

**Millikin University**  
**Student Learning in the Communication Major**  
Jeffrey Brand (Chair), Nancy Curtin, Thomas Duncanson, Samuel Meister  
2011-2012

**Executive Summary**

The Department of Communication 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 stakeholders: 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.

A new option for Communication majors was implemented this year. Students have the opportunity to complete their communication program with a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Sciences (B.S.) degree. This option was created to allow students access to a degree program that was more appropriate to their skills, professional aspirations, and academic preparation. This option is also seen as an advantage to students transferring into the department from other universities/colleges or other majors at Millikin. We will monitor this option and within a couple of years have enough data to reach some sort of conclusions about how these choices are impacting the major.

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.

Highlights from this academic year as a department include:

- Dr. Nancy Curtin won the **James Millikin Scholars Educator of the Year Award**. This recognition comes from her work with the Honors program and as an excellent teacher and senior project advisor in the honors program.
- Senior student **Sarah Reed** was recognized multiple times for her scholarship. She won a top poster award at the Central States Communication Association Conference and Convention. She also won a poster award at the **Millikin University COS Poster Symposium**. She presented her James Millikin Scholars Project at the end of the year. She was also offered and accepted a teaching assistantship and admission to the Illinois State University's M.A. graduate program in Communication.
- Students participated in the annual Celebration of Scholarship with programs highlighting collaborative work between WJMU radio and a freshmen IN 140 seminar course; poster presentations by students in the environmental communication course; reporting of student experiences in London entitled "Performing London," an innovative travel course; and a student developed talk show production, "Phriday's with Phil Talk Show." Three student posters were presented by **Sean Roe**, **Sarah Reed**, and double major, **Isabelle Jeffries**, who also won a poster award for her biology project presentation. Four majors presented their Senior JMS projects, a large number of honors students for the department.
- Student work in a new, experimental course on Event Planning was featured in an article in the Decatur *Herald & Review*. Local news coverage also included WJMU's assistance with the summer SMASH camp for junior high students as well as an earlier article this year on the station in *Thrive* magazine.

### **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 environment, and a personal life of meaning and value is accomplished through a variety of discipline-specific learning objectives. Graduates with a Communication 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 into careers in 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 campaigns, 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:

<b>Learning Goal</b>	<b>Corresponding MU Learning Goal Number(s)</b>
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 in 2011-2012 consisted of 4 full-time faculty and 9 adjuncts that helped deliver 75 traditional and PACE classes for the year. We ended the Spring of 2012 with approximately 120 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 public speaking, and sequential elements (University Seminar). Students are also required to take communication courses by the Tabor School of Business and for the secondary 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. In addition to courses in the major, Communication faculty have also taught IN 251 U.S. Studies, January and May Immersion courses, and in the PACE adult degree completion program by providing courses for the Organizational Leadership major and general education needs.

The Communication department currently occupies 5 offices on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Shilling Hall and shares a secretary with the Political Science department and Math Department (a new assignment). 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. Editing equipment and software have been upgraded in the two facilities in the past four years including new automation hardware/software for the radio station in January 2009. The current video equipment is critically limited. Currently only two cameras are available for use for a class of 15 in addition to use for other student productions. The lack of adequate camera equipment is considered a significant threat to the video production area of the major. If any breakdown occurs, failure to replace equipment will require cancellation of the courses, even mid-semester.

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 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 began with students entering Millikin University in the Fall of 2008.

The Department offered 30 sections of oral communication courses (CO 200 and CO 242) in the 2011-2012 school year between the traditional program and PACE and summer school. We are monitoring the demand levels to see if it is necessary to further expand on the number of courses being offered each year. Part-time, adjunct teachers taught all sections of the oral communication requirement. Although the department values the quality and commitment of its adjunct faculty, the lack of administrative support for full-time faculty to help teach this general education requirement does not demonstrate strong commitment to this general education requirement. In comparison, full-time, tenure line or tenured faculty teach a majority of other

general education courses. A review of the assessment reports by the other general education areas will confirm this observation.

The current full time faculty cannot contribute much towards the oral communication requirement teaching load without further eroding the access students in the major have to terminal degreed faculty. For 2011-2012, part-time adjunct faculty members also taught 20%-24% of major specific courses. The department is simply understaffed for the FTE it generates.

The internship requirement is also an important part of the learning process for our majors. This requirement contributes to developing the student's goal of achieving professional success after graduation. It also supports the University's mission of performance learning. Our students practice their communication training in real life situations and for actual organizations. The department generates significant credit hours through internship experiences. For 2011-2012, 153 credit hours were generated. They break down to 44-Summer 2011, 42-Fall 2011, and 67-Spring 2012. This requirement is unique on this campus and it has been an asset for students seeking employment after graduation.

### **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. or B.S. 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 2011-2012 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 or radio production, organizational communication, 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 also help to recruit new students. Many of our applicants identify a specific track in their admissions profile.

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 Art, English, Psychology, Entrepreneurship 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.

A communication program in the twenty-first century must be prepared to engage every facet of communicative competency from the physiology of sign production to the politics of institution formation and legitimation. A fully functional university program in communication must provide:

- first courses, non-remedial first courses, appropriate to the maturity and self-reflective habits of traditional university aged students and adult learners, instilling meta-vocabularies of risk, effects, and critique
- skill courses, especially in the arts of public communication
- intermediate and advanced courses, with special support for skill building, in interpersonal, small group, and organizational communication
- initial and advanced courses in media production
- specific preparation for the norms and standards of specific communication professions and industries
- research methods training
- creative outlets for student performance
- courses in discourse in historical and comparative contexts, especially as related to the dominant institutions of society
- ample opportunities to practice communication skills and knowledge in real world settings, to engage in performance learning in the spirit of the Millikin University mission
- developing leadership for communication industries

The Millikin Department of Communication has done all of these things, and the current faculty see tremendous demand that it does these things more, and in increasingly sophisticated market-driven ways, and that there are extraordinary opportunities that remain to express leadership in communication education and win the rewards that go with that leadership.

### **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.

<b>Core Courses</b>	<b>Learning Goal #1</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.	<b>Learning Goal #2</b> Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts	<b>Learning Goal #3</b> 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 Public Speaking	x	x	

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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
<p><b>Elective Courses</b></p>	<p><b>Learning Goal #1</b> Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate in personal, scholarly, and/or professional contexts through appropriate verbal, nonverbal, and mediated formats.</p>	<p><b>Learning Goal #2</b> Students will distinguish the theories pertinent to communication studies and demonstrate the skills needed to create, present, analyze, and evaluate messages in relevant contexts</p>	<p><b>Learning Goal #3</b> Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills when generating, consuming, and evaluating messages in relevant communication contexts.</p>
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 220 Introduction to Video Production	x	x	x

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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 342 Applications in Organizational Comm	x	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

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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
CO 425 Media Law and Policy		x	x
CO 432 Intercultural Communication	x	x	x
CO 456 Applications in Public Relations	x	x	x

Based on current levels of assessment, we have compiled the following results concerning our majors. Our assessment efforts rate a yellow-green on the Red-Yellow-Green scale being used to evaluate assessment efforts. We have a strong grasp of our program’s strengths and weaknesses. Our assessment resources and experience, however, are limited. Progress has been made on assessment of our delivery of the oral communication requirement. We have two years of more developed assessment and the results from that assessment are encouraging. The data from that assessment is provided in a separate report for general education purposes. From the department’s perspective, one of the greatest dangers facing the program’s quality is the absence of full-time faculty teaching including assessment experience for the program. Other general education programs have full-time faculty teaching and a program coordinator with release time and support for program assessment. This requirement does not have the same resources allocated to its teaching or assessment.

We have experienced a wide range of feedback from students about the communication program. Some if it is beyond the control of the department and reflect shortfalls of administrated support in the areas of faculty and equipment. One example would be video equipment. For four years requests have been made to upgrade and develop these resources and those requests denied. Another example, no member of the department has release time to perform assessment responsibilities. The small size and limited faculty size makes assessment difficult. The department size has also been further reduced annually for a variety of reasons,

for example, in the last four years, the Department has had one faculty member teaching for Millikin University in London or on a sabbatical leave for a semester. New teaching and advising duties were the priority for the department during these short-handed periods. In the Spring of 2010, both senior faculty members taught a fifth course in response to the University's financial crisis concerning instructional resources. Faculty are advising 30-40 students each and spend significant time helping to advise and mentor student majors. Time, resources, and opportunities for assessment are limited. Results of current assessment efforts include:

Student Exit Interviews: The chair of the department conducted interviews with 37 students enrolled in the capstone course and planning to graduate from the department in December 2011, May 2012, or anticipating graduation in August or December 2012. Students were generally positive about their overall experience with the University and the Department of Communication. These interviews have been valuable sources of information on our students. Many of the changes made over the years in the department have started with student recommendations that occurred with the capstone interview or reflection paper. This process has resulted in almost every student being interviewed prior to graduation. Some of the more frequent and valuable comments are summarized below:

- Advising was highly praised by graduates from the major. This year we did have a few students who ended up with multiple advisors due to international teaching, sabbaticals, and faculty turnover in the radio station. This appears to be more of an exception to the rule, but the department plans to consider more closely helping to track students who are moved around in advisors due to shifts in staffing availability. We want all students to have the same level of satisfaction with their advising experience.

On average, students were pleased that the department made an effort to help them graduate on time and that curricular and advising resources were available to make that possible. Students felt that their departmental advisor, the department secretary, and Registrar's office were meeting their advising needs. Ordinarily, freshmen receive an advisor who follows them through their four years in the major. Many students reported getting help on advising issues from multiple members of the Communication faculty, not just a single advisor. All full-time faculty are prepared for and expected to assist students with advising issues during their time in the department. Students described the advising experience in our department much more favorably than other departments they had transferred from prior to becoming communication majors. Many students mentioned that they have had multiple meetings during the semester with their advisor and that advising extended well beyond scheduling. Students received assistance in their career planning, with issues concerning their courses and university services, study abroad, graduate school, and with other academic and personal challenges. This success has been possible despite communication faculty advising as many as 30 or more advisees each semester.

- Many students referenced 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. The variety of courses and faculty described demonstrated a breadth of courses and teaching styles that students found attractive and that helped them to succeed. Students in the major usually have at the minimum three of our full-time faculty in their major program, many have all of us at one time or another as they move through the program. The range of courses was interesting. Many focused on multiple courses taught by Dr.

Curtin and Dr. Duncanson. The individual courses were important but so was their teaching style and success at contributing to student learning. Many of the core courses were included in their comments, students seem to appreciate, if only later in the process, the central theory and knowledge the core contributed to their preparation. Those courses included: CO 101 Introduction to Communication Theory, CO 107 Argument and Social Issues, and CO 204 Investigative Methods in Communication.

- Students who have selected a track in their major were generally pleased with that option and outcome. Most would like even more upper-level coursework in their individual track areas. This seem particularly true for students entering the major their Freshmen year. The longer a student is a major in the department the more our limitations become evident. Offering a variety of topics courses, including Immersion courses, is helping this situation. However, with a limited faculty size, a heavy core course demand, and a significant number of majors, variety is going to be limited.
- Students in the media track were particularly critical of the options available to them at this time. Video production is limited to a reliance on instruction with an adjunct teacher. That position has been held by three different adjuncts in the last five semesters, making any development or improvement in that program difficult. Such turnover prevents the relationships needed for effective advising, independent study, or mentoring in this area of the major. Equipment limitations have compounded this problem. With only two cameras for a class of 10-15 students, the Millikin University mission of hands on learning and performance learning is impossible to adequately develop. As long as the media area is not supported sufficiently, it is not delivering on our promise of education. Due to low enrollments, exacerbated by the equipment limitations, independent project opportunities were offered to students for the Spring 2012 semester. For a few of those students that experience was helpful, but it was a poor substitute for an entire course on advanced production.
- The study abroad was referred to as a unique and positive experience during exit interviews. One popular program has been a London Semester program. Student experiences in the London Semester were rated exceptional and the students were extremely pleased to have had the experience and opportunity to study abroad. Other students have used their language skills, immersion courses and general education requirements to experience learning off campus. More options and types of opportunities for such learning were recommended.
- Students would like to see more activities outside of the classroom beyond the radio station. Our student honorary, Lambda Pi Eta, needs to become more active. The leadership has upped their involvement level this past year, and we hope to see it grow next year. Events for majors both semesters went well and students are hungry for additional opportunities to gather. Our majors have also been active in other non-Communication organizations including the Greek system, student life, student government, DECA, and the Decaturian student newspaper. Our majors have traditionally participated effectively in student organizations and have held positions of leadership in many of them. Exit interviews reinforced the benefits and enjoyment that our majors had from their involvement in campus organizations.
- Despite our active efforts to promote preparation for graduation and looking for employment, many of those interviewed were still in the early stages of planning for life after college. A few in the May group had a job in hand, and a few were very successful by mid-June in finding

work or selecting graduate school options. The portfolio pieces showed better understanding of their potentials as graduates but limited active effort to pursue jobs. The requirements of the capstone course were seen as motivating some students to prepare more fully for graduation and the job hunt. More interaction with the Career Services Center was observed and hopefully this effort will pay off later.

• When asked about improvements to be made to the major, many of the interviews reiterated the same few issues in a variety of ways:

- Better resources for video production and hands-on media work.
- More advanced courses with a focus on applied and real world experiences.
- Better quality classroom experiences with fewer underprepared or unmotivated students. Students have advocated for either a selective admission into some advanced courses or a GPA requirement for majors. Both options are being investigated for the future. This year a large number of French business students were placed into some of our courses. Their presence was disruptive and not a positive contribution to the classes. Students would like more hands on courses and better quality of overall participation by those enrolled. This is an ongoing discussion topic with our faculty.

Internship Evaluations: Consistent with the mission of the university for performance learning, the departmental requirement for student internships has been a successful one. Approximately 41 internships were completed in 2011-2012 for a combine total of 153 credit hours. Student internships were located in a variety of places, both on campus and in the community at large. Summer internships also included experiences outside of the Decatur community. Students worked with campus organizations, corporate organizations, small businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. Examples of sites for internships include: the Chicago Field Museum, Clear Channel Communications, the Holocaust Museum, WIBI radio, Walt Disney World, WAND TV, DCC Marketing, St. Mary's Hospital, Decatur Public Schools, WISH TV, Partners in Education, the Farm Progress Show, United Cerebral Palsy, Decatur Public Schools, Rutherford Photo, An Affair to Remember, Macon Resources, Target, and other locations on campus, in the community, and beyond.

The Department continues to have an internship advisor who has been instrumental at getting students meaningful and interesting learning positions. The students complete a learning contract, submit a portfolio, certify their hours, and receive feedback from the internship site. It takes a lot of time and effort to implement the department's internship requirement. However, it has been a valuable experience and distinctive requirement for our majors.

Curriculum Evaluation: The department reviewed its curriculum and made changes in the Fall of 2006. Since that time, the numbers of majors participating in the advanced courses necessary for the tracks are up. For example, CO 343 Conflict, CO 351 Writing for Communication Professions, CO 425 Media Law and Policy, CO 456 Applications in Public Relations, show growing or higher enrollments than before the new changes, with some unevenness due to other curricular choices or conflicts in scheduling. Media production courses are also up but uneven. The video area is taught by an adjunct that makes it difficult to build up a demand for

advanced course work. The adjunct position has also turned over frequently, making the task of building an audience for the course more difficult. A new course, CO 342 Applications in Organizational Communication, was added to the curriculum in 2009. It was piloted as CO 360 in Spring 2009 with 23 students and in Spring 2010 with 21. It fell short this year and was combined into a team taught course with Drs. Curtin and Kruml. The course was not offered in Spring 2011 due to Dr. Curtin's junior sabbatical. The overall number of Organizational Communication students is also down this year and that helps explain the lower number in the advanced course. The course is also not required for the Organizational Communication Track as are other advanced courses, which will be addressed this year as we review some issues with our curriculum and scheduling of courses.

Course	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
CO 314 Advanced Audio Production	Cancelled low enrollment	7	19, 15	21	11	Not taught	15
CO 324 Advanced Video Production	8	10	13	14	10	6	5 on indep study
CO 343 Conflict	4 Immersion	7	17	15, 8	15, 15	24 Immersions	25 immersions summer
CO 344 Leadership	Not taught	Cancelled low enrollment	16	Not taught	Not taught	23	9
CO 351 Writing for Communication Professions	16, CO 360 equivalent	Not taught	19, 16	15, 14	20	25,20,22	13,13
CO 425 Media Law and Policy	14	Not taught, every other year	14, will need to be taught annually	20	17	17	3 taught by indep study
CO 456 Applications in Public Relations	19	11	20	20	26	24	16
CO 342 Applications in Org Comm	n/a	n/a	n/a	23 as CO 360	21	Sabbatical, n/a	11

Student Scholarship: Students participated in the annual Celebration of Scholarship with programs highlighting collaborative work between WJMU radio and a freshmen IN 140 seminar course; poster presentations by students in the environmental communication course; reporting of student experiences in London entitled "Performing London," an innovative travel course; and a student developed talk show production, "Phriday's with Phil Talk Show." Sean Roe, Sarah Reed, and double major, Isabelle Jeffries, presented three student posters. Sarah Reed and Isabelle Jeffries both won awards for their poster presentations. Additionally, Communication majors made Long-Vandenberg presentations, Senior JMS presentations, and participated in presentation in other departments. This year, four majors presented Senior JMS projects, a record number in recent years.

Senior Sarah Reed, in addition to her JMS and poster presentations, presented her poster at the Central States Communication Association conference and received a poster award for that presentation. She has also been accepted into the master's program in communication at Illinois State University.

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

- Seven of the 31 students graduating in May of 2012 did so with academic honors including 4 summa cum laude, 2 magna cum laude, and 1 cum laude. This is similar to the May of 2011 graduates. Eight of the 24 students graduating in May of 2011 did so with academic honors including 2 summa cum laude, 4 magna cum laude, and 2 cum laude. The Department has a fairly consistent range of graduates and honors for these students. Eight of the 39 students graduating in May of 2010 did so with academic honors including 3 summa cum laude, 4 magna cum laude, and 1 cum laude. This is in comparison to the May 2008 graduates, where 6 finished with academic honors including 1 summa cum laude, 3 magna cum laude, and 2 cum laude. In 2012 the department for the second year had 6 students graduate with double majors in the following areas: Biology, Philosophy (2), Spanish, History, and Music Business. The double major as well as a minor is a popular option for students in a number of other programs. In comparison, only two students graduated in 2009 with double majors one in Theatre and the other in English. Double majors are challenging programs of learning for students. The department had 5 students graduating in December. In 2010 there were 8 December graduates in comparison to 2 for the 2009 December group.

Video Production Assessment: The video production and media areas of the major have been the most problematic parts of the major this year. As detailed earlier, it has been plagued by adjunct instructor turnover, insufficient equipment support, limited financial resources, and limited participation by students. There are both highs and lows for the program this year that lead to a positive potential for the program if deep support could be developed. Two student projects this semester have demonstrated that video production potential is positive here at Millikin and would have greater success if supported.

First, Phillip Armstrong, piloted a student-produced talk show called "Phriday's with Phil." (PWP). The show produced 9 segments and experimented with both a fixed studio show along with some on-scene segments. The show received good reviews and generated positive comments. (To view videos go to: <http://www.youtube.com/user/PhridaysWithPhil/videos>). Phil was able to recruit and build a small production team for the show and using student equipment (the departmental resources were too limited), created a series of segments. This project was exciting for students interested in production and could have had long term potential. Unfortunately, Phil has decided to concentrate on other areas of his career aspirations and is not continuing the production. This is the problem with student-run projects, they do not have a long-term focus or sustainable potential. The absence of faculty leadership and resources make these productions interesting experiments but they are incapable of sustaining a track or portion of a major. They cannot replace or even reliably support the curriculum for the major in media. The performance learning potential of this is evident but it needs to be capable of continuing over time for more students with faculty leadership and expertise.

Second, Heather Bulthuis for her Senior James Millikin Scholars Project, researched the potential for a video production studio and program similar to our radio station, WJMU. (A copy of the report is available from Dr. Jeffrey Brand, Chair, Communication Department) Heather researched similar stations in peer and aspiration schools, she surveyed student interests and media usage, evaluated potential support for a station, and even produced some

sample news segments to demonstrate what a station might create if given the opportunity. Her results demonstrated some important issues for assessment. First, we do not have the curricular and technological resources to complete our performance-learning standard in video production in the same sense as the radio program. Second, students are interested in having this resource to add to their major experience. It would also be a help with recruitment. The largest group of potential student majors indicated an interest in some sort of media, without this program potential students may be lost. Many similar institutions have a studio resource to offer. Third, echoing the experience with Phil Armstrong's project, the expertise and effort to develop a station require faculty and administrative resources and support. This is not a need that can be outsourced to a student club or hobby. It needs a clear and developed role in the curriculum and campus. If we are to have a track in media, it needs to be supported. In today's media rich environment it would seem wrong not to offer resources in this area.

In further support of this assessment of our video production course, Mr. Johnny Robinson, current adjunct instructor for video production, submitted to the chair his evaluation of the video production course and its limitations. The first issue we have discussed is again, equipment. The two cameras we have are too few and limited. For example, we cannot shoot in High Definition (HD) that is becoming the standard picture format. To teach students editing and issues with HD footage we have to use someone else's content. HD content presents both shooting and editing challenges that students should know about. Student projects in the course have been primarily assigned by groups because of the limits in equipment. The group focus is a valuable experience but conflicts led to drops in the course and limited enrollments for the advanced course. The current course is taught by an adjunct on a once-a-week basis. This has limited time available to students to work with the faculty member who lives out of town. The faculty member's evaluation of the course has indicated plans to change both format and assignments in the course, but he realizes the limits we have to work under. He worked hard to provide independent study opportunities to a few students in the Spring but we were not able to offer the advanced course. We are now behind in an already limited set of courses for media students.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, student exit interviews also have consistently voiced a concern for more video and media related coursework and resources to work with. It is our greatest weakness in areas including staffing, technology, and curriculum. Without improvements this program should be evaluated for its place in a university that values performance learning but cannot provide the performance experiences necessary to learn successfully. If the program review for the department occurs this year, perhaps a final plan can be reached for this part of the program.

Assessment Summary: The current level of departmental assessment is considered to be yellow to green as a performance indicator. We are expanding and improving on the range and quality of assessment and have plans to continue improvements. Current data is very encouraging for continued growth and potential for the department. The program has made some important and significant adjustments to its curriculum and goals. Student activity in the classroom and outside of courses indicates that the learning goals we have set for majors are being pursued and accomplished. We are also hoping to engage in a program review in 2012-13.

## **Improvement Plan for the Department of Communication**

The 2012-2013 academic year promises new challenges, dangers, and opportunities for the Department of Communication. A summary of concerns and goals include:

- Adequate staffing for the department continues to be a danger. The loss of our media production faculty member, four years ago, threatens to limit our ability to grow and develop that portion of the major. This is an area where adjunct faculty is not recommended and finding qualified faculty with a master's degree for part-time work is proving nearly impossible. Current budget and enrollment failures threaten our ability to fill this needed area of the major. At the very time when this program has found success, the loss of faculty is a step backwards. With only 4 full-time faculty and more than 110 majors and general education commitments, our department is too small to provide the level of curriculum necessary to meet the need. The major deserves resources commensurate with its contribution to enrollments and University graduation rates.

For example, in the past six semesters, three different adjunct instructors have taught the video production course. Additional offerings in media production and theory courses have been limited and put off due to the absence of qualified faculty. The media area along with the Sport Communication track, which also has a media focus, are not being adequately covered. The lack of stability and the benefits in advising and mentoring of a full-time faculty member are not being realized. Other, smaller majors in this University are not so poorly staffed and supported.

Overall, full-time faculty is teaching less than one-half of the courses delivered by the department. In Fall 2011, 44% of the teaching was completed with full-time faculty. In the Spring 2012, 45% of the teaching was completed with full-time faculty. And adjunct faculty is covering 100% of the oral communication requirement. No other general education requirement in this University is so dependent on adjunct faculty teaching than this one.

The University succeeds when both admissions and graduation numbers (retention) are sufficient. At the May graduation ceremony, there were 31 Communication majors (24 B.A.) receiving degrees and 35 B.A. degrees for between the following departments: English, History, Philosophy, Mathematics, Human Services, Spanish, Political Science, Social Science Education, and English Education. With only four full-time faculty members, the Communication department graduates more students than departments or units of the College of Arts & Sciences that are larger in faculty support. There are many ways to measure productivity for departmental units, but any measurement would suggest this department has proven the need for more staffing. Without it, limits must be placed on the number of majors and students in the program.

- Development of the public speaking requirement is too limited due to resource restrictions. A full-time hire for a basic course director who can also contribute to at least one other curricular track is needed. The position would allow for better-informed assessment of this general education requirement, adjunct training and mentoring, and course development. An additional lecturer or instructor hire(s) would also improve the quality and consistency of the general education requirement. The first effort to begin assessment of this program has begun with the help of an adjunct with minimal support, but more should be done. This general education requirement needs to be supported as have others at the University.

- Resource needs in addition to faculty also limit the department's ability to meet University mission goals. Theory to practice, and performance learning is difficult to accomplish when the department's resources include only 2 cameras for a video production course. Students are not being afforded sufficient time to work hands-on with the equipment. The addition to the department's responsibilities of the oral communication requirement has also occurred without any resources improvements in staffing, equipment, office space, or office expenses. The current departmental budget cannot handle these expanded expectations without new resources.
- Primary goals for the department with regards to assessment and student learning for 2012-13 include:
  - Expand and enhance oral communication course assessment and continue to evaluate the effective meeting of its learning goals.
  - Plan for a process of external program review for 2012-13 or the next year depending on funding.
  - Continue the process of course assessments on a multi-year plan.
  - Begin process of external evaluation of student learning in the major through alumni and internship supervisor feedback.
  - Develop media resources to bring this part of the major into greater focus and strength.

The Communication Department has accomplished a great deal over the years. We expect to continue to function as a successful department with interesting courses and valuable experiences that are appealing to students at Millikin University.