

## Department of Communication, Weber State University Program Review

Review Date: February 21, 2020

Review Team:

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Overview:

Two review team members (Mullen & Norton) met the night before the review to discuss general impressions of the Department of Communication and go over questions to ask during the review. The external review was a day-long process starting at 8:00am on February 21, 2020. The three-member team met over a light breakfast with the School's Chair, Sheree Josephson to overview the schedule and discuss initial thoughts, concerns, and opinions. We then met with co-curricular advisors and throughout the day met with various constituencies (faculty, students, support staff, Dean and Associate Dean, department chair, adjunct faculty, and the unit's advisory board consisting mainly of alumni from the Communication Department). The review team was also given tours of the department's teaching facilities (television production studio and labs, radio station, newspaper writing lab, debate room, computer labs, and classrooms). The review ended approximately 6:00pm with the review team meeting briefly to discuss general and specific impressions and the strategy for completing the written summary. The review team's feedback will summarize strengths, areas of improvement, and recommendations for Standards A-H in the report that follows.

Standard A-- Mission Statement:

- A. Are outcomes of program well defined?
- B. Are student accomplishments assessed by stakeholders?
- C. Is educational program clearly defined so graduates can meet goals?

D. Does mission statement support college mission statement?

Strengths:

The mission statement for the Department of Communication at Weber State University acknowledges the importance of communication in an ever-changing communication environment and seeks to deliver a mix of theory and practice to its students while serving multiple constituencies: the instructors and students within the department, to the college of arts and humanities, the university, the surrounding community, and the communication discipline itself. The free exchange of ideas, inclusivity, equity, and diversity and the continuation of a high level of knowledge, proficiency, and talent in research and practice are also strengths of the department's mission.

Outcomes are multi-faceted and well-defined, student accomplishments are assessed by stakeholders, students graduate in a timely manner, and the department's mission is in line with the college's mission to teach students to excel in today's complex world.

Areas for Improvement:

While the Department of Communication seeks to stay on top of the ever-changing aspects of communication, some of the equipment used by students and faculty are dated. Some of the faculty office computers many years old. Television and radio production equipment should be updated as well.

In terms of diversity, although the faculty has a good degree of diversity, more diversity within the ranks of the student population is an area for improvement.

Recommendations:

The department needs funding to update hardware in faculty offices, labs, and media production facilities. The department should also have an on-site broadcast engineer for regular maintenance and repair of the various technologies used by the department's faculty and students.

Faculty office computers and student lab computers should be replaced on a regular, more frequent basis, not only to keep up with the ever-changing computer technologies and software, but to stay on top of computer security issues such as hacking, ransomware, and theft of personal information. Implementation of a technology fee for the department, if not the entire university should be considered for implementation.

To improve on the delivery of a top-quality education, the department need more faculty lines to replace the numerous adjunct faculty used to teach writing, and other courses.

The department, college, and university should have some sort of outreach program(s) to improve the diversity within the student population (if there is one, we were not privy to it). There is a significant Latino community in Ogden that has a fairly low representation within the student population.

### Standard B Curriculum:

- A. Is there evidence of thoughtful curriculum planning and review?
- B. Is the curriculum consistent with mission?
- C. Are there resources to support the program?
- D. Are courses offered in a timely manner?

### Strengths:

The curriculum is broad and diverse, covering a broad range of emphases: civic advocacy, digital media, interpersonal & family, multimedia, organizational communication, public relations & advertising, and communication teaching. The range of emphases and courses is consistent with the unit's mission to equip students for today's ever-changing world of communication. Tracks allow flexibility in student program of study rather than overly dividing resources.

Skills are provided for students to pursue careers in public relations, advertising, corporate communication, public administration, journalism, technical writing, media programming, audio-video production, law, advocacy, teaching, research, sales, and social media.

The mix of theory and practice is evident in the curriculum which supports the department's mission. As evidence, the Department has many outlets (co-curriculars) for applying the things learned in class: Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), newspaper (*The Signpost*), debate team, radio production (KWCR Wildcat Radio), audio/video production (Studio 76), a student-run PR firm (Ogden Peak Communications), the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), National Association for Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), and the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). This kind of experiential learning is key to the Department's success. Additionally, students are required to take an internship as part of their course work. The internship serves as a transition from academia to the workplace for many students, giving them an experience in the workplace and career path they have chosen. Overall, experiential learning is a strength of the Department of Communication and it was a theme that was prominent during the visit.

An emphasis on writing and other core skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, and conflict management are lifelong skills that undergird the curriculum and faculty teaching.

Small classes are an advantage for quality learning. The alumni stressed the importance of small class sizes for meeting personal student needs.

There is growth and evidence of thoughtful planning for growth. Since the last review the Department of Communication has added 10 new classes to support two interdisciplinary degree programs (Associate of Workplace Communication & Writing, and Film Studies).

Alumni and adjunct faculty are in the classrooms as visiting lecturers and instructors which exposes students to real world experiences. The mix of classes, instructors, and students interact to respond and pivot to the current needs in the marketplace. Networking among students and with professors, mentors get students job-ready in a short period of time. There is a flexibility and ability to change within the confines of a university.

Professors do not “own” classes, which means a variety of instructors get a chance to teach the same class. In other words, courses are shared. This practice has both pros and cons. The cons are discussed under “Areas for Improvement.”

#### Areas for Improvement:

Because professors do not “own” classes, the courses are shared and the same professor isn’t always teaching the same course. But there are pros and cons to this. Due to scheduling dynamics and professors teaching different classes, some students can end up having the same professor over and over, thus limiting the academic experience to a degree. Additionally, professors can end up with an undo number of course “preps.”

It is probably a good time for the faculty to undergo a systemic assessment to find small but important ways to update the curriculum to better support established and emerging students interests of specialization. For example, it is not clear why organizational communication students have to take the visual communication course, which seems more geared for PR and production students. The industries which these degrees prepare students for change rapidly. This requires more consistent discussions among faculty to incorporate feedback from alumni working in these various industries and changes in specializations to match contemporary needs.

Courses are offered in a relatively timely manner, though there could be improvement in this area. Some classes only taught some semesters. And sometimes required courses are taught at the same time, thus making students choose between one or the other. But scheduling can be challenging due to co-curricular obligations.

#### Recommendations:

Build in mini-internships, or micro experiences for the students to help them make career decisions. The more “real-world” experiences they get, the better chance they have for choosing the career they best fit into. It will not only give them experience with possible career paths, but would help winnow the ones they may not like, or be suited for.

Replace the Visual Communication course for organization communication students with a course they can better relate to.

Improved course scheduling so there is little or no scheduling conflicts for required, or “needed” courses. This would help in the progression through the degree thus improving graduation rate. Sometimes required courses students need aren’t offered. Required course should be offered every semester.

Continue to stay on top of industry requirements as they change rapidly, and update course content as needed.

### Standard C. Student Learning Outcomes & Assessments

- a. Learning outcomes should reflect expected skills and behaviors achieved by graduation
- b. Learning outcomes support goals of program
- c. Learning outcomes linked to curriculum (with matrix)

#### Assessment

- a. Program has clearly defined assessment plan
- b. Each learning outcome has a direct measure that is public
- c. Evidence of learning is collected and reported regularly
- d. Program faculty meet regularly to discuss results
- e. Assessment results are being used to improve teaching & learning (i.e., close the loop)

#### Strengths:

The Department of Communication has approximately 437 majors in the BS and BA degree programs as of October 2019. This represents a 3.3% increase over five years. There is a broad range of traditional and non-traditional students. The department has also offered an Associate’s degree since 2014 with 47 students, and an interdisciplinary Associate’s degree with the English department since 2018, which has 24 students enrolled. There are 62 students with a minor in Communication and/or the Bachelor of Integrated Science.

The student experience is overwhelmingly positive. Students appreciate faculty support, faculty availability to help with transfer credits, variable scheduling needs, excellent advising (students are assigned faculty member advisors based on area of interest) and accommodating their needs. Students say that it is about the “interconnecting network of the things we do,” and, “the communication department is really great in helping with navigating college.” In other words, students feel that professors are on their side -- accommodating work schedules, good advising, and supporting team members (e.g., Debate Team travel and other activities). They also say that faculty, “care enough to correct me.” Former students say that bonds with their

classmates and with their instructors are created within the Department Communication that last a lifetime.

Courses that are not offered regularly have been taught as an independent study to accommodate students getting through the program more efficiently. There is good communication between faculty and students (a monthly newsletter sent to students is one example of this). Networking with professionals, real-world experiences (via internships and co-curriculars), personal attention, and recognition of student strengths are among the many things students mentioned.

Students are academically hungry and passionate. As evidence of this, dozens of students showed up to the meeting for the review, and this was a Friday afternoon, mind you! For this to happen at a commuter school is noteworthy.

The graduation rate has increased since the last review.

Communication students are assessed via their internship. Internship supervisors are required to assess the intern's performance on a survey. Many of the program's learning outcomes are assessed through this survey. The internship surveys filled out by employers at the completion of a student's internship and the exit surveys filled out by students about to graduate are excellent barometers to look at assessment over the last five years. These results are reported as assessment data. Students also take an exit survey administered in the Senior Seminar course (COMM 4990) they're required to take. There is also an eportfolio that students create for this class which is assessed. Soon, professionals will also review this eportfolio.

#### Areas for Improvement:

Students note that inadequate resources are directed to supporting the debate program. Also, other students at Weber do not know about the award-winning debate team.

Even though there is a host of co-curriculars, and a required internship, student crave more real-life experiences.

Although the graduation rate has ticked up since the last review, there is still room for further improvement.

There is a need to diversify the student body. The department does send promotional material into local high schools and encourages high school counselors to tell students about the Communication major but is this strategy effective in recruiting minority students? Can minorities students be better targeted? Most students are from Utah and the local community. The inability to give out-of-state students scholarships hampers diversification and attracting top quality out-of-state students.

Tracking students after they graduate. Something more than anecdotal evidence is needed here.

### Recommendations:

Students are interested in ways to model their assignments to meet their needs and fulfill requirements. Continue to enhance opportunities to do this.

Efforts to improve student diversity should be implemented. Ogden has a fairly substantial Hispanic population. Find ways to target this minority segment of the population with a recruiting program and promotional material.

Support and promote the award-winning debate program. Advertise it around campus. Write more newspaper articles about the debate squad. Interview the debate coach and debate team members on radio, etc. In other words, spread the word about the gems in the department.

The department needs college and central administration to work collaboratively to support the department and its programs to attract a more diverse student body. One particular area of concern is the loss of talent in out-of-state students for the Debate and Speech programs. These programs offer significant potential to recruit out-of-state and a more diverse student population. However, this recruitment potential is stymied by residency requirements

If time and resources allow, a systematic method to track students after they graduate would be a nice addition to the department's effort to assess the outcome of each student's educational experience over the long-term. Perhaps an online questionnaire would be the cheapest way to do this. The initial effort to collect email, or other contact information, and design the questionnaire would be the primary burden of this endeavor.

### Standard D. Academic Advising

- a. Clearly defined strategy of advising
- b. Students receive appropriate assistance in planning course of study
- c. Students receive appropriate assistance in planning career

### Strengths:

The Department of Communication's advising strategy is clearly defined. All majors and minors are assigned to a faculty member based on their emphasis area or minor. Most emphasis areas have at least two advisors and students are assigned according to the first letter in their last name. All faculty have advising responsibilities. Students report that faculty advisors are very helpful. Students get one-on-one assistance in planning their course of study and agree that advising is very good and one of the strengths of the department. A designated and dedicated

internship coordinator is a strength and brings cohesiveness to the internship program and provides assistance with career planning.

Information about each advisor is provided on the department's website. Students are encouraged to meet with an advisor upon admission to the program and receive assistance in planning individual programs of study. Students can meet with their advisor whenever needed. If an advisor isn't available, the department chair handles walk-ins. New advising sheets for each emphasis area in the major, minor, and Associate's degree are created each academic year. These sheets are available in hard copy in the front office, or electronically via the department's website. Students can access the CatTracks system, which looks like the department's advising sheets. CatTracks helps advisors track student progress. The university provides training for faculty on CatTracks and faculty are encouraged to attend these training sessions and other advising training. There is required training before a faculty member can do tasks such as accepting or substituting one class for another. In all, the advising is systematic, and well-established.

For career advising the department posts internship opportunities online at [weber.edu/communication](http://weber.edu/communication). Internships are also posted on designated bulletin boards outside the department office, shared on email, and announced in classes. Career Services staff interact with students in COM 4990, Senior Seminar. Mock interviews are conducted in class to help students present themselves in a professional manner. Professionals from outside the university also volunteer to advise students on resumes, interviewing skills, networking, portfolios, and other job-related activities.

Some strides have been made to increase the number of Communication majors and increase the graduation rate. In recent years the number of students graduating from the program has increased from 71 five years ago to 102 last year, a 44.45% increase. There has been a small amount of growth in the number of majors of about 3.3% since the last program review. Slow grow should be seen as a positive.

#### Areas for Improvement:

Although having faculty advise students enhances the relationship between faculty and students and makes faculty more in touch with student needs, it is time consuming, especially around registration and graduation seasons.

#### Recommendations:

Consider establishing a dedicated advisor for the department. The college has advisors, but adding an advisory office to the department will help take some of the advising load off faculty so they can redirect their time and talent to other rewarding areas such as research, scholarship development, and the like.



Consider giving course release time to faculty for their advising duties. The internship coordinator current receives one.

Consider giving students the opportunity for an earlier internship, so a sophomore-level internship as well as a junior or senior-level internship. Micro-Internships were another suggestion floated during the review. Such short-term internships would give students the opportunity to explore more than one career path. Although the department has Ogden Peak Communications, their in-house student-run public relations firm, the department's advisory board suggested that some other unique firm-like opportunities could be created such as an Ad Lab (like BYU) to provide high-level education and strong deliverables.

### Standard E. Faculty

- a. Faculty size, expertise, professional development are aligned with mission
- b. Programs has core faculty required to maintain quality program
- c. Adjunct faculty are qualified
- d. Program strives to achieve diversity among faculty
- e. Plan in place for mentoring new faculty
- f. Plan in place to assignment teaching and service loads
- g. Teaching is monitored to assess effectiveness
- h. Have formal periodic review process for faculty

### Strengths:

Department faculty numbers have grown steadily. Since the last review the Department of Communication has added four full-time, tenure-track faculty lines. The faculty is of adequate size but could use more tenure-track lines to replace the many adjunct positions currently teaching basic courses.

There is a very collegial relationship among faculty. They are very cohesive in spite of their offices being spread out in three different buildings, with the dean in yet another building. A yearly retreat and good intra-faculty communication help with the cohesive nature of the faculty. The chair of the department sends a weekly newsletter to the faculty. She also sends hand-written notes to adjunct faculty. There is an appreciation for one another's disciplinary expertise and its contribution to the student experience. Faculty have pride in the program. There is an egalitarian way of operating in that all full-time faculty vote on important issues such as curriculum.

The high quality of instruction continues to impact graduates throughout their careers. The emphasis on core concepts such as problem solving, writing well, critical thinking, and decision-making that do not change over time, is noteworthy.

Faculty are student-centric and care about the student experience. Students report that the faculty are very accommodating to student scheduling and other needs. For example, when the debate team travels and needs to miss class, the faculty are helpful in making up work and understanding the absence. Faculty are flexible and accommodating for students. For example, they will substitute one class for another if the requirement is not offered. Students also report that the faculty teach more than academics, they teach “life skills” and like to be involved with the students. Professors “really listen” to student concerns.

The diversity of faculty is a positive in terms of attracting diverse students. The department has diversity in academic disciplines, education, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, religion, and various aspects of background.

Teaching comes first at Weber State University, service second, and research third. Two publications are required for tenure. The faculty are productive in their research endeavors. The chair of the department, Sheree Josephson, is an especially good role model in this regard (noteworthy is the *Handbook of Visual Communication* for which she is a co-editor).

The faculty are reviewed regularly and there are clear tenure and promotion guidelines. Tenure at Weber State University is granted based on criteria, not a quota, which allows faculty to be promoted without regard to the number of promotions within the department, college, or the university as a whole. As such, faculty are not competing with one another for tenure. This supports a collegial environment. Teaching is evaluated every semester via student evaluations and peer review of teaching is conducted on a regular basis. Adjunct faculty are also mentored and reviewed on a regular basis.

New faculty are mentored with senior faculty serving as mentors. Funding from the Dean’s Office is provided so senior faculty can take new faculty to lunch several times. The Dean’s Office also has an active role in mentoring new faculty.

#### Areas for Improvement:

Too much rotation among faculty leads to too many preps for faculty; it can also lead to students having the same faculty over and over from one semester to the next. And as noted in Standard B, above, faculty do not “own” classes. This, though it does enhance a sense of shared instructional responsibility, results in faculty having too many course preps, overall. This along with advising responsibilities and other responsibilities, take away from research and creative output, which could be increased.

Despite the diversity of the faculty, the student body of the Department of Communication remains fairly non-diverse, especially along racial/ethnic lines.

#### Recommendations:

Growth should be kept at a slow pace so that faculty cohesiveness is not fractured.

Consider a deliberate rotation to balance the number of new preps for faculty and success for students. Limit the number of course preps during any given academic year. When advising students ask if they have had the same instructor teach them each semester (for different courses). Consider transferring students who have had the same instructor over and over into a different section of a class if available.

The racial diversity of the faculty is something to focus on when new hiring opportunities come along.

Research on the pedagogical aspects of the profession might be a way to enhance research production for the faculty. The journals, *Communication Education*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, and *Intercultural Communication Education* might serve as viable options.

## Standard F. Program Support

- a. Number and capabilities of staff adequate to support mission and objective
- b. Administrative support available to assist staff
- c. Facilities, equipment and library capable of supporting program mission

### Strengths:

Support staff for the Department of Communication is adequate. It has one full-time and one part-time administrative assistant. One work study student supplements the office support staff. The department's administrative assistant stays up to date by attending on-campus classes and workshops. The administrative staff will be regularly reviewed via WSU's Performance Review and Enrichment Program (PREP) beginning in this academic year. Previously, they were reviewed with a Staff Annual Report process coming out of the Dean's Office.

The Dean's Office has been very supportive and responsive to the needs of the Department of Communication. There is excellent communication between the Dean's Office and the department of Communication. The Provost's Office is also very supportive by providing additional instructional wage monies to help meet the increase in enrollment. New faculty lines have been promised if enrollment continues to increase.

There is good support for faculty to travel for research presentations. The department provides a yearly allotment of \$400 for each full-time faculty member. The Dean's Office also contributes \$1250 in travel funds yearly to tenure track faculty members with an active research agenda. Non-tenure track faculty can receive \$750 from the Dean's Office. Some faculty have also received research and scholarship funding from special accounts at WSU, such as the Research,

Scholarship and Professional Growth fund, and offices such as the Teaching and Learning Forum, Center for Community-Engaged Learning, the Presidential Teaching Scholarship, and the Brady Presidential Distinguished Professor Award.

In terms of space, the 11-year-old Elizabeth Hall is modern, well-designed, and comfortable for faculty and staff. It provided a very good space for student learning. The office furniture is good. Most offices have windows. All the classrooms are equipped with computers with comfortable seating and space for students. The co-curricular organizations all have adequate facilities except for the student-run public relations firm, Ogden Peak Communication/PRSSA. The department is working on renovating a space for this group of students.

#### Areas for Improvement:

Though the office staffing is adequate, the addition of one more part-time administrative staff position to help with advising, recruitment, and other tasks would help to better serve students, faculty, and the university.

Modest course fees are applied to a number of courses in the Department of Communication's curriculum to help with the maintenance and updating of equipment. This fee probably should be increased to keep in step with the rising cost of digital and other electronic equipment. Because replacing equipment is so expensive, monies collected via these differential course fees must be accumulated over many years. The university should recognize this and stop pressuring the department to spend these monies on an annual basis.

Scholarships for students are limited. More privately-funded scholarships would support and attract more out-of-state students.

Support staff (admins.) say there is not much really lacking but feel under-valued. Staff are not always looped into decisions or asked for administrative aspects of the implementation of decisions. The faculty should be more responsive to the administrative staff requests for information—they want to help with the publicity of the department in social media, for example, but the faculty are often non-responsive to requests for information. The administrative assistants should be more “in the loop” with what is going on in the unit. This may help reduce the turn-over rate of administrative assistants which is fairly frequent. There is also a lack of clarity regarding the staff's role as budgetary managers or budgetary technicians in conjunction with faculty advisors taking the initiative to manage their budgets.

The department is somewhat challenged by space. Although the debate and speech teams have nice offices in the basement of Elizabeth Hall and the co-directors also have offices and the debate squad room is nice, the three media organizations are spread in three different buildings on campus and the PR organizations have an inadequate space. It also seems odd that Computer Science and their labs are in such close proximity to the Department of Communication. Can their labs be moved so Communication can have a more consolidated space?

Funding for set design and building for the digital media, film, and multimedia journalism students is inadequate.

As mentioned above, the public relations students need to have a better space to meet.

### Recommendations:

Hire an additional part-time (20-hours per week) office administrative staff person to better serve students, faculty, and other stake-holding constituencies.

Make scholarships available for out-of-state students. This recommendation is a bit of a problem due to state residency requirements so, this is where private scholarships would help. Perhaps designate it as long-term project and coordinate with the university, local officials, and state officials with a lobbying effort to get the residency rules changed.

Partner with local industry to create more scholarships to help support students. The dean suggested this was an area that the department could and should explore.

The university should allow the Department of Communication to accumulate monies collected from differential course technology fees for several years, essentially to “bank” these monies annually, to pay for computer and other equipment upgrades and maintenance on a 3- 5-year basis.

Make administrative staff feel more empowered and valued for their expertise. Keep this important part of the department in the loop on the various things of importance. The faculty should be more responsive in helping the administrative assistants to promote the department by more readily sharing information with them so they can engage social media and help share information about students, faculty, and the unit as a whole. Also, a discussion of a departmental display case in Elizabeth Hall came up. This case is meant to “showcase” the department’s trophies, awards, and generally have a promotional purpose. The case has become dated and is under disrepair as of late and the department’s administrative showed a desire to help fix the display case. In fact, it has not been changed for close to three years. It may be a small but important gesture to empower the administrative staff by giving them the time, resources, and authority for this project. The administrative staff might feel empowered and trusted to lead on this and similar projects.

Better technology support is necessary. Upgrades to faculty office and student lab computers needs to be more regular. Perhaps instituting a university-wide technology fee would help enable this recommendation. The Department of Communication also needs a dedicated broadcast engineering position—someone who can maintain and fix equipment and serve as an expert on the various technological and software needs of the department. That a student is currently staffed for this responsibility is inadequate.

Continue with the renovation of the space in Elizabeth Hall for the public relations students.

## Standard G. Relationships with External Communities

- a. Formal external relationships exist
- b. Role and contribution are clearly defined
- c. External advisory board exists and communicates regularly

### Strengths:

Formal external relationships exist, and the strong internship program is, in this respect, a key part of the program. Students are required to take an internship as part of their program of study and some students even take more than one. The Department of Communication also has several co-curriculars that engage the surrounding community. For example, Ogden Peaks Communications is a student-run public relations firm that does work for local establishments. In fact, one alumni told us that one local establishment still calls on him to consult on a PR project the students implemented years ago. WSU professional recruiters and student ambassadors are met with regularly to help promote the department to a wider market.

The department is involved with the high schools in the area via the Concurrent Enrollment Program that teaches communication courses to high school students.

There is a strong element of service. Service learning and community advocacy are important elements of the department's program. And several faculty members serve on various community boards.

The Department of Communication has an Advisory Board. The department chair holds bi-annual meetings with this board. The Advisory Group is made up of alumni who have gone on to have successful careers locally and statewide.

### Areas for Improvement:

More private scholarships might be garnered if the department engaged local industry more.

The department is not positioned well to keep in contact with its alumni. The department does not have the personnel to successfully accomplish this task in a sustainable way. The faculty, chair, and staff do their best—for example, when they have time, the administrative assistants try to locate graduates via social media outlets.

### Recommendations:

Talk with corporate leaders in the community. Begin discussion of possible avenues of giving to support more student scholarships. Local television and radio station might also be tapped to donate older, but useable broadcast equipment when they upgrade.

Attempt to improve the tracking of your graduates via some systematic method.

## Standard H. Program Summary

a. Program showed it implemented recommendations from previous review

### Strengths:

From curriculum, to faculty, and more, this is a strong department. As you can see in each area of this report, the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement. In fact, one person called the Department of Communication the “best-kept secret” in Utah higher education.

Some of the main things are the progress the Department of Communication has made in the last five years by hiring four additional faculty, graduating many more students, updating the facilities, publishing many articles, winning many awards, and placing many graduates in communication-related jobs.

The curriculum grid has been reworked, as well as the learning objectives on all classes.

The Dean regards the unit as a “strong department” with “strong student outcomes” and “strong leadership.” The department’s current chair, Sheree Josephson, is an internationally recognized scholar and role model for the faculty, staff, and students. She is a wonderful asset for the department, college, university, and discipline of communication studies, especially in the area of visual communication and eye-tracking research.

There is a reasonably strong identification to the department and there is a lot of appreciation for the faculty, classes, advisors, co-curriculars, the caring environment (“amazing” was a word used more than once). There is a distinct enthusiasm for the department from the students.

### Areas for Improvement:

According to the dean and department chair, more faculty lines are needed. Almost every section of the General Education classes are taught by adjunct faculty, which can pose problems related to course consistency, teaching/learning quality, and unit branding.

To reiterate the above point, there are too many adjunct faculty—some should be converted to tenure track positions.

There is a possibility that there are funds for support (for scholarships, research, etc.) in the community that the department has not tapped into yet.

The students would like to see more updated course material and technology for the contemporary communication and media environment.

The space used by students, particularly the PRSSA students, received some criticism. The space for the PR students is, however, being renovated.

Recommendations:

Not a recommendation so much as something to think about: Is the department in the right college? Does being housed in the Arts & Humanities College restrict funding, scholarships, and recognition? Do donors see the more highly visible arts programs as more in need than the communication program and are more willing to give to them than to the Department of Communication? Explore these questions.

Out-of-state waivers might be considered for students coming from other states or other countries.

Explore a Global/International Communication concentration to take advantage of Utah's "mission overseas" community of possible students.

The Advisory Board suggested that the department needs to "sell" itself more.