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: __2012/2013__________ College: __Arts and Humanities___  
Department ___Communication______________ Program: _Communication Studies_______

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?
   a. Understanding 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 construction and analysis of persuasive discourse.
   d. Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally for responsible citizenship.

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 standard criteria.

   b. Competency ‘b’ was assessed in a required course, COM 450—Advanced Public Speaking. All Communication Studies students are required to take these courses. Student presentations are compared to a rubric developed by the National Communication Association.

   c. Competency ‘c’ was addressed in COM 207—Introduction to Communication Studies, COM 340 Public Communication Theory and Practice, and COM 350 Persuasion and Culture. They are all required courses. Students were evaluated against professor-developed criteria.

   d. Competency ‘d’ was assessed in COM 302 Intercultural Communication, COM 350 Persuasion and Culture and COM 401 Language, Thought and Culture. Students were compared to department standard criteria.
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.

In competency ‘a’, 70 percent of students “exceeded expectations” while none was below expectations. This is a satisfactory result.

In competency ‘b’, 80 percent of our surveyed students exceeded expectations. This is a significant improvement from an already very good result last year. We will keep working to increase the percentage of students that exceed expectations in this competency.

Regarding competency ‘c’, 75 percent of our students meet expectations and 25 percent exceed expectations. We would like to see a rise in the number of students who are able to present well using a variety of methods. We will work to develop new methods and assignments to improve in this competence.

In competency ‘d’, 100 percent of communication students seem to have implemented assignments with a local or global civic engagement component. Although this is a new learning outcome suggested in last year’s review, it is true that our department, and particularly communication studies, always had a strong component on this subject.

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.).

Regarding the subject of presentations, we will improve assignments, strengthen lectures, and make students more aware of the importance of being good presenters in their future careers. As a part of that, we are actively encouraging them to participate in presentations outside of the classroom.

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.

Communication faculty strengthened the research component in this major. As a result, 25 of our students worked on thesis projects last year.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:
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: _2012/2013_____________ College: __Arts and Humanities___
Department ___Communication______________ Program: _Journalism________

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

   a. Technical skills: Students will be able to create news stories by discovering and evaluating diverse sources, work a beat, and do computer assisted research. Students will be able to produce quality audio and video, to write thorough and compelling articles.

   b. Ethical behavior: Students will understand the historical socio-political and cultural context for the ethical decisions they must make.

   c. Convergent media skills: Students will be able to use multiple media outlets to deliver the content they gather.

   d. Enhance students’ civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally for responsible citizenship.

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.

   Each competency was assessed through appropriate course work focused on each of the competencies:

   Technical skills were evaluated in COM 208, COM 209, COM 306, COM 308, COM 321 and COM 322.
   Ethical behavior was evaluated in COM 201, COM 333, COM 369, COM 382 and COM 460.
   The convergent media skills were evaluated in COM 306 and COM 406.
   The local and global civic engagement perspective was evaluated in COM 369.

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.

   Students meet or exceed expectations in every learning outcome. However, there are certain areas where more excellence should be expected, such as convergence media skills, where the level of students who exceed expectations is clearly inferior to the rest of the categories (less than 50 percent).
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.).

The journalism department has hired a new journalism professor experienced in digital and convergence media. This Fall 2013, the journalism program curriculum will be updated (the revamping of the curriculum was scheduled to be implemented last academic year). The cornerstone of the new curriculum will be the integration of digital media in every existing area (print and broadcast journalism). There will be a major in digital journalism. Thanks to these changes, we expect that this relative weakness of our program will be solved.

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.

The head of the program, Cynthia Mitchell, has attended a number of seminars in digital journalism. A new faculty specialized in digital journalism has been hired. All the journalism professors had several brainstorming sessions last year as a prior step to developing a new digital journalism curriculum. Our former chair and head of the journalism program, Lois Breedlove, will act as consultant in this important endeavor. We expect to have the new revamped curriculum approved during Winter 2014.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University:
1. **What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?**

   a. Technical skills: to gather data, information processing, practice writing
   b. Consultant skills: to combine strategies, tactics, and planning in order to achieve goals
   c. Persuader skills: To learn how to influence and/or persuade audiences with solid and well-chosen arguments.
   d. Leadership skills / Working in a team / Understanding of corporate PR: To know how to lead a project, be critical with others’ work and understand the ultimate objectives of organizations.
   e. Responsible citizenship: Enhance students' civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally for responsible citizenship.

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.

   Each competency was assessed through appropriate course work. All our students are required to submit a portfolio before graduation that is assessed in COM 489 Portfolio Assessment class. All Public Relations students were evaluated on each of the competencies:

   - Technical skills were evaluated in COM 208, COM 370 and COM 491/493.
   - Consultant skills were evaluated in COM 470 and COM 492.
   - Persuader skills were evaluated in COM 345 and COM 350.
   - Leadership skills were evaluated in COM 470, COM 475 and COM 481/483.
   - Responsible citizenship skills were evaluated in COM 470, COM 490 and COM 481/483.

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.

   Our internship reports indicate that overall there is a high level of satisfaction among the employees with the quality of our public relations students. I receive a number of invitations from my students to join their LinkedIn networks and most of them get jobs in less than 6 months in a field-related position. It seems that the most
appreciated aspect of their education by their employers as well as by the students are the hands-on and the experiential learning courses such as COM 470, COM 481/483 and COM 490.

According to the materials submitted by the students in our portfolio assessment class, a significant portion of them exceeds expectations (at least 60 percent in each of the learning outcome). These results provide evidence that our students produce a number of quality materials before their graduation.

Last year, some employees showed in their internship evaluations some concern about the quality of the writing of some students and their lack of initiative. This year professional feedback is getting better and indicates that the department strategy of being more rigorous about writing standards and emphasizing proactivity in our classes seems to be making a difference.

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 want our students to have a more global perspective. We are encouraging them to take some internship overseas and/or in US companies with a global presence. Our COM 472 Global PR is successful but we need to do more among our students to promote diversity and internationalization. The number of them who take internships overseas is very low: one or two per year, which is surprising taking into account that they don’t have to pay for the credits.

We are also requiring via our new curriculum that the foundation class be taken before the first writing class and not vice versa, so students have a clear view of the field before starting to work on their writing skills.

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 address the results of assessment obtained primarily through the feedback gathered in COM 489 through a combination of in-class peer-review evaluations, course revision, assignment revision, and improved communication among the faculty.

We have included new criteria in our list of learning outcomes, “enhance students' civic knowledge and engagement locally and globally for responsible citizenship”. I have encouraged our writing instructors to be more demanding from our students. We just raised the GPA from 2.4 to 2.7. That will help to raise the overall level.

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