

To: WSU Master of Professional Communication (MPC) Program Faculty and Staff

From: Dean Madonne Miner

Re: Dean's Response to MPC Program's Self-Study, Reviewers' Report, and MPC Program's Response to the Review

Date: May 7, 2015

Thank you for your many contributions to WSU's Master of Professional Communication Review process. All MPC faculty members participated in various stages of this review, and I am grateful to you for your thoughtfulness and thoroughness in addressing concerns of importance to the program and to the College. I want to convey special thanks to Kathryn Edwards for serving as internal team leader, and to the four individuals (Becky Jo Gesteland, Daniel Lair, Matthew Mouritsen and Kenneth Smith) who served as reviewers.

In their report, program reviewers note that WSU's MPC program "has already evolved in a highly successful manner through an insightful process of assessment and change." Reviewers also comment: "The internal core of the program appears to be on an incredibly strong foundation." I agree wholeheartedly with these positive findings.

With respect to challenges identified by reviewers (pressures to conform with more traditional programs; more support needed to recruit students; more career placement and advising needed for students; possible competition for students from a proposed online Master's of Leadership degree program), I believe the MPC has responded adequately and appropriately.

I don't see the "pressure for conformity" as a major challenge; my sense is that WSU traditionally has offered "applied programs," and that as long as the MPC garners respect across campus, there will not be a push to make it "more academic" than it already is.

Recruiting professionals into a graduate program requires a different approach than recruiting high school juniors and seniors to their first year of college. I hope, however, that when the college hires a second college-wide advisor this summer, MPC may be able to make some use of this person in recruiting. The second advisor's job description will specifically include recruiting.

I too worry that MPC and MENG students do not receive adequate career placement help from the university's Career Services Office. Students have had to rely, instead, on the MPC Director and on personal networks. As Dean, I intend to approach Career Services to request more specific attention from them to all students in the A&H College, and especially our graduate students.

Another concern is the proposed Master's of Leadership degree, to be offered through the College of Applied Science and Technology. Thus far, MPC director Kathryn Edwards and MBA director Mark Stevenson have voiced concerns about the audience for this new program, as well as about the quality of its offerings. Rather than present the proposal to Faculty Senate,

COAST has decided to revise this proposal and offer it for public review in fall, 2015. At that time, we will want to consider whether the proposed program overlaps too extensively with the MPC and MBA programs. At the moment, our best course of action is to remain attentive to what is happening in COAST and be supportive of proposals that are not going to damage our own degree offering.

Reviewers listed five overall recommendations; program faculty provided practical Action Plans in response to each recommendation.

In conclusion: I am quite pleased with the direction the MPC has taken during its first years of existence. It began with a strong structure; where there were issues with the structure, program faculty developed alternatives. Enrollment continues to be steady and graduates are finding themselves better prepared for their current careers or prepared to head off into new careers.

Madonne Miner, Dean
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