Program Review - Communication

Prepared by: James McDonnell, Cythia Johnson, Robin McGehee, Tom Weise

What are the strengths of your area?: 1. The Communication Certificate program has approx. 300-350 students enrolled, with an average of 40 students achieving the certificate per year. At this point in the school year, the Communication Program already has 22 Communication Certificate Graduations scheduled for Spring 2015.
2. Increasing rates of student success in most courses, especially in high FTES earning courses such as COMM 1, COMM 4, and COMM 8.
3. Highly in demand general ed and transfer courses. As evidenced in the "Student Ed Plan Course Demand" the demand for COMM classes in upcoming semester sits an average rate of 2 to 1 (demand/need compared to space available) and in some COMM courses the rate is as high as 3 to 1 (demand/need compared to space available) - see attached document.

What improvements are needed?: Success rates in any program could and should always improve as pedagogy evolves. That being said, our COMM 1 courses tend to have lower success rates than other Communication courses, largely due to inherent communication apprehension in the average individual. This is an issue all communication professors face, and continued dialogue of successful lecture materials, tools, techniques, with additional investigation of any current research in the area, is always an added bonus. The majority of those students who disappear, or drop, face such fears despite a professor’s best efforts. To this end, the faculty will continue to work on the aforementioned areas in anticipation of elevating student success. The hybrid classes also see a dip in student success at times. This, again, is mainly due to students who stop attending and participating the coursework. Online courses are relatively new in the pedagogy, and while our student demographic is indeed technologically savvy, the dedication and commitment it takes to be an online student, is foreign to many of them as they are accustomed to a traditional instructional methodology. This, however, is changing. The current COMM 4 instructor is certified in online instruction with two colleges, and works with the COS Blackboard specialist to update her skills and understanding of how new BB tools can assist the student. In this area, time is the key factor, as well as the continued implementation of current successful online techniques. Finally, there need to recruit and hire additional qualified adjunct COMM instructors as the demands for COMM classes are on the rise, while the current adjunct pool is dwindling.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The communication program faces few challenges from a community standpoint. However, limited funding and administrative support for a forensics program has held back the success of our program, as well as the moratorium on writing/adding new courses. As the COMM Certificate program grows, the need for additional course offerings (in terms of new sections and entirely new courses) each semester is vital, as all communication classes are full. Additionally, to stay current and consistent with other communication programs, a wider breadth of offerings needs to take place. Specifically, the program would like to offer Gender Studies and Health Communication (which was also requested from the PTA program at COS in order to educate their students).

Overall Outcome Achievement: The Communication Department is presently in the process of following up on our COMM 5 and COMM 7 course Outcome Goal/Action Plan of 2013. For example, the Action Plans included the need to prioritize language definitions and cross-examination skills for the COMM 5 class; and Audience Attitude Change and the Source Credibility Student Learning Outcomes. COS finally has allowed multiple courses of COMM 5, but only one course of COMM 7 exists. Both courses fulfill CSU transfer requirements for A-3 and A-1 categories (respectively) and serve as electives for the IGETC. The Success Rate for COMM 5 stands at 83% over a three year cycle and the COMM 7 enjoys a 79% success rate over a three year time period.
In order to see if changes made in the presentation of class have had any efficacy, pre-tests were given in both classes at the start of the Fall 2014 semester concentrating on the Student Learning Outcomes stated above.
In other words, while the Communication Department will be meeting to address the concerns for COMM 1 and COMM 4 outlined in other sections above, testing the result of pedagogical changes in the COMM 5 and COMM 7 courses will occur. With these thoughts in mind, our Overall Outcome Achievements are in progress.

Changes based on outcome achievement: The Communication department meets on a regular basis and has utilized email as a source of continued dialogue. As mentioned and above, the sharing of information about differing educational techniques, useful tools to improve student outcomes and student feedback during the evaluation process has been highly beneficial. As well, and an added bonus, our Communication professors evaluate one another, full time and adjunct alike. This allows for the sharing of new ideas, methodologies, implementation, success and perhaps weakness of certain tools, and a greater consistency of materials presented in the classrooms.

Outcome cycle evaluation: The Communication department has clear student learning outcomes for each class and as individual professors and a department we are using in-class assessment tools to evaluate the success rate of not only the student, but also the theory and practice of the classroom experience. There is broad support from each faculty member and adjunct professor for the continued success of not only our class offerings, but also the success of each individual student. We deeply believe that the success rate in both COMM 1 and 4 will continue to rise and continue to see new students to the department decide to take more Communication classes, with some deciding to become a Communication Certificate graduate.

Last year the Communication Department developed a 3 year cycle for Course Level Learning Outcomes with COMM 1 and 4 being assessed first since they are the most populated courses that the Program offers. There was definite high success rates for students as they participated
Action: Technology for Kaweah 253A

Install a "smart" cart with computer, projector, doc cam, video/audio technology and equipment.

  Start Date: 05/04/2015
  Status: Proposed

Identify related COMM 1, COMM 5, COMM 7, and COMM 112 all have Course Level Learning Outcomes which require student use of technology in classroom activities.

course/program outcomes: Example: COMM 112 Outcome #3 - Given the electronic presentation software available at the College, students will be able to design, develop and visually enhance a presentation, clearly communicating information and/or data to an audience to a level of success of a C or better in at least two out of three presentations.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):
James McDonnell, Theatre Department Faculty (Fine Arts Division Chair)

Rationale (With supporting data): The Course Level Learning Outcomes for more than half of the COMM Program courses require the use of technology in classroom activities and one of the four main classrooms used for COMM Program classes does not have technological capabilities. The student success rates for these classes varies greatly (from a high of 88% in COMM 112 2010/11 to 62% in the same course 2012/13) and more support is needed to meet student success in these courses.

Priority: High
Safety Issue: No
External Mandate: No

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<th>Add Resource Request for Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purchase and install the District standard equipment for classroom technology in room 253A of the Kaweah Building.</td>
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Resource Type: Technology