

Millikin University
Student Learning in the Communication Major

By

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Executive Summary

The Communication Department at Millikin University is committed to providing a market-smart, challenging, and high quality major to students with a variety of professional and personal aspirations. We celebrate and inform our students about the wide variety of ways a major in communication can prepare them for a future life of meaning and value.

Communication is about the construction of meaning between people and their various audiences: friends, families, professional colleagues, communities, and more. The study of communication focuses on understanding the symbols and the processes that construct those meanings, whether the symbol is a word, a gesture, a song, a billboard, a website, or any other meaning-generating object in our world. We also examine the relationship of those symbols to the people who use them. We examine the pragmatic and ethical principles that guide people's communicative choices. We apply this learning to our personal and professional lives.

Consequently, the University's goals of professional success, citizenship in a global environment, and a life of personal meaning and value are manifest in the Communication department's goal to enable students to become effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their personal and professional communities. This is accomplished through classroom learning, research projects and practical application of service learning, internship projects, and media lab activities that help make these abstract ideas come alive.

The Communication Department has developed three learning goals for our students:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats before diverse and varied audiences.
2. Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.

Students in the Communication major take 16-hours of foundation courses. These courses introduce students to the learning goals of the major through an introduction to theory, practice, and critical thinking skills. The core also includes a capstone internship experience and portfolio project designed to integrate these learning goals together in preparation for graduation. All majors are required to complete an internship experience that combines theory and practice in a professional environment.

All majors must complete a tool requirement consisting of an advanced writing course that is designed to build upon the freshmen writing experience. Students choose from courses in the English Department's writing program or from courses offered by the Communication Department in specific professional writing contexts such as writing for the media or speechwriting. Majors in public relations or mass media-journalism are also required to complete one additional writing course.

Students may also select communication elective courses chosen for their contribution to their personal and professional communication goals. In the Fall of 2007 the Department of Communication made professional tracks available to majors in the areas of public relations, mass media (production or journalism), and organizational communication. Some of our current and graduating students have already added a track to their plan of study. Some will remain as a general major and select a more personalized set of courses reflecting their own communication objectives. Students are also encouraged to supplement departmental offerings with non-major courses in the Tabor Business School, the English Department, and other majors who can enhance their skills and knowledge with their unique disciplinary perspectives. All students are required to have an internship experience for professional development purposes.

Student skills and knowledge are assessed using a variety of techniques in the Department of Communication. Information is gathered through various sources and contexts: student exit interviews, internship evaluations, course evaluations, assignment evaluations, and the senior year capstone course and portfolio. Systematic acquisition and evaluation of this data is still ongoing and a learning process, but individuals in the department are using current information for curricular planning and programmatic improvements.

Students who graduate from Millikin University with a degree in Communication find success in a wide variety of professional contexts. Our students enter careers in human services, media, sales, counseling, training and development, public relations, business, publishing, radio and television broadcasting, graduate and law school, and many other areas. A strength of the communication major is its value to many different employers and businesses.

Communication Department Goals

The drive to communicate forms the basis for human social behavior and is a critical element of any organization or field of employment, regardless of technological advancement or changes. Our department's commitment to the

University mission of preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global community, and a personal life of meaning and value is accomplished through a variety of discipline-specific learning objectives. Graduates with a Communication B.A. degree achieve the goal of professional success by becoming effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their professional communities. Our objective in addressing democratic citizenship in a global environment is to help students develop an appreciation for the power of symbols, awareness of the complexity of ethical choices in communication endeavors, and an understanding of the opportunities and constraints of technology. Classroom experiences, service learning, and internships are designed to challenge everyday assumptions about communication in a rapidly changing world. Finally, our objective in addressing a personal life of meaning and value is to enable students to become effective problem-solvers, critics, and practitioners in their personal communities.

More precisely, upon graduation, students who major in Communication will be able to demonstrate communicative competence in three areas:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats before diverse and varied audiences.
2. Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.
3. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in communication contexts.

Successful majors in Communication move onto careers in the human services, media, sales, counseling, training and development, public relations, business, and publishing. Recent graduates are currently pursuing graduate work, working for radio and TV stations, planning media events, working in universities, organizing PR campaign, etc. A strong liberal arts background and intensive work in all aspects of communication uniquely qualify communication graduates for these positions. We expect that majors who have mastered the program learning objectives will, at a minimum, be successfully employed in their chosen field and/or successfully perform in any master's or doctoral program.

These departmental learning goals match well with Millikin's University-wide learning goals:

1. Millikin students will prepare for professional success.
2. Millikin students will actively engage in the responsibilities of citizenship in their communities.

3. Millikin students will discover and develop a personal life of meaning and value.

The table below shows how Communication Department learning goals relate to the University-wide learning goals:

Learning Goal	Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s)
Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	1, 3
Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts.	1, 2
Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.	2, 3

Communication Department Snapshot

The Communication department currently consists of 5 full-time faculty and an average of 2 adjuncts that help deliver an average of 3-4 classes per semester. We currently have 120 students listed as majors. In addition to majors and minors, we also service students throughout the University who take our courses to satisfy their general education requirements in social sciences, the culture track, and sequential elements (University Seminar). Students are also required to take communication courses by the Tabor School of Business and for the language arts degree requirements in the School of Education. Various faculty and programs often encourage students to take communication courses for enrichment or remedial purposes. Many students who graduate with the Interdepartmental degree option have communication as one of their primary "departments" in their major. In addition to courses in the major, Communication faculty have also taught IN 140 University Seminar for freshmen, IN 250 U.S. Studies, IN 350 Global Studies, and in the PACE adult degree completion program by providing courses in the Organizational Leadership and Criminal Justice majors. During the academic year, we teach approximately 60 courses.

The Communication department currently occupies 5 offices on the 4th floor of Shilling Hall and shares a secretary with the Political Science department. In addition, the Communication Department has a video-editing lab in the basement of Staley Library and a radio broadcast facility in the basement of the Richards Treat University Center, including office space for a faculty member who also serves as general manager for the radio station. Equipment and software have been upgraded in the two facilities in the past two years.

The Department of Communication in the Fall of 2006 completed a self-study of its current curriculum and successfully passed through University governance a new

curriculum structure that went into effect in the Fall of 2007. After thorough review of existing classes and curriculum structure, three concentrations, or tracks, were created and adjustments were made in the curriculum in areas of writing and ethics. In the Spring of 2008, the department added a fourth track in sport communication to the major. These four tracks are the only formal tracks planned for the department in the near future. The impact of these changes will be discussed in the learning story section of this report as the faculty revise and improve the learning story of our majors' experience at Millikin.

To enhance the quality of instruction in the department, two new hires were made in the Spring of 2007. Dr. Nancy Curtin-Alwardt was hired as a replacement for Dr. Rivers who retired in the Spring of 2007. She is teaching the departmental methods course and focusing on areas of organizational communication, small group communication, gender communication, and relational communication. Dr. Curtin-Alwardt had a successful record as an adjunct instructor for our department before being hired full time.

A second hire in video production and mass media was also successfully completed with the hiring of Mr. Todd Hauser, an ABD doctoral candidate from the University of Missouri. Mr. Hauser's position has allowed us to upgrade our teaching of video production coursework and mass media courses. In the past, adjunct instructors have taught many of our radio and television courses. This resulted in less faculty-student contact and limited the quality of our mass media programming. With Hauser's hire we have redistributed the radio and video coursework between two full-time faculty and expect to enhance the quality of instruction and popularity of the media programs.

Additional program development and definition will occur in future years as we evaluate the outcomes of assessment efforts and the success of the curricular tracks. In the Fall of 2007, the Millikin University faculty passed a new curricular structure including general education requirements. All students must now have an oral communication course under the new general education requirements. This requirement will be in full effect in the 2009-2010 school year. The requirement's impact on the department will be assessed in the next few years as we gradually learn to accommodate the new demands on our resources and the University's response to that need.

Communication Department Learning Story

The Communication Department combines diverse perspectives to investigate the social creation and management of meaning through delivery of the Communication major, B.A. degree. The major in communication builds upon a critical foundation that blends theory, methodology, and practice to prepare students for more serious study in their own area of interest. We study the interplay of messages and audience in a variety of contexts. Students develop an appreciation for the power of symbols, awareness of the complexity of ethical choices in communication endeavors, and an understanding of the opportunities and constraints of technology. Course work in theory and methods central to the investigation and

understanding of communication processes provides majors with tools for more intensive study in areas such as media production, public relations, relational communication, organizational culture, and social issues. Thus, our curriculum and its corresponding pedagogy fully incorporate the University's mission of professionalism, citizenship, and a life of meaning and value, and it is intentionally designed to challenge everyday assumptions about communication in a rapidly changing world.

The Communication major in 2007-2008 consists of a minimum of 34 credit hours, consisting of 16 hours in the foundation and 18 hours of Communication electives, 9 of which should be numbered 300 or above. All communication majors begin their studies with an introduction to communication theory, after which they may select any required and elective course work, provided the prerequisites for the higher-level courses are completed. Our curriculum uses a non-hierarchical organization schema that allows for maximal flexibility in designing individualized plans of study. There are a few courses that do build onto each other in stages, for example, multiple public relations, video editing, and media courses. Majors are required to use an internship experience to round out their classroom experience. To that end, the department has a communication department internship coordinator who assists students in fulfilling this objective. Thus, communication majors are able to tailor their major both to explore their interests and construct a plan of study germane to their intellectual and career interests.

Students join the communication major at many different times during a Millikin University experience. As an incoming freshman, transfer student, change of major, second major, or interdisciplinary student, our majors have a variety of demands to make on our curriculum. With its flexibility, and as a small department with limited offerings, we are able to advise and teach students at all stages of their Millikin University experience.

In the Fall of 2006, the department revised its curriculum in light of data and experience through the QPC project, self-evaluation, student feedback, and industry and disciplinary trends. The new curriculum structure offers clear concentrations or tracks in four areas of the major, it expands its emphasis on written communication skills in two of those areas (public relations and journalism), requires an internship experience for the professional development of all majors, and integrates ethical reasoning into the department's core course requirements. Our track programs have been a way to improve our major in the following ways:

- Students have a stronger identity for their major and professional goals.
- The tracks have aided in the process of advising majors.
- The tracks have directed students to take more advanced coursework in their areas instead of a general set of choices.
- The tracks will also help to recruit new students.

The four tracks are designed to help students find greater meaning and interconnectedness in their curricular choices. Any students, for whom these tracks do not fully meet their requirements, may choose another combination of courses

with the consent of their advisor and the department chair. The tracks and their professional intentions include:

- **Public Relations:** Communication careers in public relations include a wide variety of professional settings in corporations, non-profit organizations, professional associations, government agencies, and public relations firms. Students combine coursework in public relations, organizational communication, advanced writing courses, and applied internship experiences to prepare them for successful careers.
- **Mass Media:** The mass media track includes concentrations in media or journalism. Media students focus on radio and/or television production in addition to theory and professional practice in the media environment. Students interested in journalism focus on writing, media law and policy, along with practical journalism experiences. Many media majors are involved with the student-run radio station, WJMU or the campus newspaper, *The Decaturian*. Both concentrations offer students experiences with professional media outlets through internships.
- **Organizational Communication:** Students in the organizational communication track develop communications skills vital for the professional workplace. Coursework in leadership, conflict management, organizational culture and small group communication prepare students for a wide range of careers. Courses in management, advertising, and other areas from the University may be incorporated into this major track.
- **Sport Communication:** Like the mass media track, this one offers two concentrations, public relations or media. This track is for students interested in sport communication in areas such as publicity, event planning, marketing, broadcasting, editing, sales, etc. Students will be encouraged to take additional coursework from the English Department, Exercise Science Department, and the Tabor Business School as needed to supplement their program of study.

Throughout these tracks we have expanded the writing requirements for many majors, incorporated a senior-level internship experience, and approved inclusion of courses from other departments that might enhance our own tracks including coursework from the departments of English, Psychology, and Marketing. Our students are also required to complete a 1-credit capstone course in conjunction with the internship experience designed to provide reflection, assessment, and preparation for future professional activities.

Assessment Methods & Analysis of Assessment Results

The Communication Department assesses student skills and knowledge using a variety of techniques. One of our assessment goals is to create a consistent, ongoing assessment process to improve the quality and quantity of data useful to our department for program development and growth. Assessment data will be gathered from the following sources and contexts:

- Student Interviews: A random sample of students is interviewed each year. These have included exit interviews for graduating seniors, discussions held with student leadership, and student feedback provided in the capstone course.
- Internship Evaluations: Communication majors are encouraged to have at least one internship experience. At the end of the internship, students, supervisors, and faculty advisors evaluate the intern's performance. These evaluations will provide us with data from several different perspectives about the students' professional competence and their ability to apply coursework in the professional arena. The internship advisor also collects informal data as she places student interns and checks in with employers.
- Assignment Evaluations: Assessment of particular assignments to track implementation of learning goals is planned. Each year, a select set of courses and assignments will be evaluated for their contribution to the major and to student learning.
- Student Activities/Experiences: Assessment of experiential activities will also take place at regular intervals to assess the contributions of departmental opportunities outside of the traditional classroom. The student radio station provides on-campus media experience to students, both majors and non-majors. Lambda Pi Eta provides students with professional exposure and networking opportunities.
- Capstone Project/Course: All graduating seniors are to prepare a portfolio of their work at Millikin with a focus on their major. The department plans to assess these portfolios as an individual assignment and as a measure of meeting the goals of the department. Additional assignments in the capstone course may also be assessed.

Based on our departmental learning goals, a curriculum map has been created to illustrate the contributions of individual courses to student learning.

Core Courses	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 101 Introduction to Communication Theory		x	
CO 104 Argument and Social Issues	x		x
CO 200 The Rhetorical Act	x	x	
CO 204 Investigative Methods in Communication		x	x
CO 308 Communication Ethics & Freedom of Expression		x	x
CO 47x Communication Internship	x	x	x
CO 480 Capstone Experiential Learning Seminar (1 credit)	x		x

Elective Courses	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 100 Interpersonal Communication	x	x	
CO 110 Introduction to Radio Industry	x		x
CO 120 Media Aesthetics		x	x
CO 181-5 Communication Practicum	x		
CO 214 Advanced Audio Production	x		x

Elective Courses cont.	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 220 Introduction to Video Production	x	x	x
CO 225 Issues in Mass Media		x	x
CO 242 Business and Professional Communication	x	x	
CO 251 Introduction to Public Relations	x	x	
CO 260 Seminar in Communication		x	x
CO 306 Topics in Discourse Studies		x	x
CO 310 Small Group Communication	x	x	
CO 314 Advanced Radio Production and Performance	x		x
CO 324 Advanced Video Production	x		
CO 331 Relational Communication	x	x	x
CO 332 Gendered Communication	x	x	x
CO 341 Organizational Culture	x	x	
CO 343 Communication and Conflict	x		x
CO 344 Leadership	x	x	
CO 351 Topics in Writing for Communication Professions	x	x	x
CO 360 Seminar in Communication		x	x
CO 371-4 Communication Internship	x		x
CO 391-4 Independent Study		x	x
CO 401 Topics in Persuasion		x	x

Elective Courses cont.	Learning Goal #1 Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	Learning Goal #2 Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	Learning Goal #3 Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.
CO 425 Media Law and Society		x	x
CO 432 Intercultural Communication	x	x	x
CO 456 Applications in Public Relations	x	x	x

(this chart will be updated in the next report to reflect curricular changes that will begin in Fall 2008)

Based on current levels of assessment, we have compiled the following results concerning our majors. Our assessment efforts rate a yellow on the Red-Yellow-Green scale being used to evaluate assessment efforts. We believe we have a strong grasp of our program's strengths and weaknesses. Until our tracks are more fully implemented, however, our expectations concerning student experiences with the new curriculum remain untested. We intend to expand the quality and quantity of data to be reviewed in each successive year.

Student Exit Interviews: The chair of the department conducted interviews with 24 of the 25 students graduating from the department in December 2007 or May 2008. Many of the interviews continue to reiterate the students' perceptions of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Some of the more frequent and valuable comments are summarized below:

- Once again, advising was highly praised by graduates from the major. Students felt that their departmental advisor, the department secretary, and Registrar's office were meeting their advising needs. Freshmen receive an advisor who follows them through their four years in the major. All faculty are prepared for and expected to assist students with advising issues during their time in the department. Students described their advising experience in our department much more favorably than other departments they had transferred from prior to becoming communication majors. This success has been possible despite many communication faculty advising as many as 25-30 advisees each year.
- Many students expressed appreciation for at least one favorite faculty member and/or course in the department and recognized the collegiality and support Communication faculty provide to students and to each other. Students in the major usually have at the minimum three of our faculty in their program, many have all of us at one time or another as they move through the program.

- A few students had chosen to use the track option and graduate with one of them this year. The number is still too small to gauge the overall popularity of the tracks and student choices within them. Graduates were nevertheless very supportive of the new system. Many wished they had been created in time for their degree program. Even without a track in their specific program, recent graduates felt they were better prepared to explain what they were here to study and hope to accomplish with their degree in Communication.

- Students would like to see more activities outside of the classroom beyond the radio station. This is an area our department believes it needs to work on more actively. Our student honorary, Lambda Pi Eta, was not very active this year. The leadership has upped their involvement level this past Spring, and we hope to see it grow next year. The option for a Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter is still being investigated and pursued. The Ethics Bowl team did not compete this year and that program will be reviewed for the future.

- Many soon-to-be graduates were still up in the air about their next step and had not made detailed plans for their immediate future. This seemed typical of past years. The Communication Department would like to help promote a more active process for majors to pursue work options before graduation.

Senior Year Capstone Portfolio: Each graduating senior must complete a portfolio project that is to provide opportunities for reflection, assessment, and preparation for application of the Millikin experience to their professional aspirations.

- In review of the portfolios, the reflection pieces were some of the most useful documents and showed some real effort to tie together their experiences in the major and at the University. The compilation of papers and projects was less satisfactory and meaningful. Insufficient review of past work occurred and students did not seem to process their past work into a more meaningful evaluation.

- Student resume's and application materials were better than the past year. Students were required to use the services of the Career Center for feedback. Students also used the networking assignment to help interview professionals and to learn for other's experiences.

- A review of the portfolio project is a topic for the Fall meeting of the department. Improvement in the project requirements might make the project more valuable and help to improve the lack of preparation of exit strategies by our majors mentioned during the senior interviews.

Internship Evaluations: Although internships require a portfolio and review by the internship coordinator, the internship coordinator has submitted no formal report. A process and template format for internship assessment is being worked on. One positive evaluation of the current internship experience is that the number and quality of internships is improving. Students are getting internships in other communities during the summer in professional settings. Some of our majors have

also been selected in competitive internship selection processes for professional experiences. A more thorough assessment for the internship program is anticipated. As a new requirement for all majors, it is time to more fully evaluate the internship component.

Curriculum Evaluation: The department reviewed its curriculum and made changes in the Fall of 2006. The new curriculum structure must be evaluated as it matures and the changes are expected to improve the department in a variety of ways in recruitment, advising, and graduation requirements. It is too early to assess the tracks and our curricular structure in detail at this point. One positive outcome at this early stage, in the first year of the new structure, are indications that majors are getting greater depth of instruction in their major by selecting a track. For 2007-2008, the numbers of majors participating in the advanced courses necessary for the tracks are up. For example, CO 314 Advanced Audio, CO 324 Advanced Video, CO 343 Conflict, CO 344 Leadership, CO 425 Media Law and Policy, CO 456 Applications in Public Relations, all show growing enrollments. More students are also taking writing courses in the major, CO 351 Writing for Communication Professions, or from the English Department.

Course	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
CO 314 Advanced Audio Production	Cancelled low enrollment	7	19, 15
CO 324 Advanced Video Production	8	10	13
CO 343 Conflict	Immersion only	7	17
CO 344 Leadership	Not taught	Cancelled low enrollment	16
CO 351 Writing for Communication Professions	16, CO 360 equivalent	Not taught	19, 16
CO 425 Media Law and Policy	14	Not taught, every other year	14, will need to be taught annually
CO 456 Applications in Public Relations	19	11	20

Student Scholarship: In the Spring of 2008, the department had student majors deliver a poster presentation at the Central States Communication Association Convention and the Celebrations of Scholarship research day on campus. Students also presented video projects in news and filmmaking, and a paper on campus involvement at the Celebrations of Scholarship event. Well attended and engaging, student projects and research were effectively presented and demonstrate another goal of the Communication Department, to more actively engage others with student projects that go beyond the classroom assignment. This should be a growing part of the department's efforts in the future. We hope to track trends and the effectiveness of presentation in the future. Communication faculty are already looking for ways to incorporate more research projects with external audiences in mind for future semesters.

Assessment of Student Success: Majors in communication have also been recognized for their success by other measures that demonstrate what should be a growing level of quality in the major. Some examples of student excellence:

- Six of the 20 students graduating in May of 2008 did so with academic honors including one summa cum laude, three magna cum laude, and two cum laude. One of five graduating seniors in December 2007 finished with summa cum laude honors. This is in comparison to the 14 May 2007 graduates, where three finished with academic honors including two magna cum laude and one cum laude. In 2008 the department also had two students with double majors in Music and Communication that are difficult to successfully complete in four years.
- In April 2008, Stacy Fackler, a junior major in communication, was awarded a Scovill Prize that recognizes a very select group of students on the basis of their scholarship, personality, and citizenship. Sarah K. Johnson, a graduating senior, received a Helen Moffett Russell Community Service Award for outstanding service leadership. Two juniors were elected by their peers to positions of student leadership at Millikin. Alex Berry was elected to be Student Body President and Allison Lackey was elected to service as the student representative to the Board of Trustees for 2008-2009. These students are evidence that communication majors are being recognized as student leaders and credible members of our department.
- The communication department has also serviced many Interdepartmental majors over the years. These students have chosen three departments to concentrate their plan of study in. Six in May of 2008 and one in December 2007 used the Communication department as a primary site for their studies. Like minors, we do not receive much recognition for these students but they do use significant departmental resources. Our success in attracting these students to the program provides additional proof of our effectiveness.
- Communication majors have been successful after graduation. According to a report from the Career & Experiential Education Center at Millikin University, 88% (14) of our students have gained employment or entrance into graduate/professional schools in 2007. 13% (2) considered themselves under employed. The department has been consistently successful in getting its majors hired and making them eligible for continued education.

The current level of departmental assessment is considered to be yellow as a performance indicator. We are slowly expanding our assessments but must make more systematic evaluation of student learning in specific course areas and improve reporting of that data. As the track system matures, we hope to develop assessment reports for students by track area. Current data is very encouraging. The program has made some important and significant adjustments to its curriculum and goals. We have new faculty and ideas for implementing our program. We will evaluate the program to preserve its continued success.

Improvement Plan for the Department of Communication

The 2008-2009 academic year will bring new opportunities for assessment in the communication department. We will be supporting a new oral communication requirement for all incoming students. Assessment tools will need to be developed for these courses. Although the assessment of these courses will largely be the responsibility of the general education committee, the courses need to be assessed in relationship to other departmental offerings and needs. More course specific assessment is due to begin with this year. We will be looking at core courses first and then key courses in the individual tracks in the future. A stronger assessment of internships is also a goal. A schedule and plan need to be developed to insure that all components in the major are assessed over a period of time. These data will be reported on, with the red-yellow-green light scale, to the department faculty, the Dean of Arts & Sciences, and the University Assessment coordinator.