

Evaluation Report for Program Review Face to Face Meeting University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: Communication (MS), 2023- 2024

Date: 1/19/2024

Invited: Provost John Chenoweth; Dean Michael Dugan (Arts & Comm); Dean Matt Vick (Graduate Studies); Department Chair Kathy Davis; Graduate Program Coordinator Corey Davis; Audit & Review Team Chair Pavan Chennamaneni; Audit & Review team member Kristen Prock; Assessment Representative Katy Casey

Overview of review team evaluation, program comments:

The Review Team Chair, Pavan Chennamaneni, provided a summary of the strengths and recommended actions based on the review team report. Corey Davis shared an overview of the current Master's program, highlighting some of the changes from the last program. The changes shared included the program being offered fully online (asynchronous), elimination of the 3-credit capstone to one e-Portfolio, two required courses with the remaining 21-credits selected by students from a list of electives. The new structure also includes a stackable certificates option. The new program launched in fall of 2020.

Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:

1 – Please share your plan to market the COMM Matters modules outside of the program.

The Graduate Marketing plan is being coordinated with the Graduate School and is underway, mainly through social media. There may be potential to pitch the program- particularly the certificates or modules, to employers down the road to recruit a team from a regional business.

COMM Matters modules should be ready to launch by spring 2025. The goal of the modules is to take a few of the .5 credit courses (offered as modules) and bundle the courses into a 3-credit course that could apply to a master's program.

2 – Has the program thought about how to create community between students in the program to encourage persistence and engagement?

Student engagement has been a topic of discussion among staff in the program. Some classes in the program do offer synchronous opportunities for students to connect with each other and the instructor. There have also been observations by faculty that students are connecting with each other- on their own and do not necessarily require instructors to create the space. The attendees of the meeting questioned/discussed what the expectations are for fully online, asynchronous, programs to engage students. Dean Dugan shared that some of the topics being discussed are part of the Online Council's work, and the program review process should be aware of final recommendations and incorporate those into the process.

3 – Has the program considered a plan for sharing advising responsibilities should the program continue to grow?

In recognition of the potential growth of this program since the redesign, the committee discussed their recommendation of building leadership in the graduate space to assist the coordinator. Hiring additional support is not likely, and currently the program does not have plans to bring others into the administration of the graduate program. However, the attendees discussed the rationale and Dean Dugan suggested a conversation with the Coordinator and Chair should the need arise.

Recommended Actions:

Recommended Action #1

Consider creating an advisory board that includes employers and graduates. Meeting with the advisory board once a year to get feedback and suggestions for improvement is invaluable.

Recommended Action #2

Report out program enrollment, including enrollment in the COMM Matters Modules.

Recommended Action #3

Continue developing the assessment plan, including how the program uses assessment data to drive improvement.

Recommended Result:

Continuation without qualification

Next Self-Study and/or Progress Report Due Dates:

1 - Next SHORT self-study will be due to the Dean on May 1, 2030, and to the Assessment Office on August 1, 2030

For a copy of the full evaluation report and detailed comments, please reach out to the assessment office: assessment@uww.edu.