

## STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUMMARY FORM

Program Name: MA in Communication Studies

Dept: School of Communication and Journalism

College: Liberal Arts and Sciences

Submitted by: Angela Jacobs, Graduate Coordinator

### Part 1:

CGS Learning Goal #1 A depth of content knowledge	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will demonstrate strong disciplinary knowledge of communication.
How are learners assessed?	Disciplinary knowledge is assessed three ways throughout the graduate program: 1) Graduate Student Critical Thinking Rubric (Element 1- using theory to answer questions). 2) Graduate Research Paper Writing Rubric (Element 3 - literature review) 3) Academic Thesis or Creative Thesis rubrics, or using the scholarship subscale of the comprehensive exam rubric.
What are the expectations for the students?	For this learning objective, students are evaluated on: 1) Understanding of scholarship 2) Correct interpretation of scholarship 3) Correct application of scholarship 4) An ability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant scholarship
What are the expectations for the program?	For the Graduate Student Critical Thinking and the Graduate Research Paper Writing rubrics we have the following expectations: 1) Average student falls at the high end (greater than 6) of the competent range (4-7) 2) 90% of all students will be rated as competent 3) 33% of all students will be rated as highly competent  For the Academic Thesis and Creative Thesis rubrics we have the following expectations:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student achieves competent (greater than 2.5) on the scale</li> <li>2) 100% of students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 70% of students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p>For the Comprehensive Exam rubric we have the following expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student falls at the high end (greater than 13) of the competent range (10-14) on the scale</li> <li>2) 90% of students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 50% of students rated as highly competent</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<p><b>Graduate Student Critical Thinking Rubric (Element 1):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average rubric score: 7.5 (on-campus) 8.5 (online)</li> <li>2) 92% on-campus and 98% online students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 65% on-campus and 95% online students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p><b>Graduate Research Paper Writing Rubric (Element 3):</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average rubric score: 7.5 (on-campus) 8.6 (online)</li> <li>2) 90% on-campus and 100% online students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 50% on-campus and 75% online students rated as highly</li> </ol> <p><b>Academic and Creative Thesis Rubrics Literature Review Subscale:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Creative Thesis Average student score: 4.5</li> <li>2) Traditional Thesis Average Student Score: 4.2</li> <li>3) 100% of students rated as Highly Competent in Creative and Traditional thesis writing</li> </ol> <p><b>Comprehensive Exam Scholarship Subscale:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score: 16.0</li> <li>2) 100% of students were rated as competent</li> <li>3) 65% of students were rated as highly competent</li> </ol>

How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	The assessment report is an agenda item for graduate faculty meetings at the beginning of each term. Our graduate faculty discuss results and explore ways we can make improvements.
projects.	
CGS Learning Goal #2: Critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will demonstrate effective critical thinking skills.
How are learners assessed?	Effective critical thinking is assessed three ways throughout the graduate program: 1) The Graduate Student Critical Thinking Rubric 2) The Findings/Conclusions subscales of the Academic and Creative Thesis rubrics 3) Element 3 (analysis/synthesis) of the Comprehensive Exam Rubric
What are the expectations for the students?	For this learning objective, students are evaluated on the following: 1) Ability to generate original insights 2) Ability to develop and design new research 3) Sensitivity to multiple perspectives 4) Ability to assess reasoning 5) Ability to assess arguments 6) Ability to identify assumptions
What are the expectations for the program?	For the Graduate Student Critical Thinking rubric we have the following expectations: 1) Average student scores 60 (out of 80) 2) 90% of students rated as competent 3) 50% of students rated as highly competent

	<p>For the Findings/Conclusions subscales of the Academic Thesis and Creative Thesis rubrics we have the following expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 3.75 out of 5 for the academic thesis</li> <li>2) 3.75 out of 5 for the creative thesis</li> </ol> <p>For the Comprehensive Exam Rubric (Element 3) we have the following expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score of a 12 (out of 20)</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<p><b>Graduate Student Critical Thinking rubric:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average rubric score: 60.1 (on-campus) and 70 (online)</li> <li>2) 82% on-campus and 100% online students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 50% on-campus and 75% online students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p><b>Creative thesis rubrics Conclusions subscale:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Traditional Score: 4.5</li> <li>2) Creative Score: 4.71</li> </ol> <p><b>Comprehensive Exam rubric (Element 3)</b></p> <p>Analysis/synthesis score: 14.88</p>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>The assessment report is an agenda item for graduate faculty meetings at the beginning of each term. Our graduate faculty discuss results and explore ways we can make improvements.</p>

CGS Learning Goal #3: Effective oral and written communication skills	<p>Program Learning Goal(s):</p> <p>Students are able to communicate effectively in written and spoken form.</p>
How are learners assessed?	<p>Effective written communication is assessed three ways throughout the graduate program:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Graduate Research Paper Writing Rubric (utilized in graduate courses).</li> </ol>

	<p>2) The Writing subscales on both the Academic Thesis and Creative Thesis rubrics.</p> <p>3) Elements 4 (organization/development) and 5 (style and mechanics) of the Comprehensive Exam Rubric.</p> <p>Effective spoken communication is assessed through the Graduate Speech Evaluation rubric.</p>
What are the expectations for the students?	<p>For this learning objective, students are evaluated on their writing and speaking quality, including but not limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Organization</li> <li>2) Complexity of sentence structure</li> <li>3) Effective use of language</li> <li>4) Ability to communicate an argument/main idea to an audience</li> <li>5) Ability to synthesize numerous concepts into a coherent argument</li> <li>6) Competent delivery</li> <li>7) Audience analysis</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the program?	<p>Graduate Research Paper Writing rubric expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student scores 75 (out of 100)</li> <li>2) 90% of students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 50% of students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p>Writing subscales of the Academic Thesis and Creative Thesis rubrics expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student achieves a subscale score of highly competent (3.75 out of 5)</li> </ol> <p>Comprehensive Exam Rubric expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Average student score of a 7 (out of 10) across all rubrics for the selected subscales</li> </ol> <p>Speaking expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score is highly competent (3.5 out of 4)</li> </ol>

	<p>2) 100% of rubrics rated as competent (2.5 out of 4)</p> <p>3) 75% of rubrics rated as highly competent (3.5 on a 4 point scale)</p>
What were the results?	<p><b>Graduate Research Paper Writing rubric:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score: 72.07 (on-campus) and 84.06 (online)</li> <li>2) 95% of on-campus and 100% of online students were rated as competent</li> <li>3) 55% of on-campus and 67% of online students were rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p><b>Creative thesis rubrics:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Creative Thesis score: 4.9</li> <li>2) Academic Thesis Score: 4.43</li> </ol> <p><b>Comprehensive Exam rubrics (organization/development; Style &amp; mechanics)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Organization/Development score: 9</li> <li>2) Style and Mechanics: 8.38</li> </ol> <p><b>Speaking rubric:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score: 3.33 (on-campus) and 3.75 (online)</li> <li>2) 82% of on-campus and 100% of online students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 65% of on-campus and 82% of online students rated highly competent</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>The assessment report is an agenda item for graduate faculty meetings at the beginning of each term. Our graduate faculty discuss results and explore ways we can make improvements.</p>

	give informal presentation assignments rather than more formal assignments.. Increasing the number of formal assignments might help improve students' speaking skills.
CGS Learning Goal #4: Evidence of advanced scholarship through research and/or creative activity.	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will be able to understand, critique, and apply appropriate research methods in a broad range of situations and contexts.
How are learners assessed?	Research knowledge is assessed directly two ways throughout the graduate program: 1) Students are assessed using the Academic Thesis or Creative Thesis rubric after they have completed their required thesis capstone project at the end of the program.  2) Elements 4 (research methodology) and 5 (analysis) of the Graduate Research Paper Writing Rubric (utilized in graduate courses).  In support of this goal we also measure: 1) Number of original research presentations by students 2) Number of blind reviewed original research presentations by students at conferences
What are the expectations for the students?	For this learning objective, students are evaluated on: 1) Understanding of various methodologies 2) Correct application of methods 3) Ability to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate claims based upon a chosen methodology
What are the expectations for the program?	For the Academic Thesis and Creative Thesis rubrics we have the following expectations: 1) Average student achieves a score relative to 80% or a... 2) 116 on the creative thesis rubric 3) 112 on the academic thesis rubric)  For the Graduate Research Paper Writing rubric (elements 4 and 5) we have the following expectations: 1) Average student falls at the high end (greater than 6) of the competent range (4-7) 2) 90% of students rated as competent

	<p>3) 50% of students rated as highly competent</p> <p>Student Presentations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 50% of students will participate in original research presentations</li> <li>2) 10% of students will present at local, regional, or national conferences</li> </ol>
What were the results?	<p><b>Academic and Creative thesis rubrics:</b></p> <p>Academic Score: 120 (85.71%)</p> <p>Creative: score: 139 (95.92%)</p> <p><b>Graduate Research Paper Writing rubric (elements 4- research methodology)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average score of 6.9 (on-campus) and 8.5 (online)</li> <li>2) 91% of on-campus and 96% of online students rated competent</li> <li>3) 44% of on-campus and 79% of online students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <p><b>Graduate Research Paper Writing rubric (elements 5- analysis)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average score of 6.79 (on-campus) and 7.98 (online)</li> <li>2) 91% of on-campus and 100% of online students rated competent</li> <li>3) 50% of on-campus and 70% of online students rated as highly competent</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We had 3 students complete a thesis during the current evaluation period</li> <li>• 1 student presented at regional conferences</li> </ul>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	<p>The assessment report is an agenda item for graduate faculty meetings at the beginning of each term. Our graduate faculty discuss results and explore ways we can make improvements.</p>



	This will be a heavier focus for us this next year.
CGS Learning Goal #5: Ethics and Professional Responsibility	Program Learning Goal(s): Students will demonstrate integrity in their research practices, professional discipline, show respect for diversity and inclusion, and value respectful and inclusive discourse.
How are learners assessed?	Ethical and professional responsibility is assessed in two ways throughout the graduate program: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) self-assessment on exit survey</li> <li>2) written class papers using graduate research paper writing rubric (element 9- references)</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the students?	For this learning objective, students are evaluated on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Integrity in scholarship</li> <li>2) Responsible and informed decision-making</li> <li>3) Appropriate and effective interactions with diverse others</li> <li>4) Use of inclusive language</li> </ol>
What are the expectations for the program?	For the exit interview we have the following expectations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 100% of students report the program prepared them to communicate appropriately and effectively with diverse others</li> <li>2) 100% of students report they feel equipped to make informed and responsible decisions</li> <li>3) 100% of students report they use inclusive language</li> </ol> <p>For the Graduate Research Paper rubric (element 9- reference) we have the following expectations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average student score of a 7 (out of 10) across all rubrics for the selected subscale.</li> <li>2) 100% of students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 50% of students rated as highly competent</li> </ol>

What were the results?	<p>Exit interview:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) 63% of students report communicating appropriately and effectively with diverse others</li> <li>2) 87% of students report making informed and responsible decisions</li> <li>3) 94% of students report use of inclusive language</li> </ol> <p>Graduate Research Paper rubric (element 9):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Average score of 7.53 (on-campus) and 8.24 (online)</li> <li>2) 84% of on-campus and 96% of online students rated as competent</li> <li>3) 47% of on-campus and 69% of online students rated as highly competent</li> </ol>
How are the results shared? How will these results be used?	The assessment report is an agenda item for graduate faculty meetings at the beginning of each term. Our graduate faculty discuss results and explore ways we can make improvements.

## Part 2

**Describe what your program's assessment accomplishments since your last report was submitted. Discuss ways in which you have responded to the Graduate Assessment Summary Response from last year's report or simply describe what assessment work was initiated, continued, or completed.**

The Communication Studies division continued to collect all of the data outlined on the previous report. During this evaluation period, we feel we gained more insight into the ways in which our on-campus and online students are meeting the ethical and responsible citizenship goal. We continue to add questions to our exit surveys to fully to assess how well students felt our program equips them to be ethical and informed decision-makers. We also added questions related to critical thinking, speaking, writing..

Since our last reporting period in 2023, we continue to see upward growth in our online program, especially in our online certificate program. We continue to offer flexible programming and have made our admissions process easier for our online students in the certificate program.

We had one student present at local and regional conference. We are also seeing more student-faculty collaboration on research projects; we had three students working on independent studies/practicums in which they engaged in research and/or creative activities with faculty; we also had three students complete thesis projects. While we would like to increase the number of students presenting at conferences, we are experiencing a decline in on-campus enrollment and an increase in online enrollment. The lower numbers of students doing research is simply because our largest enrollment comes from our online program, which does not have a thesis option nor do most of our online classes require full research projects. This means that a majority of our students are not required to produce research in the traditional sense. Our graduate faculty are working on ways to be more creative with both our on-campus and our online students to increase student research activities and their research presence on campus and at conferences.

### Part 3

**Summarize changes and improvements in curriculum, instruction, and learning that have resulted from the implementation of your assessment program. How have you used the data? What have you learned? In light of what you have learned through your assessment efforts this year and in past years, what are your plans for the future?**

Our department has continued to see a positive impact from curriculum changes we've made since our last two reports. We have remained flexible with our delivery of curriculum. As our online enrollment continues to grow, we are able to add new classes to meet increasing demands for our courses. Our online program also continues to attract students from across the nation (stretching from the west coast to the east coast). We have had students from places as far away as Germany. We have undergone some curriculum changes that have helped us deliver our online program to a growing student population. In general, we have learned through our assessment data that our online population is thriving in both of our online programs (Certificate and MA). 100% of our online student population has met or exceeded our expectations on every learning goal. We had 7 students from the Certificate in Communication Processes program choose to complete the full MA degree; this also led to our decision to create more classes per semester. This has become a common trend; we had several students from our last evaluation period who were enrolled in the certificate program also roll over into the MA program. The certificate program has become a strong recruitment tool for our MA program.

We are also beginning to revise our on-campus offerings to recruit more students to our on-campus program. Our goal is to make our on-campus program more flexible and appealing to students. We have seen a slight increase in our on-campus programs over the last year and are hopeful that new programming will make our offerings even more appealing. We also had 3 students enroll in the accelerated graduate program. We remain hopeful that this program will lead more undergraduates in SC&J to enroll in our master's program.

