Two-Year Progress Report
Communication Studies (BA, Minor) and Digital Arts Communication (Minor)
October 2022

Background

The Final Assessment Report for Communication Studies and Digital Arts Communication, approved at Senate on February 28, 2022, makes eight recommendations to support the robust delivery and measured growth of the Communication Studies and Digital Arts Communication programs. The report is the outcome of a regularly scheduled program review, and was conducted by two arms-length external reviewers, (Dr. Chris Russill, Professor of Communication and Media Studies, Carleton University, and Dr. Christian Lundberg, Professor of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill) and an internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Maria Strack, Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management).

The review involved a campus visit March 11-12, 2020, and included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Arts Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Chair of the Department of Communication Arts, as well as faculty members, staff and current undergraduate students. The Review Team also had an opportunity to visit the program's space and meet with representatives from the Library.

This Two-Year Progress Report was prepared by Gerald Voorhees, Associate Chair Undergraduate Studies, under the direction of the Interim Chair, Grit Liebscher, and with the help of members of the department.

Enrollment over the past two years

	Communication Studies General	Communication Studies Honours	Communication Studies Co-op	Communication Studies Minor	DAC Minor
2021-2022 (CURRENT YR)	10	134	85	33	110
2020-2021 (LAST YR)	10	175	114	38	115

*Based on Active Students Extract in Quest (Fall 2020 and Fall 2021)

* These numbers do not reflect the impact of the name change yet. After the name change, students only declared their majors in April 2022, and we expect to see this impact starting with numbers for Fall 2023 and beyond.

Progress on Implementation Plan

Recommendations

1. That the unit hire a tenure-line faculty in fulfilment of a resourcing commitment that was made with the Department's agreement to support and help administer UCOI.

   Status: **in progress**
   Details: As of November 2021, the Dean of Arts approved a tenure-line hire in Communication Studies to support the administration of the UCOI program. The position was advertised January 23, 2022, and hiring is underway.

2. That the Department housing Speech Communication and DAC retain its current balance between research-intensive and teaching-intensive faculty.

   Status: **in progress**
   Details: During the 2020-2021 academic year, 3 tenure-line faculty resigned their positions, reducing the tenure-line faculty complement to the equivalent of 12 FTE (which includes Nacke and Young with ½ FTE each, since they have joint appointments with other departments) and, thus, creating a 12:7 ratio of research-intensive to teaching-intensive faculty. Successfully hiring replacements for these three tenure-line positions, which were advertised on January 23, 2022, will correct the imbalance of this ratio. Impending changes to Policy 76 regarding the terms and conditions of teaching-intensive appointments will inform further discussion of this priority.

3. Changing the program name from Speech Communication to Communication Studies.

   Status: **completed**
   Details: The name change became effective Fall 2021 with very positive results. The Undergraduate Recruitment Office provided information showing that the number of first year student applications, indicating Communication Studies as their "subject of major interest", grew from 76 in Fall 2020 to 281 in Fall 2021.

4. That the speech communication program proceed with its plans for incremental and managed growth, and agree that recent changes to the program's name and curriculum (especially the inclusion of media studies content) will facilitate such growth.

   Status: **in progress**
   Details: The name change has contributed to the continued growth of the department (see response to 3 above). With 2.5 times more students indicating Communication Studies as their "subject of major interest" over the previous year, the Department has already begun to discuss

and implement changes to course delivery and department structure. We are examining how to increase the size of a number of 200 level courses to accommodate additional students. Additionally, the Department implemented a new organizational structure creating agile curriculum committees to maintain and develop the course offerings and plans for each undergraduate program, and facilitate communication and planning between those programs.

5. The Department continue to develop more formal and explicit rules, processes, and procedures for decision-making that are transparent to and inclusive of all program faculty and their concerns.

   Status: **ongoing**
   Details: The new Departmental organizational structure (see response to 4 above) resulted in the reinvention of a number of processes and the bringing to the surface of informal rules so that they could be examined, and rejected or explicitly adopted. While larger structural changes have been implemented, we expect to continue to refine processes for the next several years.

6. The Department consider developing a formal mentoring process for junior faculty (especially those new to the University) to help them navigate program, Department, and University contexts.

   Status: **ongoing**
   Details: This was largely put on hold due to circumstances outside the department's control, particularly the Covid-19 global pandemic. However, further conversations also highlighted the limitations of a medium-sized Department to provide mentorship in-house, and the need for a faculty- or even University-wide mentorship program. The Department will resume efforts to develop a mentorship program limited in scope to navigating departmental tenure and promotion considerations and within several research streams where senior faculty are able to be resources for junior faculty (e.g. media, communication, and gender; design justice; communication and social justice; environment and communication; and media, culture, and communication). The Department will also advocate for appropriate Faculty and University level supports. In the meantime, the Chair has informally connected junior faculty requesting mentorship with senior faculty members in the Faculty of Arts.

7. That more attention be paid to room allocations for teaching, and that appropriate spaces and technology be made available to instructors in Speech Communication and Digital Arts Communication.

   Status: **ongoing**
   Details: The 2022-2023 budget request includes renovations to the Department's facilities in ECH, including ECH 2101 (student lounge), ECH 2108 (Digital Media Studio), ECH 2113 (Making and Design Classroom), and ECH 2106 and 2109 (audio studio and control room). Once approved and complete, the ability to book DAC and CADP classes in these rooms will greatly aid course planning and administration.

Explain any circumstances that have altered the original implementation plan

The Covid-19 global pandemic resulted in several delays to plans to address the recommendations of the external review. For instance, the primary action to address concerns about space raised in recommendation 7 was postponed by the Faculty of Arts. The initiative to develop a formal mentoring program for junior faculty, from recommendation 8, was addressed minimally, as faculty in the department adjusted to the circumstances of remote teaching. The Department's efforts to develop more formal and explicit rules and processes, from recommendation 9, is ongoing but also delayed due to the unplanned demands the pandemic has placed on faculty.

Report on anything else you believe is appropriate to bring to Senate concerning this program

Since the Final Assessment Report was completed in 2020, the Department of Communication Arts has launched a new interdisciplinary major, Communication Arts and Design Practice. The first application cycle for the program, Fall 2021, saw over 100 applicants select this major as the Subject of Major Interest, more than had selected the Department's largest major, Communication Studies, the previous year in 2020. This new program was intended to rely primarily on existing faculty and resources but these numbers also far exceed expectations. If this program turns into the projected success in attracting students, there may be some faculty and resource (e.g., space) implications over the next few years, and those could also support the Communication Studies and Digital Arts Communication Minors.

Additionally, the Department has begun to address how systemic racism and colonialism are present in department policies and operational norms. This has involved numerous department-wide discussions and meetings dedicated to the topic. The experiences of racialized faculty are being centered in the task, and the Department is receiving assistance in the form of external consultants that specialize in addressing and ameliorating how equity, diversity, and inclusion impact organizations.

Updated Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	That the unit hire a tenure-line faculty in fulfilment of a resourcing commitment that was made with the Department's agreement to support and help administer UCOI.	Hire tenure line faculty to support UCOI	Faculty and Provost	The Provost has authorized and the Department has completed hiring 1 tenure line professor with expertise in Communication Across the Curriculum who started July 2022.
2.	That the Department housing Speech Communication and DAC retain its current balance between research-intensive and teaching-intensive faculty.	Maintain ratio of better than 2:1 tenure line faculty to lecturers	Faculty and Provost	The Provost has authorized and the Department has completed hiring 3 tenure line professors to replace mission critical faculty resignations, starting July 2022. At the same time, 4 more Lecturer lines were made

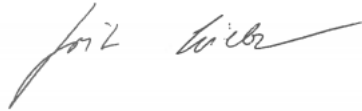|				
				available (2 with hiring completed), which indicates that the balance needs to be watched moving forward.
3.	Changing the program name from speech communication to communication studies.	name change approved in 2019/20, awaiting undergraduate calendar change for 2021/22.		Complete
4	That the speech communication program proceed with its plans for incremental and managed growth, and agree that recent changes to the program's name and curriculum (especially the inclusion of media studies content) will facilitate such growth.	Once program name change is complete, engage in outreach and recruitment efforts to improve visibility of program. This includes redoing the recruitment material used at open houses.	Department Executive	Ongoing; Will liaise with recruitment to ensure messaging is clear and distinguishes Communication Studies from other programs in the Department and Faculty
5	The Department continue to develop more formal and explicit rules, processes, and procedures for decision-making that are transparent to and inclusive of all program faculty and their concerns.	Currently in process of revising Annual Performance Review (APR) guidelines and process, revised curriculum change process, working toward policies to improve equity in Departmental culture	Department Executive	Ongoing; Large structural changes have been implemented but the operating procedures for each will continue to be scrutinized and fine-tuned for another 2-3 years

6	The Department consider developing a formal mentoring process for junior faculty (especially those new to the University) to help them navigate program, Department, and University contexts.	Committee struck in Fall 2020 to propose a formal mentorship process.	Faculty of Arts and Department Executive	Ongoing; The Department will resume it own effort to formalize mentorship, with a limited scope, while advocating for Faculty and University level support for mentorship.
7	That more attention be paid to room allocations for teaching, and that appropriate spaces and technology be made available to instructors in Speech Communication and Digital Arts Communication.	Request renovation of ECH rooms in next budget cycle.	Faculty of Arts	Initial proposal for ML-117 renovation was delayed due to pandemic. Requesting renovation to ECH facilities, including ECH 2108, 2113, and 2101, in the next budget cycle.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

Date of next program review: _____ **2026-2027**_____

Date

Signatures of Approval:

_____ June 8, 2022

Chair/Director   Date

_____
AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only)   Date

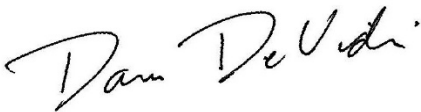_____ 5 September 2023

Faculty Dean   Date

Note: AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.

_____ October 2, 2022

Associate Vice-President, Academic   Date
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

_____
Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs   Date
(For graduate and augmented programs)