

Degree/Certificate: MS

Major/Option: Communication Studies

Submitted by:

Date:

Part I – Program SLO Assessment Report for 2013-14

Part I – for the 2013-14 academic year: Because Deans have been asked to create College-Level Summary Reports annually, the template has been slightly modified for a) clarity for Chairs and Directors, and b) a closer fit with what the Deans and Associate Deans are being asked to report.

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.

To facilitate understanding of the fundamentals of research methodology as it is used in the field of communication with the emphasis on the development of quantitative and qualitative research designs, as well as interpretation and critical evaluation of findings.

2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** Indicate whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.

 X SLO is met after changes resulting from ongoing assessments, referencing assessment results from the previous year to highlight revisions;

 SLO is met, but with changes forthcoming;

 SLO met without change required

3. **Strategies and methods:** Description of assessment method and choices, why they were used and how they were implemented.

The most important goals of this class were to foster students' insight into the techniques of scientific inquiry. The "competency building" approach (cognitive "I know", affective "I feel", behavioral "I do") was used to evaluate the students' ability to apply course related concepts to their own research of communication phenomena. The students studied the main scientific paradigms: Discovery, Interpretative, and Critical along with theoretical schools and methods affiliated with each paradigm (Cognitive approach). The students evaluated their own research values and motivations (Affective). The class culminates in creating of students' own thesis proposal (Behavioral).

4. **Observations gathered from data:** Include findings and analyses based on the strategies and methods identified in item #3.

a. Findings:

An on-going classroom assessment, e.g. tests, oral presentations, classroom discussions, homework assignments, and samples of the students' thesis proposals were used to collect data.

b. Analysis of findings:

Findings from the collected data indicate that approximately 85% of students are able to apply the concepts from the course to their personal research design. These numbers are indicative of certain demographic changes that took place at the MSC during the last couple of years. At present, international students from China, Japan, and Saudi Arabia constitute about 30% of the MSC student population. For most of them, the concepts from CMST 520 are brand new and may be too Eurocentric in their nature.

5. **What program changes will be made based on the assessment results?**

a) Describe plans to improve student learning based on assessment findings (e.g., course content, course sequencing, and curriculum revision, learning environment or student advising).

Based on the above mentioned findings, certain arrangements have been already implemented. More nonwestern traditions in communication are now part of the MSC curriculum.

Graduate Student Assistants of the CMST department established Peer Advising group providing support for the international students.

Since more students are taking Comprehensive Exams rather than Thesis or Research Project, the CMST Department Graduate Advisory Committee (Dr. Sinekopova, Dr. Shields, Dr. Stafford) are in the process of reviewing the possible adjustments in theory (CMST 501) and methodology (CMST 520,521,522) courses to reflect this change.

- b) Provide a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year.

The GSA Peer Advising group helping international students will continue its work throughout the whole academic year.

The Graduate Advisory Committee will start working on curriculum revision in spring, 2015.

- 6. Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed and an evaluation of the assessment plan/process itself.

It may take longer than just one year to see and evaluate the results of implementations of changes generated by the assessment process.

NEW: PART II – CLOSING THE LOOP
FOLLOW-UP FROM THE 2012-13 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT

In response to the university's accrediting body, the [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities](#), this section has been added. This should be viewed as a follow up to the previous year's findings. In other words, begin with findings from 2012-13, and then describe actions taken during 2013-14 to improve student learning along, provide a brief summary of findings, and describe possible next steps.

Working definition for closing the loop: *Using assessment results to improve student learning as well as pedagogical practices. This is an essential step in the continuous cycle of assessing student learning. It is the collaborative process through which programs use evidence of student learning to gauge the efficacy of collective educational practices, and to identify and implement strategies for improving student learning.* Adapted 8.21.13 from <http://www.hamline.edu/learning-outcomes/closing-loop.html>.

1. Student Learning Outcome(s) assessed for 2012-13

To facilitate understanding of the fundamentals of research methodology as it is used in the field of communication with the emphasis on the development of quantitative and qualitative research designs, as well as interpretation and critical evaluation of findings.

2. Strategies implemented during 2013-14 to improve student learning, based on findings of the 2012-13 assessment activities.

1.) Consider working closely with the faculty teaching other methods courses (CMST 521 Qualitative Research and CMST 522 Qualitative Research) in developing more individual approach in meeting the research needs of each particular student in the program. In addition, use Research/ Design proposals from CMST 520 to determine which areas should be paid more attention to in the following research methods classes.

3. Summary of results (may include comparative data or narrative; description of changes made to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery, etc.): Describe the effect of the changes towards improving student learning and/or the learning environment.

The Department Graduate Advisory Committee was formed as the result of the previous assessment.

The new Comprehensive Examination Exams option for graduation was developed and implemented.

The MSC Curriculum Revision process has started.

4. What **further changes to curriculum, pedagogy, mode of delivery**, etc. are projected based on closing-the-loop data, findings and analysis?

More nonwestern traditions in communication will be included in the existing curriculum. di
More on-line and in person advising for international students is projected based on the increased needs.

More options for graduation have been implemented.

Definitions:

1. **Student Learning Outcome:** The student performance or learning objective as published either in the catalog or elsewhere in your department literature.
2. **Overall evaluation of progress on outcome:** This checklist informs the reader whether or not the SLO has been met, and if met, to what level.
3. **Strategies and methods used to gather student performance data,** including assessment instruments used, and a description of how and when the assessments were conducted. Examples of strategies/methods: embedded test questions in a course or courses, portfolios, in-class activities, standardized test scores, case studies, analysis of written projects, etc. Additional information could describe the use of rubrics, etc. as part of the assessment process.
4. **Observations gathered from data:** This section includes findings and analyses based on the above strategies and methods, and provides data to substantiate the distinction made in #2. For that reason this section has been divided into parts (a) and (b) to provide space for both the findings and the analysis of findings.
5. **Program changes based on the assessment results:** This section is where the program lists plans to improve student learning, based on assessment findings, and provides a broad timeline of how and when identified changes will be addressed in the upcoming year. Programs often find assessment is part of an ongoing process of continual improvement.
6. **Description of revisions to the assessment process the results suggest are needed.** Evaluation of the assessment plan and process itself: what worked in the assessment planning and process, what did not, and why.