

Annual Assessment Report May 2018

Name of academic program: Communication (comprising majors in Multi-Media Journalism, Public Relations and Strategic Communication, both offered with an optional concentration in Sports Communication).

Report Summary

The report focuses on the results of Baccalaureate Assessment conducted in May 2018 although, as explained within, the process of assessment is integrated within the Communication program from the first major field course to the final presentation.

All six participating students passed the Baccalaureate Assessment, and five of them earned the “High Pass” designation. Consistency of performance across the three areas of focus increased this year.

Quincy University Mission Statement

Quincy University stands as a Catholic, independent, liberal arts institution of higher learning in the Franciscan tradition. Inspired by the spirit of Francis and Clare of Assisi, we respect each person as a sister or brother with dignity, value, and worth. We work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We prepare men and women for leadership and for the transformation of the world by educating them to seek knowledge that leads to wisdom. We welcome and invite all to share our spirit and our life.

Academic Unit Mission Statement

The faculty of the Division of Fine Arts and Communication set as their mission:

- To guide students in their discovery of the rich and diverse heritage of the fine arts and the liberal arts;
- To support students in their growth and development as creative individuals, team members, and contributors to the success of others;
- To provide students with expertise, assistance, resources, and models of integrity, intellectual acuity, critical and creative thinking, and lucid expression;
- To prepare them to have a positive impact through principled servant leadership in careers and in service to the larger community;
- To impart the values, skills, and traits of character essential to lifelong learning.

Program Mission Statement

The Quincy University Communication program provides students with knowledge, practical opportunities, and grounding in ethical principles to prepare them to meet the challenges and opportunities of professional and personal communication. Students are guided to synthesize learning in the varied fields of communication and to apply their abilities with respect for each individual and within a context of service to the profession, to their communities, and to our global society.

Program Goals

The Mission Statement implies that successful students of communication:

- Will demonstrate a working understanding of their heritage as citizens of a diverse global community
- Will show proficiency as members of functional teams as well as in individual endeavors
- Will develop the knowledge and skills pertinent to their fields to a level of excellence and will be able to apply what they have learned to a range of new and challenging problems, thus transforming knowledge to wisdom
- Will consistently embody integrity and responsibility
- Will think reasonably, independently, impartially, and creatively
- Will take initiative, demonstrate goal-oriented planning, and be able to marshal human and material resources in designing solutions to problems in their communities and other spheres of influence
- Will continuously seek, embrace, and make the most of opportunities to learn and to share learning with others.

Goal	Learning outcome assessed via
Students will demonstrate a working understanding of their heritage as citizens of a diverse global community.	(1) Socio-political context exhibit (2) Communication theory presentation/post-test (3) Public speaking exhibit
Students will show proficiency as members of functional teams as well as in individual endeavors	(1) Area of professional specialization exhibit. (2) Citizenship and service exhibit (3) Professional leadership exhibit. (4) Public speaking exhibit
Students will develop the knowledge and skills pertinent to their fields to a level of excellence and will be able to apply what they have learned to a range of new and challenging problems, thus transforming knowledge to wisdom	(1) Area of professional specialization exhibit (2) Citizenship and service exhibit (3) Professional leadership exhibit (4) Media writing exhibit (5) Research paper and presentations
Will consistently embody integrity and responsibility	(1) Legal and ethical contexts exhibit (2) Citizenship and service exhibit (3) Professional leadership exhibit
Will think reasonably, independently, impartially, and creatively	(1) Legal and ethical contexts exhibit (2) Media ethics exhibit (3) Media writing exhibit (4) Research paper and presentations
Will take initiative, demonstrate goal-oriented planning, and be able to marshal human and material resources in designing solutions to problems in their communities and other spheres of influence	(1) Area of professional specialization exhibit (2) Professional leadership exhibit (3) Citizenship and service exhibit
Will continuously seek, embrace, and make the most of opportunities to learn and to share learning with others	(1) Citizenship and service exhibit (2) Research paper and presentations

Program Learning Outcomes/Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the Quincy University Communication Program will demonstrate competence in the following areas as demonstrated by exhibits collected in the professional portfolio. Detailed rubrics for creating and self-assessing exhibits in each area of competence are supplied in the *Assessment Handbook* of the Communication Program (appended as a PDF)

Media Writing

Students will be able to produce written work reflecting the conventions and standards of the media.

Speaking

Students will be able to compose and present speeches reflecting audience awareness and the conventions and standards of spoken rhetoric.

Legal and Ethical Contexts

Students will exhibit a working knowledge of laws and ethical principles relevant to professional and personal communication.

Social and Political Contexts

Students will exhibit a functional understanding of a variety of social and political contexts in which professional and communication take place.

Areas of Professional Specialization

Students will present written evidence of a high level of competence in the area or areas of major field concentration.

Professional Leadership

In keeping with the Quincy University mission of transformative action, students will demonstrate the characteristics of a leader within the professions of journalism, public relations, broadcasting, or another field of communication.

Media Literacy

In keeping with the liberal arts emphasis upon critical reflection and analysis, students will present evidence of sophisticated understanding of the specialized tools of mediated communication and the problems and responsibilities with which such communication may be associated.

Citizenship and Service

In keeping with the Franciscan character of their education, students will demonstrate an understanding of the potential for service specific to their skills and occupational roles and a commitment to seeking opportunities to serve.

Relationship of missions and outcomes to assessment

The mission of the QU Communication program draws inspiration from the QU mission in the following specific ways:

1. Faculty members provide opportunities to gain knowledge, and they guide students in the synthesis of knowledge and experience that leads to wisdom. The program focuses on internship and campus opportunities to gain practical experience, and faculty members support students in the effort to integrate theory with practice.

The major assessment of the knowledge and wisdom of Communication majors takes place at the conclusion of the senior year. The Senior (baccalaureate) assessment requires students to demonstrate both knowledge and wisdom through a process that includes

- An extemporaneous presentation on a topic that relates communication theory to practice;
- Presentation of a scholarly paper that involves first-hand research on a topic related to communication theory;
- Successful completion of a post-test demonstrating knowledge of the field;
- Presentation of a portfolio of exhibits representing the eight areas of competence. Each exhibit includes a self-assessment, and the eight exhibits are assessed by members of the Communication Advisory Board.

2. The students are called to demonstrate respect for each individual through examples of Franciscan leadership and service.

- Respect for the individual (including sources, subjects, and audience) is a central criterion in evaluation of all work submitted by students in the Communication program.
- Two exhibits—Leadership and Service—are required as part of senior assessment.

Evidence for Fulfillment of Learning Outcomes

Theoretical Grounding	Research Skills	Communication Proficiencies	Professional Preparation
Theory post-test	Research paper	Writing	Portfolio
Theory presentation	Final: Research defense	Speaking	Final: Portfolio presentation
Final: Extemporaneous presentation		Presentation support—posters, graphics	

Methods of Assessment

The summative assessment of prospective communication graduates consists of the following:

- Successful completion of a post-test on key theories, terms, and concepts (for comparison with the pre-test administered in the introductory course, COM 205).
- Composition, presentation, and defense of a paper based on original research.
 - The paper must be rooted in one or more communication theories.
 - The paper must include a review of scholarly literature.

The paper must report on first-hand research.

The paper must lay the groundwork for applications in professional or personal communication.

Students must design and present research publicly with visual support.

Students must defend research during the Baccalaureate Assessment event.

- Delivery of a timed extemporaneous presentation on communication theories.
- Creation and presentation of a portfolio of exhibits demonstrating the eight learning outcomes listed above. (The portfolio is initiated during the introductory course, COM 205, revised throughout the academic career, and polished during senior seminar.)

Assessment is thus a continuous and recursive process that communication majors begin during their first course in the program and self-assessment plays a fundamental role at each stage.

The handbook assists them in locating courses in which terms are introduced and portfolio exhibits may be developed. In addition to being introduced in the first major field course, the handbook is also linked to the Moodle sites for all courses in the major and artifacts are discussed by the faculty. Self-assessment rubrics for each artifact are also contained in the handbook.

Here are excerpts from relevant handbook entries.

Suggested sources for portfolio exhibits.

Course COM	Media Writing	Speaking	Ethics/Law	Soc/Pol Contexts	Leadership	Media Literacy	Service
101		X	X				
200						X	
201							
205		X		X			
210	X		X				
320				X			
330	X		X				
340		X			X		X
350		X					
351				X			
352				X	X	X	
353			X	X		X	
354							
355				X		X	
361		X					
362	X						
365						X	
380	X		X				
381	X		X				
382	X		X		X		
383	X	X	X		X		X
384		X				X	
385						X	

386				X			
387							
390			X				
395	X						
480/1					X		X
497				X	X		X

Terms and Concepts

Please use this grid as a guide to courses in which the following terms and concepts are discussed.

Term/Concept	Course
agenda setting	COM 205, 210, 353, 363, 380, 383, 395
Framing	COM 205, 210, 330, 350, 351, 353, 363, 380
Ethos	COM 101, 205, 353, 363, 497
Logos	COM 101, 205, 353, 363, 497
Pathos	COM 101, 205, 353, 363, 497
Hypodermic Model	COM 353, 380, 383
Limited Effects Model	COM 205, 353, 363, 380, 383
Cognitive Dissonance	COM 205, 350, 351, 382, 395, 497
media gate-keeping	COM 200, 210, 353, 363, 380, 383
Uses/Gratifications	COM 200, 353, 380, 383
actual malice	COM 210, 330, 363, 382, 383, 390, 395
Libel/slander	COM 210, 330, 363, 382, 383, 390, 395
neutral reporting	COM 210, 330, 363, 382, 383, 390, 395
Four areas of right to privacy	COM 210, 330, 363, 390, 394
Privilege	COM 210, 330, 363, 382, 390, 395
<i>Wall Street Journal</i> style	COM 210, 330
hourglass style	COM 210, 330
public domain, Creative Commons, fair use	COM 205, 210, 350, 351, 363, 382, 394, 395
FOIA (Freedom of Information Act)	COM 200, 210, 330, 363
sunshine laws	COM 210, 330, 390
media norms	COM 205, 210, 330, 353, 390
media work routines	COM 210, 330, 353, 363, 380, 395
Symbolic Interactionism	COM 205, 350, 351, 363, 497
Looking-glass Self	COM 205, 350, 351, 497
Coordinated Management of Meaning	COM 205, 350, 351, 382, 497
Expectancy Violations Theory	COM 205, 350, 351, 363, 382, 497
Uncertainty Reduction Theory	COM 205, 350, 351, 363, 382, 497
ELM (Elaboration Likelihood Model)	COM 101, 205, 350, 351, 363, 497
Classical Canons of Rhetoric	COM 101, 205, 350, 351, 497
Burke's Dramatism	COM 101, 205, 350, 351, 497
Gerbner's Cultivation Theory	COM 350, 351, 353, 380, 497
Anxiety/Uncertainty Management Theory	COM 205, 350, 351, 363, 497
Genderlect Styles	COM 205, 350, 351, 395, 497
Hard news style	COM 210, 330, 363, 380, 382, 395
Radio script format	COM 210, 330, 363, 393
Video script format	COM 210, 330, 363, 387, 393
Focus group	COM 205, 350, 351, 381, 383, 393

Communication audit	COM 210, 381, 383
First amendment	COM 210, 330, 394
SPJ Code of Ethics	COM 210, 394
Social media	COM 210, 330, 393, 394, 396
SEO (search engine optimization)	COM 210, 330, 393, 396
Web analytics	COM 210, 330, 393, 396
Content management system	COM 210, 330, 396
Web-based news writing style	COM 210, 330, 396
Blog	COM 210, 330, 393, 396

The concluding stage of assessment in 2018 was conducted on Friday, May 4. The candidates delivered extemporaneous presentations, defended their research projects, and discussed their portfolios with a panel of seven assessors, who scored their work using the rubric in the appendix. The assessors had read the research papers and portfolios in advance, and several of them had previously attended the student poster presentations on their research. A table summarizing the **results** is appended.

Analysis of Assessment Results

Five of six students earned a “High Pass” designation this year, and the lowest average score (inclusive of all categories) was 4.05 on the 5 point scale. The extemporaneous presentation showed the greatest improvement, exhibiting the highest rated average and strongest consistency of performances in the history of the assessment. For the first time, all speakers met the time requirement (5 minutes, plus/minus 30 seconds) and all employed the rhetorical elements of the informative speech.

Although the portfolio remains the strongest area for all students (including transfer students who attended QU for only two years), the gaps between assessment categories continue to close. Students have two – four years to assemble a portfolio, two semesters to complete a research project/paper, and five minutes to prepare their speeches on communication theories. Speaking on demand before an audience (and within narrow time constraints) serves to validate the accomplishments represented by the paper and the portfolio and to demonstrate that deep learning has taken place.

Each element tests their abilities in a valid and meaningful way, but consistency across the three performance areas suggests that they have truly made a significant body of knowledge their own and are prepared to apply their skills in a range of unpredictable situations.

The snapshot provided by the extemporaneous presentation has special significance because it shows knowledge and proficiency translated spontaneously into action. The students’ ability to deliver a cogent and fluent presentation under pressure is arguably the best indicator of the depth of their preparation.

Revisiting Goals

1. The faculty plan to sustain the levels of achievement experienced this year in the portfolio and research paper elements of assessment. (25% high pass; 100% pass).

This goal was exceeded. The pass rate was 100%. Five of six students (83%) achieved high pass (defined as 45 points, no scores below 4.5 and fulfillment of the time requirement on the extemporaneous speech), as noted on the appended chart.

2. The faculty will strive to maintain at 75% the percentage of students adhering to the time limits of the oral presentation and to experience higher quality presentations across the board.

This goal was exceeded. The planned attention by all faculty members to timed presentations across the curriculum appears to be having the desired effect. Even more important, the faculty's focus on assessment goals throughout the progression of the major continues to influence the quality of the presentation content and the ability of students to speak confidently about what they know.

3. The faculty will continue to emphasize the stages of research and the ethical context surrounding it.

This goal was met. A focus on the IRB process was successful, and the poster presentation established for students the need to communicate for lay audiences and to regard research as a public commitment rather than a mere course requirement. The ongoing integration of the two research courses (COM 363 and COM 497) continues to improve results.

Strengths and Benefits

1. The consistency of individual performances may be a blip or a reliable indicator that the reorganized curriculum has been effectively built around learning outcomes that are known and owned by students, reinforced by pedagogy (syllabi, assignments, testing), and supported by technology (Moodle and LiveText).

2. The consistency of performances across the group reflects elements of the Seminar and Baccalaureate Assessment process that encourage and reward appropriate collaboration. The number and frequency of those elements have increased in recent years, thanks to input into the format from the three members of the program faculty.

3. The emphasis on the research component continues to yield very satisfactory results. Once again all students were required to submit research plans to Quincy University's Institutional Review Board, and students employed methods of first-hand research with greater depth and variety than before the revision of COM 363 (in Fall 2016). Ms. Schnack's template for the research sequence (COM 363 and 497) proved durable, and the new instructor found the course design effective and Ms. Schnack's advice invaluable.

Areas for Continued Improvement

1. The use of LiveText to collect, assess, and refine exhibits for final presentation needs to be strengthened. The process of creating the portfolio still consumes an unreasonable amount of time during senior year, given that artifacts can be effectively saved and analyzed throughout the students' years in the major.

A hands-on introduction to the major field portfolio in LiveText during COM 205 will help. In the past, LiveText was explained, but students did not have access to the senior portfolio template until later in their experience.

In addition, all faculty members can require students to upload at least one appropriate artifact from each course, reserving a winnowing process for senior year.

2. Transfer students find portfolio construction particularly difficult. Although they tend to produce results on par with those of four-year students, the effort involved is significantly greater and could productively be applied to other areas of their academic work.

The faculty might consider designing an enculturation process for transfer students that would include an introduction to the LiveText system, the major field portfolio, and the Communication Handbook. The process could address additional areas of strain for transfer students (including those pointed out in research conducted this year by one of the seniors), and it could be coordinated with an institution-wide focus on retention and satisfaction among transfer students.

3. This year's students seemed more familiar than previously with a range of theories and their applications, and the credit goes to my colleagues, Mr. Yates and Ms. Schnack, who teach courses in which theory is not front and center, requiring a intentional linkage by instructors. Once that linkage is a routine part of all courses we teach, the positive results should be consistently sustainable.

Therefore, the effort by faculty members to explicitly connect theory with practice should be continued.

Planned Program Changes

In addition to the changes italicized above, the Communication program will strive to more systematically integrate the Public Relations/Strategic Communication concentration with the MultiMedia Journalism concentration through public relations and advertising projects in which PRSC students promote QUTV.

Program Aspirations

The faculty continues to pursue the following initiatives to strengthen the program:

1. Designing and obtaining donor support for a PRSC lab on North Campus that will provide practical opportunities and increase links between the QUTV studio and the PRSC curriculum.

2. Forging stronger links between alumni and current students to increase awareness of career opportunities and contribute to the ongoing effort to maintain a fully up to date curriculum. The faculty also hope to foster more consistent engagement by the Communication Advisory Board, in part to support this initiative.

Faculty members are also pursuing a number of recruitment projects, but a full description of those falls outside the scope of this report, which is focused on curriculum, learning, and assessment.

Possible Changes in Assessment Procedures

No substantial changes are planned at this time. The current goals for achievement levels continue to seem appropriate as well.

Appendices:

Evaluation form used by assessors

Results for 2018

Communication Handbook (forwarded separately as a PDF)

Presenter: _____

Please rate each element 1 (low) - 5 (high).

Extemporaneous Presentation	Rating
The student demonstrates knowledge of communication theory.	
The student uses specific evidence to support a thesis about theory	
The presentation is organized for unity, coherence, and clarity.	
The student demonstrates the qualities of effective public speaking.	
COMMENTS: Time:	

Major Paper Presentation	Rating
The presentation focuses on a significant area of theory and practice.	
The presentation shows evidence of careful thought on the topic.	
The student seems thoroughly versed on the topic.	
The student is able to answer questions or to engage in intelligent speculation regarding the topic.	
COMMENTS:	

Portfolio	Rating
The portfolio is neat, professional, and carefully prepared.	
Self-assessments of the exhibits are intelligent and thorough.	
These exhibits are particularly strong.	
These exhibits call for improvement.	

Please use the reverse for additional comments.

	knowledge	evidence	organization	presentation	focus	logic	depth	response	portfolio 1	portfolio 2		time
A	4.43	4.28	4.57	4.85	4.57	4.57	4.43	4.57	5	4.5	4.577	4:45
B	4.86	4.71	4.85	4.14	4.86	4.86	4.7	4.7	5	4.5	4.718	4:30
C	4.57	4.71	4.71	4.71	4.86	4.71	4.85	4.71	5	5	4.783	5:00
D	4.57	4.57	4.43	4.14	4.43	4.71	4.57	4.86	5	5	4.628	4:45
E	4.33	4.5	4.17	3.5	4.5	4.17	3.67	4.17	3.75	3.75	4.051	4:45
	5	5	5	4.8	5	4.67	5	5	4.75	4.66	4.888	4:30

