



Academic Program Review 2017-18 Consultant Graduate Program Review

Program: **Communication, M.A.**

Reviewer(s) Name(s): Gonzalez, Hardin, Ulmer

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Instructions: Please offer your assessment of each item below, considering when appropriate, your knowledge of other public research institutions. While a few items solicit an open-ended response, most ask you to rate a particular characteristic of the program under review as exemplary, appropriate, or needing improvement. At the end of each section, please elaborate on any items in that section identified as exemplary or needing improvement. Additional comments are optional. You may offer recommendations for improvement on the topics covered in each section at the end of the respective section and/or you may provide all recommendations for program improvement in item 8.3 at the end of this document.

Section 1 - Program Goals and Planned Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Please evaluate the following:

- 1.1 Program goals and objectives, including those related to planned student learning outcomes (In addition to the program self-study, you may wish to consult the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* section in the UCF APR Web site.)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified item 1.1 as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program goals and planned student learning outcomes:

Continue revisiting program goals as Ph.D. program is implemented.

Section 2 - Program Coordination, Administration, and Student Support

Please evaluate the following:

- 2.1 Program administrative and management structures to effectively run program (e.g., effectiveness of program coordination, process for monitoring students' progress to degree, program handbooks, process for selecting preceptors/thesis advisors/research mentors/clinical supervisors)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 2.2 Student access to resources to support student success (e.g., advising, faculty members, appropriate technology)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 2.3 Evaluate the composition of the current program advisory board (if applicable) to be able to benefit student preparation to meet industry needs

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☒ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (2.1- 2.3) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program coordination and administration:

Section 3 – Contributing Faculty and Graduate Assistantships

- 3.1 Quality of faculty member instruction

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.2 Faculty member involvement of graduate students in research or other creative activity

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.3 Minimum faculty member qualifications required for teaching in the discipline(s) (The state and our regional accrediting body require UCF to review the qualifications of our faculty members. To inform related reviews, the department/unit has developed a statement articulating the minimum qualifications necessary to teach the discipline(s) it houses. Qualifications beyond the minimum may also be sought when hiring faculty members. We would appreciate your assessment as to whether or not the minimum qualifications identified by the unit appear consistent with common practices in the field. Please refer to the document labeled *Faculty Teaching Qualifications – Statement of Good Practices in Discipline*, located in the *Faculty Information* section in the UCF APR Web site.

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.4 If applicable, competence (considering scholarship and qualifications) among the graduate faculty members to provide instruction, advising, mentoring, research guidance and opportunities to graduate students

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 3.5 Number and amount of GTA and/or GRA assistantships compared to those found in programs of similar size at other public research universities

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (3.1- 3.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Observation: students are encouraged by faculty to collaborate on research projects and students have many opportunities to present their work on campus and at state, regional and national conventions. Also, many students register for internship credit and this level of community engagement is to be commended.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of contributing faculty:

The current number of graduate faculty is judged sufficient. A concern is raised about whether this number will stay sufficient with the implementation of the Ph.D. program. Ultimately, a new hire may be needed but in the shorter term, offering courses that enroll both M.A. and Ph.D. students will be an efficient way to utilize existing graduate faculty.

Section 4 - Program Demand and Productivity

Please evaluate the following:

- 4.1 Program's ability to meet student demand for the major

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 4.2 Enrollment levels relative to faculty size and composition

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 4.3 Program's ability and responsiveness to meet the needs of other disciplines (e.g., program offerings that support other programs)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☒ Not Applicable

- 4.4 Program's ability and responsiveness to meet local, regional, and national talent needs

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

- 4.5 Student time-to-degree in the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (3.1- 3.6) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The curriculum has been modified to be more programmatic and to facilitate timely completion.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program demand and productivity:

There are productive conversations on anticipating implications for the M.A. program upon implementation of the Ph.D. program. Such conversations should continue. An aspect of these conversations is how to recruit from the professional workforce in the greater Orlando region. Faculty should develop an action plan to initiate new recruitment strategies.

Section 5 - Program Quality

Please evaluate the following:

5.1 Criteria for program admission

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.2 Quality and rigor of student learning outcome targets (Refer to student learning outcomes assessment plans located in the *Student Learning Outcomes Assessment* section of the APR Web site.)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.3 Evidence of student learning consistent with stated program goals (including planned student learning outcomes) and discipline standards

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.4 Student licensure pass rates (if applicable)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☒ Not Applicable

5.5 Placement rates for graduates relative to disciplinary trends at other public research universities

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.6 Quality and rigor of any affiliated combination programs (if applicable, see self-study addendum); e.g., accelerated baccalaureate-to-master's degrees, combination dual degrees, graduate degrees with external departments

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☒ Not Applicable

Student Perceptions of their Overall Experience

Based upon your interactions with students in the program, please indicate how you believe students in the program view the program in the following areas:

5.7 Students' perception of the overall administration of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.8 Students' perception of advising and mentoring

Please select only one option from the list below:

☒ Exemplary ☐ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.9 Students' perception of program quality and rigor

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

5.10 Students' perceptions of the academic and collegial atmosphere of the program

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (4.1- 4.10) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Overall, students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the M.A. program. They find classes challenging and rigorous. They speak highly of faculty and staff and single out their helpfulness and level of guidance. They speak highly of their faculty advisors in shaping research projects and preparing them to apply to Ph.D. programs across the U.S.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of program quality:

Students expressed uncertainty regarding the scheduling of elective courses. We understand that schedule changes can occur for any number of reasons. We recommend that course offerings and changes be communicated to students as early as possible and explained as appropriate.

Section 6 - Student Characteristics and Quality

Please evaluate the following:

6.1 Program's ability to attract high quality students

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary
 ☒ Appropriate
 ☒ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

6.2 Incoming students’ credentials

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☐ Exemplary
 ☒ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

6.3 Student diversity

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☒ Exemplary
 ☐ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

6.4 Quality of student accomplishments compared to similar programs at other public research universities (e.g., theses, dissertations, creative works, papers presented; awards won; quality of subsequent graduate and professional programs entered; employment) (Refer to student works located in the Student Works section of the APR Web site as well as any additional student works you may have reviewed during your site visit.)

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☐ Exemplary
 ☒ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

6.5 Program relationship with alumni

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☐ Exemplary
 ☐ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☒ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (5.1- 5.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The program has been successful in recruiting across a wide range of student demographics. This is commended.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of student characteristics and quality:

Section 7 - Curriculum, Course Offerings, and Student Engagement Opportunities

Please evaluate the following:

7.1 Current curriculum’s alignment with program goals

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☐ Exemplary
 ☒ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

7.2 Design of core courses’ to provide students a solid foundation in the discipline

Please select only one option from the list below:
 ☒ Exemplary
 ☐ Appropriate
 ☐ Needs Improvement
 ☐ Don't Know
 ☐ Not Applicable

7.3 Availability and timeliness of required courses

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.4 Adequacy of student professional development opportunities (e.g., research, clinical experience, student teaching)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.5 Balance between coursework and research, practica, independent study, etc., (e.g., too many or too few courses)

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.6 Overall quality and rigor of current curriculum

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

7.7 Degree to which the program's course/activity/experiences sequence is appropriate to achieve the program's outcomes and student learning objectives.

Please select only one option from the list below:

☐ Exemplary ☒ Appropriate ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Don't Know ☐ Not Applicable

Please elaborate if you identified any items in this section (6.1- 6.7) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

The program has borrowed best practices from similar M.A. communication programs to improve both particular courses and program structure.

Please use the space below to provide recommendations, if any, in the area of curriculum, course offerings, and student engagement opportunities. Please offer any specific suggestions to further enhance the curriculum (e.g., internationalize curriculum, add interdisciplinary components, expand high impact practices)

Section 8 - Comparative Advantage

8.1 If applicable, please identify features that distinguish the program from similar programs at other institutions (e.g., curriculum, faculty member expertise, student engagement opportunities)

Faculty and students develop projects, they consider research topics—such as communication and the environment—that are region-specific. Hence, they are able to direct research that is applicable to community members and organizations.

8.2 Does the program fit a disciplinary niche? If so, please elaborate.

The current M.A. program is a generalist communication program. Students emerging from this program are prepared for Ph.D.-level work in communication.

8.3 Please discuss the program's potential for achieving discipline (re-)accreditation or (re-)certification, if available.

NA

Section 9 - Analysis and Recommendations

9.1 Please identify up to five areas of greatest program strength.

Faculty are very qualified to teach graduate-level courses.
Faculty are dedicated to student success and mentoring of students.
Faculty are willing to make curricular changes to the program based on student and faculty experience and ongoing self-assessment.
Student diversity.
Excellent leadership and collegiality.

9.2 Please identify up to five areas of greatest concern for the program (e.g., program weaknesses, barriers, threats, unique vulnerabilities).

Ongoing concern that graduate faculty should seek more external funding and support for research.
Ongoing concern that faculty should be building more partnerships within the community to leverage these partnerships for grant applications.
Consistently attracting high quality applications.
Determining best focus for faculty hiring.

9.3 Please reflect on program centrality, cost, comparative advantage, demand, and quality. Keeping these factors in mind, please offer your recommendations for program improvement considering each of the following, as appropriate:

- improvements necessary for successful continuation of program operation (if applicable)
- improvements that are not resource intensive, but that are likely to enhance program quality
- improvements that, if resources permit, could help take the program to the next level of prominence (including program rankings) and/or help enhance performance key metrics identified in the university's collective impact strategic plan

To increase the possibility of securing external funds for research, graduate faculty might attend grant-writing workshops held at regional or national communication conventions. This faculty development activity would be low-cost. A member of the graduate faculty from the program is encouraged to become a member of the IRB Committee.

With experience, the member would be a needed resource at the downtown campus. The program is also encouraged to explore a new faculty hire through the Research Cluster program sponsored by the College of Graduate Studies.

Section 10 - Executive Summary

In one to two pages, please provide your overall impression of the program, emphasizing key aspects of the review. As appropriate, contextualize your assessment in relation to best practices in the discipline of study, graduate education, the broader higher education landscape, and/or industry trends within the field.

Overall, the MA program in Communication is well managed and students speak highly of the quality of the courses and their interactions with the graduate faculty. The faculty are dedicated to the success of the M.A. program and are willing to make adjustments to curriculum and program procedures. Synergies with graduate programs in other departments are being explored and that is encouraged.

Faculty express some uncertainty over the impending move downtown and with the implementation of the Ph.D. program. At the same time, faculty are highly optimistic about the benefits of both events and they look forward to the expanded opportunities for research and teaching.

The program is supported by accomplished faculty members who are active on campus and in professional and academic associations. Graduate teaching assistants experience high-quality training and they feel prepared for their teaching assignments.

Faculty members are encouraged to be opportunistic in seeking external funds for research and programs. With a doctoral program, the expectations for external funding will only increase. With the move downtown, there are likely to be funding agencies and foundations that may emerge to support research on local exigencies. The faculty are encouraged to work closely with the College of Graduate Studies to maximize funding opportunities.