Graduate Program (and degree(s)): (e.g., Special Education, MSE) M.S. in Communication

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report:
Dr. Barbara Penington, Graduate Program Coordinator

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1. Please list the emphases and post-baccalaureate certificate programs offered by your graduate program.

   Emphases: Corporate Communication and Mass Communication
   Certificates: NA

2. Provide the number of students (both FTE and headcount) and number of individuals who have completed their graduate degrees through your program during terms and years indicated.

   (Skip to Question #3. This information will be secured and filled in by the Campus Self-Study Coordinator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>Headcount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1996</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Fall 1997</td>
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<td>Fall 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

   Human Resources
   Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of faculty and instructional staff and their skills) relative to the graduate program’s ability to serve its student populations and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs).

   8 1-9
In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

During the past five years, our Department has secured more faculty positions. We now have 19 graduate faculty and 2 faculty who are close to completing their terminal degrees. The faculty have a wide range of interests and experiences that serve our students well. Our faculty boast publications in our discipline’s journals, have held offices in regional and national organizations related to our discipline, and have won awards related to teaching, research, service and advising across campus. Although we have 19 graduate faculty, 5 of these individuals are not teaching a full-time course load as they are in administrative positions. If we had their availability and expertise in the areas of organizational communication, cross cultural communication, and rhetoric, our program would be that much stronger. Generally, however, we have a competent, enthusiastic staff dedicated to meeting student needs. Availability and support of faculty is the most often noted strength in our students’ exit interviews.

A problem that had existed since the last review was that the graduate coordinator position was held by five different people. Because of the lack of continuity in leadership, the program floundered somewhat. The current graduate coordinator has been in the position since the Fall of 2002, and having learned the basics of the position, has been better able to take on programmatic changes suggested by the University Audit and Review Committee. It is hopeful that this more experienced leadership will be advantageous to the program in the years ahead.

Physical Resources
Evaluate the adequacy of the physical resources available to support the graduate program ability to serve its student population and achieve programmatic goals by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs). Consider such issues as office space, classroom space, supporting technology, lab space to support research and/or instruction, etc.

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

Scheduling of classrooms to meet student needs does not appear to be a problem. The only type of “room” that would be advantageous to our program would be a smaller, seminar room. Classrooms are equipped with Computer/VCR units and computer programs are kept up to date. Projector units are available in all of our classrooms. We also have computer lab facilities for up to 20 students. SPSS and other specialized programs needed by our graduate students are loaded onto lab computers. The University has made training for technology available to faculty. Faculty in our Department have used the University’s Instructional Technology support and multi media facility for preparing course materials and have participated in IT offered trainings in use of D2L delivery system, web design, etc.

Fiscal Resources
While recognizing that every academic program would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the program to serve its student populations and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between “1” (completely inadequate) to “9” (completely satisfies needs).

7 1-9
In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of key expenses, and key needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of fiscal limitations.

Our program has demonstrated a steady growth in FTE from 8.9 in January, 1998 to 17.9 in January of 2005. We currently offer three 700 level courses every semester. It would be beneficial to the program if at least one or two more 700 level courses could be offered each semester; currently, we lack the funding to do so. To this point, our students have not been eligible for fellowships or assistantships specifically designated for our program. Beginning next year, however, a fellowship and several new graduate assistantships will become available aiding students in our department with costs incurred in their graduate program. The School of Graduate Studies offers competition for Graduate Research Grants that fund student scholarly projects, including paper presentations at conventions. We do not at this time, however, have funding for graduate students to attend regional or national conventions if they are not presenting or have not applied for the research grants which are awarded once each academic year.

4. In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your graduate program or its curriculum since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit).

Regarding curricular revisions, one significant change has been the eliminating of many of our dual-listed course options for graduate students and a more consistent offering of 700 level courses. The program has also added a third capstone experience option called the Applied Communication Project (ACP). Additionally, a Communication Practicum course which allows for graduate level internships and other similar opportunities has been developed. 700 level classes are offered on a more consistent, rotating basis where students know up to five years in advance the semesters in which these classes will be offered. The Department has also moved to scheduling the majority of graduate level classes and all 700 level classes during the evening.

As far as the graduate program itself, there have been many changes. First, all new students are advised by the graduate coordinator who continues as their advisor during their entire program unless the student requests a change. Secondly, a Graduate Student Handbook has been developed to aid students in understanding the program, especially options for the capstone experience and connecting with faculty and the School of Graduate Studies. A Graduate Student Advisory Board has been established for the program for the purpose of planning social and research-oriented events and offering informal feedback on the program. Two research colloquia are also presented each academic year where faculty and graduate students can present research to their mentors and peers.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.

These curricular and programmatic changes address several needs that have been identified primarily during our previous two University Audit and Reviews. At least 12 of our dual listed courses have been eliminated. This diminishing reliance on dual listed courses and a more consistent offering of 700 level (grad only) classes has enabled as to offer students a truer “graduate” program. The Research Colloquium offerings and the scheduling of most graduate courses during the evening have also contributed to students viewing our program as a “graduate” program. Another need of our program was to better support its “applied” nature by offering students more practical experiences where they could actually use the skills and theoretical background they were gaining from their coursework. The Applied Communication Project developed in 2003 as an additional capstone option and the 793 Communication Practicum course are two examples of ways the Department has been working to meet this need. Finally, students on previous exit interviews had indicated that there should be better methods of sharing information about the program with them. One way this has been accomplished is to have the graduate
coordinator be the student’s advisor throughout the program. This way a relationship is formed between the graduate coordinator and the student from early in their career and information and feedback on their scheduling/capstone decisions can be better managed. The Graduate Handbook, which is circulated among students and faculty alike, provides much useful information as well. The 701 or Introduction to Communication Studies class has also recently been designated to provide and explicate this information to its newer graduate students. The Graduate Student Advisory Board consisting of 5 graduate students, two graduate faculty members, and the graduate coordinator has also been used to disseminate information and plan events. This Board also addresses a need students have voiced regarding their desire to build more of a “community” of graduate students within the program.

MISSION & PLANNING

5. In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that the graduate program is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.

To obtain feedback from alumni and better assess the program, we are currently finishing an alumni survey to be circulated before Summer, 2005. We are also in the process of establishing an External Advisory Board to provide guidance and feedback on our graduate program. To better recruit quality students, inform our current students of events, changes in the program, advising appointments, etc, and keep our graduate faculty updated on our students and program, a website is currently being developed to be completed before Summer, 2005. In the curricular area, we are at the very early stages of talking about a possible third emphasis for the program which would compliment the Corporate Communication and Mass Communication emphases we currently offer. We have currently written a mission statement for the program and now are working to be sure that our program objectives flow from that mission statement. Additionally, we will be reexamining our assessment measures to be sure they directly relate to our program objectives.

6. Below are five “core values” the University identifies as central to its purposes. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your graduate program (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your program receiving more points).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Value</th>
<th>Importance (100 points)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of the individual</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and professional integrity</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to serve</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total=</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Every academic program engages in planning. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your graduate program, particularly as it relates to your curriculum (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables, with those variables playing a larger role in your planning process receiving more points).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Variables</th>
<th>Importance (100 points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The mission of the University, the School of Graduate Studies, the department, or the graduate program</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit &amp; Review feedback)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. In 1997, the Graduate Council approved the following mission statement as one that characterized the overarching mission of graduate education at UW-Whitewater.

The School of Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater oversees programs whose goal is to provide high quality, practitioner-oriented programs that use knowledge and skills acquired through baccalaureate degrees as a foundation for advanced preparation and professional development for careers in business and industry, education and human services.

The graduate programs achieve this through provision of learner-centered processes which couple professional experiences with advanced knowledge and highly-refined analytic, communicative and functional skills such that their students are capable of performances that characterize the best practices of their profession.

To that end, all master's level graduates will be able to:

- comprehend and discuss advanced theoretical questions and current issues;
- collect, analyze and interpret data applicable to complex questions and problems;
- conceptualize, evaluate and implement solutions to complex problems;
- use appropriate technologies as needed; and
- synthesize and articulate multiple concepts in a clear, concise and persuasive manner

Evaluate the extent to which this mission statement aligns with the purposes of your graduate program by assigning a “1” (has no alignment with the purposes of our program) to “9” (aligns closely with the purposes of our graduate program).

9   1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of how the Graduate Mission Statement diverges from the purposes of your graduate program.

The mission statement of our program closely aligns with that of the School of Graduate Studies. In fact, it was used as a model when our program’s mission statement was developed during the Fall, 2004 semester.

9. Does your graduate program have a mission statement?
   Yes X   No

MISSION STATEMENT
Master of Science Degree in Communication

The Master of Science Degree in Communication Program is committed to providing high quality, learner-centered educational opportunities that build upon students' undergraduate education and professional experience. The Program engages students in scholarly activities designed to promote intellectual growth,
confidence and effectiveness in expression, and personal development of graduate-level writing, research, and critical thinking skills. Students are guided and supported as they strive to make original contributions to our discipline’s body of knowledge. Students are encouraged to apply theoretical and communication concepts and skills to contexts outside the classroom be it in the workplace or through service in their communities. The Program pursues its mission through faculty who are active in their own professional growth and dedicated to creating an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement for all students.

If you answered “yes,” please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your graduate program’s planning and/or decision-making, particularly as it relates to the curriculum. Because the mission statement has only been in place for a portion of the semester, we have recently started to use it as a planning tool to guide decision-making. However, we have worked to integrate the tenets of our mission statement into our alumni survey so we are sure to address their perceptions of how program objectives were met. Questions developed for our alumni survey which will offer us assessment data relevant to our program. Our new mission statement will appear in our Graduate Handbook and on our new website so faculty and students alike can become more familiar with the mission of our program.

GRADUATE QUALITY

10. In the 1996 Report of a Visit filed by the visiting accreditation team, the lone "concern" mentioned in the report related to graduate programming. The Report recommended that “Existing graduate programs should be carefully reviewed with attention given to issues such as: inclusion of scholarship, opportunities for a true graduate experience, elimination of a number of dual-level courses, and faculty loads.”

Evaluate the extent to which having students engaging in scholarly activity relates to the student learning outcomes (or the process of achieving the student learning outcomes) of your program by assigning a “1” (student scholarly activity plays no role in our graduate student’s achieving our program’s learning outcomes) to “9” (student scholarship is essential to achieving the student learning outcomes of our program).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you’ve assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of why and how student scholarship does and/or does not play a role in student learning in your graduate program. All the 700 level courses and most of the dual listed graduate courses require students to do research on a topic or theory of their choosing. Independent studies also provide opportunities for students to work with faculty mentors on research projects drawing upon their theoretical knowledge and advance writing skills. Recently, students have been encouraged to submit papers to regional or national conventions. One graduate student, for example, had her paper selected as one of the top four debut papers at a regional convention last April, 2004. In addition to assignments in classes, and submitting papers to conventions, one or two graduate students are always presenters for our Department’s research colloquia which occur once each semester. Perhaps the best opportunity students have to demonstrate their scholarship is in the program’s capstone experience required of all graduating
students. Students have the option of writing a thesis, doing an applied communication project which typically calls for scholarly research in preparation of the project, or taking a comprehensive examination where a student’s knowledge of theory and research methods as well as another more specific area of communication is addressed in a series of questions. In addition to the written portion of these projects, students must “defend” their work orally giving them opportunity to make scholarly arguments in both formats.

In a paragraph or two, define how your program defines a “true graduate experience,” addressing, in particular, how graduate-level learning differs from undergraduate-level learning. (You may choose to address the difference in terms of the three conceptual differences identified by the Graduate Council: Content: What content areas of the course will graduate students explore with greater depth, and/or what additional content areas will graduate students examine? Intensity: What are the unique course requirements for graduate students—in terms of additional readings or assignments, different requirements in assignments, different role expectations, and/or different evaluation methods and/or standards—that reflect greater intellectual intensity and rigor? Self-Directed: What outside-of-class activities are required of graduate students, including research, and how do they reflect a greater degree of self-directed learning?)

The above three criteria have been used to guide our structuring of both graduate-only and dual listed courses. Content relates both to the quality and quantity of scholarly works the graduate student must examine. Readings assigned by graduate instructors typically focus on scholarly journals rather than textbooks, articles, or web-based materials which may be more common in undergraduate classes and are thus much more challenging reading. More emphasis in and outside of the classroom is placed on theoretical and other advanced concepts and research methods.

Intensity is emphasized for the graduate student in several ways. Reading assignments are more difficult, more plentiful, and take more effort to understand and apply as compared to the undergraduate experience. Most often, graduate students are expected to read, analyze and synthesize multiple scholarly sources to develop a paper or article on a topic of their choice. These assignments are typically quite time-intensive for students. Our program’s capstone experience, especially the thesis and applied communication option call for a graduate student’s direct and extended focus on a topic. Much research is typically done and there is a higher expectation for quality writing for all capstone options.

There is much more self-direction expected from the graduate student. Typically, graduate classes meet one night a week, so graduate students are often working on projects for days before interacting with an instructor. Because in Communication, research is strongly emphasized, students often do much of their work individually, analyzing and synthesizing scholarly literature in the discipline. When writing papers or working on capstone projects, the student, although mentored by a graduate faculty member, generally helps develop a timeline and has the sole responsibility in meeting the goals he/she has set.

In a paragraph, discuss the role that dual-level (i.e., 300/500; 400/600) courses play in your graduate curriculum.

As mentioned previously, more than 12 dual-listed courses have been cut from the program within the last 4 years so our reliance on dual-listed courses to fulfill program requirements has diminished, although has not disappeared completely. In our Corporate Communication emphasis, for example, students are required to choose one of two 600 level courses to complete their degree. In the Mass Communication emphasis, students choose two of four dual listed courses for their degree. Elective credits, 12 in Corporate and 9 in Mass Communication, can be fulfilled by taking dual listed courses.

Does having responsibility for teaching graduate-level courses in your program alter the teaching load of your program’s faculty? Yes NO
If “yes,” take a paragraph to describe how faculty teaching load differs, and why such adjustments are made.

**STUDENT LEARNING & ASSESSMENT**

11. List the student learning outcomes for each of the emphases areas and post-baccalaureate certificate programs identified in question #1.

   *This is an area that will be reevaluated shortly to be sure that student learning outcomes relate to our newly developed mission statement. We have the same learning outcomes for both Corporate and Mass Communication emphases, so that will also be addressed in upcoming meetings of our graduate faculty.*

   Learning outcomes fall into three general categories, again the same for both of our emphases.

   **SUBJECT MATTER OUTCOMES**

   Students should be able to:
   - List and describe communication terminology and seminal concepts inherent to their academic emphasis.
   - List and describe processes relevant to the quantitative and qualitative Research methods used in communication research.

   **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES**

   Students should be able to:
   - Generalize about and evaluate paradigmatic theories inherent in their academic emphasis.
   - Determine the appropriateness of research methods to their topic of inquiry.

   **SKILL-BASED OUTCOMES**

   Students should be able to:
   - Use scholarly evidence in supporting an argumentative premise.
   - Write in scholarly style expect of Communication graduate students.
   - Effectively present an argument or the findings of an independent research project that he or she has conducted.

12. Complete the grid below by listing the emphasis areas and post-baccalaureate certificate programs from question #1 across the top row (and indicated by the example). Then, under each emphasis and certificate program, place an “X” indicating which data collection methods are used to assess the extent to which the student learning outcomes are achieved (evidence that students know and can perform against the objectives). Mark, where relevant, both “direct assessment methods” (efforts that directly evaluate student performance) and “indirect assessment methods” (efforts that evaluate student performance based on perception of student, alumni, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Method</th>
<th>(Example) Knitting (Emphasis)</th>
<th>Corporate Com</th>
<th>Mass Com</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Assessment</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum-Embedded Exams/Tests</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum-Embedded Essays</td>
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<td>Curriculum-Embedded Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone Project Review (thesis,</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>comprehensive exams, etc.)</td>
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<td>Portfolio Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reviews by External Evaluators</td>
<td>X</td>
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</table>
13. Indicate specific changes to the department's operation or planning, if any, that have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding question. Place an "X" in the appropriate box in the far right hand column for any of the following changes that have occurred.

- **Programmatic Changes**
  - Learning Outcomes (e.g., changes in what students should learn in the program)
  - Curriculum (e.g., revisions to sub-major, change in pre-requisites, addition of new courses, deletion or combining of coursework, changes in existing course content, etc.)
  - Scheduling (e.g., when courses are offered, etc.)
  - Departmental Procedure (e.g., changes in advising)
  - Instructional Methods (e.g., shift to hybrid courses)
  - Curriculum Delivery Methods (e.g., online programming)
  - Changes in Assessment Procedures (e.g., addition of specific assessments, creation of Advisory Board)
  - Other:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmatic Changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Procedure</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Methods</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Delivery Methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in Assessment Procedures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

In a paragraph, discuss your graduate program’s use of academic assessment data/information as chronicled in the table above. Discuss, in particular, how these changes have improved or stand to improve student learning.

**Capstone assessments have indicated that students are weaker than we would like in understanding and applying theoretical concepts. This has been brought to the attention of the faculty and the importance of theory has been stressed in graduate classes.**

**Exit interviews have indicated that students wanted more 700 level courses (less dual listed courses) so they would have more of a graduate level experience. They also wanted to know when the 700 level classes would be offered so they could better plan their schedules. This has been accomplished. Exit interviews indicated that students also wanted more evening classes to better accommodate the needs of a working adult, and this has been done. Additionally students in exit interviews wanted a better dissemination of information and as mentioned previously, this has driven program decisions regarding the graduate coordinator’s role in advising students, the creation of the program Handbook, the modification of Introduction to**
Communication Studies course (701) to include basic information for graduate students’ successful completion of their program and the development of a program website to also disseminate information. Finally, students wanted more input into the program and to build a greater sense of community with other graduate students in the program. This has led to the creation of a Student Advisory Board.

14. In the box below, indicate the extent to which you think your graduate program has fully implemented its academic assessment program, with 100% representing a fully-implemented program. Consider the extent to which the department has developed clearly stated learning outcomes, systematically collects data/information that informs the extent to which the outcomes are achieved, and uses the data to make changes to the curriculum, etc.

70% to which academic assessment program is fully implemented

If you've indicated a percentage other than 100%, please list actions that remain to be completed before implementation of the assessment program is complete.

The following actions are in the process of occurring:
1) The development and dissemination of an alumni survey
2) The development of an External Advisory Board which will give input and feedback regarding the program.
3) Reevaluation of our program objectives, learning outcomes, and finally Our current assessment tools to be sure they are in line with the mission of our program.

If you've indicated a percentage less than 100%, what are the biggest obstacles to your graduate program fully implementing its assessment program? Consider such items as: faculty and instructional staff involvement, time, budget, understanding of academic assessment and the process, etc.

The biggest obstacle is time and faculty involvement. Both the graduate coordinator and graduate faculty have quite heavy loads—the graduate coordinator has a one class release each semester and teaches three courses; the graduate faculty members typically have a four/four load. With the additional requirements for research and service, it is difficult for those involved in the program to allocate the time it takes to reevaluate program objectives, assessment measures, etc.

15. Describe any initiatives on behalf of your graduate program (and its faculty) that have specifically promoted enhanced student understanding of issues related to diversity and inclusion.

One of the dual listed graduate courses that we have not cut is the 624 Cross Cultural Communication which many of our graduate students take. Not only do graduate students learn course material and pursue self-directed study in this area, but most instructors of this course require graduate students to teach a portion of the course to the undergraduate students, causing them to really develop an area of expertise related to diversity and intercultural issues.

Many of our graduate faculty have expertise in the area of intercultural communication. Thus, independent studies and capstone experiences often have an diversity/intercultural emphasis. A recent applied project (Summer, 2004) involved the student formulating a Process Model to be used for developing a catalogue for an international corporation. A recent thesis completed in January, 2005, involved an investigation into how individuals of different cultures develop trust in internet interactions. In the past several years, many students choosing the comprehensive examination have, as one of their three questions, chosen to be tested on their knowledge of cross cultural communication.
16. Describe in a paragraph or two your graduate program’s relationships with constituencies external to the university (alums, employers or potential employers, advisory boards). What role, if any, have these groups played in (re)directing curriculum development specifically, and departmental planning generally?

As mentioned previously, we have been relatively weak in working with external constituencies. We are currently developing an alumni survey and an External Advisory Board. In addition, two of our dual listed courses in the Corporate Communication emphasis have worked with businesses and organizations within the community to allow students to do training programs and conduct communication audits. Feedback on student performance in these capacities is often solicited.

17. Does your department generally, or faculty or student groups specifically, offer special programming (e.g., non-credit workshops) or provide services (e.g., consulting services, project support) for constituencies external to the university?

Yes  No

If “yes,” please provide a list of these initiatives and the constituencies they serve.

- Communication Needs Analysis (dual listed) course: works with local organizations in student-conducted communication audits.
- Communication Training and Development (dual listed): students develop and present training programs to local organizations/businesses.

18. Related to the preceding question, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)

Yes  No

If “yes,” please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission’s Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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- 
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19. Does your graduate program offer any service-learning courses, or do any of your faculty use service-learning as a teaching method?

Yes  No

If “yes,” please list specific courses and faculty.

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- 
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Strengths

20. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your graduate program efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your graduate program do very well? What good things do people say about your graduate program? How has your graduate program aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your graduate program "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to graduate program performance, trend data from the Office of the Registrar or Institutional Research, special recognition from external agencies, etc.

1. Specific Strength: Consistency in the Graduate Coordinator Position

   • Supporting Evidence: FTE has slowly grown from 8.9-17.9 (School of Graduate Studies information)—we think this is a result of students being better informed and feeling more supported throughout their program. Additionally, the program has adopted an Applied Communication Project, Communication Practicum course and has undertaken other initiatives as a result of more continuity and a developing expertise in this position (see Graduate Faculty Minutes; Graduate Program Handbook, etc.).

2. Specific Strength: Graduate Faculty

   *Supporting Evidence: The graduate faculty has grown to 19 over the past five years. Graduate faculty represent a broad range of expertise and accomplishments that benefit students (see copy of Communication Program Self Study, 2004 for faculty vitae; Graduate Handbook for faculty area of expertise). Faculty are highly rated by the program’s graduate students on their availability, ability to teach, and support of their students (see Exit interview assessment data).

3. Specific Strength: Flexibility in Scheduling/Programming

   • Supporting Evidence: Graduate courses are scheduled primarily at night to meet the needs of working adults (see timetables from past several semesters). A student’s program also has room for 9-12 credits of electives which can come from the Communication Department at UWW OR can come from another graduate program on campus or another institution where credits are transferred in (see Program ‘check sheets;” School of Graduate Studies policies regarding transfer credits). Elective credits can also come from independent studies. These options give students flexibility in completing courses for the program and a variety of topics specifically suited to a student’s interest and expertise.

Concerns

21. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your graduate program’s efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a graduate program, avoid doing, even though we know it’s important?
After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to departmental performance, trend data available from the Registrar or Institutional Research, information gathered from accreditation visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your graduate program has already underway, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes have not been evaluated in some time.

   - Supporting Evidence: Program objectives and learning outcomes should be reexamined in light of the program’s new mission statement (see Audit and Review Self Study, 2004; Audit and Review Committee recommendations for that self study; new mission statement included in this report.)

   - Recommended Actions: Now that the mission statement has been completed, the graduate faculty under the direction of the graduate coordinator must meet, possibly with the help of ad hoc committees or a workshop format, to reevaluate the program objectives and learning outcomes that are associated with this graduate program.

2. Specific concern: Little interaction with external constituencies.

   - Supporting Evidence: No evidence of an External Advisory Board, alumni survey, or many initiatives with classes working to serve the community

   - Recommended Actions: The graduate faculty must work hard on completing their alumni survey, getting it out to alumni, and analyzing results using this as an assessment tool to drive program decisions and changes. The graduate faculty must also take an active part in helping the graduate coordinator establish an External Advisory Board. Finally, Graduate faculty should be encouraged to develop courses to include service learning or other components that get students involved in community ventures. This will reinforce the applied nature of the program. Perhaps the Graduate Student Advisory Board could offer suggestions on possible projects to be undertaken in the community.

3. Specific Concern: A wide variety of academic levels are represented in students admitted to program.

   - Supporting Evidence: Some students admitted to the program have stellar grade points while others’ grade points are lower. More importantly the quality of writing and critical thinking varies substantially from student to student (see graduate coordinator files for incoming grade points and application materials), but this is often hard to catch initially as we only require a two page goal statement and no evidence of scholarly writing or GRE scores. Letters of recommendation are generally complimentary of all students, so it is difficult at times to distinguish who can do graduate work and who can’t.

   - Recommended Actions: The graduate faculty must reevaluate admission procedures and if needed, establish new criteria for admission.