



Academic Program Review 2017-18 Consultant Undergraduate Program Review

Program: **Human Communication, B.A.**

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

Report Author(s): **Gonzalez, Hardin, Ulmer**

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.

Observation: The program goals and objectives are comparable to most generalist communication programs. However, the recent curricular revisions clarify the nature and quality of the program and reflect some of the distinctive areas of faculty expertise. The changes to the organization of the courses should be attractive to students and should allow the program to maximize the new downtown environment.

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

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 /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.

Observation: Students report that academic advising services are excellent. Our own visit with advising staff members proved them to be highly engaged with students and their concerns and highly knowledgeable with institutional online tools that assist course scheduling.

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

Section 3 – Contributing Faculty

- 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 undergraduate 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

- 3.4 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* library 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 any items in this section (3.1- 3.4) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Recommendations, if any, in the area of contributing 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 (4.1- 4.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

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

With the combination of full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants, there are adequate teaching resources to meet demand for classes. Concern was expressed regarding the proportion of adjuncts to the proportion of full-time faculty. Concern was also raised regarding the implications of Valencia faculty teaching at the downtown campus. Questions were also raised regarding the number of graduate teaching assistants once the Ph.D. program is implemented. There are many issues in flux and not all questions can be confidently answered.

Nevertheless, we recommend the development of a comprehensive hiring plan that includes each program. However tentative and flexible, the plan should include hiring priorities, estimates of teaching capacity for the

next 2-3 years, and anticipated changes in program demand. The plan should be developed to accommodate different contingencies such as sudden changes in student demand for courses.

Section 5 - Program Quality

Please evaluate the following:

- 5.1 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

- 5.2 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

- 5.3 Student licensure pass rates (if applicable)

Please select only one option from the list below:

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

- 5.4 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

- 5.5 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:

- 5.6 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

- 5.7 Students' perception of advising and mentoring

Please select only one option from the list below:

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

5.8 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

5.9 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 (5.1- 5.9) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Students describe faculty as very knowledgeable and student centered. They believe that once students discover the major, they see its applicability in the workplace. They spoke highly of the comprehensiveness of the major. However, they described courses as "being all over the place" and that sometimes they feel they "are being taught the same thing in every class." These last observations have been addressed in the revised curriculum for the major which features four tracks or specializations.

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

Students expressed a desire to leave the major with a tangible "product." This could be a research paper, a portfolio of work, a special project from a class, etc. We recommend additional discussion with students to eventually build into the major's assignments (and perhaps emerging from high impact experiences) that guarantee that students will graduate with a product that represents their acquired knowledge and skill.

With the move to the downtown campus, explore the possibility of a "community liaison" position (perhaps a faculty member with a course release) who can assist with helping faculty connect to the community and nearby businesses to facilitate high impact experiences for students.

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 (e.g., GPA)

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 (6.1- 6.5) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

While the student entry scores are below the aggregate for UCF, we believe this is not unusual for a communication program where students are often transferring from another major or institution. The recent increase in Latino and African American students reflects well on the program.

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

There is concern regarding students' willingness or ability to register for classes at the downtown campus. We believe that the central administration should provide additional recourses so that this program (and other undergraduate programs within NSC) can be adequately promoted at the main campus.

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)

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 (7.1- 7.7) as exemplary or needing improvement. Other comments are optional.

Observation: While students were aware of career planning services in student affairs, they expressed a desire to learn more about jobs and professional areas where a communication degree is ideal. While not a recommendation, we encourage faculty to make the workplace visible within particular course topics or activities.

Undergraduate research is a particular strength and the Honors in the Major initiative should continue to encourage projects with faculty. Debate and Forensics are active and accomplished. The Global Communication Initiative is commendable and additional intercultural initiatives should be encouraged.

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)

The development of the new tracks reflects faculty expertise and corresponds to the increased attention to health communication, relational communication, public activism, and communication in the workplace. This is an excellent reorganization of the courses.

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

The B.A. in Human Communication is a generalist program. The program is influenced by three flagship institutions outside of Florida which have generalist undergraduate communication programs.

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.

Knowledgeable and student centered faculty.
Loyal, diverse, and enthusiastic students.
Courses that are current in communication studies where research is ongoing.
A large population of majors who seem highly please with their decision.
A promising plan for curricular revision.

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

Potential loss of majors due to the move to the downtown campus.
Uncertain staffing needs/changes moving into the future.
Increase global communication and intercultural initiatives.

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

The B.A. in Human Communication is a significant component within NSC. With adequate promotion, the program can continue to generate and meet student demand. Generalist communication programs are popular at most colleges and universities in the U.S. and the program at UCF is well-positioned to take advantage of the new possibilities available within the downtown environment.

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 program is well-managed, the faculty are collaborative, and self-assessments have led to appropriate curricular revision. Once the revisions are implemented, the program will be comparable to human communication programs at several flagship institutions.

Students appear very satisfied with their classes and interactions with faculty. Advising for the program is excellent—the professional advisors are proactive and highly knowledgeable.

The program likely will need promotion on the main campus when the move downtown occurs. Student demand for the program should remain high. Any structural barriers that emerge in the next 2-3 years should be identified, analyzed, and removed.

A comprehensive and flexible hiring plan is needed if for no other reason than to resolve uncertainty regarding priorities for new hires and at what rank or position.

If possible, a community liaison position at the downtown campus can service not only this program but perhaps the other departments that become part of the new inter-college unit. Such a position should be designed to assist faculty with high impact experiences for students within and surrounding the downtown environment.

As the Greater Orlando area is an international and intercultural environment, initiatives in global and intercultural communication should be encouraged.