

# ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR

Bachelor of Arts with a major in Communication  
**Degree Program**

Spring 2004  
**Assessment Period Covered**

June 1, 2004  
**Date Submitted**

## **Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose Linkage:**

### **Institutional Mission Reference:**

Texas A&M International University, a Member of The Texas A&M University System, is committed to the preparation of students for leadership roles in their chosen profession and 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 is 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.

### **College/University Goal(s) Supported:**

To increase (1) students' ability to communicate through the use of the written and spoken word; (2) their knowledge and appreciation of culture, fine arts, social integration; and (3) self realization. The College [COAH] also prepares students for a variety of professions and roles by providing a broad-based liberal arts education.

### **Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes:**

- 1.** Students completing the baccalaureate program in Communication will communicate competently in public and social contexts.
- 2.** Students completing the degree program will be able to explain main theoretical assumptions they make about the nature of communication while analyzing a practical or professional problem.
- 3.** Students will be able to approach practical communication problems in professionally valuable ways.

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**Instructional Degree Program**

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

1. Students completing the baccalaureate program in Communication will communicate competently in public and social contexts.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **1. a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

In a self-report version of the widely used and empirically validated Communicative Competence Scale<sup>[1]</sup>, 85% of the students will score at or above 144 (out of a possible 180). The mean score should be at or above 155.

### **1. a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Spring 2004 (Comm 4360: Communication Theory and Practice)

71% at or above 144; Mean = 149.3; Median = 156; n = 7<sup>[2]</sup>

Textual summary of results:

Of the seven students who completed the survey in Comm 4360 "Communication Theory and Practice," 71% scored at or above 144. (Our goal was 85%.) The average score was 149.3. (Our goal was 155.) The median score was 156. (We did not set a goal for the median score.)

### **1. a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action was taken because the results were close enough to the program's objectives that no immediate change in course appeared warranted or necessary.

Some care must be taken in interpreting the results this semester. The difference between the intended and actual outcomes is not as large as it first appears. If survey #3 had been one (1) point higher, then 86% of the students (rather than 71%) would have been at or above 144, our intended objective. Clearly the small sample size (n=7) and the abrupt cut-off point are exacerbating factors in accurately calculating the program's percentage-keyed results.

Additionally, the mean is lower than targeted mainly due to the results of one survey (#6). If the one low survey had reported the same score as the average of the remaining ones, then the mean for the entire group would have been 155, as desired.

## **Second Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **1. b. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

In a third-person version of the Communicative Competence Scale<sup>[3]</sup>, administered either by an internship supervisor or a partner in an in-class project, 85% of the students will score at or above 144. The mean score should be at or above 146.

### **1. b. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Will next be assessed in the Fall of 2004.

### **1. b. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action taken because this assessment is conducted only in the Fall, in conjunction with COMM 4350.

## **Third Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **1. c. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

On the Survey of Communication Interns<sup>[4]</sup>, distributed in the Internship class (COMM 4350), 85% of students will "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement (item #5), "Given my experiences this last year communicating in public and social settings, I feel able to communicate effectively and appropriately." The mean score should be at or above 4.5. Scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree.

### **1. c. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Will next be assessed in the Fall of 2004.

### **1. c. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action taken because this assessment is conducted only in the Fall, in conjunction with COMM 4350.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

2. Students completing the degree program will be able to explain main theoretical assumptions they make about the nature of communication while analyzing a practical or professional problem.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **2. a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

Students will submit an essay that focuses on the above objective as part of their work in the capstone course, COMM 4360 Communication Theory and Practice.<sup>[5]</sup> 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 analytical objective. An essay will count as demonstrating the desired outcome if the average score on each of the following criteria is 2 or higher (1=not satisfactory, 2=satisfactory, 3=good): (1) the essay describes a particular problem, (2) analyzes how communication practice constitutes a part of the problem, (3) and clearly elaborates the main concepts used in the analysis.<sup>[6]</sup> The program will consider the outcome successfully achieved if 85% of the students in each year's class submit an essay deemed satisfactory.

### **2. a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Of the eight students completing COMM 4360, six (or 75%) wrote final essays that demonstrated the desired analytical ability (n=8).<sup>[7, 8]</sup> According to the main evaluative measures, the mean scores were as follows (scale was 1-3, with 1=not satisfactory, 2=satisfactory, and 3=good): Mean = 2.4 for standard #1, Mean = 2.2 for #2, and Mean = 2.2 for #3). According to a separate scale used to evaluate general explanatory competence (0=none, 1=weak, 2=marginal, 3=adequate, 4=mastery, and 5=excellence), the mean for the batch of essays was 3.2 and the median 3.

### **2. a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

Results come very close to intended outcome, particularly given the small sample this semester. For example, if one additional essay had been scored "satisfactory," then we would have surpassed the benchmark with a rate of 87.5%.

Furthermore, scoring ambiguities put in question the validity of the failing score in one case (#2). An issue of concern is knowing what degree of elaboration of concepts is satisfactory to show understanding of theory. Faculty who evaluated the essays discussed the extent to which an analysis constitutes successful elaboration of concepts.

Keeping these concerns in mind, the faculty found the results of the assessment essentially heartening, yet made a few adjustments to the assessment method. Specifically, they reworded the Intended Educational Outcome to read, "Students completing the degree program will be able to explain main theoretical assumptions they make about the nature of communication while analyzing a professional problem or topic." This led to changes of wording in the first two criteria used for evaluation, adding "or topic" to each.

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## **Intended Educational (Student) Outcome:**

3. Students will be able to approach practical communication problems in professionally valuable ways.

## **First Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **3. a. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

85% of supervisors completing the Survey of Internship Supervisors<sup>[9]</sup> will agree or strongly agree with the statement (item #2), "The understandings of communication shown and applied by the intern were professionally valuable."

### **3. a. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Will next be assessed in the Fall of 2004.

### **3. a. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action taken because this assessment is conducted only in the Fall, in conjunction with COMM 4350.

## **Second Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **3. b. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

85% of students completing the Survey of Communication Interns<sup>[4]</sup> will agree or strongly agree with the statement (item #4), "My academic study of communication prepared me to approach practical communication problems in a professionally valuable way."

### **3. b. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Will next be assessed in the Fall of 2004

### **3. b. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action taken because this assessment is conducted only in the Fall, in conjunction with COMM 4350.

## **Third Means of Assessment for Outcome Identified Above:**

### **3. c. Means of Program Assessment & Criteria for Success:**

As part of their work in the Internship class students will prepare and submit professional resumes that then will be kept in departmental portfolios. Once a year at least two communication professors will evaluate the resumes on the extent to which they (1) target an entry-level professional position in the communication field, (2) clarify relevant practical skills, and (3) conform to common conventions for resumes in the field.<sup>[10]</sup> The results will be considered successful if for 85% of the resumes the average score on each criterion is 2 or higher (1=not satisfactory, 2=satisfactory, 3=good).

### **3. c. Summary of Assessment Data Collected:**

Will next be assessed in the Fall of 2004.

### **3. c. Use of Results to Improve Instructional Program:**

No new action taken because this assessment is conducted only in the Fall, in conjunction with COMM 4350.



**SUPPORT DOCUMENTATION**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>LOCATION/Special Instructions</b>
[1] Communication Competence Survey (self-report version).	Original presentation and validation of scale in Wiemann, J. M. (1977). Explication and test of a model of communication competence. <u>Human Communication Research</u> , 3, 195-213.
[2] Data and Summary of Results from Spring 2004 Administration of Communication Competence Survey.	Hard copies available in the Department of Language and Literature, Killam Library Building 428. Data summaries available in the SACS Resource Room.
[3] Communication Competence Survey (third-person version).	
[4] Survey of Communication Interns.	
[5] Final Essay Assignment for Communication Theory and Practice (COMM 4360)	
[6] Essay Evaluation Rubric.	
[7] Student essays, assigned and collected in Communication Theory and Practice (COMM 4360).	Hard copies available in the Department of Language and Literature, Killam Library Building 428. Data summaries available in the SACS Resource Room.
[8] Scoring sheets and evaluative comments, completed on 04/21/04 by Drs. Fjelstad, Law, and Bloomingdale.	Hard copies available in the Department of Language and Literature, Killam Library Building 428. Data summaries available in the SACS Resource Room.
[9] Survey of Internship Supervisors for Communication Majors.	
[10] Résumé Evaluation Rubric.	