UNLV

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

Program Review Self-Study

Program Reviewed: Communication Studies

Degrees: B.A., M.A.

Program Chair or Director: Dr. Michael Bruner

Dean: Dr. Robert Ulmer

Date of Report: January 4, 2019

I. Program Description

A. College/Department/Program

1. College or School: Urban Affairs
2. Unit: Web Address: https://www.unlv.edu/communicationstudies
3. Program being reviewed:
   B.A. and M.A. in Communication Studies

B. Primary individual completing this worksheet

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C. Other faculty involved in writing this report

The tenure-track faculty first met as a whole to agree upon process. A meeting was then held with Academic Program Analysts Gail Griffin and Eleonora Carroll, with Dr. Tara McManus, undergraduate coordinator, and Dr. Donovan Conley, graduate coordinator, in attendance. Then, after co-producing a first draft, which was shared with the Dean and Academic Program Analysts, as well as with Dr. McManus and Dr. Conley, we met in an open faculty meeting to obtain feedback and integrate input, with faculty having received the rough draft one week in advance.

D. Catalog Description

"The Communication Studies program promotes the growth of knowledge about communication and its uses to achieve individual, group, and societal goals. Students learn about the functions, processes, channels, and influences of communication and can specialize in interpersonal or public communication. Studies in communication work to acquire proficiency in critical analysis, argumentation and presentation (oral and written), and research methods."

As a faculty we could enhance this messaging to attract more students, particularly those interested in clear professional outcomes. Elsewhere, for example on our website, we have language emphasizing ethical citizenship, community engagement, and the importance of communication to all professions, with representative lists of where our students are employed, which includes leadership positions in law, business, politics, all of which is central to the mission of the university. Integrating some of that material here would likely increase the attractiveness of the major.

II. Centrality to Mission

A. Department/Program Mission

What is the program's mission statement?

Our department's mission statement lines up nicely with the university's mission statement, as well as with university's learning objectives, the latter of which emphasizes *communication*, analytical thinking, lifelong learning, and citizenship and ethics (www.unlv.edu/provost/gen-ed/uulo, see Appendix for all sources, arranged in cited order).

Taken from our website, our mission statement reads as follows: "Our mission is to help students, members of the Las Vegas community, and citizens from all walks of life, develop healthy interpersonal relationships, manage small groups and organizations, speak with knowledge and confidence, critically evaluate and present complex data, and ensure the development of sound public policy."

Faculty have requested the following amendments to our mission statement:

"Our mission is to help students, members of the Las Vegas community, and citizens from all walks of life, develop healthy interpersonal relationships, manage small groups and organizations, speak with knowledge and confidence, understand the theory and practice of public advocacy, evaluate and present complex data, and ensure the development of sound public arguments."

We are now in the middle of my second year as Chair. In the first, we focused in a targeted way on the following key metrics in UNLV's Top Tier initiative: retention, graduation rates, and community impact. As introductory examples of our efforts, detailed in what follows, we restructured our largest course, COM 101 (oral communication), moving it from a DFWI rate of near 30% to 15%. We worked with advising to streamline how prerequisites impact students seeking to move into the major. We developed a new critical thinking course for the General Education requirement in analytical thinking called Critical Thinking and Public Argument (COM 104), which contains a community focus, and we developed a new graduate track in Community Engagement. As further evidence of our focus on community impact, faculty are working to complete the development of a fully online degree available in 2019-2020, which dovetails nicely with MGM's recent online tuition reimbursement program for their workforce.

As we continue to invent and test new courses, we are also moving to assist UNLV's Top Tier Initiative by increasing investments in research assistance, enhanced professional development budgets, fully funded mini-conferences, paid guest scholars, the assignment of research and/or grading assistants, and other internally funded measures, simultaneously expanding the range of student learning.

We have excellent post-graduate placement for our graduate students given our established expertise in public argument (e.g., the translation of complex information into understandable prose, the effective articulation of public policy), effective relational communication (e.g., ensuring police/victim interactions ameliorate trauma, properly managing interpersonal online relationships), and organizational resiliency (e.g., coordinating stakeholder communication, environmental communication, health communication).

The majority of faculty are presently engaged in significant curricular refashioning to help improve student learning, retention, and graduation rates, as we seek to move increasingly toward active, measured learning models. Our goal is to reach measured excellence in all our curricular offerings, ensuring that our courses assist the university in achieving stated learning objectives and Top Tier metrics.

B. Department/Program Mission Alignment

Briefly describe how this program is aligned to the mission of the University as described in the most recent mission statement, UNLV Mission (source: https://www.unlv.edu/toptier/vision), and how it supports achievement of the institution's mission:

The top-tier university mission statement reads as follows: "UNLV's diverse faculty, students, staff, and alumni promote community well-being and individual achievement through education, research, scholarship, creative activities, and clinical services. We stimulate economic

development and diversification, foster a climate of innovation, promote health, and enrich the cultural vitality of the communities that we serve." Our department's mission statement, as well as the tenor of our website, aligns with this statement. It speaks of the importance of healthy interpersonal and group relations, sound public policy, and healthy communication environments.

We are fostering innovation in community well-being through aggressive course development, linking the department to relevant urban issues and enhancing our community impact, and helping to develop relevant Top Tier graduate education in the College and the Department. A central example is our new doctoral-level course in Qualitative Field Methods, to be offered for the first time in spring 2019, where graduate students learn to take their research into the community. We are working collaboratively with Public Policy on transdisciplinary graduate offerings.

C. Core Themes

Describe how the program supports UNLV's Core Themes (source: https://www.unlv.edu/provost/nwccu/core-themes):

The University's core themes are (1) student achievement; (2) research, scholarship, and creative activity; (3) academic health center; and (4) community partnerships. We are fully relevant to theme 1, relevant to theme 2, currently uninvolved in theme 3, and increasingly relevant to theme 4.

Communication Studies arguably plays a central role in UNLV's Top Tier efforts. Regarding student engagement, retention, and graduation rates, we carry a major basic course responsibility for the university. When students speak, empathize, and reason at a certain level, then they are more likely to succeed in college and in life. We are also central to most of the University's targeted learning outcomes, including lifelong learning, critical thinking, citizenship and ethics, and *communication*.

Reaching well over 3,000 first-year students annually, we take our basic course responsibility very seriously. Maintaining appropriate course rigor, we have now added active learning components to COM 101 (oral communication), COM 102 (interpersonal communication), and our new COM 104 (critical thinking). These changes have already helped to move our COM 101 course from a DFWI rate (i.e., the percentage of students who receive grades of D+ or worse, withdraw, or take an incomplete) that was among the worst in the university, at about 28%, to one of the best: in spring and summer of 2018 we got to 18.5% and 15% respectively (source: *The UNLV Analytics DFWI rate*). Still a limited test, we are currently transforming all three of our basic courses (COM 101, COM 102, and COM 104) into active, measured learning models in agile form (i.e., an "agile" course is one that is offered in online, hybrid, and standalone formats). We are moving, in other words, away from large lectures with multiple choice exams to courses with clearly articulated final learning objectives, where active learning assignments, based on clear rubrics, ensure that students achieve those objectives. Across all basic course sections, we seek a measured learning rate of 85% and an average DFWI rate of 15% or better, always in search of better learning experiences for our students.

By fall 2019, therefore, we are actively planning to have agile models in all three of our first-year courses. Faculty will be in ongoing discussions regarding additional curricular refashioning in 2019-2020, when we will likely pilot agile model courses in a newly designed COM 21x (applied communication for non-majors), a revised COM 216 (introduction to communication studies as a major), and a revised COM 217 (argumentation and debate).

COM 101, 102, 104, 216, and 217 are all now General Education courses, as of last year, and we are also developing a series of courses in applied rhetoric. Rhetoric, as traditionally conceived, is the art of persuasion, and we are developing a series of courses to aid students who wish to apply the arts of persuasion in their communities. We have approved a new course in advanced public speaking (COM 203), and there are other courses in development for 2019-2020: public advocacy (COM 3xx), and a capstone class in service learning and advocacy (COM 4xx).

All of these changes to our undergraduate program are designed to increase our educational excellence, enhance retention, improve graduation rates, and increase our community impact, all while meeting UNLV's learning objectives, especially in communication proper.

Regarding student achievement at the graduate level, we have just developed a new M.A. track in Community Engagement, and three new 700 level graduate courses will be delivered in this new graduate track within the next two semesters (i.e., applied mixed field methods, rhetoric and everyday life, and advanced policy argumentation). This will be useful in integrating communication scholarship more richly into the College, the University, and the larger Las Vegas community. It is also directly related to one of UNLV's Top Tier metrics: community impact.

On the excellent success of our graduate students, see G2 below.

Our nationally ranked policy debate team, finishing 8th overall in the nation last year, continues to bring outstanding press to the university, helping to brand our department as "Argumentation Nation." We also have two new student engagement clubs: (1) United Conversations Network, which is a public argument club with about thirty active members that combines workshops on ethical argument with open forums on controversial topics, and (2) the Millennial Club, which is a public advocacy student group with about ten members that works with top business executives across the U.S. to promote the reputation of Millennials and the newest generation of college students.

Regarding core theme two: research, scholarship, and creative activity. Our faculty remain broadly productive, though this is an area ripe for growth. In the current academic year (2018-2019) our nine tenure track faculty have already published one monograph (Peter Lang), one edited book (U. Alabama), and twenty-four peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. In press is another monograph (U. of South Carolina), another edited book (U. Alabama), and eight peer-reviewed essays and book chapters. We are producing knowledge in public persuasion, interpersonal relationship development, conflict resolution, organizational resilience, science and environmental communication, media and identity, and communication and health.

We do not yet have sufficient synergies among our social scientists to attract significant grants, but we are starting on this path by ramping up our use of dedicated research facilities, hiring in applied organizational research, and focusing on transdisciplinary community engagement (e.g., with MGM, the Equal Rights Commission of Nevada, the Vegas Golden Knights). This year our research facilities are being used more regularly on projects related to science communication (Bloomfield) and interpersonal communication and technology (Pennington), and we plan to have our next tenure-track hires complement such work. Our social science research appears in leading communication journals, such as *Communication Studies*, *Human Communication Research*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Non-Verbal Behavior*, and *Argumentation and Advocacy*.

Regarding core theme three: our department has not yet been asked to participate, nor has our present network allowed us to help, as we could, with "academic health." Our faculty are in a good position to assist here, particularly in the area of communicative health.

Regarding core theme four: we are moving in the direction of community engagement. Last year we hired Dr. Carlos Flores, a full-time faculty in residence (i.e., a Ph.D. holding faculty member who focuses on a project, such as debate or community engagement, instead of publishable research) to lead this effort. In addition to our new M.A. track in Community Engagement, we built a new General Education course in critical thinking (COM 104) that includes a clear community focus. The debate team has established and grown multiple community partnerships over the past decade with the Clark County School District and multiple regional schools with their urban debate league, annual summer debate camp, and debate tournament hosting. In addition, the team hosts public debates for multiple community partners and stakeholders. Also, as noted, we have just developed one of three additional courses in applied rhetoric, and we are considering a certificate in public advocacy.

Also related to community impact, we are revising our internship program. In the last self-study a healthy internship program was the goal, and by 2011-2012 we had approximately fifteen internships for our approximately 75 qualified majors. By 2017, however, we were down to one (source: COM 499 Enrollment History, e-mail 10/1/2018). In early 2018, Mr. Bill Belk agreed to re-envision the program, and already we have internship opportunities with the Las Vegas Golden Knights, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, Las Vegas City Hall, The Brookings Institution, and others that are equally impressive. We are also working to establish a permanent institutional framework to ensure the internship program remains healthy as personnel shift. As of this writing, this framework includes an identified lecturer who serves as internship coordinator with clearly defined internship targets, with the undergraduate coordinator ultimately responsible for helping to spread the word through Dr. Tara McManus's newly developed group e-mails to all of our undergraduates on a regular basis.

Our faculty, together with other researchers in the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, work with a wide range of public partners on issues including youth homelessness, domestic violence, equal rights, food access, and so on. For example, Dr. Guthrie worked last year with Criminal Justice and Public Policy faculty both with MGM and the Sands Corporation on youth homelessness issues, and she also works with the Nevada Equal Rights Commission on sexual harassment and discrimination policies. Dr. Thompson continues to run our urban debate league in the Clark County School District, and we are working to expand our internship and service learning networks with Social Work. We are actively expanding our community outreach efforts through the hiring of Dr. Flores, assisting with the College's new Urban Adventure course, and otherwise integrating communication skills across departments.

Our department, then, while already engaged in the community, is actively seeking to expand this role significantly over the coming years. In fact, it is central to our brand.

D. Excellence
List and briefly describe five highlights or areas of excellence of the program:

First, we have a nationally-ranked NDT/CEDA policy debate team, whose Director, Dr. Jacob Thompson, received the Coach of the Year Award in 2018 and whose team ended last year ranked 8th in the nation, with a pair of veteran debaters ending the season ranked as the 5th best debate partners in the country. We have invested in the program by hiring a full time lecturer as Assistant Debate Coach. This year they have a team ranked in the top 10 at the end of the fall semester. The team overall is consistently in the top twenty in a field of over 100, and our competitive trajectory has been steadily upward. *Source: UNLV Debate Team National Rankings*.

Second, <u>we provide excellent support for teaching teachers</u>. This assists the entire university in retention, graduation rates, and post-graduate placement. We have a strong reputation for our in-depth supervision and training of graduate student teachers (GTAs), and our teachers are exceptionally strong in the classroom, at least according to peer reviews and student assessments. See our placement of teachers at community colleges and universities (G2 below). *Source: GA Alumni List*.

Third, <u>we are excellent at placing our M.A. students in the best communication doctoral program in the country, as well as in very good jobs outside of academia</u>, with twenty-seven M.A. graduates being sent to top doctoral programs in the last six years, including one last year who received a $25k signing bonus to join the team at the University of Maryland, and another being admitted with full funding to the University of Illinois. Last year one MA graduate became an Associate Producer for Fox 5 in Las Vegas, while another became the Account Outreach Manager for a large Nevada solar energy company. In addition to such regular successes, our debate team graduates have leadership positions in politics and law across the state.

Fourth, <u>the faculty are highly motivated and innovative</u>. Just this year alone, faculty initiatives led to the creation of a new M.A. track, two new General Education courses in critical thinking, a completely re-designed COM 101, six new online courses, two new graduate courses, active model pilots for COM 102 and COM 104, and working teams for assessment and internships. Faculty are self-starting, given their individual motivations, and together they work hard to ensure courses are relevant and impactful. Truly, this broad-based collegiality and entrepreneurial spirit bodes well for the future of the program.

Fifth, <u>we are increasingly excellent in community engagement</u>, with various faculty members actively involved in some aspect of community work, such as Bill Belk, Emma Bloomfield, Carlos Flores, Jennifer Guthrie, and Jacob Thompson, and others eager to begin participating actively. Belk helps with internships; Bloomfield helps scientists and others translate complex information for public consumption; Flores works with at-risk youth and youth activists; Guthrie works with domestic violence victims and other at-risk populations; and Thompson maintains our urban debate program and otherwise brings public argument skills to the broader community. The department will continue in these and similar efforts, seeking an increasingly significant community impact.

III. External Demand for Program
A. Stakeholders

1. Who are the main local and regional stakeholders of your educational programs, i.e., employers and entities benefiting from these programs, hiring the graduates, or admitting them to graduate and/or professional programs?

    Major employers who regularly hire our students include, but certainly are not limited to, MGM, NV Energy, the Vegas Golden Knights, the United Way and other key employers in the Las Vegas area. They are hired as communication directors for state senators, congresspersons, councilpersons, and municipal agencies; as judges and lawyers in Nevada; as teachers at the College of Southern Nevada; as students in top doctoral programs in the country; as professors around the country, and in similar positions of communication leadership.

2. What are specific stakeholder needs for graduates?

    It is well-known that communication skills are those most coveted by employers, if by those skills we mean the ability to speak and reason well, all while being able to convey complex information

to multiple audiences with equal impact. To that end, we provide precisely those skills to help individuals prepare to become civic leaders of all types through the development of critical thinking and research skills, practical rhetorical skills, and practical relational skills.

B. Needs for Graduates and Future Plans

1. What are the anticipated needs of the program graduates over the next 3-5 years?
   We are making many new choices that have potential long-term impacts for the graduate program, specifically through the redesign of our basic courses.

   Our faculty desire a robust graduate program, which on average has yielded about 15.5 M.A. students per year, though the number has been increasing to about 18.4 M.A. students per year since 2015 (source: *M.A. program review, PeopleSoft Table PS-LV-CNR_STDNT_CR*, See V below). Major external recruitment efforts last year resulted in a jump in applications from about twenty in 2017 to about fifty in 2018.

   We believe demand for the M.A. program will remain steady, given growth projections at UNLV and our adjusting our national brand to emphasize community engagement and applied communication. In a recent survey of our undergraduate students, although almost 58% of respondents stated they were "not at all familiar" with our graduate program, while 33% stated that they had "considered it and are interested" (source: *Default Report, Current Undergrad* Q6). Areas of reported interest are decidedly applied: small group communication, conflict resolution, intercultural communication, political communication, digital/social media, and organizational communication, with an emphasis on community engagement (source: *Default Report, Current Undergrad* Q2 & Q7). Thus, better advertising our graduate program while building applied capacity may yield even more internal candidates, particularly if our major grows. We also have instituted a 50 graduate application standard per year, and to support that effort we now have an advertising and swag budget, a newly redesigned graduate webpage, and established recruitment procedures.

   Over the last ten years the department has employed approximately 14 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and we are starting to make choices where the long-term consequences are yet unknown. We had an efficient basic course system based on large lectures with breakout sessions or Scantron exams, but they had poor retention outcomes, and so we are moving to models of active learning that have already produced positive results in retention and learning. Our COM 101 and COM 102 sections fill well before semesters begin, so it is not a matter of demand: it is a matter of first proving product excellence in our pilot revisions and then securing resources sufficient to deliver high quality basic course education. We believe we are nearing such excellence in our new COM 101, at least given last summer's assessment numbers. COM 102 and COM 104 pilots will continue to be polished and re-assessed through 2018-2019, at which point we hope to secure equal excellence there as well.

   Regarding graduate research, our students occasionally publish with faculty, regularly present at national and regional communication conferences, and work as research assistants on projects ranging from domestic violence and science communication to public health and policy projects.

2. What changes to the program will those require?
   First, we need to ensure our basic courses are of exceptionally high quality. To that end we continue to polish and revise COM 101, which is now in agile model form (i.e., offered in online, hybrid, and standalone sections) and garnering solid numbers. We have already gone through two helpful revisions of COM 102 and COM 104, and the third iteration, to be accomplished in spring

and summer 2019, will turn those two classes into agile models, which we will continue to modify until they too meet our 15% DFWI and 85% measured learning standard.

We will have more evidence of the relative success of our new graduate student recruitment efforts over the course of the next two years, and we have a new graduate director, Dr. Jennifer Guthrie, assuming that role in fall 2019. We will also continue to build our offerings in community engagement, assuming that will also help to attract students to our program from across the nation. Usually we only attract a handful of external applicants, and our current plan seeks to address that challenge (e.g., sending M.A. ambassadors with clear recruiting objectives to national and regional conferences, providing a recruitment budget).

C. Success of Graduates

1. What steps does the department take to facilitate the success of graduates (e.g., internships, career fairs, employment talks, etc.)?

Our department is well-known for the care and close attention all graduate students receive, we have enhanced these efforts over the course of the last year, and we continue to work with our College partners to support student job placement. For example, our College advising office holds career-oriented events aimed at preparing students for the job interview process; we are active in the Graduate School Professional Development Academy, regularly encouraging our students to pursue the program; we have a Millennial Club that gets students in contact with highly placed corporate executives; and our internship program has been re-envisioned, with a goal of 15 internships a year for our 200 upper division majors by 2019-2020, and in 2018-2019 to place a minimum of 8 interns. This supports the Top Tier metric of post-graduation placement.

2. Discuss the placements of recent graduates:

Upon my arrival as Chair in July 2017, our department engaged in surveys of all of our undergraduates, current and former graduate students, and alumni (source: *Default Report*). As part of that effort, Dr. Conley, our current graduate coordinator, compiled an excellent placement list of our graduate students. According to our *GA Alumni List* we know where 62 of our 91 graduate students work, and they work in a wide range of industries. For example, three graduates have gone on to become directors of university debate programs, and three others have become high school debate coaches. A sample taken randomly from every ten on our list includes the following: Staff Attorney at Kid's Voice; Ph.D. University of Maryland; Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice; Instructor, College of Southern Nevada; Assistant Professor, California Polytechnic; Corporate Training and Development Officer ASNY; Assistant Professor, Louisiana State University.

We collect our own employment data for our graduate students. At UNLV, data is collected on undergraduates from Career Services, Academic Assessment, and Alumni Relations. Source: "Graduating Senior Exit Survey."

3. If the department or program does not have placement information on graduates, what is the plan to implement gathering that information?

We do collect that data for graduate students and will continue to do so through the graduate director position. We believe undergraduate placement should be tracked centrally, as it is now, though we shall track that data ourselves carefully.

4. Do placements match stakeholder needs as identified above in A of this section?

We believe our graduate placements directly reflect stakeholder needs, though the data for our undergraduates is, at present, based on the arguments provided by broad institutional data points.

5. If not, please explain: N/A.

6. Does the program assess whether the graduates are meeting employer's needs?
   We are working on this at the College level. The department does not gather and assess employer satisfaction data. We know from word of mouth and the broad range of positions held by our graduates that the vast majority are excellent employees who hold leadership positions.

7. If not, what will the program do to place this NSHE-required assessment in place and by what date?
   Please see our new *Assessment Plan* (XI B below; see also the source "2015-2017 Undergraduate and Graduate Assessment Plans" in the Appendix).

8. Additional comments:
   We are very pleased with the success and placement of our graduate students and their substantial community impact. We believe the new MA track in Community Engagement, in addition to our moves toward applied and community-relevant research, will enhance and clarify our national reputation among graduate programs in Communication Studies.

IV. Program Resources. (Numbers provided by the Office of Decision Support).

A. Faculty Time
1. Faculty and GA Resources

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Number of Full Time Faculty	6	6	6	6	8	8
Number of State-Supported GA lines	12	13	13	15	10	11
Number of PTIs	1	3	1	0	0	0
Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty (lecturers and visiting lecturers)	8	8	8	8	9	12

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Percent of Classes Taught by Full Time Faculty	16.87	16.09	18.52	20.73	26.97	23.60
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of State-Supported GA lines	43.37	37.93	40.74	40.24	33.71	29.21
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of PTIs	1.2	1.15	1.23	0.00	0.00	0.00
Percent of Classes Taught by Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty	33.73	36.78	33.33	35.37	38.20	46.07
Other: includes theses, independent studies, and other courses taught under the category ADM (administration)**	4.81	8.04	6.16	3.65	1.11	1.11

Sum of above categories to overall class count	99.99	99.99	99.99	99.99	99.99	99.99

** See appendix (A: Faculty Time, providing by the Office of Institutional Support)

	Fall 2015	Spring 2016	Fall 2016	Spring 2017	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Student Credit Hours Taught by Full Time Faculty	1104	891	1116	1179	1270	1248
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of State-Supported GA lines	1806	1635	1719	1650	1524	1077
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of PTIs	60	51	72	0	0	0
Student Credit Hours Taught by Number of FIRS & Visiting Faculty	3507	3975	4095	4038	4011	4371

2. For other non-major courses – e.g., upper division for the college or university, estimate the unit's resources allocated to them: our faculty teach courses in the Honors College and in support of the GUA 100 and 300 courses. Historically speaking, the resources required are roughly equal to one lecturer line.

B. Budget
1. Please fill in the table with three years of financial expenditures to be used to respond to questions 2 and 3 below.

Budget category	FY 15–16	FY 16–17	FY 17–18
State Operating (2101)	$27, 437.16	$29,546.65	$40,604.85*
Student Fees	$0	$0	$0
Indirect Cost Recovery	$0	$0	$0
Self-supporting	$36,238.12	$39,579.27	$70,499.26
Total Allocations	$63,675.28	$69,125.92	$111,104.11*
Number of Graduate Assistantships (including GAs on grants)	12.5	13	12.5

*The increase in expenditures has been matched by increases in income, as described in detail in the following question (B2).

2. Are these resources sufficient to meet the degree program's instructional and scholarship needs?
Our general operating state budget is fine. Last year we had a state operating budget of $18,900 (source: *Manager Balance – Account-FIN-CR-PG06417 July 2018*). Our salary budgets are competitive, and overall out budget is healthy. As of September 28, 2018, our department has a positive self-supporting balance of $148,767.47 (source: *Manager Balance – Budgeted reserves September 2018*).

Our department is innovative and entrepreneurial, enjoying and responsibly developing two sources of income: royalties from basic course textbook/reader sales and summer course offerings (see section D below).

Regarding personnel, we are especially grateful to Provost Chase and Dean Ulmer for recent and generous resources, including an open rank tenure track position and several visiting lines. This has allowed us to pilot new basic courses while further developing our scholarly identity. Because we will likely have two new lecturers as a result of our moving to provide an online degree by fall 2019 (i.e., one previously promised as a line to accompany our present search for an Assistant Professor of Applied Organizational Communication, and another to be funded through a mechanism provided by online education), we believe we need no additional faculty resources to accomplish our goals in 2018-2019.

That said, we have no way of fully tracking new demand for our major in advance of our offering our degree online; therefore, we will carefully monitor that demand with the assistance of College advising and respond accordingly.

3. If not, approximately what line items and amounts would be needed?

To assist UNLV in the Top Tier initiatives to which it is committed, and to help meet present demand at the basic course level, it will help to get our new tenure track faculty in Applied Organizational Communication and our two new visiting lecturers in place as soon as possible. This will allow us to meet increasing demand for COM 101 and to cover our remaining 400 students in COM 102 who remain in passive learning environments.

As long as our major remains level, though we are confident it will grow, especially with our new online degree option and more popular basic courses, as well as the addition of our new Applied Organizational Communication faculty member and (hopefully) a senior replacement for Dr. David Henry in Applied Rhetoric next year, we should be good for the next year or two, capable of managing growth in the major anywhere from 40 to 60 students. That said, we would hope to maintain our current tenure track faculty/student ratio at approximately 40 to 1, given the intensive writing and hands-on coaching provided in our upper-division courses, if indeed the major grows. Our upper division courses, as well as our basic courses to a lesser degree, are writing intensive, and performance intensive, which means time intensive. Our basic course break out sections and our upper division courses are capped anywhere from 25 to 30 for precisely this reason. We have an obligation to ensure our students are excellent communicators in all modes, and this requires hands-on mentoring; therefore, expanding course caps in many instances is pedagogically unsound. That said, we are expanding course caps in classes where feasible, providing teaching assistance as needed. All of these changes directly relate to Top Tier goals in retention, graduation rates, post-graduation placement, and community impact.

C. General Education

1. If your program or unit offers General Education courses, please estimate what portion of the unit's resources are allocated to this area:

Our department plays an increasingly significant role in UNLV's General Education system, with potential for dramatic growth in COM 104 (critical thinking), now capped at 60. Our outstanding debate team is a natural partner for this class, as well as for COM 217 (argumentation and debate).

Over 1600 students take COM 101 each year, and the course is arguably central to the university when it comes to communication learning objectives. That said, COM 102, COM 104, COM 216 and COM 217 are our other four General Education courses, currently reaching an additional 1500 students a year.

Regarding the resources devoted to General Education: two lecturers are fully devoted to COM 102, our visiting assistant professor works about .25 of his workload in COM 104, and one lecturer and one

FIR teach .5 each in COM 217. Four GTAs currently support COM 102 and COM 104, or 33%, since 2 of our 14 GTAs do not teach but support debate. So 14.5% of faculty resources and 33% of GTA resources support General Education at present outside of COM 101, though COM 104 could easily grow, as one of very few options for fulfilling the analytical thinking General Education requirement for the University.

If we include COM 101, however, then we have to add four lecturers and eight GTAs devoted to that in 2018, though this is a historically low number of offerings since 2005 (source: *UNLV Basic Course Enrollment (2003-2013): A History and Analysis*). This would constitute 21% of faculty resources and 66% of GTA resources.

Therefore, to cover our first year courses, COM 216 and COM 217, we devote 35.5% of faculty and 100% of GTA resources.

2. Does the combined load from A and B above affect your unit's ability to offer courses for its major? If so, please describe:
At present we are fully capable of delivering our major and our basic course responsibilities, though we believe there is unmet demand, especially for our online offerings. There were bottlenecks in COM 400 and COM 216, but we have expanded our summer offerings of these courses and appear to be back on a smooth track. Our classes all fill, save for a small handful of upper division rhetoric courses, and, given projected hiring in 2018 (i.e., two visiting lecturers and a new tenure track professor), we presently have the capacity to grow 10% to 15% percent without stressing the system.

We would hope for careful tracking of the growth of our major over the next several years, should growth occur, to ensure we do not exceed that capacity.

D. Other Funding and Resources

1. Is funding from other sources sufficient to assist the program in achieving its outcomes?
For the sake of enhanced student learning through investment support, we are working diligently to secure consistent internal income, since these monies go directly back to students and faculty in the form of awards, travel support, and research support. At present our reserves are healthy, at approximately $149k, and income and expenditures about equal at $75k for 2018-2019

The only current threat to our budget is the need for long-term funding for our excellent debate team. See D3 below.

Our department enjoys two major sources of discretionary income, in addition to other minor sources. First, we retain royalties from uniquely crafted materials for our basic courses. Second, we receive approximately $100 for each student who takes a course with us in any of our three summer mini-terms. Summer monies support faculty development, while royalty monies support student development. Our income in 2017-2018 was $60k, and we are projecting an increased income in 2018-2019.

Our internally generated income seems secure given our relatively large basic course delivery system and enhanced summer offerings.

Regarding gifts, we enjoy a large gift from Sanford Berman for the Berman Chair in Language and Thought. The gift, in the amount of $400k, generates about $17k annually for departmental use in areas outlined in our Memorandum of Agreement, and our current balance of expendable funds is about $80k. Those funds are utilized to ensure a vibrant intellectual culture in the department around

rhetoric and general semantics. We are launching a biannual conference on rhetoric, subjectivity, and politics, with the first scheduled for next March, and the holder of the Berman Chair – Dr. Donovan Conley as of spring 2019 – shall maintain our course in Language and Thought, as explicitly requested in our Memorandum of Agreement.

In sum, we believe that through our own internal efforts we can generate sufficient income to pursue the short and long term goals of the department and the College of Urban Affairs, save for the need to secure long-term support for our debate team. Given our expected inclusion of two visiting lecturers and a new tenure track faculty member in 2018-2019, we also believe we can manage the transition to offering our new online B.A. degree with minimal additional support. If the department does grow, though, over the next ten years, say, from 400 to 600 majors, then we would hope that would translate, as our hiring has in the past, to five tenure track lines (40 x 5 = 200), three lecturers, and one FIR, as that would maintain our current student/faculty ratio across all offerings.

2. If not, which funding streams could most reasonably be increased to help the program attain its outcomes?
Our focus is on excellence and scalability. Given our work in basic critical thinking education, once we have excellence in COM 104, the faculty could consider developing something along the lines of a MOOC for summer, perhaps a large number of bridge course sections for new college students on critical thinking and citizenship, or perhaps an introduction to communication best practices for non-majors. A course that attracted 200 students, for example, would generate $20k, minus expenses for grading assistance. Five such courses could pay for the debate team, for example, while two could replace lost revenue from royalties.

3. Has any new donor revenue been generated since the last program review?
Very little, though efforts are ongoing. The Berman Chair was established in 1999, the Berman Debate Forum Fund was established in 2007, and the Berman Debate Scholarship Fund was established in 2009. These gifts translated into an annual budget of over $100,000, split into $60,000 annually for operations/travel and $40,000 for scholarships. The team received this money in the form of a gift each year on July 1 from the trust of Dr. Sanford Berman. These annual gifts, plus the promise of the future creation of a $2.5 million endowment gift were established via Memorandums of Understanding with Dr. Berman, who passed away in 2015. However, on April 23, 2018, we were informed that we would no longer received donations, or the endowment, effective immediately, and this in the wake of the team's best showing in its history. As a result of this action, Dr. Thompson has worked closely with the Dean to secure funding for the 2018-2019 season, and a few donors have stepped up to help with that effort, but we are actively seeking through the Dean's office a major gift to help secure the future health of our debate team.

It is crucial to the success of our department and its mission regarding ethical public argument to ensure the ongoing fiscal health of our debate team. $100k annually is what it takes to run a nationally competitive program, in addition to dedicated human resources. We have the latter (i.e., a coach, a dedicated assistant coach, and two dedicated graduate students), but a serious threat to our debate team, and therefore to our department, remains until a major gift is secured or funding is otherwise guaranteed long-term.

4. Has the unit engaged in fundraising activities to support the program over the last 5 years?
We have engaged, but only starting last year, in active fundraising, if by that we mean increasing our internal income generation. External fundraising, however, is something handled at the College level, as we have a paid fundraiser (Jeff Holbrook). Of course, we are always seeking financial support. Our webpage has places for people to donate, we are working on a public communication/translation initiative (i.e., taking complex information and making it understandable to public audiences) that will

likely include a consulting service, and, as noted, we are actively seeking a major donation to help fund debate.

5. What has been the result of these fundraising activities?
Other than funds required for a high-functioning debate team, we have stable resources of internally generated income sufficient for present and anticipated needs, and the College does our fundraising otherwise.

6. Review the space data for your department and comment on its amount and quality.
We have worked successfully in 2018 to address our space needs, which initially were pressing, and we have done this by working with the Chair of Public Policy, Dr. Christopher Stream, and Dean Ulmer to create a transdisciplinary graduate space, formally approved for a three-year expansion. The creation of this new graduate space, which presently houses 12 of our GTAs and will eventually house up to 36, freed up four of our eighteen dedicated faculty offices, allowing us to redesign our space to manage projected growth for the next several years.

We also transformed an old storage room with outdated files, digitizing and otherwise condensing what had to be kept according to UNLV policy, and turned that into a graduate student reading room, which is now happily used on a regular basis. 12 of our 14 GTAs moved to the new transdisciplinary space, which also houses a small handful of students from Public Policy. Next year that transdisciplinary graduate space will be doubled in size, financed in large part by our department, capable of accommodating an additional twenty-four graduate students. The relevant UNLV committees approved both the move and the expansion. Phase one was completed in summer 2018, and phase two will be completed in summer 2019.

As a result of these efforts, instead of having two lecturers per office and four GTAs per office, all lecturers and tenure track faculty now have private and newly refurbished offices, though all lecturer offices are designed for two faculty. The lecturers are aware that their private offices are a temporary luxury, but they also know that as we expand tenure track lines (i.e., private offices), and as we hire more lecturers to cover our growing basic course program and major, we can comfortably add three tenure track lines and three lecturers and still be comfortable in our current setting. Growth above that number (25 faculty and 14 GTAs) and we would likely need additional office space.

7. Is the quality and quantity of available consumable materials and supplies (e.g., office supplies or lab supplies) adequate?
We are very happy with our state budget, which provides us at present with sufficient monies to keep our offices supplies current and adequate. We also have a computer replacement program, offered by the College, which allows us to purchase three or four new computers a year, which is adequate to our present needs.

8. Is the quality and quantity of available technology resources, such as computers adequate and if not, explain why not:
Within the department, yes. All faculty have computers, including lecturers and GTAs, and they are all relatively new (i.e., purchased within the last four years). Most faculty have office printers, as do the students in the new transdisciplinary graduate space.

Our main challenge is that the wireless network does not work well in some locations across campus, especially for faculty seeking to use new media technologies in their classrooms. Technology updates to our sole conference room would be welcome.

9. Is the quality and quantity of available equipment (other than computing) adequate?

Yes, save as noted in question 8.

10. Is the quality and quantity of available library and information resources adequate?
    Yes. We have a terrific Dean of Libraries, and her staff actively engage with our students at all levels, and we have already integrated library consulting into COM 101 and COM 104, with library work expected in coursework for COM 102, COM 217, and almost all of our upper-division courses; therefore, we continue to have ever-increasing and high quality support from the library.

11. Staffing
    a) Are available department staff resources sufficient to attain the program's outcomes?
       Yes, generally speaking. Ms. Ralston, the department's current administrative assistant, is a UNLV veteran with many years of service, and one experienced AA allows us to have our fall, spring, and summer schedules entered properly, our travel documents handled efficiently, our office supplies maintained, and other miscellaneous duties accomplished as outlined in the AA's Work Performance Standards document.

       The state budget provides us with 20 hours of office support a week at $10 an hour, and we spend some of our internally generated funds for an additional work study student for the other 20 hours.

    b) If not, what additional staff resources are needed and how would they be funded?
       As noted, we have to pay for any additional staff workers through our own income streams via work study.

12. Additional comments:

    Overall we are pleased with our financial and resource situation. We have two reasonable and adequate income streams based on summer offerings, which we can increase if expenses rise, as well as royalty funds from uniquely designed basic course materials.

    Beyond this, we hope that growth will be matched in a way that ensures we do not weaken our current faculty/student ratio.

V.   Size of Undergraduate Program

Headcount Declared Majors in Communication Studies *Preparatory* Only (Pre-Majors)

Term	Freshmen	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Senior+
Fall 2010	39	49	70	54	0
Spring 2011	30	39	76	53	0
Fall 2011	50	37	80	67	1
Spring 2012	29	44	68	58	0
Fall 2012	33	39	42	49	3
Spring 2013	17	25	35	30	1
Fall 2013	39	42	64	26	2

Headcount Declared Majors in Communication Studies *Preparatory* Only (Pre-Majors)

Term	Freshmen	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Senior+
Spring 2014	22	40	64	28	2
Fall 2014	39	47	77	41	2
Spring 2015	29	44	82	42	4
Fall 2015	44	60	85	40	2
Spring 2016	32	52	104	24	2
Fall 2016	53	62	104	38	2
Spring 2017	30	53	84	40	3
Fall 2017	50	59	66	35	3
Spring 2018	33	52	65	31	3

Headcount Declared Majors in Communication Studies BA Only (Majors Proper)

Term	Freshmen	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Senior+
Fall 2010	0	14	42	74	0
Spring 2011	0	5	47	88	0
Fall 2011	1	6	26	93	1
Spring 2012	1	5	29	119	1
Fall 2012	9	20	47	109	0
Spring 2013	12	22	49	117	1
Fall 2013	6	24	40	108	0
Spring 2014	3	16	44	109	0
Fall 2014	3	7	28	95	0
Spring 2015	1	4	29	108	0
Fall 2015	1	4	22	98	0
Spring 2016	0	4	36	109	1
Fall 2016	0	5	43	106	0
Spring 2017	0	7	66	126	0
Fall 2017	0	11	57	124	0
Spring 2018	0	7	61	134	0

**Headcount Declared Majors in Communication Studies BA and Communication Studies
Preparatory, Combined (Pre-Majors and Majors)**

Term	Freshmen	Soph.	Junior	Senior	Senior+
Fall 2010	39	63	112	128	0
Spring 2011	30	44	123	141	0
Fall 2011	51	43	106	159	2
Spring 2012	30	49	97	176	1
Fall 2012	42	59	89	158	3
Spring 2013	29	47	84	147	2
Fall 2013	45	66	104	134	2
Spring 2014	25	56	108	137	2
Fall 2014	42	54	105	136	2
Spring 2015	30	48	111	150	4
Fall 2015	45	64	107	138	2
Spring 2016	32	56	140	133	3
Fall 2016	53	67	147	144	2
Spring 2017	30	60	150	166	3
Fall 2017	50	70	123	159	3
Spring 2018	33	59	126	165	3

Course Enrollments

Greenspun College of Urban Affairs School of Communication Studies enrollments by course level

Term	Level - 100	Level - 200	Level - 300	Level - 400
Fall 2010	1269	181	191	281
Spring 2011	1276	131	185	280
Fall 2011	1247	149	281	164
Spring 2012	1195	148	265	232
Fall 2012	1452	144	291	216
Spring 2013	1338	140	126	286
Fall 2013	1419	151	193	264
Spring 2014	1113	121	146	240
Fall 2014	1479	151	258	205

Greenspun College of Urban Affairs School of Communication Studies enrollments by course level

Term	Level - 100	Level - 200	Level - 300	Level - 400
Spring 2015	1506	185	176	365
Fall 2015	1463	148	174	391
Spring 2016	1557	123	208	324
Fall 2016	1525	219	199	331
Spring 2017	1561	121	132	408
Fall 2017	1505	206	143	417
Spring 2018	1437	209	156	403

Degrees Conferred by Academic Year (July to June)

Communication Studies BA and Communication Studies *Preparatory*

Academic Year	Degree Count
2008-09	64
2009-10	106
2010-11	96
2011-12	101
2012-13	88
2013-14	83
2014-15	93
2015-16	104
2016-17	96

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_DEGREES
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

1. Discuss the headcounts from the last five years, i.e., are the trends in line with projections in your unit's strategic plan?
   It is fair to say that the Department of Communication Studies has remained largely "flat" over the last ten years, with pre-majors averaging just under 200 (198.25) and majors averaging 160 (160.25). The department's pre-majors range from a low of 143 (spring 2013) to a high of 257 (fall 2016), but there is no clear upward trend. The same is true for majors, ranging from a low of 125 (fall 2015) to a high of 202 (spring 2018), though again there is no clear upward trend.

   Our goal is to see approximately two percent growth in our major over each of the next ten years, with the goal for 2027 being approximately 480 majors. To achieve this goal, in addition to our new pilot offerings at the basic course level and community engagement, we are considering a number of

measures, including but not limited to mirroring the Criminal Justice Trailblazer's program, which is a program matching seniors with new majors; using our new e-mail blasts to undergraduates to generate interest in our programs and their opportunities; maintaining an exciting and updated new media presence; and more robustly advertising our programs at our largest feeder school: the College of Southern Nevada (CSN).

2. If not, why not?
   See the prior answer. We have only begun to develop a robust recruitment strategy for our undergraduate and graduate programs.

3. Does your program's enrollment trend differ from national trends?
   Evidence from the Council of Graduate Schools (source: see press release in Appendix) suggests that graduate enrollments are flat, while we see an increase in applications there. At the undergraduate level, we believe demand is higher than our numbers would suggest, suggesting in turn our need to redesign our offerings in ways that attract more students. We also believe demand remains solid for our graduate program because of the availability of good jobs for our M.A. students, and the focus on community engagement and applied communication also resonates strongly with undergraduate students. We also believe that by retooling our basic courses we will also attract more students to our program.

4. If yes, please discuss the reasons why:
   UNLV is a unique school, being the most diverse in the nation. This is why national trends in many ways don't matter here. Las Vegas is a boom and bust town, but our department has not grown during the recent "boom" since 2011, so we need to try harder to provide courses with clear relevance to our student population.

5. Additional comments:
   The department plans to be aggressive in monitoring the headcount in the major, especially in light of uncertainties surrounding demand for an online Communication Studies degree. MGM has over 70,000 employees who will be eligible for tuition reimbursement for online degrees, and it is difficult to predict whether forty or four hundred might accept the opportunity. We also do not know how many undergraduates currently outside of our major will switch to Communication Studies once the online degree is announced.

VI. Size of the Graduate Program

Headcount Declared Majors in Communication Studies MA

Term	Graduate
Fall 2010	18
Spring 2011	13
Fall 2011	13
Spring 2012	15
Fall 2012	15
Spring 2013	15
Fall 2013	18

Term	Graduate
Spring 2014	13
Fall 2014	12
Spring 2015	14
Fall 2015	20
Spring 2016	19
Fall 2016	22
Spring 2017	20
Fall 2017	16
Spring 2018	16

Greenspun College of Urban Affairs School of Communication Studies Enrollments by Course Level

Term	Level - 600	Level - 700
Fall 2010	9	32
Spring 2011	7	20
Fall 2011	9	30
Spring 2012	9	17
Fall 2012	12	33
Spring 2013	1	33
Fall 2013	15	31
Spring 2014	3	19
Fall 2014	4	35
Spring 2015	13	19
Fall 2015	10	41
Spring 2016	19	30
Fall 2016	11	37
Spring 2017	22	29
Fall 2017	13	25
Spring 2018	9	23

Degrees Conferred by Academic Year (July to June): Communication Studies MA

Academic Year	Degree Count
2008-09	3
2009-10	7
2010-11	7
2011-12	5
2012-13	3
2013-14	11
2014-15	2
2015-16	5
2016-17	12

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_DEGREES, Office of Decision Support, July 2018

1. Discuss the headcounts from the last five years, i.e., are trends in line with strategic plan projections? Over the last five years we have averaged 17 graduate students per semester, with a high of 22 (fall 2016) and a low of 12 (fall 2014). We have 14 paid GTA positions.

To describe our strategic plan at the graduate level is no easy task, primarily because there are numerous moving parts, including but not limited to the current College doctorate in Public Affairs, our new M.A. track in Community Engagement, the present limit of the market for graduate students, and our basic course delivery load. We will review these complications in reverse order.

As noted throughout this document, we have a relatively large basic course delivery load that is likely to grow over the next ten years, given our 2% annual growth strategy. Many programs with a large basic course delivery load have large graduate programs to assist them. For example, Penn State has a large graduate program to help handle the university-wide requirement for public speaking. Our department, however, cannot possibly attract enough graduate students to an M.A. only program to cover all of our basic courses (i.e., each graduate student covers 75 students in three breakout sections of 25; therefore, to cover 3000 students in that model we would need 20 GTAs).

Instead of 20 GTA lines we have 14; therefore, we must create basic course models that can be taught by both lecturers and GTAs, planning long-term growth accordingly. We can also work, as the Greenspun College has done in other departments, to attract externally funded GTAs, especially for students in the Community Engagement track. We have already located one such assistantship with student housing, whose leaders have promised room and board plus a stipend in exchange for helping dorm monitors communicate more effectively. We have worked to increase our M.A. applications dramatically, but we do not believe it is feasible to attract more than fifty completed applications in a given year. This is why we do not project significant M.A. growth over the next ten year period.

We do believe our new track in community engagement may help us to attract more graduate students to our program in the future, given our unique setting in the College of Urban Affairs. We also are working closely with Public Policy to develop a series of 700 level courses in applied communication that will serve not only as electives to the current College doctorate in Public Affairs but may also allow us to transmute some of our M.A. lines into Ph.D. lines, encouraging our best M.A. students to stay in our program to pursue the College doctorate, in which we may play an increasingly central role.

We are currently in discussion with the Dean to determine how we might move to a model whereby we have, say, 4 Ph.D. and 8 M.A. students, instead of 14 M.A. students, covering any missing break out sections with PTI support or coverage by lecturers. At present only about one half of our tenure track faculty are in a position to direct a dissertation, though Dean Ulmer, Associate Dean Tara Emmers-Sommer, and myself have directed several, and some faculty publish with sufficient regularity that, with guidance, they too could do a fine job with doctoral students.

The faculty will engage in discussions in 2018-2019 to determine if a college-wide doctoral degree blending public policy with communication will produce excellent candidates for our own field, but we are already fully committed to public communication and the translation of complex information for general audiences. As we all know, the larger community desperately needs people who can bridge public policy and communication. Alone, our department would likely not be able to produce its own doctorate for many years, as we do not yet have enough majors to drive tenure track hiring, but Public Policy has welcomed us to not only create courses for the program but to also produce new students. The faculty, however, have not yet fully discussed our options here, as discussions with Public Policy began in earnest only in late October.

2. If not, why not?
We are generally happy with our present recruitment efforts. As discussed in the prior question, we are addressing growth at the graduate level on various fronts.

3. Does your program's enrollment trend differ from national trends?
No. Trends across the country tend to be flat, as is ours, though enrollments remain steady, as too do ours.

4. If yes, please discuss the reasons why:
We are meeting our primary goal, which is to attract the highest quality M.A. students to our program, limited at present by the lack of a doctoral option. We do an excellent job of internally recruiting our top undergraduates, but we do not yet do the best possible job of recruiting students nationally and internationally.

5. Additional comments:
We hope to build doctoral capacity into our graduate offerings as soon as possible (e.g., fall 2020), moving away from all 400/600 courses to 700 courses, all while building our brand in community engagement. If we remain M.A. only, then we cannot expect access to doctoral students for the next several years at least.

VII.   Retention, Progression, Completion
A. Major Course Offerings
1. Are enough courses offered to meet enrollment demands?
At the graduate level, yes, and at the undergraduate level, yes, save for in the basic courses, where we believe considerable unmet demand exists. That said, we want to not expand our offerings until they are ready, but they are being readied. Also, students would like to see more graduate electives. Right now at the undergraduate level our only large bottleneck is in COM 101 and somewhat in COM 102, but we are working to alleviate that demand by increasing our summer and online offerings for both courses. We also did have bottlenecks in COM 400 (communication theory), but that too has been alleviated by increased summer and online offerings.

2. How many major courses have been added or eliminated in the last 5 years?
In spring 2014 the department deleted 24 courses because they were improperly transferred over into our curriculum when we split from Journalism and Media Studies in 2005.

Over the last five years we have added eleven courses. These are, respectively: 104 Critical Thinking; 203 Advanced Public Speaking; 225 Communication for Teachers; 303 Rhetoric and Ecology; 321 Political Campaign Debates; 410 Advanced Topics in Relational Communication; 418 The Rhetoric of Science; 427 Love and Romance in Popular Culture; 432, Qualitative Research Methods; 454 Alternate Dispute Resolution; and 482, Security Discourse.

3. Why were the actions taken?
As noted, about thirteen years ago our department was separated from journalism, and this required that we delete a wide range of then duplicate courses. At the same time, new faculty have come to not only provide new foundational courses, such as qualitative methods, but also new areas of research expertise, such as the rhetoric of science and dispute resolution. We plan to add at least four new courses over the next five years, including COM 21x (i.e., a sophomore level course in applied communication); COM 3xx (i.e., a course for transferring majors to ensure they know our basic learning objectives); and at least one additional COM 3xx and COM 4xx in applied rhetoric.

4. After reviewing the program, what additional actions should be taken to improve retention, progression and completion?

We are doing everything we can to improve retention, progression, and completion, and we are happy to report that we do regularly graduate our students on time, as our 360 majors and pre-majors tend to graduate at a rate of about 90+ per year. To that end, we have focused on the following revisions to our program: (1) identified COM 216 as the major's milestone course and COM 408 or 435 as the major's capstone; (2) re-evaluated and updated the pre-requisites for upper-division COM courses to make sure they were appropriate for the course and minimized bottlenecks, barriers, and confusion for students (most course pre-requisites now are COM 101, COM 102, or COM 216; and (3) clarified and had the pre-major enforced in our curriculum in fall 2015.

That said, our DFWI rates in our basic courses before 2018 were quite poor and below university norms. This is the primary reason why we began my tenure as Chair with a major redesign of COM 101, our largest offering, where the DFWI rate was consistently higher than university averages for basic courses. While we wait for fall numbers for COM 101, being taught in the new format by graduate students for the first time, last spring both COM 101 and COM 102 were better than university averages for the first time (source: the DFWI rate summary sheet in the Appendix). We will continue to polish our basic courses until they are consistently among the best in the university in relation to retention, progression, and completion. Also, we have no major bottlenecks in the major, and we continue to work to ensure that prerequisites are kept at a bare minimum. Right now, a student needs COM 101, COM 102, and COM 216 with a C or better to become a major, and we only have a few prerequisites for advanced classes, such as COM 101 for advanced public speaking, and in other instances where an "advanced" course is offered.

5. Are there any courses that students routinely have difficulty getting enrolled in, that slow progression and/or graduation?
No. We are doing fine, save for expanding the basic course offerings.

6. If last question was answered yes, what steps can be taken to reduce "bottle-necks" in these courses. Please indicate *both* financially-based and non-financially-based solutions.
N/A

7. Can any changes in sequencing of courses be made to facilitate graduations?
None we are aware of at present, and we have no complaints.

B. Curriculum

1. Is the program's curriculum aligned with current developments in the field?

Yes, and increasingly so, and all of our basic courses are undergoing significant revision. We are focusing now almost exclusively on applied, relevant, communication education. We have recently hired in online communication (Pennington), public outreach (Flores), organizational communication (TBD), and we will continue to ensure that new hires have research related to communication and urban affairs. Many programs across the country also continue to hire "academic professionals," or individuals with terminal degrees who do not publish but instead have truckloads of practical experience in a given area, such as television production or web design. We have FIRs to play such roles, particularly as our teaching becomes more pragmatic. That said, we shall continue to hire highly accomplished and/or promising scholars, ensuring that we also stay intellectually vibrant and aware of new trends.

2. If not, what needs to be done to make the curriculum current?

We believe we are engaging in curricular reforms that are making us increasingly current and relevant.

C. Graduation Rates

Program graduation numbers and rates are summarized below.

VIII. Graduation Rates for Fall Cohorts

First-time, Full-time Undergraduate College Students declaring Communication Studies BA and Communication Studies *Preparatory*, and Graduating Within 6 years

Cohort Term	Cohort Size	Degree in Plan	Degree % Plan	Degree in Dept	Degree % Dept	Degree any Dept	Degree % any
Fall 2010	25	3	12.0	3	12.0	11	44.0
Fall 2011	23	6	26.1	6	26.1	15	65.2
Fall 2012	22	3	13.6	3	13.6	8	36.4

Graduation Rates for Fall Cohorts

New Graduate Student Cohorts Declaring Communication Studies M.A.. and Graduating Within 5 Years

Fall	Size	Yr 2 rate (%)	Yr 3 rate (%)	Yr 4 rate (%)	Yr 5 rate (%)
2010	9	55.6	66.7	66.7	66.7
2011	5	40.0	80.0	80.0	80.0
2012	7	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2013	7	28.6	42.9	42.9	42.9
2014	7	42.9	71.4	71.4	NA
2015	11	81.8	90.9	NA	NA
2016	10	0.0	NA	NA	NA

New Graduate Student Cohorts Declaring Communication Studies M.A.. and Graduating Within 5 Years

Fall	Size	Yr 2 rate (%)	Yr 3 rate (%)	Yr 4 rate (%)	Yr 5 rate (%)
2017	6	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: PeopleSoft Table PS_LV_CNR_DEGREES
            PS_LV_CNR_CP
            PS_LV_CNR_CR
Office of Decision Support, July 2018

Using the data in the tables above, please answer the following questions:

1. Are trends in 6-year cohort graduation close to the University's goals (UNLV's undergrad goal is 50%)?

   While our data here is spotty, it does appear that our two-year graduation rate for graduate students is excellent. Last year, for example, only three students (two GTAs) of eleven failed to complete their degree in the two-year window, two of those three will complete in three, and only one dropped out of the program.

   It also appears that we regularly graduate our majors at a clip of about 90 a year, and this is with average numbers of declared majors and pre-majors of about 360.

   We also believe that by increasing our applicant pool for the graduate program that graduation rates will be even higher, and all students know they are expected to complete their M.A. degrees in two years.

2. If not, what is being done to reach the goal?
   We appear to be well within university norms regarding retention and progress to degree, but we are still taking action to make our classes more attractive to a wider constituency, and as our major grows we will want to ensure that students move with alacrity through our program. We always recruit with a focus on both programmatic fit and academic preparedness.

3. Discuss how and why the graduation rate is changing.
   No numbers indicate dramatic changes in graduation rates.

4. Additional comments:
   Overall we believe we are working to ensure that UNLV students succeed in our basic courses, are attracted to our major, and encounter no unnecessary structural obstacles to graduation. By 2020 we should have all three basic courses in active, measured, agile models of high quality, and, coupled with our recent decision to offer our degree online, we have many years of piloting and testing ahead.

IX.   Relationship to Other Programs
1. What relationship does your program have to other programs (e.g. articulation, transfers, collaborations, partnerships) in the NSHE system?
   We regularly work with the Honors College, with at least one faculty member each semester helping with their upper division courses. We collaborate closely with all units in the College of Urban Affairs in a wide range of transdisciplinary initiatives, including GSC 300 (Urban Experience), the new graduate space, and cross-department research teams. Our main clients for our basic courses are

Engineering, Nursing, Business, and Hospitality, though students from across the university take our basic courses. We work closely with advising to help with our numerous transfers from the College of Southern Nevada. In sum, we are relevant across the university and communicate with a wide range of stakeholders across campus.

2. What relationship does this program have to other programs at UNLV (e.g., collaborations, partnerships, affiliated faculty, General Education requirements, etc.)?
As noted, we provide several General Education courses, including COM 102, COM 104, COM 216 and COM 217, and our COM 101 reaches, at present, about 1800 students annually. We have no affiliated faculty or official partnerships with other departments.

3. Additional comments:
We will continue to develop community relevance in our program, hiring to ensure incoming faculty can take their knowledge and improve our communities. We believe that as our basic courses reach their new form their popularity will increase, as well as, hopefully, our major. As we grow the major we will continue to work very closely with our College partners (Public Policy, Criminal Justice, Social Work, and Journalism/Media Studies), striving to provide the truly transdisciplinary skills of communication to civic leaders, those seeking greater social justice, those aiding the less fortunate in our communities, and those who communicate our community values through the media. Our plan is to work with public policy on communicating policy effectively, to work with social work on interpersonal empathy and conflict resolution, to work with criminal justice on better communicating about domestic violence, homelessness, and public safety issues, and to work with journalism and media studies on the new public communication/science translation initiative, all in the spirit of enhancing the College's community impact.

X. Impact

1. What impact has this program had or will have in the following areas:
a) University.
Our goal is to produce what the Roman educator Quintilian called "the good person speaking well." This requires excellent interpersonal, group, and public communication skills, for these very skills are the foundation of effective leadership. Through courses ranging from conflict resolution to argumentation and debate, and through the development of the public communication initiative, our primary purpose is to support public reason through the education of excellent communicators.

We have already begun to make a positive impact on the University over the last year by working to ensure that our DFWI rates in our basic courses are moving from worst to first, as they say. Already we anticipate growing demand for our basic courses as summer bridge courses for at risk new admits, and we also anticipate that demand for COM 101, 102, and especially 104 will increase significantly over the next ten years, particularly if we are able to provide consistent and high quality first-year student experiences.

Also, we will positively impact the University through our leadership in online education. Not only will we be among the first small handful of departments offering their degrees fully online, we will also likely be one of the most requested degrees, given our centrality to UNLV and its top-tier mission. As the most diverse university in the country, our students have uniquely diverse needs, which we always strive to meet.

b) Community

Clearly we are interested in community engagement, as that is the new direction the faculty have chosen to pursue, particularly given our location in the College of Urban Affairs. We already work with a decent range of community partners in substantial ways, from MGM to the Nevada Equal Rights Commission. We are having positive impacts on community issues ranging from youth homelessness to critical thinking through debate in Clark County schools. Given our recent hiring of a community outreach FIR (Dr. Flores), we have made a long-term commitment to community impact. Also, we hope to find ways to ensure that we maintain a healthy internship program in the department. Our goal, as should be clear, it to make research in our department relevant to the broader community.

c) Field
Our presence in the field remains relatively marginal, though our department does enjoy, we believe, a very good reputation for producing high quality M.A. students for doctoral programs. We regularly place our M.A. students in doctoral programs, and we hope to make an increasingly good name for ourselves in community relevance. The faculty are research productive, but the lack of a doctoral program and limited access to graduate students have not helped. We are attempting to strengthen our graduate program with increased applications and internal changes to our operations, but it will take time and effort to make us competitive with top programs in the western U.S.

2. What are the benefits to the institution of offering this program?
Basic communication skills among community members are always beneficial. We have worked with MBA students, stellar high school STEM students, and various public constituencies, and they ALL need very basic communication training. There is tremendous opportunity for teaching people how to organize and present their materials in compelling and easy-to-understand ways, and the general student population still shows an amazing inability to handle the most basic types of critical thinking. There is a tremendous need for knowledge regarding how to handle the most basic types of critical thinking.

3. Provide examples of the integration of teaching, research, and service (e.g., faculty mentoring leading to student presentations at conferences, service learning classes, and community service activities involving students, or other student activities and/or achievements that you think are noteworthy).
A proper answer to this question would be very lengthy. Hopefully it will suffice to say the following: (1) compared to many Communication departments, we aggressively seek to integrate teaching, research, and community engagement; (2) our graduate students regularly present at national and regional conferences (e.g., three attended NCA this year with competitively selected papers); (3) we have already developed a first-year service learning course (COM 104), where students are required to interact with a community organization of their choice, and we have hired a community outreach professor to help develop additional upper-level service learning courses; (4) several of our faculty are engaged in extensive community service, especially Dr. Guthrie and Dr. Thompson, and all anticipated future hires will be expected to explain the concrete community relevance of their research, identifying the community partners their research engages.

XI. Productivity
1. Please provide an indication of faculty productivity appropriate for your unit (lists of publications by type, grants by type, performances by type, installations by type, etc.):
As noted, in IIC above, in the last academic year, with nine tenure track faculty, we had one monograph (Peter Lang), one edited book (U. Alabama), and twenty-four peer-reviewed essays and book chapters. In press is another monograph (U. of South Carolina), another edited book (U. Alabama), and eight peer-reviewed essays. Our faculty to date have not attracted external grants.

2. Additional comments:

It is our hope that faculty productivity will increase as the major grows and we move tenure track faculty away from their historical focus on undergraduate education to graduate education. This will take time, however. Unfortunately, at present we do not have publication records or sufficient majors to seek a Ph.D. in the near term, but each tenure track faculty member has clearly articulated research goals each year, which I monitor as chair. Each fall I meet with faculty to go over their productivity the past and present year, and, if all presently established goals are met, then we shall become increasingly productive. For example, our new hire, Dr. Pennington, already has 14 publications in her first three years, and Dr. Bloomfield has published 5 peer-reviewed essays this year alone, with multiple publications in leading communication journals; therefore, our junior faculty are leading the way toward doctoral level publishing.

XII. Quality

A. Admission and graduation requirements

1. Please insert program admission requirements from the current UNLV catalog.

"Students are assigned a pre-communication major (PRE-COM) designation until they have completed the following pre-major requirements: COM 101 or HON 101, COM 102, and COM 216. Eventually, students will also need to complete, in addition to the requirements for the degree, the U.S. and Nevada Constitutions requirement and six credits chosen from the remaining General Education core requirements. All courses satisfying PRE-COM requirements must be completed with at least a C (2.0) grade (C- is unacceptable). Upon completion of the pre-major requirements, students may request admission to the major by contacting the GUA Advising Office."

2. Are there any updates that need to be made to the catalog and if so, what are they?

At present we are unsure, as COM 104, a revised COM 216, a revised COM 217, and an entirely new COM 2xx (Applied Communication for Non-Majors) have not been developed. Only then will we know if we might want to provide more options for pre-majors. As of now, though, we want all students to take COM 101, COM 102, and COM 216.

3. How many full-time advisors are available at the college level?

We are very fortunate to have a College advising center that has won the award for the last two years running (2016 and 2017) as best advising center at UNLV. They do a terrific job, and our only consistent challenge is for students who are currently taking the pre-major who want permission to sign up for the major. We are actively working with advising not only on our new online degree but this issue as well. I believe there are usually about six full-time advisers in the Center, along with a handful of part-time folks.

B. Outcomes and Assessment

1. Student Learning Outcomes and Program Assessment Plans and Reports by program concentration are listed at http://provost.unlv.edu/Assessment/plans.html. Please attach the most recent assessment report in the Appendix.

Both our M.A. and B.A. assessment plans from 2015-2017 are located in the Appendix.

2. Describe specific program changes made based on the program's evaluation of its assessment reports:

Significant revision of all basic courses and the development of a new M.A. track in community engagement. Both moves were made based on both quantitative and qualitative assessments of our program. We shall complete the revision of our measured learning in the basic courses and build from the ground up an assessment plan for our undergraduate program. We have eliminated the final exam option to ensure higher quality final products from all of our graduate students, and we are moving to a

requirements model where MA students must only take two of our three methods courses. Prior to this year we only offered two (rhetorical methods and quantitative methods), but now we have added applied field methods.

3. Has the program revised its curriculum such as changing prerequisites, adding or eliminating required or elective courses, or co-curricular experiences for the degree(s) in the last 5 years?
Yes, though the question was already addressed in VI A2.

    a) If yes, what changes were made and why? Again, this question was already answered in VI A2.

4. Has the program revised course content or instructional approaches (pedagogy, technology) in the last 5 years?
This is a repetitive question. Prior answers already clarify the changes in our instructional approaches, moving from "sage on the stage" to a "guide on the side" pedagogical model based on active, measured learning. We seek to better meet students where they are to ensure they can actually apply their learning to extra-university contexts.

Describe any other changes made in the last 5 years (for example, advising) based on assessment reports:
Again, this is a repetitive question already addressed in the earlier questions.

5. List and describe two specific improvements in student learning outcomes and why they represent forward movement.
During this time of transition, we have a workable strategic vision for student success. By refocusing and rebuilding, learning outcomes are significantly improved, both by objective DFWI measures and student satisfaction scores, in both COM 101 and COM 102. Obviously, reducing student failure rates is an important aspect of "forward movement." We also have dramatically redesigned our welcoming procedures for incoming GTAs based on questionnaires provided to current and former graduate students in 2017. As a result, reported graduate student satisfaction is very high at present, and we have had far fewer problems with the delivery of our break out sections, which are now being carefully supervised by our three assistant basic course directors. Obviously, working to ensure quality across all break out sections while simultaneously providing much-needed support to new teachers, which includes weekly meetings with their course supervisors, helps to create a consistent product for students.

6. Additional comments:
The timing of this self-study is not ideal for projecting a new three-year assessment plan. That said, we will continue to polish COM 101, 102, and 104 until we have the measured learning we seek. That should be accomplished no later than fall 2020. In the meantime, in fall of 2019 we will begin working on COM 2xx, 216, and 217, and we hope to have those new agile model pilots in shape by fall of 2021. Only then, when we know that our students are succeeding at a rate of 85% in their courses, can we then talk about properly addressing the learning objectives, built upon that foundation, for our advanced classes. We have developed pre- and post-tests for our basic courses, we have an Assessment Committee, we have developed transparent rubrics for success, we have moved to active learning models, and we are going to engage in a series of best practices in online education in 2018-2019, in conjunction with the Office of Online Education. We take assessment very seriously, which is why we are approaching the issue systematically.

XIII.   Conclusions, Self-Assessment

A. Faculty Review of self-study
1. On what date did the program and/or department faculty review this self-study?
Faculty as a whole reviewed the self-study from Friday, November 20 to Friday, December 7, at which time we had a two hour faculty meeting to discuss, review, and amend the document.

2. What were the results of the faculty review?
Overall the faculty seem to be happy with the study, and after open comments the study was approved.

3. What are the top 3 priorities and/or needs for the future development of the program?
For the faculty, the top three priorities are as follows: (1) growing the quality and size of our major; (2) institutional commitment to visiting faculty; and (3) funding the debate team. For the chair, our top three priorities are as follows: (1) reaching measured excellence in all our curricular offerings; (2) growing the quality and size of our major and graduate program; and (3) firmly establishing our intellectual reputation in public argument, effective relational communication, and organizational resiliency.

4. What are the strengths of the program?
Faculty were in agreement with the strengths listed in section IID above: a motivated faculty; the quality of our graduate teachers and the support they are provided; the debate team; our placement of MA students; and our ever-increasing community engagement. Furthermore, faculty added, we should work to build our intellectual reputation around public, relational, and organizational communication.

5. What are the challenges facing the program?
Faculty referred readers to question 3 above. We have a relatively small major, insufficient but potentially growing graduate demand, a debate team in need of funding, basic courses that still need reworking, and an insufficiently strong intellectual reputation.

6. What recent additions, corrections, or other changes have been made to the program that reflect
   changes or developments in the field?
We have moved to online education in a more dedicated way; we have moved toward active, measured learning and away from large lectures with Scantron exams; we are working to ensure our scholarship is increasingly relevant to solving urban problems; and we are paying very close attention to retention, post-graduate placement, and community impact, as should be evident from the preceding report.

B. Other comments
1. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the program?
We look forward to receiving feedback and advice on our efforts.