

**Central Washington University  
Assessment of Student Learning  
Department and Program Report**

Please enter the appropriate information concerning your student learning assessment activities for this year.

Academic Year of Report: 2011/2012 College: Arts and Humanities  
Department Communication Program: Communication Studies

**1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?**

- a. Understanding of multiple theoretical perspectives and diverse (including western, eastern, and others) intellectual underpinnings of communication.
- b. Competency in presentation, preferably in more than one form.
- c. Competency in systematic inquiry in the analysis of communication systems and processes.

**2. How were they assessed?**

In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

- a. Competency 'a' has been measured directly in three courses: COM 253—Interpersonal Communication, COM 302—Intercultural Communication, and COM 401—Language, Thought, and Communication. The assessment methods were course assignments that focused on multiple theoretical perspectives. Com 401 and COM 253 are taught once a year, and COM 302 is taught each quarter. Students were compared to department standards criteria.
- b. Competency 'b' was assessed in a required course, COM 450—Advanced Public Speaking. All Communication Studies students are required take this course. Student presentations are compared to a rubric developed by the National Communication Association.
- c. Competency 'c' was addressed in COM 365—Organizational Communication and COM 451—Assessment of Communication Behavior. Again, all Communication Studies students are required to take these two classes. Both were taught once in the academic year. Students were evaluated against professor-developed criteria.

Furthermore, we used a collection of data from our COM 489 Portfolio Assessment Class that includes information from all the courses described above. In this class, we ask our students to provide class samples generated in all of these courses.

**3. What was learned?**

In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

Regarding competency 'a', it was determined that an overwhelming majority of students, 75 percent, 'met expectations,' while 25 percent 'exceeded expectations.' This result is satisfactory.

In competency 'b,' most of our communication students exceeded (25 percent) or met expectations (75 percent). From last year, students improved transferring learning—that is, taking the principles learned in one situation and applying them to another. We will keep working to increase the percentage of students that exceed expectations.

Concerning competency 'c,' 88 percent of our students exceeded (12 percent) or met expectations (67 percent). Another 20 percent of our students were below expectations. We are aware that Communication students have difficulty with research methods and with thinking in methodological terms. They do not easily apply research methods to gathering data on specific hypotheses. We have been including additional class projects in this field in both COM 365 and COM 451.

#### **4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?**

In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

We will address the two points noted above through the restructuring of classes. First, we will keep watching the linking of our classes together so that each builds more clearly on previous classes. We will also make evaluation criteria more consistent between classes and instructors.

Regarding the subject of research, we will improve assignments, strengthen tests, and make students more aware about the practicality and applications of research methods. As a part of that, we are actively encouraging them to participate in conference presentations.

#### **5. What did the department or program do in response to last year's assessment information?**

In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

Faculty in the three majors in our department addressed the results of assessment obtained primarily through a combination of course revision, assignment revision, and improved communication among the faculty.

#### **6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:**