Mission / Purpose
The mission of the B.A. program in Speech Communication is to develop students’ understanding of and abilities to use communication in their public and private lives. We facilitate the University's mission "to cultivate intellectual development" and produce students who are "articulate." Our graduates are prepared to enhance their professions and society.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

SLO 1: Communicate effectively in public
Students will learn to communicate effectively in public.

Related Measures:

M 1: Public Presentation
As part of the capstone class, students will engage in one or more evaluated public presentations or speeches. These will be evaluated using the QEP oral communication rubric or one adapted for the specific requirements of the course.

Source of Evidence: Performance (recital, exhibit, science project)

Target:
90% of students should score "3" (proficient) or "4" (advanced) on the vocal delivery and nonverbal delivery criteria of the standard rubric for evaluating oral presentations.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
40/43 (93%) of students in 3 classes met the target for the vocal delivery criterion and 40/43 (93%) met the nonverbal delivery criterion.

Summer 2013. 11 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) in the summer semester. The course topic this term was computer mediated communication. Each student gave 2 presentations (one online interview and one online presentation based on research). On the first assignment (interview) 10 of 11 (91%) students scored proficient or advanced in vocal delivery and 8 of 11 (73%) students scored proficient or advanced in nonverbal delivery. On the second assignment (online presentation), 8 of 11 (73%) scored proficient or advanced on vocal delivery and 9 of 11 (82%) scored proficient or advanced on nonverbal delivery on the presentation. First and second speech scores were averaged for this section.

Fall 2013. 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425 + CMS 493) in the fall semester. Each student completed a major speaking assignment to the class consisting of an explanation of an analyzed conflict and how it played out according to multiple concepts covered in the course. In addition to this 10-minute presentation, they were also expected to record an extemporaneous one-minute advocacy of the communication studies major. Only scores from the major speaking assignment are reported. 17/18 (94%) scored proficient or advanced on vocal delivery on the presentation; 17/18 (94%) scored proficient or advanced on nonverbal delivery on the presentation.

Spring 2014. 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440 + CMS 493) in the spring semester. Each student completed a major speaking assignment to the class consisting of an explanation of an analyzed communication campaign and its effectiveness based on theories and
concepts discussed in class. In addition to this 8-minute presentation, they were also expected to record an extemporaneous 6-minute advocacy of the communication studies major. Only scores from the major speaking assignment are reported. 14/14 (100%) scored proficient or advanced on vocal delivery on the presentation; 14/14 (100%) scored proficient or advanced on nonverbal delivery on the presentation.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**
For full information, see the *Details of Action Plans* section of this report.

**Discussion of assignments.**
*Established in Cycle:* 2010-2011
The capstone instructors for the 2014-15 year will be informed of the previous year’s assessment results and will meet with the ...

**Refer results to committee for recommendation.**
*Established in Cycle:* 2010-2011
These results will be referred to the department’s undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

**M 5: Student self-assessments of learning**
Students in the capstone class will complete a self-report measure asking them to assess how their courses have enhanced their abilities to communicate effectively in dyadic, small group, and public contexts, as well as to advocate ideas and adapt messages. This questionnaire consists of 4 or 5 items for each measure, each with a 5-point response continuum ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Source of Evidence: Student satisfaction survey at end of the program

**Target:**
The mean score on the 5-item scale will be 4.25 or greater. This is equivalent to 85% of the students agreeing strongly with statements describing how courses in their major have enhanced their abilities to communicate in public.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
4.9/5 (98%) for 29 students.

- Summer 2013: The questionnaire was not administered in this class.
- Fall 2014: 18 students students taking the capstone class (CMS 450 + CMS 493) completed this questionnaire and produced a mean of 4.86 out of 5 (97%) on items related to speaking in public.
- Spring 2014: 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. 11 students completed the questionnaire and produced a mean of 4.96 out of 5 (99.2%) on items related to public speaking. 10 of 11 strongly agreed with all of the public speaking items.

**SLO 2: Advocate their ideas**
Students will learn how to be advocates for their ideas.

**Related Measures:**

**M 2: Essay Exam**
As part of the capstone class, students will take an essay exam that can be used to assess general, comprehensive learning objectives. At least one question will be composed to address students’ advocacy skills while at least one other will address ability to adapt messages.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level
Target:
90% of students should score "minimally acceptable" or higher on a grading rubric on the answers to the questions related to this objective.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
29/32 (91%) met this criterion.

Summer Semester: This assignment was not used in this class.

Fall 2013: 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425+CMS 493) in the fall semester. Students took a capstone exam consisting of two questions. The first asked them to convince a fellow student to take (or not take) a course on conflict management and communication. The second asked them to convince a parent of a friend that someone should major in communication studies. 15/18 (83%) of students achieved a "minimally acceptable" or higher on the exam questions.

Spring 2014: 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. Students took a capstone exam consisting of one essay question. The question asked students to make recommendations about how to adapt a health campaign to meet the needs of a particular audience, and then to defend their recommendations while considering alternatives. 14/14 (100%) of students achieved a "minimally acceptable" or higher on the exam questions.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

Refer results to committee for recommendation.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
These results will be referred to the department’s undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

M 5: Student self-assessments of learning
Students in the capstone class will complete a self-report measure asking them to assess how their courses have enhanced their abilities to communicate effectively in dyadic, small group, and public contexts, as well as to advocate ideas and adapt messages. This questionnaire consists of 4 or 5 items for each measure, each with a 5-point response continuum ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Source of Evidence: Student satisfaction survey at end of the program

Target:
The mean score on the 5-item scale will be 4.25 or greater. This is equivalent to 85% of the students agreeing strongly with statements describing how courses in their major have enhanced their abilities to advocate ideas.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
4.79/5 (96%) for 29 students (criterion met).
Summer 2013. The questionnaire was not administered.

Fall 2013. 18 students taking the capstone class (CMS 450 + CMS 493) completed this questionnaire and produced a 4.72 average (94%) on items related to advocating ideas.

Spring 2014. 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. 11 students completed the questionnaire and produced a mean of 4.85 out of 5 (97.1%) on items related to advocacy. 7 of 11 strongly agreed with all of the advocacy items.
M 6: Papers
Students will complete one or more writing assignments as part of their capstone class that will be used to assess students' writing abilities.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:
90% of students to receive rating of proficient or better on pertinent criteria of the QEP Writing Rubric.

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
39/43 (91%) met the criterion.
Summer 2013: 11 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) in the summer semester. The course topic this term was computer mediated communication. Students completed blog entries that made arguments for the most effective way to communicate in particular online contexts. They were required to use peer reviewed articles to support their position. In the area of purpose/content of the writing rubric, 11/11 (100%) scored proficient or higher on the first assignment and 9/11 (82%) on the second assignment. The scores from both papers were averaged for this section.

Fall 2013: 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425+CMS 493) in the fall semester. Students in the fall capstone class completed a conflict analysis paper consisting of exploring and explaining an instance of conflict or negotiation using concepts learned during the course. This paper was expected to be at least 10 pages in length, and give some background to a conflict or need to negotiate or mediate. Following that, the essay was expected to supply analysis of and recommendations for conflict styles, tactics, or negotiation methods. In addition, capstone students did two preliminary shorter (4 pages each) "conflict diagnosis" papers each on a separate conflict situation of their choice. Only rubric results from the final conflict analysis are reported. 15/18 (83%) met the idea advocacy standard.

Spring 2014: 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. Students wrote 5 shorter papers reacting to the course reading material. They then wrote a major paper critiquing a health campaign. 14/14 students (100%) met the standard for advocacy.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

Discussion of assignments.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
The capstone instructors for the 2014-15 year will be informed of the previous year's assessment results and will meet with the ...

Refer results to committee for recommendation.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
These results will be referred to the department's undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

SLO 3: Adapt messages
Students will learn how to compose messages adapted to audience, goals, and context.

Related Measures:

M 1: Public Presentation
As part of the capstone class, students will engage in one or more evaluated public presentations or speeches. These will be evaluated using the QEP oral communication rubric or one adapted for the specific
requirements of the course.

Source of Evidence: Performance (recital, exhibit, science project)

**Target:**
90% of students should score "3" (proficient) or "4" (advanced) on the adaptation criterion of the standard rubric for evaluating oral presentations.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
42/43 (98%) of students in 3 classes met the target for the adaptation criterion.

Summer 2013. 11 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) in the summer semester. Each student gave 2 presentations (one online interview and one online presentation based on research). 10/11 (91%) of students scored proficient or advanced in audience adaptation on their interview and 9/11 (82%) scored proficient or advanced on audience adaptation on the online presentation. The two scores were averaged.

Fall 2013. 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) in the fall semester. Each student completed a major speaking assignment in front of the class consisting of an explanation of an analyzed conflict and how it played out according to multiple concepts covered in the course. In addition to this 10-minute presentation, they were also expected to record an extemporaneous one-minute advocacy of the communication studies major. Only scores from the major speaking assignment are reported. 18/18 (100%) scored proficient or advanced on audience adaptation on the presentation.

Spring 2014. 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440 + CMS 493) in the spring semester. Each student completed a major speaking assignment to the class consisting of an explanation of an analyzed communication campaign and its effectiveness based on theories and concepts discussed in class. In addition to this 8-minute presentation, they were also expected to record an extemporaneous 6-minute advocacy of the communication studies major. Only scores from the major speaking assignment are reported. 14/14 (100%) scored proficient or advanced on audience adaptation criterion for the presentation; 14/14 (100%) scored proficient or advanced on audience adaptation on the presentation.

**M 2:Essay Exam**
As part of the capstone class, students will take an essay exam that can be used to assess general, comprehensive learning objectives. At least one question will be composed to address students’ advocacy skills while at least one other will address ability to adapt messages.

Source of Evidence: Writing exam to assure certain proficiency level

**Target:**
90% of students should score "minimally acceptable" or higher on a grading rubric on the answers to the questions related to this objective.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
29/32 (91%) met this criterion.

Summer 2013: This assignment was not included in the summer capstone course.

Fall 2013: 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425+CMS 493) in the fall semester. Students took a capstone exam consisting of two questions. The first asked them to convince a fellow student to take (or not take) a course on conflict management and communication. The second asked them to convince a parent of a friend that someone should major in communication studies. 15/18 (83%) of students achieved a "minimally acceptable" or higher on the exam questions.
Spring 2014: 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. Students took a capstone exam consisting of one essay question. The question asked students to make recommendations about how to adapt a health campaign to meet the needs of a particular audience, and then to defend their recommendations while considering alternatives. 14/14 (100%) of students achieved a "minimally acceptable" or higher on the exam questions.

**M 5: Student self-assessments of learning**
Students in the capstone class will complete a self-report measure asking them to assess how their courses have enhanced their abilities to communicate effectively in dyadic, small group, and public contexts, as well as to advocate ideas and adapt messages. This questionnaire consists of 4 or 5 items for each measure, each with a 5-point response continuum ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Source of Evidence: Student satisfaction survey at end of the program

**Target:**
The mean score on the 5-item scale will be 4.25 or greater. This is equivalent to 85% of the students agreeing strongly with statements describing how courses in their major have enhanced their abilities to adapt messages.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
4.9/5 (98%) for 29 students (criterion met).

Summer 2013. The questionnaire was not administered.

Fall 2013. 18 students taking the capstone class (CMS 450 + CMS 493) completed this questionnaire and produced a 4.87 average (97%) on items related to adapting messages.

Spring 2014. 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. 11 students completed the questionnaire and produced a mean of 4.96 out of 5 (99.2%) on items related to audience adaptation. 10 of 11 strongly agreed with all of the audience adaptation items.

**M 6: Papers**
Students will complete one or more writing assignments as part of their capstone class that will be used to assess students' writing abilities.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

**Target:**
90% of students to receive rating of proficient or better on pertinent criteria from the standard QEP writing rubric

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**
40/43 (93%) met the criterion.

Summer 2013. 11 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 450+ CMS 493) in the summer semester. 100% met the criterion. 11 students fulfilled the capstone experience requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) this term. The course topic this term was computer mediated communication. Students wrote blog entries that were targeted at the general public. As part of the assessment, essays were evaluated for how well they were adapted to the audience. 11/11 (100%) scored proficient or higher on essay 1; 11/11 (100%) scored proficient or higher on essay 2.
Fall 2013: 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425+CMS 493) in the fall semester. Students in the fall capstone class completed a conflict analysis paper consisting of exploring and explaining an instance of conflict or negotiation using concepts learned during the course. This paper was expected to be at least 10 pages in length, and give some background to a conflict or need to negotiate or mediate. Following that, the essay was expected to supply analysis of and recommendations for conflict styles, tactics, or negotiation methods. In addition, capstone students did two preliminary shorter (4 pages each) "conflict diagnosis" papers each on a separate conflict situation of their choice. Only rubric results from the final conflict analysis are reported. 15/18 (83%) met the idea adapted to audience standard.

Spring 2014: 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. Students wrote 5 shorter papers reacting to the course reading material. They then wrote a major paper critiquing a health campaign. 14/14 (100%) students met the standard for audience adaptation.

Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):
For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

Discussion of assignments.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
The capstone instructors for the 2014-15 year will be informed of the previous year’s assessment results and will meet with the ...

Refer results to committee for recommendation.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
These results will be referred to the department’s undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

SLO 5: Write effectively
Students will learn to write clearly.

Related Measures:

M 6: Papers
Students will complete one or more writing assignments as part of their capstone class that will be used to assess students' writing abilities.

Source of Evidence: Written assignment(s), usually scored by a rubric

Target:
90% of students to receive rating of "proficient" or "advanced" on the organization/structure and the language criteria of the QEP writing rubric

Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met
40/43 (93%) met the organization/structure criterion. 39/43 (91%) met the language criterion. (Please note that we consider these two criteria to constitute two measures of this learning objective.) Summer 2013. 100% met the criterion. 11 students fulfilled the capstone experience requirements (CMS 450 + CMS 493) this term. The course topic this term was computer mediated communication. The students wrote two papers that were evaluated by using a modified version of the QEP rubric. On the organization/structure criterion, 10/11 (91%) of the students scored proficient or higher for the first paper and 9/10 (82%) did do on the second paper. On the language criterion, 10/11 (91%) scored proficient or higher on the first paper and 8/11 (73%) did so on the second paper. Fall 2013: 18 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 425+CMS 493) in the fall semester. Students in the fall capstone class completed a conflict analysis paper consisting of exploring and explaining an instance of conflict or negotiation using concepts learned during the course. This paper was expected to be at least 10 pages in length, and give
some background to a conflict or need to negotiate or mediate. Following that, the essay was expected to supply analysis of and recommendations for conflict styles, tactics, or negotiation methods. In addition, capstone students did two preliminary shorter (4 pages each) "conflict diagnosis" papers each on a separate conflict situation of their choice. Only rubric results from the final conflict analysis are reported. In the fall capstone, 16/18 (89%) were found to be "proficient" or "advanced" in the area of grammar, punctuation, etc. In the fall capstone, 16/18 (89%) were found to be "proficient" or "advanced" according to the organization standard. Spring 2014. 14 students completed capstone requirements (CMS 440+ CMS 493) in the spring semester. Students wrote 5 shorter papers reacting to the course reading material. They then wrote a major paper critiquing a health campaign. 14/14 students (100%) were deemed proficient or advanced in grammar. 14/14 (100%) were advanced or proficient in organization.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

**Discussion of assignments.**

*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*

The capstone instructors for the 2014-15 year will be informed of the previous year’s assessment results and will meet with the ...

**Refer results to committee for recommendation.**

*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*

These results will be referred to the department’s undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

**Other Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans**

**O/O 4: Advance personal and/or professional goals**

Students will be able to utilize what they've learned to advance their personal and/or professional goals.

**Related Measures:**

**M 3: Alumni Survey**

A survey of recent alumni will be conducted. A question will ask former students if their education has prepared them to achieve their personal and/or professional goals.

**Target:**

90% to give an affirmative reply to this yes/no question.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Met**

8/8 (100%) met this target. We sent e-mail messages, LinkedIn, and Facebook messages to all 22 graduates from the 2013 calendar year requesting them to complete the brief alumni survey. 8 (40%) responded and all gave an affirmative answer to this question.

**M 4: Employment**

We will ascertain the employment status of graduates approximately one year after matriculation. Students will be asked if they are satisfied with their current employment.

**Target:**

90% to have a position they find satisfactory.

**Findings (2013-2014) - Target: Not Met**

5/7 (71%) met this target. We sent e-mail, LinkedIn and Facebook messages to all 22 graduates from the 2013 calendar year requesting them to complete the brief alumni survey. 8 (42%) responded, but only 7 answered this particular question. 5 of the seven indicated that they have
obtained a position they consider satisfactory. We acquired additional data pertinent to this question by compiling information known about all the graduates, including information from their Facebook and LinkedIn pages. We acquired job information about 17 of 22 graduates. Some graduates had acquired new and appropriate positions (e.g., organizational development trainee with Sanderson Farms) while some continued working for companies they were working for at the time of graduation (e.g., Office Depot). Others had entered graduate school and some were apparently underemployed. These data are difficult to evaluate without knowing the students' goals, plans, actions, etc. It does, however, suggest that we need to continue and enhance efforts to prepare students for the difficult employment outlook faced by all college graduates. The outcome is also affected by the low response rate to the survey, thus the percentage of those who reported satisfactory employment might be higher with a higher survey return rate.

**Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**
For full information, see the Details of Action Plans section of this report.

**Infusion of employment/career issues into capstone course.**
*Established in Cycle: 2009-2010*
Faculty teaching the capstone class will include units, topics, or assignments that will help student understand how the major...

**Refer results to committee for recommendation.**
*Established in Cycle: 2010-2011*
These results will be referred to the department’s undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be as...

**Undergraduate committee discuss the goal.**
*Established in Cycle: 2013-2014*
This goal is intentionally idealistic. However, these data require us to ask if it reasonable to think that 90% of our students...

**Details of Action Plans for This Cycle (by Established cycle, then alpha)**

**Infusion of employment/career issues into capstone course.**
Faculty teaching the capstone class will include units, topics, or assignments that will help student understand how the major in communication studies can lead to careers and employment opportunities.

- **Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010
- **Implementation Status:** Finished
- **Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**
- **Measure:** Employment
- **Outcome/Objective:** Advance personal and/or professional goals

**Implementation Description:** We will explore different ways of achieving this objective and then decide which are most efficient and effective. We have now done this and decided to allow faculty teaching the course to decide how to implement this. However, we are also considering radical changes to the capstone class so may decide to remove instructor discretion in regard to this.

- **Projected Completion Date:** 05/11/2011
- **Responsible Person/Group:** Department chair and faculty teaching capstone class.

**Discussion of assignments.**
The capstone instructors for the 2014-15 year will be informed of the previous year’s assessment results and will meet with the faculty who previously taught the capstone course and will be asked to plan appropriate responses in the courses they will be teaching. However, we should also recognize that these be an anomaly. Most students meet the assessment goals for speaking and writing.
Established in Cycle:  2010-2011  
Implementation Status:  In-Progress  
Priority:  High  

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):  
Measure: Papers | Outcome/Objective: Adapt messages | Advocate their ideas | Write effectively  
Measure: Public Presentation | Outcome/Objective: Communicate effectively in public  

Implementation Description:  This has become a routine part of our assessment process.  
Responsible Person/Group:  Department chair and individuals teaching capstone during the 11-12 academic year.

Refer results to committee for recommendation.  
These results will be referred to the department's undergraduate curriculum committee. The members of this committee will be asked to review the results and recommend steps for improvement or for modification of our assessment plan.  

Established in Cycle:  2010-2011  
Implementation Status:  In-Progress  
Priority:  High  

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):  
Measure: Employment | Outcome/Objective: Advance personal and/or professional goals  
Measure: Essay Exam | Outcome/Objective: Advocate their ideas  
Measure: Papers | Outcome/Objective: Adapt messages | Advocate their ideas | Write effectively  
Measure: Public Presentation | Outcome/Objective: Communicate effectively in public  

Implementation Description:  I will charge the undergraduate curriculum committee with the task of reviewing these results and making appropriate recommendations. (This has become a routine of our assessment process and will be done every year.)  
Projected Completion Date:  12/10/2014  
Responsible Person/Group:  chair  

Review targets for performance on papers.  
The undergraduate curriculum committee will be assigned the task of evaluating the performance targets on the capstone paper assignment.  

Established in Cycle:  2011-2012  
Implementation Status:  In-Progress  
Priority:  High  
Implementation Description:  I will include this item in the charge given to this committee. This has become a routine part of our assessment process.  
Projected Completion Date:  04/30/2019  
Responsible Person/Group:  Undergraduate Committee  

Undergraduate committee discuss the goal.  
This goal is intentionally idealistic. However, these data require us to ask if it reasonable to think that 90% of our students will obtain acceptable employment within a year of graduation. The department’s undergraduate committee will address this question and decide whether to modify this target.  

Established in Cycle:  2013-2014  
Implementation Status:  Planned  
Priority:  High  

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
**Measure:** Employment  |  **Outcome/Objective:** Advance personal and/or professional goals

**Implementation Description:** This question will be given as a specific charge to this standing committee.

**Projected Completion Date:** 08/05/2015

**Responsible Person/Group:** Department chair and department undergraduate committee.

### Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

**What specifically did your assessments show regarding proven strengths or progress you made on outcomes/objectives?**

Across all 12 measures, we averaged a 91% success rate (met or partially met). We continue to have strong results for public presentations, an understanding of adapting messages, and an understanding of how to advocate for ideas. These are skills that are not only important to the discipline, but that are expected of our graduates by employers. Consequently, we see these results as evidence of the strength of the communication studies curriculum. Writing effectiveness was also met, indicating that students can organize and present their ideas, but may need additional guidance/incentive to edit their work.

**What specifically did your assessments show regarding any outcomes/objectives that will require continued attention?**

Although results from an alumni survey indicate that students felt that they received the information that they need to achieve their professional goals (8/8 or 100%), a smaller percentage (5/7 or 71%) indicated that they were satisfied with their current employment. Two factors may have contributed to the employment results: 1) the survey only went out one year after matriculation, so students might have responded differently after one year and 2) only a small percentage of alumni responded to the survey.

### Annual Report Section Responses

**Program Summary**

As of the end of the 2013-14 term, the Department of Communication Studies had 8 faculty: four professors (Erickson, Hosman, Meyer, and Tardy) and four associate professors (Atkins-Sayre, Jung, Maugh, and Venette). Atkins-Sayre also serves ½ time as Director of the Speaking Center. Maugh, who teaches on the Gulf Coast campus, has recently assumed administrative responsibilities for the Interdisciplinary Studies major on that campus. The remaining individuals have regular faculty appointments on the Hattiesburg campus. Additionally, we had two visiting instructors this past year, one of whom directed our forensics program. We have three broad but interconnected missions: to prepare undergraduate majors for productive lives as citizens; educate masters and doctoral students for careers as teachers and professionals; and, enhance the communication skills of non-majors.

**B.A. /B.S. Program.** We graduated 22 students in 2013-14. Graduates assumed positions in sales, management, and administration. Others continued their education in graduate programs in a variety of areas (seminary, public health, and communication studies). Some apparently assumed or continued work in service positions.

**M.A./M.S. Program.** Two students graduated from our master's program. We hired one to serve as a visiting instructor and director of forensics. The other took a job as a manager of a local technology company.

**Ph.D. Program.** Two students finished doctoral degree requirements in the past year. All of these obtained or maintained full-time employment. One was hired as an assistant professor at Tarleton State University in Texas and the other one became Assistant Director of the Student Union at U. S. M. Service Mission. Last year we taught 54 sections of courses for students whose major requires or encourages them to take our classes. Though our courses are not required in the General Education Curriculum, they fulfill one of its stipulations. An analysis performed a few years ago by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness indicated that approximately 87% of undergraduate programs have elected to require their students to take one of our classes.

**Contribution to the Institution.** Our faculty contributes significantly to university projects, initiatives, and ongoing activities. We serve and perform leadership roles for such groups as the Institutional Review Board, Faculty Senate, Chairs' Council, University Assessment Committee, College Council, etc. Our department also
provides leadership and staff for the operation of the university’s speaking centers on both the Hattiesburg and Gulf Park campuses.

Highlights. The department accomplishments over the last year include:

* scholarship. Members of our faculty won the USM Applied Research Award, signed two book contracts, published articles in professional journals, and made presentations at national and international conferences. * professional service. One faculty member served as President of the Southern States Communication Association and planned this year’s annual convention. Another member participated in National Communication Association’s leadership mentor program. Several served on the editorial boards of academic journals.

* promotion. One faculty member was promoted to associate professor.

* enrollment increase. The number of undergraduate majors continues to grow. The number of majors in our programs increased by 17.5% from ’12 to ’13, the largest increase in the College of Arts and Letters. I think this trend is continuing.

* Speaking Centers. The Hattiesburg campus center, staffed primarily by undergraduate students, performed more than 2000 consultations. Undergraduate and graduate students again made research presentations at the annual convention of the National Association for Communication Centers (NACC) where we won awards for best graduate student paper and for best graduate student tutor. This is the 5th consecutive year we have received awards at this conference.

* undergraduate research. In addition to making presentations at the NACC, students made presentations at the Undergraduate Honors Conference sponsored by the Southern States Communication Association and at the annual convention of the Mississippi Communication Association.

* graduate students. Almost all of our graduate students presented research at a professional conference (including a top paper panel), several published book reviews, and one of our doctoral students was accepted into a prestigious summer enrichment program.

* debate and forensics team. The department hired a full-time, visiting instructor who did an outstanding job coaching the team. The students attended 11 tournaments and received 48 awards for debate and 50 awards for individual events this year. The program held two international events: we hosted the British national debate team and we sent a team to Chennai, India for the annual World Universities Debating Championship. * enhancements to the graduate program. This year we implemented a change to our doctoral exam procedures, again held a successful two-day writing workshop during early August, and involved most of our graduate students in summer research initiatives led by faculty. Moreover, we planned a major change to our orientation for entering students to be implemented in August. * outreach to alumni. We held a homecoming reception for alumni last fall; hosted receptions for graduate alumni at the Southern States Communication Association Annual Convention and at the National Communication Association Annual convention; and alumnus Kathryn Jack (Office of the Chief of Protocol, U.S. State Department) spoke at our annual department banquet.

* new hires. The department successfully conducted job searches to hire 2 tenure-track, Assistant Professors, one of whom will also direct our forensics team. Additionally, the department assisted in the hiring of a new faculty with a joint appointment in the Interdisciplinary Studies program. These individuals bring expertise and talents that will greatly enhance our programs.

Conclusion. This was another productive year for the department. We implemented fundamental as well as incremental changes in our curriculum and procedures; performed significant professional and university service; and taught and mentored undergraduate and graduate students, all while maintaining active programs of research.

Continuous Improvement Initiatives

The department primarily focused on expanding its course offerings through the hiring of 3 tenure-track faculty this year. We will now be able to support more fully our goal of expanding applied communication courses and civil discourse courses. Additionally, one of the new hires will act as the debate/forensics team coach, allowing for the expansion of the team. Another hire has a joint appointment with Interdisciplinary Studies, potentially offering opportunities for developing courses that pull other disciplinary perspectives into the communication focus. Consequently, the hiring work that the department undertook this year will have a significant impact on the future of the department. This past summer, we also introduced a new course (through a special topics course) that updated our curriculum: Communication through Technology. The initial semester was successful.
(student evaluations were very positive and students mentioned that it should be taught regularly) and there are plans to submit a new course proposal in the near future. The undergraduate curriculum committee closely examined the departmental capstone course and made initial recommendations for standardizing and updating the course. The department will continue this discussion in the next academic year.

**Closing the Loop**

As in previous years, the department engaged in two processes to promulgate appropriate responses to the assessment results. First, the assessment report was provided to the individuals teaching the capstone course. This enables the instructors to adapt their courses to the findings. However, we don't have a formal means of recording any resulting changes in this course. Second, the assessment report is provided to the department's undergraduate committee for review and recommendation. This year they again concluded that no immediate changes were necessary, but began work on 1) adapting the capstone course and 2) providing further guidance for supporting writing and speaking assignments for our majors. Given that the assessment results continue to be relatively consistent and indicate that we are not quite meeting some outcome targets, I expect they will deliberate on the attainability of our targets as well as possible programmatic responses. The department’s previously formulated actions plans were reviewed again this year. Over the last three years specific recommendations have been updated, eliminated, corrected, etc. This year we removed the "infusion of employment issues" action plan from the active list. Faculty who teach this course are now aware of these issues.