s) that will be used (e.g., survey, questionnaire, observation instrument, test, rubric to evaluate performance, standardized examination, action research, interviews, etc.), who will provide the information, and how the data will be obtained.*

Students will demonstrate their written communication skills and critical thinking abilities in their final thesis paper which is focused on analyzing a communication phenomenon through the lens of scholarly communication research.

Assessment will be done through the University QEP Analytical Rubric, where 4=Exceptional; 3= Better Than Avg.; 2=Average; 1= Poor Pass; and 0=Failing.

An essay will count as demonstrating the desired outcome if the average score on each of the following criteria is 2 or higher.

(2) Information will be provided by Lynda Brown from her senior capstone course, COMM 4360 Communication Theory and Practice. Once a year, a committee consisting of at least two communication professors will evaluate the degree to which the essays written by seniors accomplish the identified objective. Evaluation will be done using the current QEP rubric.

	4/A	3/B	2/C	0/F
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt is completely & clearly addressed Clear, interesting central idea stated or implied so focus of the piece is evident or gradually revealed Writing appropriate for & clearly directed at a specific audience &/or for a specific situation or occasion. Well-developed, enticing opening leads to essay's central idea. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt is clearly addressed Clear central idea, stated either explicitly or implicitly Writing demonstrates awareness of audience, situation, & occasion Effective, though less detailed opening leads to central idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt is addressed Central idea may not be immediately clear but is evident by the end of the piece Writing demonstrates occasional awareness of audience, situation, & occasion Adequate opening leads to central idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt is partially or unclearly addressed Unclear, ambiguous, or no central idea Little or no awareness of audience, situation, or occasion Rudimentary or no opening to writing sample
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently logical & effective ¶ing with smooth transitions between & within ¶s Consistently clear & logical structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually logical & effective ¶ing with mostly smooth transitions between & within ¶s Usually clear & logical structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Logical ¶ing with transitions between & within ¶s Organization is sometimes unclear or illogical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent problems w/ paragraphing & transitions Organization is often confusing
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body ¶s provide substantial detailed evidence and thorough discussion & explanation Effective, convincing discussion of topic Interesting, effective, insightful ending Sophisticated, effective, appropriate diction Consistently varied, sophisticated sentence length and structure Consistent and appropriate tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent evidence, proof, discussion in body ¶s with only occasional lapses Mostly convincing, competent discussion of topic Ends paper effectively Sometimes sophisticated, mostly accurate diction Frequently varied sentence length & structure Usually consistent and appropriate tone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body ¶s contain adequate though sometimes inconsistent levels of evidence & examples General, occasionally convincing discussion of topic Final ¶(s offer sufficient closure Unsophisticated but generally accurate diction Some variety in sentence length and structure Occasionally an inconsistent or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body ¶s lack adequate examples, details, & explanations Ineffective, unconvincing discussion of topic Missing, ineffective, dull, incoherent, or irrelevant ending Limited, imprecise diction prevents communication of complex

<p>Style & Sentence Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently smooth, clear, readable syntax Free of errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently smooth, clear, readable syntax Infrequent errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices 	<p>inappropriate tone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, relatively free of unidiomatic syntax & expressions Occasional errors in sentence structure, i.e., fragments, run-ons, and comma splices 	<p>ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetitive, unsophisticated sentence length and structure Frequently inconsistent or inappropriate tone Distracting unidiomatic syntax & expressions Frequent errors in sentence structure make meaning unclear, i.e. fragments, run-ons, and comma splices
<p>Grammar & Mechanics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free of grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc. Free of mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc. No wordiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrequent grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc. Infrequent mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc. Little wordiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc. Some mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc. Some wordiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A distracting number of grammatical errors, i.e., errors in subject-verb agreement, verb & adjective forms, pronoun-referent agreement, etc. A distracting number of mechanical errors in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, use of numbers, etc. Frequent wordiness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently uses reliable, relevant, appropriate sources Consistently and correctly cites sources both in-text and parenthetically Unfailingly uses appropriate documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequently uses reliable, relevant, appropriate sources Infrequent errors citing sources both in-text & parenthetically No or few lapses in use of appropriate documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses sources, most of which are reliable and relevant Occasional errors citing sources in-text &/or parenthetically Occasional lapses in use of appropriate documentation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses frequently unreliable and/or irrelevant sources Frequent errors citing sources in-text and/or parenthetically Frequent lapses

Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete absence of plagiarism • Thoughtful, insightful synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete absence of plagiarism • Often insightful synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete absence of plagiarism • Some effective synthesis of writer's ideas with info from sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in use of appropriate documentation style • Evidence of plagiarism • Attempts to synthesize writer's ideas with info from sources but rarely succeeds
Discipline-specific Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates exceptional creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates frequent creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates adequate creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequently demonstrates creativity and/or higher order critical thinking skills appropriate for discipline

Indicate when assessment(s) will take place:

Fall 2008

Criteria/Benchmark(s): *Specify, if deemed appropriate to assess outcome(s). Criteria/ benchmark(s) may be optional, especially if qualitative measures are used for data collection.*

The benchmark for 2 or higher using the QEP rubric indicates that the student can: cogently describe a particular communication topic or problem, (b) identifies, analyzes and synthesizes communication theory to illuminate understanding of the topic/problem, and (c) demonstrate cogent writing skills.

Section II: Analysis of Results

What were the results attained? *Describe the primary results or findings from your analysis of the information collected. This section should include an explanation of any strength(s) or weakness(es) of the program suggested by the results.*

Twenty-four student papers were evaluated according to QEP rubric. The assessment team averaged each committee member's rating for each paper then calculated an average for all the papers.

QEP Average Score for 24 Senior Thesis Papers = 2.44

Results of assessment is 2.44>2; SATISFACTORY

What were the conclusions reached?

The committee decided that the assessment for this year should still be on student papers and in addition we need to assess Internship and Media Production Track portfolios. Specifically, outcome 2 requires graduates to submit a professional portfolio for evaluation using a department-designed rubric that was developed through consideration of professional standards.

The Communication Degree program's strategic plan is to provide students with the academics and hands-on experience in different applied communication areas so that they may be more employable upon graduation especially those who plan to stay in the Laredo area.

Describe the action plan formulated. (The plan may be multi-year in nature.)

The average of the student thesis papers is 2.44. This is above the program minimum. Despite the acceptable results, the committee agreed that too many academic papers were poorly done and that the entire program needs to address how to improve writing. Since writing well and effectively is inherent and necessary for most communication careers, the committee agrees that this needs to be addressed across the program.

The following are suggestions for improving the students' writing:

1. Incorporate some form academic writing in all communication courses if possible.
2. Since students learn specifically how to write academic papers including how to effectively present an argument and evidence with discipline appropriate research in COMM 3310 Methods of Inquiry, the committee agrees that this course needs to be capped at 20 students and offered both spring and fall. Presently, this course is only offered in the spring and has 40 students which is too many for a writing intensive research course. The program has tripled in size since this was originally scheduled.
3. Require Writing Center assistance for all major papers.
4. Create a vehicle for student recognition for excellent senior thesis papers. Suggestions ranged from continuing the Communication Program newsletter to creating a MySpace for the communication degree program.

Section III: Resources

Resource(s) to implement action plan:

Funding

- New Resources Required- Video Production students need cameras, editing software, and updated Macs.
- External grant spearheaded by Dr. Keck and Candy Heins for a radio station including equipment needs for a radio performance studio and production suites.

- Reallocation of current funds

Physical

- New or reallocated space- Radio Studio and Production Suites

Other

- Primarily faculty/staff time- Need staff or student workers to oversee production areas.
- University/rule procedure change only

Provide a narrative description and justification for requested resources (include linkage to Strategic Plan)

TAMIU's communication degree program emphasizes applied communication. Our students are taking classes in media production, public relations, advertising, and media writing. We would like to add broadcast journalism including TV and radio reporting, radio news and production, and integrated marketing communications. We need equipment and space for teaching those types of classes.

Identify proposed outcomes for the next assessment cycle:

Continuation of present outcome(s) – (Indicate reason for continuation):

Despite the acceptable results, the committee agreed that too many academic papers were poorly done and that the entire program needs to address how to improve writing and therefore the committee needs to continue assessment 1 for this coming cycle.

1. Graduates will successfully write an essay that demonstrates their theoretical knowledge, research and writing skills while analyzing a practical topic or professional problem.

New Outcome(s) – (List outcomes below):

In addition to Outcome 1, the communication committee has decided to also assess Outcome 2.

2. Graduates will demonstrate their professional communication skills through their Communication Internship Portfolios and Media Production Track productions.