

To: Weber State University Master of Professional Communication (MPC) Faculty

From: Dean Scott Sprenger and Associate Dean Amanda Sowerby

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

Date: May 10, 2020

A sincere thank you to the MPC faculty for the input of thoughtful detail, time, and dedication to the MPC Program Review process. Your comprehensive report reflects the care with which you address strengths, strategies, and areas of concern for your program and the Lindquist College of Arts and Humanities. We would also like to express a special thanks to Anne Bialowas (acting MPC director) and Sarah Steimel (MPC director), for serving as team leaders, and to Program Evaluation Team Members Dr. Jared S. Colton, Dr. Donna Z. Davis and Dr. Shaun Hansen, who generously gave their time to this process.

After analyzing the documents generated for the self-study and review of the Master of Professional Communication, we want to comment on components that we believe deserve attention.

- 1) As noted by the Review Committee, the MPC Program's Mission Statement reflects a focus on established curriculum and program goals. The suggestion to include language that references critical thinking, ethics, and cultural awareness would highlight and make more transparent the professional preparation currently provided to students in the program.
- 2) The Review Committee notes the program's strengths in its flexible curricular structure that targets the working professional. The committee does articulate concern, however, about the consistency of academic rigor across the curricular offerings, citing unclear expectations between on-line and face-to-face workloads. The MPC Program's Action Plan to address these concerns through revised syllabi, clearly titled curriculum offerings and group discussion at faculty meetings to address expectations and consistency, provide opportunities to address the Review Committee's concerns successfully.
- 3) The Review Committee applauds the program's Measurable Learning Outcomes for its focus on necessary industry skills, such as research and theory, written and oral communication, collaboration, and the use of on-demand technology. We agree that the program could improve in its data collection through the documentation and archiving of student projects and professional achievements--that these could be used as a means of "summative assessment."

- 4) The Review Committee commends the program's strength in the area of academic advisement. We agree that the MPC Program director and faculty place student success at the forefront of their work by committing their time, attention, and commitment to the Master's candidates.
- 5) The Review Committee recognizes the strength of the MPC faculty and affirms the thoughtful hiring practices that emphasize diversity, community engagement, and long-term commitment to the vitality of the program.
- 6) In the area of Support (Staff, Administration, Facilities, Equipment, and Library), the Review Committee found strength in the faculty's energy and commitment to the program. An area of concern, however, was raised application and scholarship allocations processes, which may benefit from a digital upgrade. In the program's Faculty Response Action Plan, it is clear that you have initiated a collaboration between the MPC director, support staff and the Admissions Office. The program is developing a strategy to capture, share, and file program applications online. Continued attention to the improvement process will help with consistency and ease of use for all stakeholders.
- 7) The MPC Program is applauded for its strength in providing High Impact Educational Experiences (HIEE) for their students. Increased focus on faculty mentorship of students and the inclusion of industry experts in community engagement projects and internship experiences will strengthen students' professional competencies and career opportunities.
- 8) To conclude, The Master of Professional Communication Program is committed to the success of students. This commitment is evidenced by the dedication of the director, faculty, and staff who wholly commit their time to provide industry-standard training, in-depth research praxis, and relevant field experience in order to ensure the best possible professional outcomes for students.



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