

# Program Assessment Plan

## American University

### Academic Program: SOC: Public Communication - MA

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**Contact Person for** Pallavi Kumar

**Assessment:**

**Program Mission:** Our goal is to educate students not only in the most recent trends but in the type of thinking that will set them apart from their peers. We teach them to think strategically. We teach how to target an audience, how to create a compelling message, how to write persuasively, how to advocate in a changing world of new media and cutting edge technology. Through our courses, internships and hands-on work, we empower students with the strategic tools and insights to grasp a communication challenge and create a strategy to address it.

**Unit Website Address:** <http://www.american.edu/soc/communication/index.cfm>

**Unit's Primary Department:** Public Communication

**COLA last discussed report** 11/01/2011

**with unit on:**

#### Learning Outcome: Communication Campaign

Develop a communication campaign or plan.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010

2010-2011

2011-2012

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

Assessment Plan			
Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
A "composite" portfolio to be reviewed by faculty, alumni and or other outside reviewers. Instead of placing a burden on the students to prepare and submit portfolios, we would pull some of their work (assignments) from each class. The following assignments would be selected at random from 10 students in each course indicated. (Direct) Strategic Plan: COMM-640 Speech: COMM-644 News Release: COMM-644 Fact Sheet: COMM-644 Biography: COMM-644 RFP Proposal: COMM-642 Research Study/ Project: COMM-738 Graduate Project/ Thesis: COMM-744  <b>Measure Type:</b> Written Assignment	Students must demonstrate the outcomes that are relevant to each particular assignment. For example, Outcome 1 would be addressed in the Strategic Plan assignment as well as the RFP Proposal assignment.	Annual or every two years -- This direct measure has not as yet been implemented due to resource issues (faculty time and coordinating outside reviewers).	Yes
Comprehensive Exam. Students must demonstrate proficiency in the areas of strategic principles, research methods and communication theory. Each exam is reviewed by at least three faculty members. <b>Measure Type:</b> Quiz/ Exam	All students must pass the comps to get their degree.	Annual.	Yes
Capstone Projects (Direct).  <b>Measure Type:</b> Final Paper/ Final Project	All students must complete a capstone project with a grade of B or better.	Annual--Capstones are reviewed by the faculty member teaching the seminar course (COMM-744) and discussed in curriculum/ syllabus reviews.	Yes
Public Communication Division Awards. This is a competition which is judged by outside reviewers who are professionals in their field. (Direct)	Only high achieving students get awards.	Annual--Graduating students are nominated by faculty for their work in several categories at the	Yes

### Assessment Plan

Assessment Measure	Target	Schedule/Cycle	Active
<p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>		end of each academic year. The work is reviewed by a team that includes faculty and outside reviewers. Awards are given to those students who demonstrate the outcomes in an exemplary way.	
<p>Graduating Student Survey--assessment of student perceptions in achieving outcomes (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Survey</p>	On average students will rate their academic career at least "very good" or "excellent."	Annual--The survey has been administered annually since 2005 to all graduating students. The results are tabulated and reviewed by the Associate Dean and Division Director.	Yes
<p>Survey among internship supervisors (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Field Work/ Internship</p>	On average, internship supervisors will rate students' performance "very good" or "excellent" in all categories. The categories directly address the learning outcomes.	Each semester -- Internship supervisors (i.e. employers) currently evaluate students. This evaluation is reviewed by the faculty member responsible for internships. A uniform rating/ evaluation form will be developed in 2009-10. This form will ensure that the ratings are directly related to the outcomes.	Yes
<p>A survey of 3-5 year alumni (Indirect). To assess their transition into and preparedness for the profession. Alumni who have been working for several years should be better able to assess their education. <b>Measure Type:</b> Alumni Feedback</p>	On average, alumni will rate their academic career "very good" or "excellent."	Every five years.	Yes
<p>Periodic Curriculum Reviews/ Faculty Retreats (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	To ensure that curriculum meets the needs of the profession.	As needed--The Public Communication Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculty (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean's Advisory Council--a group of high-level alumni who are professionals in the field).	Yes
<p>Ad Hoc Research Studies--SOC Image Study, Writing Programs Survey, Career Center Survey, Alumni Focus Groups, Alumni Survey (Indirect). <b>Measure Type:</b> Survey</p>	Surveys conducted occasionally to address specific issues.	Occasional--Studies have been conducted through the Development Office and also in Research Methods classes. Two studies in particular -- the Writing Study and the Career Center Survey -- provided useful data to evaluate student perception toward our programs.	Yes

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### Related Courses

- COMM-640 - Principles of Strategic Communication
- COMM-642 - Public Communication Management
- COMM-644 - Public Communication Writing
- COMM-738 - Research Methods in Communication
- COMM-744 - Public Communication Seminar

### Learning Outcome: Research

Use qualitative and quantitative research in developing and evaluating communication plans.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010  
2010-2011

**Start Date:** 06/30/2011

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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<p>Periodic Curriculum Reviews/ Faculty Retreats (Indirect).</p> <p><b>Measure Type:</b> Other</p>	<p>To ensure that curriculum meets the needs of the profession.</p>	<p>As needed--The Public Communication Division monitors its curriculum and uses input from its faculty (many of whom are practicing professionals), adjunct faculty (who are all professionals), and alumni (including the Dean's Advisory Council--a group of high-level alumni who are professionals in the field).</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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### Related Courses

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- COMM-642 - Public Communication Management
- COMM-644 - Public Communication Writing
- COMM-738 - Research Methods in Communication
- COMM-744 - Public Communication Seminar

### Learning Outcome: Analytical Thinking

Think analytically and creatively.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010  
2010-2011

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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- COMM-744 - Public Communication Seminar

### Learning Outcome: Writing

Write clearly, concisely, and strategically in a range of formats and media.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010  
2010-2011

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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- COMM-644 - Public Communication Writing
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### Learning Outcome: Technology

Use technology in communication activities.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010  
2010-2011

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

**Outcome Status:** Active Learning Outcome

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### Learning Outcome: Presentation

Present confidently and persuasively.

**Outcome Year:** 2009-2010  
2010-2011

**Start Date:** 06/30/2010

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