

Dalton State College
Academic Program Review

Program/Subject Area: AA Communication Studies

Review Period: 2010/11 through 2014/15

1. PROGRAM GOAL AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Program Goal Statement:

The Associate of Arts degree in communication studies is designed to prepare graduates to transfer to Bachelor of Arts programs in journalism, mass communication, speech communication, or other areas of study in the field of communication. It will also prepare graduates for positions that require listening and interpersonal skills, critical thinking skills, an understanding of the effects of mass media, and oral communication skills. The Associate of Arts degree in communication studies takes a generalist approach in order to prepare the graduate for a variety of career and life opportunities, including work in numerous areas of business and media.

Program Outcomes:

Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will

1. read critically
2. think critically
3. write competently
4. demonstrate competence in oral communication
5. express satisfaction with the faculty and programs in the School of Liberal Arts

Student learning outcomes (2014-2015):

Students completing the AA in communication studies are expected to satisfy the following student learning outcomes:

COMM 1100: Human Communications

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements of communication studies as a social science.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the leading theories of how the communication process works.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to work with others collaboratively to develop and deliver a message to an audience through group presentations.
4. Students will demonstrate the ability to use critical and empathetic listening skills as part of the communication process.

COMM 1110: Fundamentals of Speech

1. Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report or speech. (General Education Learning Outcomes)
2. Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments. (Critical Thinking)
3. Students will use technology and gather data to conduct research from various sources,

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including electronic media, and demonstrate an understanding of plagiarism by acknowledging and citing informational sources correctly. (Critical Thinking)

4. Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation. (Critical Thinking)

COMM 1120: Argumentation and Advocacy (Area B)

1. Students will express orally or in writing a broad understanding of an array of issues relating to culture, society, creative expression, or the human experience.
2. Students will use APA format to cite research materials correctly for assignments.
3. Students will correctly research, organize, and structure advanced oral arguments on questions of fact, value, and policy.
4. Students will effectively defend beliefs, concepts, and ideas with logical arguments.

COMM 2000: Introduction to Mass Communication

1. Students will understand the origins and evolution of the major mass media.
2. Students will understand how media intersect and converge in the advancement of new media.
3. Students will demonstrate awareness of the ways media influence and alter perceptions of reality.
4. Students will develop critical thinking and media-literacy skills to be more informed consumers and students of media.

COMM 2110: Interpersonal Communication

1. Students will identify types of, critically analyze examples of, and participate in interpersonal interactions within business, educational, and social contexts.
2. Students will understand and apply the major theories of interpersonal communication.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interpersonal communication patterns of various cultural groups.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of interpersonal communication practices within business, education, and social contexts.

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2. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

(a) Five-year enrollment summary by headcount, FTE, & full-time/part-time status

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Headcount	31	36	30	36	33	6%
FTE	31.8	32.2	28	39.7	32.8	3.1%
Full-time	25	23	23	31	25	0%
Part-time	6	13	7	7	8	33%

Analyses and Comments:

Headcount and Full-time Equivalent (FTE) have increased slightly over the last five years, while full-time enrollment has remained constant. We experienced a respectable increase in the number of communication studies majors in Fall 2015, 41 students, a 24% increase for one year. Part-time enrollment showed a modest 33% increase; however, the increase is not meaningful given the low number of part-time students involved. These increases show the continued and increased viability of this field of study.

(b) Five-year enrollment summary by gender & race/ethnicity

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Gender						
Female	21	19	21	24	19	-9.5%
Male	10	17	9	14	14	40%
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian	0	1	1	0	0	0%
Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0%
African-American	3	6	3	5	10	233%
Hispanic	2	2	2	7	3	50%
Multi-racial	0	0	1	1	2	200%
Undeclared	3	5	0	0	2	-33%
White	23	22	23	25	16	-30.4%

Analyses and Comments:

These figures show a large increase in the number of males enrolled in the major (a 40% increase). While the number of females has decreased, the drop (two students) is not significant. There has been a significant increase in the number of American-Americans choosing this major (233%), as well as increases in the Hispanic and multi-racial categories, showing improved diversity in race and ethnicity.

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(c) Average class size, GPA, faculty/student ratios, and credit hours: includes only COMM courses required for the major (COMM 1100, 2000, and 1110)

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Average class size	19	26	24	24	24	26.3%
Student credit hours	170	153	162	147	225	32.4%
Credit hours/FTE faculty	15	15	15	15	15	0%

Analyses and Comments:

Class sizes for COMM 1100, 1110, and 2000 have increased modestly since 2010/2011, a 26.3% increase, and faculty teaching loads have remained constant (excluding overloads). Student credit hours have increased by 32.4% over the past five years. These increases demonstrate the viability of this program and its potential for success as a bachelor's program.

(d) Faculty teaching in Program

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
Total Faculty						
Full-time Faculty	8	8	8	8	8	0
Part-time Faculty	3	2	1	1	1	-67%
Gender						
Male	4	4	4	4	4	0
Female	7	6	5	5	5	-29%
Race/Ethnicity						
American Indian/Pacific	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian	1	1	1	1	1	0
African-American	1	0	0	0	0	-100%
Hispanic	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	9	9	8	8	8	-11%
Multiracial	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tenure Status (full-time)						
Tenured	2	3	3	4	4	100%
On-tenure track	5	4	4	3	3	-40%
Non-tenure track	1	1	1	1	1	0
Rank (full-time)						
Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate Professor	2	3	3	3	4	100%
Assistant Professor	5	4	4	4	3	-40%
Instructor/Lecturer	1	1	1	1	1	0
Highest Degree (full-time)						
Doctorate	4	4	4	4	5	25%
Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Master's	4	4	4	4	3	-25%

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Bachelor's	0	0	0	0	0	0
Associate's/Other	0	0	0	0	0	0

Analyses and Comments:

The number of full-time communication faculty members has remained the same over the past five years, while the number of part-time faculty has decreased. This trend, however, is changing, and in Fall 2015, we added an additional full-time lecturer, and a faculty member from the English Department began teaching COMM 1110 to help with the increased demand.

Since the last review, the department has made some improvement in diversity with the hiring of an Asian lecturer, and there remains a good balance in the numbers of male and female faculty members. The faculty has remained very stable with little turnover, and members have made excellent progress in working toward tenure and promotion, with the percentage on tenure-track decreasing simply because the faculty in question have been awarded tenure and the percentage of assistant professors decreasing simply because the faculty have been promoted.

Since it is difficult to find qualified part-time faculty to teach communication, once the digital design program has been taught out, we plan to use that line to hire a doctoral-level communication faculty member.

(e) Percent of classes taught by full-time faculty

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
92%	91%	100%	99%	95%	3.3%

Analyses and Comments:

The percentages of classes taught by full-time faculty is somewhat distorted by the number of overloads that were taught by full-time faculty. To avoid relying on the goodwill of full-time faculty to teach overloads, the College should hire additional full-time communication faculty.

(f) Number of degrees conferred

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
2	2	6	5	1	-50%

Analyses and Comments:

The very few numbers of degrees conferred throughout the five-year period is not surprising despite the increasing numbers of students pursuing degrees in communication studies; rather, the low Associate of Arts degree-completion rate should be seen as resulting from the need of these students to transfer to an institution that offers a bachelor's degree in the field. In addition, some of these students switch to the Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies since it offers a concentration in communication. Retention rates would likely improve with the addition of the bachelor's degree in communication. The percentage change, while high, is not meaningful given the low number of graduates in 2010/11 and 2014/15.

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(g) Placement rates: Five-year summary of job placement rates, if applicable

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Analyses and Comments:					
This is a two-year transfer program.					

(h) Cost per Full-time Faculty (Average Faculty Salary)

2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	% Change
\$46,366	\$45,008	\$45,258	\$45,570	\$46,870	1.1%
Analyses and Comments:					
The average faculty salary for communication faculty has increased only minimally over the five years included in this review. The college did not have any money for raises during most of that time period, with 2014/2015 the first year in which some money was allocated. Since faculty who teach in this program teach a 5/4 load, the program is quite cost effective, and more money should be allocated to boost salaries as soon as possible.					

(i) Summary and evidence of achievement of Program Outcomes

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current Program Outcomes

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the following outcomes were assessed in Weave Online. Four of the five outcomes were completely achieved and one of the outcomes was partially achieved.

1. Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will read critically.

Measure & Target: Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) reading test.

Finding: Target Met. On the CAAP reading test that was given to 181 graduates at the end of Spring Semester 2015, Dalton State graduates scored higher than the national average. Dalton

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State graduates scored a 60.5, while the national average was 60.1. Thus, Dalton State graduates are proficient in reading when compared against a national sample of graduating students.

2. Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will think critically.

Measure & Target: Students will perform equal to or above the national average on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency critical thinking measure.

Findings: Target Met. At the end of Spring Semester 2015, 181 Dalton State graduates took the CAAP critical thinking test. As with the previous year, Dalton State graduates performed higher than the national average. Dalton State graduates earned a 62.3 on the critical thinking test, while graduates nationally earned a 60.6. Dalton State's new critical thinking graduation requirement has likely contributed to the improved scores.

3. Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will write competently.

Measure & Target: Competence in written communication will be demonstrated using completion rates for English 1101 for the full academic year and using student learning outcome assessment reports for selected sections of English 1101. Students will demonstrate competence in written communication by successfully completing English 1101 and its written communication outcomes with a C or better. At least 70% of students in associate's degree programs will demonstrate competence in written communication by successfully completing English 1101 and its outcomes.

Findings: Target Met. During Fall Semester 2014, Spring Semester 2015, and Summer Term 2015, 1,060 students enrolled in various sections of English 1101 (excluding withdrawals). Eighty-three percent of the students earned a C or better. This percentage represents a slight (2%) decrease over the previous year's high success rate. When withdrawals were included, of the 1,115 students who enrolled in English 1101, 79% earned a C or better. This percentage also represents a 2% decrease over the previous year's high success rate. However, these success rates for a required general education course are impressive, though the chair of the English Department and the dean of Liberal Arts will continue to monitor them closely.

Measure & Target: Students will determine forms of communication appropriate to particular audiences and purposes; organize and communicate knowledge and ideas in a logical and purposeful way; and use accepted patterns of grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure in written communication. Students' competence will be measured by rubrics that evaluate the grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure components of essays written in English 1101 or by earning a 70% or better on grammar and usage tests. Seventy-five percent of students will score 70% or better on the grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure sections on three essays written in English 1101 or scoring 70% or better on grammar and usage tests.

Findings: Target Met. During Fall Semester 2014 and Spring Semester 2015, 96% of students who were enrolled in selected face-to-face sections of ENGL 1101 on the Dalton State main campus earned a 70% or better on grammar tests; 79% of students in selected face-to-face sections of ENGL 1101 at the Gilmer Center earned 75% or better on the grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure portion of a persuasive essay (Fall Semester 2014); and 88% of students

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enrolled in a face-to-face section of ENGL 1101 at the Gilmer Center earned 70% or higher on their three grammar tests. These findings show that the majority of students have a solid grasp of accepted patterns of grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. The one problem that was evident is that instructors used a different target (75% will earn 70% or better, 75% will earn 75% or better, and 70% will earn 70% or better), and using consistent and correct targets will be the basis of the next action plan.

4. Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will demonstrate competence in oral communication.

Measure & Target: At least 70% of students in associate's degree programs will demonstrate competence in oral communication by successfully completing COMM 1110 with a C or better, excluding withdrawals.

Findings: Target Met. During Fall Semester 2014, Spring Semester 2015, and Summer 2015, 1,028 students enrolled in COMM 1110 (excluding students who withdrew). Of these, 90% earned a C or better in COMM 1110. This percentage was 1% higher than last year. When withdrawals were included, 1,129 students were enrolled in various sections of COMM 1110, and 82% earned a C or better. This percentage was 1% lower than the success rate in the previous academic year. When hybrid sections were examined separately, students in the hybrid sections of COMM 1110 taught during Fall Semester 2014, Spring Semester 2015, and Summer Term 2015 were also successful, though the rates that included withdrawals were less successful than the traditional sections: 91% of students in the hybrid sections passed with a C or better when withdrawals were excluded, 1 percentage point higher than the traditional face-to-face classes; and 75% earned a C or better when withdrawals were included, 7 percentage points lower than the rates for traditional face-to-face classes. Withdrawal rates for hybrid courses tend to be higher than withdrawal rates for traditional classes. The department will continue to monitor success in hybrid courses, but these are good success rates considering that COMM 1110 is the one course that all learning support students can take whether they have had a writing course or not.

Measure & Target: Students in COMM 1110 will research, prepare, and present an informative speech which will be evaluated by a grading rubric that focuses on the research, organization, and presentation components of the assignment. Seventy percent of the students will earn an 80% or better on the research, organization, and presentation components of the assignment.

Findings: Target Partially Met. Students in COMM 1110 were required to research, prepare, and present an informative speech. These speeches were evaluated with a grading rubric that focused on the research, organization, and presentation components of the assignment. In the face-to-face classes that were selected for analysis during Fall Semester 2014 and Spring Semester 2015, 90% of the students earned an 80% or better; in the Gilmer County face-to-face class selected for analysis, 87% of the students earned an 80% or better; however, in the hybrid sections of COMM 1110 selected for analysis during Fall Semester 2014, Spring Semester 2015, and Summer Term 2015, only 67% scored an 80% or better on their informative speeches. Overall, 81% of the students earned an 80% or better; however, students in the face-to-face sections were more successful than students in the hybrid sections. Students in COMM 1110 are expected to satisfy three additional student learning outcomes. Students are expected to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments in a

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persuasive or argumentative speech; use technology to gather data to conduct research for a speech; and evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships. On the three additional student learning outcomes, students in face-to-face sections, the hybrid sections, and the Gilmer County sections of COMM 1110 surpassed the target. For the outcome in which students are expected to analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons, 90% of the students in the on-campus face-to-face sections, 96% of the students in the Gilmer Center, and 93% of the students in the hybrid sections earned a 70% or better on their persuasive or argumentative speeches. For the outcome in which students were expected to earn a 70% or better on the research and documentation component of an informative or persuasive speech, 87% of the students in the on-campus face-to-face sections, 83% of the students in the Gilmer Center, and 81% of the students in the hybrid sections earned a 70% or better. And for the outcome in which students demonstrated an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships, 92% of the students in the on-campus face-to-face sections, 83% of the students in the Gilmer Center, and 93% of the students in the hybrid sections earned a 70% or better. In analyzing students' poor performance on the primary outcome in which students are expected to research, prepare, and present an informative speech, the faculty who taught the hybrid sections noted the following problems: students did not speak long enough, did not cite sources, did not give the speech at all, and/or did not have a PowerPoint to support the speech. Action plans included emphasizing the commitment required to complete a hybrid course and to keep a closer eye on student progress and completion of the online component. The evaluation reports for COMM 1110 student learning outcomes are included in the course assessment of Weave. While the primary communication learning outcome was achieved, success in hybrid sections will require continued monitoring.

5. Students who complete the Associate of Arts degree in communication studies will express satisfaction with the faculty and programs in the School of Liberal Arts.

Measure & Target: All students are given the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors each semester through SmartEvals. Student evaluations of Liberal Arts faculty will exceed 4.5 on a 5-point scale, the upper-range of standard faculty performance (4.0-4.59).

Findings: Target Met. During the 2014-2015 academic year, student evaluations of Liberal Arts faculty significantly exceeded 4.6 on a 5-point scale. The overall average for the School of Liberal Arts was **4.73**. Dalton State considers an average of 4.6 and above as "High" performance, so the School as a whole achieved high performance for teaching (4.71 for the Department of Communication, 4.77 for the Department of English, 4.77 for the Department of History, and 4.66 for the Department of Social Sciences).

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(j) Summary and evidence of achievement of Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the extent to which students have achieved current Student Learning Outcomes in Area F and/or upper-division courses, if applicable. (current year)

Communication faculty assessed student learning outcomes for three associate's-level courses during the 2014-2015 academic year. The results for each course are summarized below. Detailed descriptions of assessment procedures, strengths and weaknesses, and action taken as the result of assessment can be found in the individual assessment reports for each course housed in Weave Online.

For COMM 1100, selected communication faculty assessed four learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 academic year, and students surpassed minimum expectations for all four outcomes.

COMM 1100 Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Spring 2015

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements of communication studies as a social science.	Seventy percent of students will earn an average of 70% or higher on the quizzes.	89%
2.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the leading theories of how the communication process works.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the speech.	91%
3.	Students will demonstrate the ability to work with others collaboratively to develop and deliver a message to an audience through group presentations.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the presentation.	100%
4.	Students will demonstrate the ability to use critical and empathetic listening skills as part of the communication process.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the assignment.	93%

For COMM 1110, selected communication faculty assessed four learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 academic year. For the traditional sections taught on the Dalton campus and at the Gilmer Center, students achieved all four outcomes; for the hybrid sections, students achieved three of the four outcomes (and instructors initiated action plans for the unmet outcome).

COMM 1110 Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report or speech. (General Education Learning Outcomes)	Seventy percent of students will earn 80% or better on the research, organization, and presentation components of the assignment.	90%
2.	Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn 70% or better on a persuasive or argumentative speech.	90%

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3.	Students will use technology and gather data to conduct research from various sources, including electronic media, and demonstrate an understanding of plagiarism by acknowledging and citing informational sources correctly. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a grade of 70% or better on research and documentation rubric component scores on an informative or persuasive speech requiring use of electronic and published source material.	87%
4.	Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a score of 70% or higher on a written or oral critique of an oral presentation.	92%

COMM 1110-Hybrid Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report or speech. (General Education Learning Outcomes)	Seventy percent of students will present an informative speech and earn 80% or better on the structural criteria on a rubric.	65%
2.	Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn 70% or better on a persuasive or argumentative speech.	93%
3.	Students will use technology and gather data to conduct research from various sources, including electronic media, and demonstrate an understanding of plagiarism by acknowledging and citing informational sources correctly. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a grade of 70% or better on research and documentation rubric component scores on an informative or persuasive speech requiring use of electronic and published source material.	81%
4.	Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a score of 70% or higher on a written or oral critique of an oral presentation.	93%

COMM 1110-Gilmer Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Fall 2014

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will exhibit expertise necessary to research, organize, and present an oral report or speech. (General Education Learning Outcomes)	Seventy percent of students will earn 80% or better on the research, organization, and presentation components of the assignment.	87%
2.	Students will analyze, evaluate, and provide convincing reasons in support of conclusions and arguments. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn 70% or better on a persuasive or argumentative speech.	96%
3.	Students will use technology and gather data to conduct research from various sources, including electronic media, and demonstrate an understanding of plagiarism by acknowledging and citing informational sources correctly. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a grade of 70% or better on research and documentation rubric component scores on an informative or persuasive speech requiring use of electronic and published source material.	83%

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4.	Students will demonstrate an ability to evaluate observations, inferences, or relationships in works under investigation. (Critical Thinking)	Seventy percent of the students will earn a score of 70% or higher on a written or oral critique of an oral presentation.	83%
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For COMM 2000, selected communication faculty assessed four learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 academic year, and students surpassed expectations for all four outcomes.

COMM 2000 Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the origins and evolution of the major mass media.	Seventy percent of students will earn 70% or better on the tests covering the origins and evolution of the major mass media.	76%
2.	Students will understand how media intersect and converge in the advancement of new media.	Seventy percent of students will earn 70% or better on the test covering how media intersect and converge in the advancement of new media.	76%
3.	Students will demonstrate awareness of the ways media influence and alter perceptions of reality.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or better on the analysis component of this written critique.	76%
4.	Students will develop critical-thinking and media-literacy skills to be more informed consumers and students of media.	Seventy percent of students will earn 70% or better on the critical-thinking and media-literacy components of the paper.	76%

For COMM 2110, selected communication faculty assessed four learning outcomes during the 2014-2015 academic year, and students surpassed minimum expectations for all four outcomes.

COMM 2110 Student Learning Outcomes Summary, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

	Student Learning Outcomes	Target	Actual Results
1.	Students will identify types of, critically analyze examples of, and participate in interpersonal interactions within business, educational, and social contexts.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the identification, analysis, and participation components of the research paper.	95%
2.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the major theories of interpersonal communication.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the oral presentation.	95%
3.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of the interpersonal communication patterns of various cultural groups.	Seventy percent of students will earn a 70% or higher on the exam covering interpersonal communication patterns of various cultural groups.	99%
4.	Students will demonstrate an understanding of interpersonal communication practices within business, educational, and social contexts.	Seventy percent of students will earn an average of 70% or higher on assignments pertaining to interpersonal communication practices.	92%

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(k) Evidence of Program viability

Based on enrollment history, retention rates, degree completion/graduation rates, and other Program Outcomes, comment on whether continued resources should be devoted to this program. Your comments should consider external factors such as the following: Are your students getting jobs? What is the job outlook for graduates? Are students prepared for the jobs they get? How is the field changing? Are the program faculty members in touch with employers and getting feedback on our students' performance? Do employers see a need for changes in the program?

The respectable increase in the number of communication studies majors (32.3% increase in full-time majors between Fall 2010 and Fall 2015) and the increased diversity of the student population (233% increase in African Americans and 50% increase in Hispanics) point to the viability of the program. Other evidence of program viability can be found Student Success Collaborative analytics. According to the Student Success Collaborative, there are currently 60 students listed as pursuing the AA in communication studies and 12 students concentrating in communication in the Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary studies. In addition, the screening functions in DegreeWorks show that there are currently 74 students minoring in communication as well. These numbers show student interest in the major as well as the need for a bachelor's program in the field as well.

Additional evidence of program viability is seen through the assessment of the program outcomes as well as the assessment of the student learning outcomes for the required courses. During the 2014-2015 academic year, all but one program was fully achieved, and one outcome was partially achieved, with only hybrid sections needing improvement. Of the 24 Area F student learning outcomes assessed during 2014-2015, students achieved 23 out of 24 outcomes (96%).

Since this is a two-year transfer program, employment rates are not applicable; however, students who earn the bachelor's degree in communication can find employment in public relations, journalism, publications, and business.

3. USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

What improvements have occurred since the last Program Review or assessment?

Dalton State College has experienced renewed growth in its student population and in the number of students choosing to major in communications studies. Since the last review, communication faculty have revised the student learning outcomes and assessment measures for all communication classes, have regularly assessed their courses in Weave, have strengthened Area F through the addition of new 2000-level communication courses in support of a proposed bachelor's degree in communication, and have developed online and hybrid courses that are especially beneficial to working students. (See also section 4 below—Review of Curriculum.)

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4. REVIEW OF CURRICULUM

What changes or revisions have been made to the Program, curriculum or Student Learning Outcomes since the last Program Review or assessment?

Since the last review, faculty have modified the student learning outcomes in COMM 1110, 2000, and 2110, bringing them into alignment with Dalton State's revised general education outcomes that were approved by the Council on General Education during 2010-2011. In addition, they created a new Area F course, COMM 1100: Human Communication, which became a required course for the degree program in 2012, and they modified the degree requirements so that communication studies majors were required to complete nine credit hours of communication courses in Area F and modified the Area F electives to bring them into better alignment with system requirements.

Though not a part of the associate's degree in communication studies, communication faculty also developed several upper-level courses to support the bachelor's programs in English and interdisciplinary studies, expanded the offerings in the minor in communication studies, and developed a communication concentration within the bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies.

In addition, communication faculty supported strategic initiatives by developing and teaching online and hybrid courses in COMM 1110, 2110, 3301, and 3801.

5. PROGRAM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Strengths:

The Associate of Arts degree in communication studies has as its foundation the COMM 1110 Fundamentals of Public Speaking course, which is an Area B required course in all Dalton State degree programs. Students are able, then, to become acquainted quite early in their college careers with theory and practice in public communication. The program also offers students freshman and sophomore coursework which is typical of that found in more comprehensive baccalaureate programs in communication studies, and the faculty encourage student research, with an impressive number of students presenting at state and regional conferences. The program has well-qualified and student-centered faculty, most of whom have more than seven years of successful college teaching experience, and some of whom have more than 20 years. Half of the faculty members have earned doctoral degrees, and two other faculty members are in the process of completing doctoral programs. Communication faculty members are very active professionally, with 100% of the communication faculty members publishing or presenting papers at state, regional, and national conference last year, and all faculty members in the department have impressive service records. In fact, one faculty member won the College's Excellence in Service Award (April 2012), one faculty member one the College's Excellence in Teaching Award (April 2013), and another won the College's Excellence in Professional Development (April 2013) award during the period of this review in addition to another communication faculty member who won the award just prior to the review period.

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Weaknesses and Concerns:

Unfortunately, the two-year nature of the program does not provide as comprehensive a curriculum as needed given the increasing demand as measured in numbers of part-time and full-time student majors. While students enroll in the program in numbers sufficient to complete and sustain the associate's degree program, those who wish to complete a bachelor's degree in the field must currently leave DSC to do so, with many choosing to leave before completing the A.A. In addition, the program would benefit from additional full-time faculty so that we can avoid increasing class sizes or expecting full-time faculty to teach overloads when we cannot find qualified part-time faculty.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP AND/OR ACTION PLANS (if needed)

Issues/Concerns:

The majority of communication students would like the college to add a bachelor's degree in the field. Support for this degree can be found in surveys conducted by the faculty, in the increase in the number of majors, and in the growing numbers of students who choose to minor in the degree. Related to this issue is the decrease in the number of communication studies graduates during the 2014/2015. To address these concerns, the communication faculty, communication chair, dean of Liberal Arts, the interim assistant vice president for academic affairs, and the interim vice president for academic affairs have been working toward the approval of a bachelor's degree in mass communication.

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Specific Action(s):

The chair of the Communication Department, the dean of the School of Liberal Arts, and the interim assistant vice president for academic affairs modified the communication degree prospectus (multiple times) and have submitted a full proposal to the Board of Regents for consideration.

Expected Outcomes:

If the degree is approved, we expect improved retention and graduation rates as associate's-level communication studies graduates will stay at Dalton State to complete their degrees.

Time-frame:

The chair of the Communication Department, the dean of the School of Liberal Arts, the interim assistant vice president for academic affairs, and the interim vice president for academic affairs are addressing questions from the system office about the proposal (March 2016) and expect that the Regents will consider the degree program in May 2016.

Person(s) Responsible:

Dr. Kris Barton, Chair of the Communication Department
Dr. Mary Nielsen, Dean, School of Liberal Arts
Dr. Barbara Tucker, Interim Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Andy Meyer, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs

Resources Needed:

None at this time.

Dalton State College
Academic Program Review

Prepared by:

Mary Nielsen

Mary Nielsen
(Signature)

March 20, 2016

Date 3/20/2016

Reviewed by:

Kris Barton and Mary Nielsen

Mary Nielsen
(Signature)

Date 3/29/16

Reviewed by Chair of Program Review Subcommittee:

Marilyn M. Helms
(Signature)

Date 3/28/16

Reviewed/Approved by Vice President for Academic Affairs:

Cindy Myers
(Signature)

Date 5/23/16



**BOARD OF REGENTS OF
THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA**

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May 17, 2016

Dr. Margaret H. Venable
President
Dalton State College
Office of the President
650 College Drive
Dalton, GA 30720

Dear President Venable:

At the May 2016 meeting, the Board of Regents approved the following request related to academic programs and personnel. Approval for the following program was effective May 10, 2016.

- Establishment of a Bachelor of Arts in Communication

If you have any questions or need additional documentation please let me know.

Sincerely,

Martha L. Venn, Ph.D.
Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Cc: Dr. Andrew S. Meyer, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs