

May 14, 2012

TO: Faith Hensrud, Provost
Steve Rosenberg, Chair – Faculty Senate

FROM: Academic Program Review Council
Chair, Laura Jacobs

Cc: Martha Einerson, Chair – Communicating Arts
Wendy Kropid, APRC
Xingbo Li, APRC
Shevaun Stocker, APRC
Shin-Ping Tucker, APRC

RE: Final Report on the Review of Programs within the Department of Communicating Arts (CA)

Introduction

The program review of the Communicating Arts Department (CA) was originally scheduled to submit its self-study to the Academic Program Review Council (APRC) in January of 2011. Members of the APRC were, at that time, Jeff Schuldt (Chair); Priscilla Starratt; Wendy Kropid; Laura Jacobs; and Glenn Carlson. Because of considerable confusion regarding the SSCI document, its implementation, and understanding of the general timeline, only one program of four slated for evaluation in 2011 was received. In spring of 2011, the Faculty Senate appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to examine and streamline the SSCI.

In October 2011, the Council, now under a new chair and with new members, met and prepared to receive the three overdue reviews, and an additional department review. The 2011-12 Council included Wendy Kropid; Xingbo Li; Shevaun Stocker; Shin-Ping Tucker; and Laura Jacobs (Chair). The self-study was conducted based on an adjusted periodic review schedule of programs on campus, and followed the Self-Study for Continuous Improvement (SSCI) format. Data sets were obtained through the work of Leann Brown, Institutional Research. Ms Brown also facilitated focus groups for the Department of Communicating Arts for their self-study. While awaiting reviews, the Council oriented new members to the SSCI document being used by the programs under review, and consulted with the Ad Hoc Committee on recommended modifications to the SSCI. The APRC has submitted a separate report on the challenges and recommendations regarding continued use of the SSCI, either as used for this review cycle, or as it was modified by the Ad Hoc Committee. The submitted departmental program reviews should be read in light of the issues raised by the SSCI process itself.

On January 17, 2012, the Communicating Arts Department (CA) submitted its self-study. Members of the Council were assigned sections of the report, and submitted summary comments. The Council as a whole reviewed the entire self-study and wrote an executive summary and 17 page detailed report, which it submitted to the department April 17, 2012. The Chair and several members of the Department subsequently met with APRC on April 26 to discuss specific points of the APRC report. The Chair then

supplied an extensive response to the APRC on May 7, 2012. The APRC met on May 10 and reviewed the responses of the Department. Following is the final report of the APRC. The full document, including appendices, APRC initial response, and departmental response are submitted with this report.

I. Department Mission and Alignment

The explanation of each Program's connection to the University and Department missions was commendable, and particularly appreciates the programmatic level of response. These were well-developed to include not only the department but the core Comm 110 and the graduate program. APRC appreciates the department's activities that promote the University mission and embed these concepts in meaningful ways across the many levels of department action. The department offers clearly unique contributions to campus and student learning experiences. The department has also worked diligently to meet the recommendations of the prior review.

II. Helping Students Learn

APRC recognizes the department's efforts to develop department wide learning objectives. Many of the questions of the SSCI assume an ongoing cycle of assessment; the department has not yet received its assessment results. APRC recommends the department continue with its work to map the curriculum of Theatre and Media. The department has thorough plans to examine the assessment results as they become available and adjust accordingly.

While numbers in theatre are still not ideal, participation is a core in the liberal arts, and the department is making progress. However, the tenuous nature of the major does not serve the students well, and the need to meet student needs by offering out-of-load further weakens the perception of the major. APRC recommends the administration give the department clear direction as soon as possible.

APRC recommends the department explore ways to address efficiency in scheduling and enrollment caps for Comm 110 by examining whether a lecture/lab model, such as used in HHP, could be employed.

III. Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives

The section, "Accomplishing Other Distinctive Objectives" derives from AQIP language and assumed structure. However, it appears that this is not always a distinct section or category in WEAVEOnline. This was confusing to both the department and the members of APRC, some of whom were familiar with other versions. The Program Review and the other related documents need to be properly aligned to prevent further confusion and frustration.

The department is commended for having volunteered to participate in a marketing pilot for its graduate program.

The department is deeply committed to reaching beyond traditional curricula to engage students and the community, but such outreach is not exclusive to Communications. The department should use the Program Review as a mechanism to show other disciplines how they engage members of the department in determining the means for outreach in the discipline.

IV. Understanding Students and Other Stakeholders Needs

The department knows and engages with its diverse community partners, and works carefully to place its students. APRC recommends the department consider avenues for sharing with their colleagues in other departments what they have learned about setting up and monitoring internships.

In-depth monitoring of 'other stakeholder' relationships is a new area of evaluation expected across many levels of review. While Communicating Arts already has strong connections, they also express that a path to stronger programs will entail learning more about their stakeholders' needs and level of satisfaction.

V. Valuing People

Communicating Arts plans its professional development funding very carefully to accommodate the needs of instructional staff of all ranks within the department. APRC asks whether the budget funding level is appropriate to support the diverse and substantive needs of all staff in the department, and recommends the department consider building contingency plans if the State forces greater belt-tightening on the campus.

APRC commends the members of the Communicating Arts department for their commitment to the fulfillment of the University's mission to support diversity.

It appears that the department has developed a strong mentoring program. APRC recommends pursuit of ways to measure its effectiveness.

VI. Department's Planning for Continuous Improvement

A significant piece of the departments' strategic plan is dependent on realizing capital improvements in building infrastructure and equipment needs. These improvements are necessary to provide the best possible resources for its students as well as supporting the campus at large. APRC notes that linkage between the Campus Physical Plan and all other planning instruments has been weak to the detriment of long-range planning for all programs.

VII. Program Recommendations

- APRC recommends the department continue with its work to map the curriculum of Theatre and Media.

- The tenuous nature of the Theatre major does not serve the students well, and the need to meet student needs by offering out-of-load further weakens the perception of the major. APRC recommends the department seek clear direction on the future of the program from administration as soon as possible.
- APRC recommends the department explore ways to address efficiency in scheduling and enrollment caps for Comm 110 by examining whether a lecture/lab model, such as used in HHP, could be employed.
- APRC recommends the department consider exploring creative ways to accommodate professional development.
- APRC recommends pursuit of ways to measure the effectiveness of its mentoring program.