

Annual Departmental Report 2021-2022

Program Information

Program/Department: B.S. in Communications Media

Department Chair: Mary Baker

Department Assessment Committee Contact: Randy Howe

This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research & Planning by June 1, 2022.

A. Departmental Special Section for AY21-22

Department Lessons Learned and Accomplishments

In AY22, three concentrations in the Communications Media major revised their curriculum: Photography, Professional Communication, and Graphic Design. The department formed a working group to discuss these curriculum changes as well as the overall structure of the Communications Media major. 11 faculty members representing the six concentrations in the Communications Media major (Film/Video, Graphic Design, Photography, Professional Communication, Theater, and Technical Theater) as well as Theory, Internship, and Game Design volunteered to be a part of the working group, which met several times between December 2021 and February 2022, including over winter break. The curriculum changes to the Photography, Professional Communication, and Graphic Design concentrations are summarized below.

The Photography concentration curriculum had not been updated in well over a decade. Course names and descriptions were updated to more accurately describe the current technology and photographic processes taught in each course. The prerequisite for COMM 3645 Advanced Photo Editing was revised to allow students to take the course in their third semester, rather than in their fourth semester. This change allows transfer students the ability to complete the required course sequence for the Photography concentration, including the capstone internship, in two years. In addition, COMM 3630 Large Format Photography was removed as a requirement. Instead, Photography students will take one course from an approved list of electives, which includes Large Format Photography as an option. This change allows for curricular flexibility, encourages student choice, and further supports the ability for transfers to complete concentration requirements in two years.

The Professional Communication concentration undertook a significant change by renaming the concentration. Feedback from students, alumni, faculty, and administrators indicated the name Professional Communication was vague and did not fully capture all that students learn in the concentration. After much discussion within the Communications Media department and with other academic departments, the new concentration name will be Public Relations, Social Media, and Advertising Production. In addition to meeting with the department-wide working group, faculty who teach in the Professional Communication concentration met in a smaller group to revise and update three courses: COMM 3304 Communicating Project Design, COMM 3025 Social Media Advertising and Public Relations, and COMM 3470 Client Project Production.

The Graphic Design concentration developed a new course, Design Studio and Practice, and a capstone alternative. Design Studio and Practice is a 6-credit course in which students will complete a body of professional-level work that integrates theory and practice, and reflects a personal design interest. In terms of the capstone alternative, students in the Graphic Design concentration will have two options for completing the 12-credit capstone requirement: a 12-credit internship or taking Design Studio and Practice and completing a 6-credit internship. These options allow greater flexibility for students.

In addition to concentration changes described above, the department also developed two minors: a Photography minor and an interdisciplinary minor in Public Relations.

As part of the working group, faculty discussed at length the overall structure of the Communications Media major. As noted in the most recent Program Review Action Plan, the external evaluators for 2014 and 2019 program reviews recommended investigating moving from the current concentration structure to distinct majors. The working group thoroughly considered this recommendation. While some concentrations have enrollments strong enough to support a distinct major, others do not. Given the current enrollment outlook, the working group determined breaking up the Communications Media major and creating distinct majors could negatively impact concentrations with smaller enrollments. The working group decided against pursuing distinct majors at this time.

The Communications Media major had plans to update the portfolio defense evaluation form and rubrics to align with updated PLOs and concentration SLOs in AY22. However, this initiative was put on hold as it became clear that three concentrations would be updating their curriculum this year. Now that these curriculum updates have gone through governance, the department will undertake revising the internship portfolio defense evaluation form in AY23.

B. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment.

| PLO # | PLO – Stated in assessable terms | Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (please specify) Include URLs where appropriate | Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.) | When was the last assessment of the PLO completed? |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
| 1. | Students should demonstrate proficiency in the core tools and skills of their discipline. | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-arts-and-sciences/communications-media-department | Bi-annual | Spring 2022 |
| 2. | Students should be able to apply aesthetic principles to their work by developing and defending a portfolio that demonstrates craftship and meets professional standards for their discipline. | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-arts-and-sciences/communications-media-department | Bi-annual | Spring 2022 |
| 3. | Students should be able to explain how their work fits in the historical and theoretical context of their discipline. | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-arts-and-sciences/communications-media-department | TBD – SLOs were updated in December 2020. Timing of this assessment is in development. | N/A – Timing of assessment is still in development. |
| 4. | Students should apply core theoretical principles to the analysis and critique of media. | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-arts-and-sciences/communications-media-department | TBD – SLOs were updated in December 2020. Timing of this assessment is in development. | N/A – Timing of assessment is still in development. |

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| 5. | Students should recognize and apply ethical perspectives to their work. | https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-arts-and-sciences/communications-media-department | TBD – SLOs were updated in December 2020. Timing of this assessment is in development. | N/A – Timing of assessment is still in development. |
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II. PLO Assessment (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.)

Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

| PLO # (from above) | Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.) | When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 th year, 1 st year, etc.) | To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.) | What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success) | Reflection on the results: How was the “loop closed”? |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|---|
| 1 & 2 | Portfolio review with rubric. | 4 th year | All | An average rating of “Acceptable” or higher. | All students must present a portfolio of their work and meet the target set for the PLO in order to be approved to register for their capstone course: COMM 4880 Internship. Students who do not meet the PLO target must revise their portfolio and repeat their portfolio review. |
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You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

Summary of Findings: Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

| Reflection Prompt | Narrative Response |
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| <p>Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</p> | <p>All students are required to pass a portfolio defense prior to their capstone course.</p> |
| <p>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</p> | <p>Student portfolios are reviewed by two members of the department: a faculty member from the student’s concentration and the Internship Director.</p> |

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| <p>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)</p> | <p>Portfolio reviews provide important data used to revise and update the curriculum in all concentrations.</p> <p>In AY21, the Program Learning Outcomes for the Communications Media major were updated. In addition, new Student Learning Outcomes for each concentration were developed. In AY23, Communications Media will work to update the portfolio defense evaluation form and rubrics to align with updated PLOs and concentration SLOs.</p> |
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C. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success.
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one?

Yes

D. Program Review Action Plan or External Accreditation Action Letter/Report

Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)

I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

- i. Date of most recent Review: Spring 2019
- ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

The Action Plan from our most recent Program Review is attached at the end of this report. In AY22, we made progress on Action Item 10: *revision to the program structure and move to distinct majors*. As described above, the working group formed this year with representatives from all concentrations in the Communications Media major as well as Theory and Internship investigated moving from the current concentration structure to distinct majors. Given the current enrollment outlook, the working group decide against pursuing distinct majors at this time.

We also made progress on Action Item 11: *address deferred maintenance and infrastructure updates to Film/Video and Photography facilities*. In October 2021, Film/Video and Photography faculty and staff met with the Associate Vice President, Finance & Administration and an architectural planning consultant as part of a space study of Film/Video and Photography classrooms, labs, and studios. The department chair and interim Dean of Art and Sciences participated in a follow up meeting to discuss draft plans for a potential renovation of these spaces in April 2022. An additional meeting is planned in June 2022.

| Specific area where improvement is needed | Evidence to support the recommended change | Person(s) responsible for implementing the change | Timeline for implementation | Resources needed | Assessment Plan | Progress Made this Year |
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iii. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program?

Yes

II. Programs with external Accreditation:

- i. Professional, specialized, State, or programmatic accreditations currently held by the program/department.
- ii. Date of most recent accreditation action by each listed agency.
- iii. Date and nature of next review and type of review.

| List key issues for continuing accreditation identified in accreditation action letter or report. | Key performance indicators as required by agency or selected by program (licensure, board or bar pass rates; employment rates, etc.)(If required.) | Update on fulfilling the action letter/report or on meeting the key performance indicators. |
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E. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

| Accomplished Initiatives AY 21-22 <small>Add more rows as needed</small> | Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy <small>Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</small> | Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Created new interdisciplinary minor in Public Relations | Goal 1, Strategy 1.3 | |
| Offered Multi-Camera Television Production through partnership with FATV in Fall 2021 | Goal 1, Strategy 1.4 | |
| Offered newly approved FYE course in Fall 2021 | Goal 2, Strategy 2.5 | |
| Virtual and in-person community discussions hosted by Communication Law & Ethics classes in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 | Goal 3, Strategy 3.6 | |
| Main Stage Theater production <i>The Rot from Beneath</i> in Spring 2022 | Goal 3, Strategy 3.6 | |

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| Visions: honors exhibition of student work from the Communications Media department, including alumni panel | Goal 3, Strategy 3.6 | |
| Multiple faculty members awarded MSCA Professional Development Funds for professional development courses and research/creative practice projects | Goal 4, Strategy 4.4 | |
| Monthly department Admissions tours and participated in shadow program for accepted students. Faculty participation in Open Houses in Fall 2021 and Future Falcon Day in Spring 2022. | Goal 5, Strategy 5.3 | |

| Planned Initiatives for AY 22-23 Add more rows as needed | Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3 | Indicate if a Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness (DEI) Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Update portfolio defense evaluation form and rubrics to align with updated PLOs and concentration SLOs. | Goal 5, Strategy 5.2 | |
| Course Mapping of Student Learning Outcome (SLOs) | Goal 5, Strategy 5.2 | |
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F. Departmental Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

1) *Initiatives that you may be considering for 22-23 academic year that you did not already capture above.*

2) *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share.*

It is worth noting Communications Media faculty members engaged in significant curriculum development work while navigating the challenges of returning to in-person learning and the ongoing pandemic. Their work this year demonstrates a genuine commitment to student success.

**Communications Media Program Review
Action Plan in Table Format
December 5, 2019**

| Specific area where improvement is needed | Evidence to support the recommended change | Person(s) responsible for implementing the change | Timeline for implementation | Resources needed | Assessment Plan |
|---|---|--|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| Mission Statement | | | | | |
| 1. Update Communications Media major mission statement to align with current University and School of Arts and Sciences mission statements | Work on updating the Communication Media major mission statement began in the Assessment Workshop in May 2019. | Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators, Communications Media faculty | Complete by May 2020 | | Report updated Communications Media major mission statements in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY20 |
| 2. Revise Concentration mission statements (including Theory and Internship) to align with updated Communications Media major mission statement | As noted by the external evaluator, the mission statements for each concentration are not currently aligned with the mission statement for the major or each other. | Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators | Complete by December 2020 | | Report updated concentration mission statements in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY21 |
| Student Learning Outcomes | | | | | |
| 3. Update Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the major | The SLOs for the major have not been updated in more than a decade. | Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators, Communications Media faculty | Complete by May 2020 | | Report updated SLOs in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY20. |

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| 4. Develop Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for each concentration, including Theory and Internship | At this time, the concentrations, including Theory and Internship, do not have formalized SLOs. | Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators, Communications Media faculty | Complete by December 2020 | | Report Concentration SLOs in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY21. |
| 5. Course Mapping of Student Learning Outcome (SLOs) | The department does not have a formal curriculum map with SLOs mapped to specific courses. | Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators, Communications Media faculty | Complete by May 2021 | | Report Concentration SLOs in Annual Departmental Plan Report for AY21. |
| Internship Assessment | | | | | |
| 6. Update Portfolio Defense Evaluation Form | The current form can be developed further to provide more detailed assessment of student portfolios and align with updated SLOs. | Department Chair, Internship Director, UARC department representative, Concentration Coordinators | Complete by May 2021. Portfolio Defense Evaluation Form will incorporate updated major and concentration SLOs. | | Include progress report update in Annual Department Plan Reports for AY20 and AY21. |
| 7. Update Internship Performance Appraisal Form | The current form can be developed further to provide more detail about student intern performance and align with updated SLOs. | Department Chair, Internship Director, UARC department representative | Complete by May 2021. Internship Performance Appraisal Form will incorporate updated major and concentration SLOs. | | Include progress report update in Annual Department Plan Reports for AY20 and AY21. |
| 8. Develop template for a report with internship appraisal data to be delivered to faculty at the conclusion of each internship cycle. | At this time, internship appraisal data is not distributed to faculty. | Department Chair, Internship Director, UARC department representative | Finalize report template by May 2021. | | Include progress report update in Annual Department Plan Reports. |

| Enrollment | | | | | |
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| <p>9. Increase the number of courses offered that can fulfill a LA&S requirement</p> | <p>As an incremental strategy to address a decline in enrollment, the external evaluator recommended making more Communications Media courses available to students outside the major. Specifically, he recommended making an introductory production class available to fulfill a general education requirement.</p> | <p>Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators</p> | <p>Submit AUC proposals in AY20 and AY21, ahead of the implementation of the new LA&S curriculum in Fall 2021.</p> | | <p>Include progress report update in Annual Department Plan Reports for AY20 and AY21.</p> |
| Major Structure | | | | | |
| <p>10. Revision to the program structure and move to distinct majors.</p> | <p>The external evaluators for the 2014 Program Review and 2019 Program Review recommended investigating moving from the current concentration structure to distinct majors.</p> | <p>Department Chair, Concentration Coordinators, Communications Media faculty</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | | <p>Include progress report update in Annual Department Plan Reports.</p> |

| Facilities | | | | | |
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| 11. Address deferred maintenance and infrastructure updates to Film/Video and Photography facilities. | There has been a long-standing need to update the infrastructure in the facilities used by the Film/Video and Photography concentrations as noted by external evaluators for the 2014 Program Review and 2019 Program Review. | Department Chair, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Capital Planning and Maintenance | Ongoing | | Include progress report on updates to infrastructure in Annual Departmental Plan Report |