

Memorandum of Understanding
2005 Program Review
Communication Department
College of Arts and Sciences
May 6, 2005

Members of the Communication Department faculty, the Division Chair of Humanities, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences met with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on May 6, 2005, to review and discuss issues resulting from the Communication Department program review of Fall, 2003. The self-study report by the Communication Department (on file) and the report by the external reviewer (on file) were the basis for the discussion. Summary points and an action plan for the Communication Department follow.

Part I. Summary Points

- The Communication Department has undergone dramatic growth in the number of majors since 1990, increasing almost 400% in those years (to about 150 from 30). It also serves greater numbers of students in service courses and numbers of students who choose to minor in Communication.
- Faculty growth has not kept up with student numbers, so upper division courses in Communication have had to be closed to non-majors over the past few years.
- The Communication curriculum has been revised to increase its identity, focus its efforts, and to meet the standards developed by the National Communication Association. The most recent faculty member has been hired to address the emphasis of intercultural communication.
- Students in the program tend to be enthusiastic about the program, their courses, and the support of the faculty. They also identify a culture of closeness between faculty and students as significant in contributing to their satisfaction with the program.
- Past leadership of the department has been viewed as excellent by students and administrators.
- This department has worked hard to support the Service Learning component of the campus and has incorporated many Service Learning projects throughout the community into its curriculum and projects.
- The department has received commendation across the campus for sponsoring the annual Diversity Symposium, giving both faculty and students a chance to present research on issues of diversity.

Part II. Plan of Action

1. The department will continue its work to refine its mission. The mission needs to focus the energies and curriculum more succinctly than what has been accomplished so far. It is not possible to address all nine areas of skills and knowledge identified at the Hope College Conference; therefore, a few areas need to be identified as areas of expertise and direction for the department. Care also must be taken that whatever pressures there are to develop a media/journalism focus, these pressures need to be balanced against the realities of the UH Hilo budget.
2. The VCAA will support continued growth in the department by hiring one new faculty member for every new 500 SSH's generated.
3. If the department chooses to emphasize the area of Media/Journalism as a major area of focus, it needs to address the cost of such a program by turning to external community resources as well as to university financial resources.
4. At another time more appropriate for this type of discussion, the department and the administration need to resolve the issue of total faculty commitment to the mission and direction of the department.
5. The department must continue its efforts to assess the learning outcomes of its majors. A good beginning step has been taken, but progress in assessing student outcomes must occur before the next visit of the WASC accreditation team in 2008. The department faculty should be prepared to answer the question, "What body of knowledge can you guarantee your graduates know?" The department should re-visit the capstone seminar course originally offered as a 494 course in order to capitalize on its obvious assessment potential.
6. The administration is aware that the department could use more lecturers, but there is simply not enough money to hire them in the current budget. Also, increased compensation for department chairs will not happen unless the Division Chair system disappears. The department can consider a course release for the department chair.

Signatures

Catherine B. Becker, Chair and Associate Professor

Date

Ronald D. Gordon, Professor

Date

Iva R. Goldman, Associate Professor

Date

Steven Y. Miura, Associate Professor

Date

Yoshitaka Miike, Assistant Professor

Date

Kenith Simmons, Professor & Chair of Humanities Division

Date

Randy Hirokawa, Dean of College of Arts and Sciences

Date

Stephen Hora, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Date