Program Review and Six Year Report

September 15 2009

COMMUNICATION STUDIES
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I. Executive Summary

In this report, we review our program of Communication Studies for the past six years, paying particular attention to our mission, the overarching goals and mission of the college, and our desired outcomes for our students. This document reveals how we have progressed from inspiration and goal-setting to more tangible methods of assessment and program review. We believe this document will illustrate our holistic and systematic approach to understanding who our students are becoming and how we might help them to transform into wise and eloquent followers of Christ and life-long learners. We begin with our mission statement:

*Sapientia et Eloquentia.* In this centuries-old phrase promoted by Cicero, St. Augustine and others, the Department of Communication Studies finds its mission, to educate students toward the union of wisdom and eloquence, recognizing the limited impact of wisdom without eloquence and the social harm that comes from eloquence without wisdom.

We are committed to helping students become wise analysts regarding the techniques and structures of human influence in a globally-oriented, media-saturated culture. We intend for our students to be informed by Scripture and able to draw upon resources in the historic discipline of Communication Studies.

We are committed to helping students become eloquent in mind and heart and speech, articulate and compassionate implementers of their wisdom. We intend for our students to communicate well and to imitate Christ by practicing reconciliation.

*Student Learning Outcomes.* From our mission statement flow the program goals and student learning outcomes (Chart 5 also in Appendix A; also referred to as Matrix Outcomes 1 & 2):

We want our graduates to be able to:

Analyze human symbolic action wisely.

*Students will attain undergraduate-level knowledge in communication, including facility with:*
  - Communication history
  - General approaches and major theories in communication
  - Research findings in communication
  - Biblical and ethical principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Communication History</th>
<th>Communication Theories</th>
<th>Communication Research</th>
<th>Biblical &amp; Ethical Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major historical events in the discipline</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major communication theories</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major research paradigms and findings</td>
<td>Is able to articulate and process complex ethical dilemmas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication Studies Program Review 2009
Practice eloquent communication:

Students will come to communication situations with greater competence in the following areas:

- Other-centered attentiveness
- Discernment for ethically based communication effectiveness
- Skills for ethically-based communication effectiveness
- Motivation to enter the public square as good citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Other centeredness</th>
<th>Discernment for Effective communication</th>
<th>Skills for effectiveness</th>
<th>Citizenship &amp; Prophetic Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Takes into account more than self; interacts in ways that are mindful of others</td>
<td>Considers multiple factors and contexts; makes educated decisions</td>
<td>Presents and writes competently for different audiences</td>
<td>Engages society as responsible citizen; advocates for justice and mercy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notable Findings:**

1. We believe we have achieved a thorough-going alignment of our departmental mission and curriculum with the mission, distinctives, and student learning outcomes of the college. Furthermore, student coursework supports both our program goals and college-wide learning outcomes. Lastly, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges specifically notes that baccalaureate programs should prepare students for work, citizenship, and a fulfilling life (*WASC 2001 Handbook of Accreditation*). Based on our curriculum, student feedback, the pilot alumni survey, and our ongoing care for our students, we believe we exceed these standards.

2. In reviewing our contributions to the general education curriculum and the needs of our students, and in reviewing our program goals, we believe we need to develop various ways for our students to fulfill the serving society requirement within the context of their major.

3. After thoughtful consideration of our findings from student assessment, we are encouraged by the accomplishments of our students in the areas of ethical and other-centered communication. Specifically, we note that internship supervisors rate our students very highly on speaking and behaving ethically in the workplace. We also note that our students often choose to write papers and pursue further study in areas that address injustice, oppression, and conflict in the world. We are also confirmed in our impressions that our students need some work in the area of eloquence in communication. Both our own analyses and those of our outside reviewers of the student papers indicate that students need improvement in the mechanics of writing and in clearly stating their claims and supporting their arguments.

4. Finally, we note that given the turbulence of the last six years (turnover, limited and decreasing resources, natural disasters), we spent much more time on big picture program
review, such as drafting and refining our mission, our program goals, and student learning outcomes, than we did in actually assessing student learning. While recognizing the need for more assessment of student learning outcomes, we do not regret the efforts invested in building and reviewing a mission-driven program for our students. We believe we are a better department, and that our students will ultimately benefit from our sustained effort in this area, and we find that we are discovering new avenues for creative, healthy, and efficient assessment activities.

**Next Steps:**

1. **Building ongoing, creative assessment into the regular life and rhythm of the department.** By this we mean, now that we know what we hope to accomplish (in terms of drafting our mission statement, our program goals, and our student learning outcomes), we are looking forward to finding out, regularly, how well we are accomplishing our aims and ideals in and out of the classroom. We will continue to devise assessment tools that give us a more cumulative view of student learning, including the possible creation of senior portfolios which would include essays, productions, practica, and so on, and ways of assessing student development as wise and eloquent communicators.

2. **Working strategically to align necessary resources with stated program goals.** We clearly are committed to doing more than our current budget will allow. Necessary, if difficult, conversations must include what we cannot continue doing without adequate funding, and what we might do differently to properly steward the funding with which we have to work.

3. **Staying in touch with our alumni.** Alumni surveys will allow us to access long-term student growth, learning, and affections, and may also strengthen relationships between and among our graduates, students, and faculty.
II. Communication Studies: Our Mission & Role Within The College

A. Our Mission

*Sapientia et Eloquentia.* In this centuries-old phrase promoted by Cicero, St. Augustine and others, the Department of Communication Studies finds its mission, to educate students toward the union of wisdom and eloquence, recognizing the limited impact of wisdom without eloquence and the social harm that comes from eloquence without wisdom.

We are committed to helping students become wise analysts regarding the techniques and structures of human influence in a globally-oriented, media-saturated culture. We intend for our students to be informed by Scripture and able to draw upon resources in the historic discipline of Communication Studies.

We are committed to helping students become eloquent in mind and heart and speech, articulate and compassionate implementers of their wisdom. We intend for our students to communicate well and to imitate Christ by practicing reconciliation.

B. Contributions to College Mission

The mission and vision of Westmont College rests on the following five distinctives— that we provide 1) a high quality liberal arts education in a 2) residential setting for 3) undergraduates with a 4) balance toward rigorous intellectual competence, healthy personal development, and strong Christian commitments, while preparing them for 5) engaging a global society.

Our department has always been committed to the mission of the college, but with our renewed sense of purpose and mission within the department, we believe we are even more closely aligned with and integral to the larger college mission. We are committed to providing high quality instruction, academic rigor, and a broad-based curriculum. Students learn that departmental faculty are committed to the liberal arts and desire to build relationships that contribute to their personal and spiritual development. This is consistent with the long history and rich tradition of the discipline.

Communication Studies has from ancient times been a vital part of the liberal arts curriculum. In antiquity and medieval times, grammar, argumentation, and rhetoric—all significant aspects of the Communication Studies curriculum—were part of the seven liberal arts.

Westmont College’s understanding of the liberal arts emphasizes the integration of knowledge, particularly the integration of faith and learning, doing and thinking, sciences and the humanities, individual and community. The Communication Studies department has contributed to this mission primarily through its curriculum, which charges students to think holistically about the role of communication in understanding ourselves (for example, through classes such as interpersonal communication); institutions (for example, by taking classes in organizational communication); and society (for example, through media studies classes). The department also emphasizes its distinctively Christian orientation by bringing Christian theology, ethics and practice to bear on students’ understanding of communication.
theory, technologies, and styles, and by encouraging students to embody their learning in and out of the classroom.

The department helps students become more globally informed. For some time, the department has highlighted intercultural communication issues in Com 006, 103, 110, 133, and many others. We have run several Mayterm programs to Northern Ireland and South Africa. In addition, as part of its program review of educational effectiveness, the Communication Studies department conducted a major curricular reform that placed a global emphasis as one of the requirements for graduation. Communication Studies majors must either take a class with a significant emphasis on global communication, such as International Rhetoric, or participate in an off-campus program that enriches student experiences with a global awareness. In addition, as noted in previous program review documents, we explicitly expressed a desire to increase the diversity of readings required of students, and in Fall 2004 we expanded the readings in nearly all courses to include authors of various traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups, international perspectives, and feminist traditions. We discussed our progress in this area again in 2006.

Westmont College has outlined six student learning standards. The Communication Studies department consistently fulfills all six standards in almost every course taught. The following examples are meant to show some of these connections.

Christian Orientation
The Communication Studies department holds, in line with Westmont’s mission, that a good education takes its starting point in God’s revelation. We are committed to helping our graduates grow in Christian faith and knowledge. To this end, we currently incorporate into our courses Scripture, devotional readings, assignments, and exercises, which we believe impact student lives in positive and meaningful ways. A significant goal in all of our classes is to construct a Christian approach to communication. In several classes, students are presented with various ethical “models” in communication that derive from Scripture. Topics such as work and calling, or being peacemakers, show the relevance of Christian thought to contemporary society. The implications for being made in the image of God are explored, as are the biblical and church metaphors which structure much (if not most) of our understanding of God and our place in the world.

Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking
The department develops students’ capabilities, talents, and gifts by deepening their theoretical, historical, and conceptual knowledge and honing their analytical, writing, and speaking skills. In our teaching, we ask many questions and follow-up student responses with more questions. We realize that there are times when supplying the “answer” is not appropriate. We seek to avoid a personalized, knee-jerk reaction based upon how something makes us feel in the moment. Students are challenged, in all classes, to avoid snap judgments. Students graduate with the ability to make critical, considered and above all wise judgments on what is good, right, admirable, and worthy. While Communication Studies has its own body of theory and literature, we strive to integrate the best of many other fields of study. Students learn elements and aspects of social science, literature, philosophy, theology, and interpretation.
**Diversity**
The discipline’s audience-centeredness naturally dovetails with issues related to diversity. Our courses encourage students to be less narcissistic, more concerned about reaching those who are unlike themselves. In class discussion and assignments, students consider how communication choices relate to ways we think about social class, gender and ethnicity. Our introductory course speaks to issues of social construction and cross-cultural communication. Many courses ask students to seek greater empathy toward those from other groups, recognizing God’s image in all. Students learn that pursuing this level of understanding requires significant work.

**Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement**
In our mission statement, we indicate our commitment to assisting our students toward wisdom. We try to teach with a sense of humility and to model for our students that learning does not lead to complacency but to a hunger for more knowledge, more learning, more understanding. In many classes, we hold up the vision of making a contribution to society, of becoming “true citizens” who are responsible to share their knowledge with their community. We encourage our students to be active reconcilers, helping to mediate between conflicting groups.

**Written and Oral Communication**
The Communication Studies department plays a vital role in helping students acquire and develop verbal skill. Our courses require that students demonstrate deep and broad mastery of the topics they are writing or speaking on, that they offer evidence of rhetorical effectiveness, and that they constantly model the Christian faith in their writing and speaking. All of the department’s courses require written work. These assignments range from short reflection essays to developed research papers. The Communication Studies department also offers a full course on the development of oral competence. In addition to this class, many other courses require oral presentations and demand a high level of articulate student participation. In some courses, students’ oral contributions might be constructively evaluated on the spot, moving students toward better, less clichéd arguments. In all student discourse, we encourage audience-centered rhetorical competence.

**Research and Technology**
God’s revelation is understood and discovered through reason, observation, experimentation, and the affections. The Communication Studies department helps students comprehend this revelation through a rigorous approach to research. We require all majors to take a course in research methods. Many of our other courses build on this foundation through semester-long projects. Some students assist faculty in their research. In addition, students develop skill in the use of technology in writing and speaking, and reflect thoughtfully on the impact of new technologies on individuals and on society.
C. Contributions to General Education

The department contributes to the general education curriculum in a variety of ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>GE Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>Messages Meaning and Culture</td>
<td>Understanding Society (Common Inquiries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>Speech Intensive (Common Skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Rhetoric I</td>
<td>Writing Intensive (Common Skills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>Communication Criticism</td>
<td>Integrating Major Discipline (Competent Action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Mass Communication</td>
<td>Research (Competent Action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Persuasion &amp; Propaganda</td>
<td>Productions &amp; Presentations (Competent Action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196R</td>
<td>Senior Seminar – Research</td>
<td>Research (Competent Action)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the “Common Inquiries – Understanding Society” section of the GE, we offer Com 006 Messages Meaning and Culture. This is a lower division course requiring no prerequisites and tends to attract many non-majors. During most years, this course is offered twice, although on occasion we offer a third section at the request of the Registrar or Provost’s Office to meet demand. We offer another lower division GE course in the writing/speech intensive area, Com 015 Public Speaking. We have noticed an increased enrollment of non-majors in recent years, though the course still primarily serves our own majors.

D. Departmental History

Development of Department: Until 1986, students interested in communication took courses in several different departments (first from “English and Speech,” then from “Speech and Theatre,” then from various departments in an interdisciplinary course of study). With Greg Spencer joining Lisa Studley in 1987, Communication Studies became an independent department. Until the hiring of Michael Giuliano in 1993, the department managed with two full-time faculty plus adjuncts. Deborah Dunn replaced Studley in 1997, and Omedi Ochieng replaced Giuliano in 2005.

As the department’s needs and student demands changed, adjuncts were increasingly used (between 1993 and 2007) until the department operated with the equivalent of four full-time professors. These adjuncts included Dave Turner, Tina Kistler, Don Rainbow, Amanda Ream, Kyle Huckins, Alana Nicastro, Rick Malleus, Dick Morrow, Steve Rudy, Sarah Hock, Kirsten Reid, John Seiter, and Cameron Sublett. Lesa Stern joined the department in 2007 (following a three-year search) to complete our current configuration of four tenure-track positions.

Staff and promotion/tenure:
- Deborah Dunn, promoted to Full Professor, 2008
- Omedi Ochieng, passed mid-tenure review, 2008
- Greg Spencer, promoted to Full Professor 1999
- Lesa Stern, awaiting final tenure and promotion review, 2010
Department chair duties:
- Greg Spencer: 2008 – Present
- Deborah Dunn: 2004-2008
- Greg Spencer: 2003-2004

Faculty Areas of Concentration and Expertise
As a faculty, we represent a wide spectrum of the discipline. We want our students to appreciate these various perspectives, such as humanities and social science orientations, interpersonal and institutional contexts, local and global applications, and both communication effectiveness and ethics. While there is certainly overlap in many areas, our individual areas of expertise can be summed up as follows:

- Deborah Dunn: organizational communication, conflict resolution, and persuasion
- Omedi Ochieng: rhetorical criticism, argumentation, and public discourse
- Greg Spencer: communication and rhetorical theory, and communication ethics
- Lesa Stern: research methods, interpersonal communication, and educational assessment

1993 External Review by Quin Schultze (Calvin College) and Michael Graves (Regent College):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Recommendations</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hire an established mid-career scholar-teacher.</td>
<td>We now have three mid-career scholar-teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create foundational course that is broader than the rhetorical perspective.</td>
<td>Com 006 Messages Meaning and Culture introduces students to both humanities and social science theories and perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-title Media Ethics as Communication Ethics, and add “Studies in” to courses such as Public Discourse.</td>
<td>This was completed several years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get involved in intercollegiate forensics.</td>
<td>We instituted an intramural Speech and Debate Tournament but have not moved significantly toward intercollegiate forensics, although we currently advise the Debate Club which competes about three times a year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change curriculum such that upper division courses are more evenly distributed across more faculty members.</td>
<td>This was implemented several years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop on-going surveying of Communication Studies alumni.</td>
<td>This needs to be more systematically pursued.</td>
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</table>

2008 External Review and Facilitation by Professor Emeritus Em Griffin (Wheaton College).

As a result of his facilitation at a retreat of our departmental faculty, Em Griffin recommended that we follow-through on the following items (see full report in Appendix):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curricular</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less emphasis on rhetorical theory in the courses required of all majors</td>
<td>Com 102 has been made an elective rather than a requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More emphasis on desired global orientation</td>
<td>Added global communication requirement for all majors; plan to submit “International Rhetoric” for GE credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take into account broader disciplinary fields and personnel changes in our department</td>
<td>Changed “African Rhetoric” course to “International Rhetoric” and incorporated it into course requirements; encouraged elective courses in specialty areas (including health communication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture of the Department</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster more vibrant intellectual culture among our majors</td>
<td>We are actively encouraging students to engage in research both on their own and in concert with professors; we also plan to offer departmental lectures and bring in guest speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase connections among faculty members</td>
<td>We agreed to and have taken the first steps toward meeting together to discuss our research plans and progress</td>
</tr>
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**Internal Reviews.** Following are key discussions, goals, and accomplishments over the past six years.

**2008-2009**
- Revised Curriculum. Based on discussion of consultant Em Griffin’s report, we made significant changes to our curriculum and shepherded those changes through Academic Senate. Please see Appendix H for the previous curriculum.
- Amended Student Learning Outcomes – we refined the language for greater clarity and simplicity.
- Assessed eight term papers (the number of research papers completed by seniors in Com 125 Mass Communication) using the writing rubric. Please see results of this discussion under Item 4.B. in this document.

**2007 - 2008**
- Hired fourth full-time professor in the department (this completed a three-year search to hire a full-time professor to replace the use of part-time adjuncts).
- Finalized and operationalized the departmental mission statement (please see Item 2.A. in this document. Statement can be read on first page of this document).
- Collected student papers for assessment.
- Further developed writing rubric to assess quality of student writing and illuminate differences in grading perceptions and practices among faculty.
2006 - 2007

- Wrote Department Mission Statement: Draft was reviewed and refined.
- Changed advising practices and encouraged prerequisites; assessed numbers of upper division students in lower division courses. Prerequisites instituted previous year made a noticeable difference.
- Reviewed student work for evidence of learning, engagement, and critical thinking: Four video productions completed in Com 129 Persuasion and Propaganda were reviewed in a public forum. Evaluations were collected and a focus group conducted. Students expressed high learning outcomes.
- Three papers from one student over the course of a semester were assessed and discussed using the newly devised rubric.
- Reviewed and revised existing courses for inclusion in the GE curriculum.
- Conducted initial alumni survey (to serve as a gauge of recent alumni experiences as well as a pilot for future alumni survey). 43 alumni responded. Satisfaction levels with content areas in the curriculum were discussed, as well as reported activities and memories of courses.
- Conducted two senior exit interviews.

2005 - 2006

- Diversified readings and coursework: To reflect a more global orientation, faculty members changed readings in several courses. One faculty member introduced a new course called “African Rhetoric.”
- After we learned that too many of our majors were taking lower division courses in their junior or senior years, we changed prerequisites in six courses.
- Began discussion of departmental mission statement.

Discussion of Previous Internal Reviews. We are pleased with the progress we’ve made in program review. It is heartening to see that we have completed or are in the process of following through on several key themes identified over the years. We knew we needed to come to some agreement on our mission and vision as a department before we could satisfactorily determine the most important student learning outcomes. That we now have substantial change points to our doggedness in pursuing these aims. Admittedly, due to the incredible re-composition of our department in terms of full-time faculty, we spent more time on these aspects of Program Review than we spent on actually assessing student learning. We now believe we are well situated to do this better, more systematically, and in a way that will lead to satisfying and ongoing improvement both for our students and our faculty. Note that many of these key issues were identified in our discussions with our outside reviewer and facilitator, Em Griffin. We have made progress in each area, although the workload involved in changing the curriculum and the disruption caused by the Tea Fire in November of 2008 restricted the hours available for more progress in recommendations two and three and our assessment plans generally.
III. Basic Statistical Information, Discussion, and Analysis

Based upon a review and discussion of the data in the appendices, we’ve considered the following questions:

**Main achievements of the department.** On the whole, we are pleased with our accomplishments. Since 2002, we have operated at a consistently high level, graduating mature and inspiring young men and women despite challenges in turnover, hiring, limited resources, and significant administrative duties. We have successfully led three off-campus Mayterm programs abroad (Northern Ireland and South Africa) that have been highly rated and within budget. We clarified our own program goals and vision, wrote a mission statement for the department, hired two new colleagues, saw the successful mid-tenure review of one of those colleagues, and a promotion to full professor of another. We’ve been cited as at least part of the inspiration of donors giving significant gifts to the college. Our students consistently provide leadership in student ministries, residence life, student government, student publications, and various other college activities. All full-time professors in the department are well qualified to teach in their areas of expertise as well as in the core, introductory courses. Faculty are known and respected on campus both for their communication skills and their close mentorship of students within and beyond the classroom context. As evidence of this, Greg Spencer has been named Teacher of the Year twice in his tenure at the college (1990, 2007), and Deborah Dunn was honored as Teacher of the Year in 2008. Our two newest colleagues have already been recognized for being excellent teachers and mentors, with Professor Stern being tapped to help other departments develop program review and assessment strategies, and Professor Ochieng serving on the communication board and advisor to student clubs on campus. In addition, Professor Stern has begun helping students interested in research by working one-on-one with them and involving them in potentially publishable research.

**Even distribution of workload.** Some of us teach more students each year, while others of us have more class preps per year, and others teach research intensive courses. We would like to think that our workload is evenly distributed, but we realize this may require some discussion in the next few years.

**Role of and Satisfaction With Part-Timers.** In a nutshell, we’ve been blessed with some very gifted adjuncts who’ve helped us out in a pinch, but we’ve also had a couple of adjuncts who were perhaps less prepared to intellectually challenge our students in helpful and motivating ways. We do believe we’ve been especially conscientious when it comes to observing and meeting with part-time faculty, which helps us make good staffing decisions. We’ve also realized that while some of our lower division courses are “easier” to fill with part-time help, this may have hurt our major over time since increasingly our “recruiting” courses are the lower division courses that part-timers are most likely to fill. We’ve discussed the need to examine this more closely in future years.

**Representation of Women and Minorities in the Department.** Significant positive change has occurred recently. Six years ago 2/3 of our full-time tenure-track faculty were white males, and 3/3 were white. Currently, 50% are female, and 25% black. (Please see Chart 1.) We are intending to continue a conversation on how our students react to difference in the classroom, especially how they perceive and respect women faculty and faculty of color.
Advising – Load and Quality. Due to the length of time it took for us to hire the full complement of faculty, two of us did the bulk of the advising for several years – that meant that each of us typically advised between 35 and 60 students each year. This was difficult to do. Nevertheless, we believe our students have generally felt well advised, especially as to major requirements. Mr. Bob Kuntz, Registrar, recently said, “Associate Registrar Wendy Wright, Assistant Registrar Jennifer Salemann, and I wish to complement the Communication Studies department on the accuracy, quality and the thoroughness of the academic advising conducted by members of the department.” Now that our numbers are more manageable (about 25 advisees each on average, though some have had more depending on numbers of graduating seniors and new advisees), we would like to focus more on helping students make career choices as well as class choices.

Faculty achievements and service. Since 2003, Deborah Dunn has completed two case studies of grass roots peacemaking organizations in Northern Ireland, has published book chapters and encyclopedia entries, and has served as a consultant to non-profit organizations in Northern Ireland. Omedi Ochieng has presented numerous papers at national conferences and given invited lectures on the epistemology, ideology, and ethics articulated by African sage philosophers and on the historiography of rhetoric. Greg Spencer has published two novels and numerous articles. His Quieter Virtues for a Noisy World will be released fall, 2010 (InterVarsity Press). Lesa Stern published a journal article and a book chapter on visual rhetoric since coming to Westmont in 2007, and also was successful in her application for a major grant for a crisis pregnancy center in St. Louis, Missouri (where she moved from). Our faculty are often in high demand to speak to the larger campus community and neighbors. Deborah Dunn has moderated two Westmont Downtown panel discussions and has addressed the Board of Trustees, the Board of Advisors, and the faculty in the Annual Phi Kappa Phi lecture. Omedi Ochieng was invited to speak as a panelist during the Westmont Presidential Inauguration, served as a respondent to a Phi Kappa Phi lecture, and has spoken in numerous Westmont classes in the departments of history, philosophy, and sociology. Greg Spencer delivered the Baccalaureate address of 2009, and has traveled numerous times on behalf of the college to speak at various alumni gatherings across the country. Lesa Stern was also recently invited to deliver a seminar on conflict management at Santa Barbara Community Church. Departmental members have been asked to serve on a variety of committees and have been elected by their peers to serve in many different administrative roles. Deborah Dunn served as Vice Chair of the Faculty for two years, chaired the long range planning committee, was a member of faculty council, established the annual scholar’s retreat, and was elected or asked to serve on several search committees including the searches for college president and provost. She also served on the Academic Senate and has led workshops for student leaders. Omedi Ochieng served as the faculty representative on the communication board, and was just recently elected by his peers to serve on the personnel committee. Greg Spencer served on the personnel committee, the diversity committee, and the general education committee. He also currently sits on Academic Senate and was elected a member of the Executive Senate. Lesa Stern has served on the student life committee and was involved in various student life programs, including help with the student resident assistants, cross-cultural programs, and a vocational retreat for students.

What we would like to be able to do better. In light of collected data, and conversations with our consultant Em Griffin, we have discussed how we could make a variety of stronger connections with students. Some of us want to spend more time with students to help them achieve their goals, sort out academic issues, help advise them on career planning, and know them individually beyond the classroom setting. Others would like to do more research with students, both in helping them
develop their own research agendas and in bringing them along so that they might join us in some of our research. Along these lines, we would also like to develop a more intellectually vibrant student culture. Here, we are referring not to the rigor of the classroom but to student conversations and habitués outside and beyond classroom.

In the appendices, please find faculty and student profiles (charts 1-5), including faculty CVs and other pertinent documents.

IV. Programs

During 2007-2009 the Communication Studies faculty spent considerable time during each department meeting discussing the nature of the program, now that all four faculty were in place. Curricular changes and discussions had been put on the back burner during the search process, as the third and fourth members’ research, interests, and opinions would make a significant difference to the department and its offerings. This hiring/search process took much longer than expected; it took three and a half years to successfully hire the fourth member of the department. It is important to note that our goals and student learning outcomes have continuously evolved in the last six years; assessment activities undertaken in 2005 list somewhat different learning outcomes than assessment undertaken most recently. Nevertheless, the same general themes have been present for many years, even as our ability to articulate what we mean has evolved.

A. Student Learning Outcomes

From our mission statement flow the program goals and student learning outcomes (please also see matrix, included here). We seek to develop students who have broad knowledge of the communication discipline, in keeping with the liberal arts tradition. Graduates of the program should have knowledge of the discipline in the areas of historical events, theories, research paradigms and findings. These department goals closely tie in with the college’s critical interdisciplinary thinking goal.

In addition, they should be able to apply biblical and ethical principles in their analysis of communication interactions and phenomena, realizing that communication is value laden and is part of God’s redemptive plan. This goal closely ties in with the College’s Christian orientation standard.

The communication program also is designed to equip graduates for successful communication practices. Graduates are encouraged to be other-centered in their communication practices and be good citizens in their various and increasingly wider circles of influence as they move off into the larger world. The program teaches them the skills to discern effective communication practices and provides them with opportunities to put them into practice.

We want our graduates to be able to:

Analyze human symbolic action wisely.

*Students will attain undergraduate-level knowledge in communication, including facility with:*

- Communication history
- General approaches and major theories in communication
• Research findings in communication
• Biblical and ethical principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Communication History</th>
<th>Communication Theories</th>
<th>Communication Research</th>
<th>Biblical &amp; Ethical Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major historical events in the discipline</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major communication theories</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major research paradigms and findings</td>
<td>Is able to articulate and process complex ethical dilemmas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Practice eloquent communication:

Students will come to communication situations with greater competence in the following areas:
• Other-centered attentiveness
• Discernment for ethically based communication effectiveness
• Skills for ethically-based communication effectiveness
• Motivation to enter the public square as good citizens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Goals</th>
<th>Other centeredness</th>
<th>Discernment for Effective communication</th>
<th>Skills for effectiveness</th>
<th>Citizenship &amp; Prophetic Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Outcomes</td>
<td>Takes into account more than self; interacts in ways that are mindful of others</td>
<td>Considers multiple factors and contexts; makes educated decisions</td>
<td>Presents and writes competently for different audiences</td>
<td>Engages society as responsible citizen; advocates for justice and mercy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following are the matrices outlining how our outcomes are aligned with specific courses:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Program Goals</strong></th>
<th>Communication History</th>
<th>Communication Theories</th>
<th>Communication Research</th>
<th>Biblical &amp; Ethical Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major historical &quot;events&quot;</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major communication theories</td>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of major research paradigms and findings</td>
<td>Is able to articulate and process complex ethical dilemmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Where are the Learning Outcomes met?</strong></td>
<td>I=006, 015, 098, 129, 130, 133, 140</td>
<td>I=006, 015, 098, 129, 130, 133, 140</td>
<td>I=006, 133</td>
<td>I=006, 015, 098, 129, 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D=101, 102, 103, 110, 125, 135, 145</td>
<td>D=101, 102, 103, 110, 125, 129, 130, 133, 140, 145</td>
<td>M=135</td>
<td>M=135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M=135</td>
<td>M=135</td>
<td>M=135</td>
<td>M=135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How are they assessed?</strong></td>
<td>Mass Communication papers</td>
<td>Mass Communication papers analyzed via rubric by all comm. faculty</td>
<td>Mass communication papers analyzed via rubric by all comm. faculty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
<td>Rubrics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
<td>Portfolios</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poster sessions</td>
<td>Poster sessions</td>
<td>Poster sessions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>External Jury</td>
<td>External Jury</td>
<td>External Jury</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
<td>Exit interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Written Surveys</td>
<td>Written Surveys</td>
<td>Written Surveys</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benchmark</strong></td>
<td>C or better in 101</td>
<td>C or better in 006</td>
<td>C or better in 098; Papers in upper division courses meet objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to the learning standards</strong></td>
<td>Critical interdisciplinary thinking</td>
<td>Critical interdisciplinary thinking</td>
<td>Critical interdisciplinary thinking; research and technology</td>
<td>Christian orientation; critical interdisciplinary thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.B. Outcomes Matrix 1
1.B. Outcomes Matrix 2

We also completed a similar version to Matrices 1 & 2, which helped us see trends in our courses. One of the things you will notice is that most of our courses touch upon each of the objectives. Many courses introduce topics related to our goals and many courses develop these goals more thoroughly. We noticed that few courses “master” the objective. In discussion, we realized that we value student flexibility in choosing courses and the timing of those courses. Therefore, in any
upper division course, we have both sophomores with little communication background and graduating seniors with considerable knowledge. We also try to keep prerequisites to a minimum in order to maintain flexibility. Therefore, few courses systematically build upon each other. At the undergraduate level, students are exposed to great breadth of content with moderate depth (D). We’ve discussed the importance of breadth in liberal arts education and are largely comfortable with the idea that students who desire more depth in particular areas could continue their studies in graduate school. In our discussion of mastery (M) in our departmental meetings, we learned that we each considered mastery to mean different things. One difference is the distinction between mastery of a body of knowledge, and mastery of the application of that knowledge. This distinction may change our designations in the future.

### Analyze Human Symbolic Action Wisely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Theories</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Biblical/Ethical Ps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>098</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>D/I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>D/I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of courses</td>
<td>7I/6D/1M</td>
<td>3I/10D/1M</td>
<td>2I/11D/1M</td>
<td>5I/8D/1M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**  
I = introduced  
D = developed  
M = mastered

### Practice Eloquent Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Other centeredness</th>
<th>Discernment -effectiveness</th>
<th>Skills for effectiveness</th>
<th>Citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>015</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I/D</td>
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<tr>
<td>098</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>110</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>125</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I/D</td>
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<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>D/M</td>
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<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>D/M</td>
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<td>D/M</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>I/D</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
<td>D/M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of courses</td>
<td>7I/6D/1M</td>
<td>3I/9D/2M</td>
<td>2I/11D/1M</td>
<td>4I/8D/2M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication Studies Program Review 2009
Alignment of Departmental and Disciplinary Expectations

Our national association, the National Communication Association (NCA) has general guidelines for undergraduate programs in communication. NCA does not prescribe particular courses but is consistent with accrediting bodies that ask programs to align their program goals to the larger college goals, and to have the resources necessary to support student learning within that context. Our core and elective offerings are consistent both with NCA guidelines and with some of the largest subdivisions within NCA, such as rhetoric, public discourse, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, and so on. See: http://www.natcom.org/index.asp?bid=7512

Comparison with Christian college in US News Top Tier Liberal Arts Colleges, Wheaton College

Wheaton College’s Communication Department is an undergraduate program rooted in the liberal arts and has similar goals to the Communication department at Westmont. They state that “The human capacity to understand, influence, and appreciate others comes through communication. The Communication Department endeavors to expand a student’s range of verbal and nonverbal skills, to develop sensitivity for their appropriate use in different situations, and to nurture a Christian perspective on issues of power, influence, justice, freedom, creativity, and truth. The course work, advising, and co-curricular activities of the department assist students in becoming competent and ethically responsible communicators, as well as preparing them for future academic study, professional training, and lifelong learning.” See: http://www.wheaton.edu/Communications/curriculum/curriculum.html

However, Wheaton’s communication department achieves their goals through four areas of specialization, and only requires 32 units (rather than our 44 required units). They also house their theater program within the communication department. Wheaton’s communication program requires 4 core classes (same as Westmont); two of their core courses are similar to ours, but then they include a performance class and a capstone. An additional 16 hours of courses is within the specialization, which is distinct from our department. At Westmont, we want our majors to be exposed to a variety of areas within communication (and allow for more freedom to explore areas of interest with 12 units of electives), whereas Wheaton students must pick one area for a specialization (and allow for just 2 units of electives). Wheaton’s communication department has 8 tenure-track faculty (not including the two theater faculty) and a couple of visiting and emeritus faculty who teach regularly. Out of 2500 students at the college, the department has 150 majors.

Comparison with Christian college in southern California, Azusa Pacific University. Azusa’s communication department is undergraduate only. Their goals state:

“The Department of Communication Studies prepares students who can: Apply the basic concepts of communication theory and research to their life's work. Incorporate individual and group communication styles that relate to the achievement of their personal and professional goals. Utilize appropriate communication skills for solving problems, making decisions, managing conflict, executing change strategies, and promoting the intellectual, spiritual, and emotional growth of those with whom they live and work. Understand the moral and ethical implications of the communicator's responsibilities in the construction of social worlds.”

Azusa Pacific’s program is similar to Westmont’s in units and the variety of courses they offer. Their required courses are also similar to Westmont’s (see starred ones below— they are also
required at Westmont, although the level of the course may differ). Azusa differs in that it offers areas of concentration for their majors and journalism is housed in the Communication department rather than in English. Otherwise, they offer media, interpersonal and rhetoric classes similar to Westmont. Azusa also has 8 faculty in the department, whereas Westmont has 4 faculty. Out of 5000 students at the college, the department has 198 majors. See: http://www.apu.edu/clas/communication/commstudies/.

Comparison with Christian college on US West Coast, Seattle Pacific University
Seattle Pacific University’s (SPU) undergraduate only program requires many of the same courses that Westmont requires, such as: Public Speaking and Theories of Communication. However, they require 8 specific courses: Interpersonal communication, Argumentation, The Public & the Media, Comm ethics (a capstone), Foundations Western Rhetoric, Modern Rhetorical Theory, Organizational Communication, and One seminar (5 choices). Therefore, their program does not offer the flexibility that Westmont offers. However, many of their required courses are options in our department.

Co-Curricular Activities

Fall Gathering. Each year, the department has a gathering to build departmental community. This gathering, which includes a meal and social activities help fulfill our citizenship and other-centeredness goals. In particular, we want to foster an atmosphere where students identify strongly with their major department, as well as get to know the other majors.

Speech and Debate Tournament. Although this tournament is open to all of the campus, not just majors, many of our majors participate. This tournament helps foster the oral communication component of the “effective skills” objective as well goals regarding fostering citizenship and being prophetic voices in society. This upcoming year we plan to discuss the nature and future of the tournament given our limited resources.

Lambda Pi Eta, the National Communication Honor Society. The induction ceremony, held each spring, rewards students for outstanding performance in the classroom, and also helps build an awareness of responsibilities when one has been given great gifts in communication and scholarly aptitude. The event includes a short speech or homily given by an outstanding student, reinforces the goals of our discipline and the importance of key concepts outlined by the ancient Greek rhetoricians but relevant for all liberal arts education, including ethos, pathos, and the logos. This event ends with a celebratory dessert.

Christian Colleges Ethics Conference. For over fifteen years, the Communication Studies department has been involved in an annual Communication Ethics conference that has usually been held at and organized by Azusa Pacific University. Our department has been one of four co-sponsors for this event. Over the years, we have contributed as faculty (as panelists and paper presenters) and as students (as panelists and paper presenters).

Student Research Symposium. For many years, a few of our students present papers at a poster session for Westmont’s annual research celebration. Consistently, our students are among only a handful of representatives from the Humanities Division. Our students have nearly always approached the symposium with considerable trepidation but have greatly enjoyed the experience of discussing their research.
B. Assessment of Outcomes

During the past few years we have chosen to focus our assessment activities on the areas where we a) noticed a wide variety in aptitude and outcomes; b) felt a pressing need for analysis; and/or c) where we thought we might most easily access or recruit outside evaluation of student work. A lot of attention was paid to student writing and the ability of students to make good arguments and support them well.

1. Skills in Effectiveness and Eloquence in Writing and Research were assessed together both within the department and by two outside reviewers. We determined we would assess the quality of student research conducted by seniors for the Mass Communication (Com 125) course. While the course is not limited to seniors, we selected only those research papers written by graduating seniors in Spring 2008 (a total of eight papers). Com 125 requires students to conduct independent research (either interpretive criticism or social science) and write it up in a format consistent with professional standards.

For our in-department discussion we used the writing rubric developed, used, and discussed by the department previously (see Appendix F). Also, this assessment was done to complete an assessment loop. Com 098 (Introduction to Research Methods) was added as a prerequisite to Com 125 and other courses requiring more advanced research skills. To improve the quality of the required research project in Com 125, advising practices were changed such that students took the course earlier in their major coursework. The discussion within our department indicated that our students were about average (or a little better) in most areas of writing. That is, their content, organization, style and conventions were acceptable, and at times, close to strong. We also noted that students could use some help in crafting readable and well developed arguments that would support their research questions, claims, and conclusions. While eight papers from one semester may not provide a broad swathe of student writing, they are indicative of the kind of research that is conducted in the Com 125 course. We also discussed how motivation and time make a big difference in our students’ work.

Two outside reviewers agreed to read the same papers identified above (although one paper was eliminated from the analysis when we realized this paper was written by a student not having the pre-requisite completed prior to the semester in which he enrolled in Com 125). We asked these reviewers to give hypothetical grades, and to use the rubric if possible. The feedback from outside reviewers was quite positive. These reviews also pointed to the helpfulness and limitations of the existing rubric. One reviewer remarked on the papers, “Honestly, as a whole I’d conclude these students are receiving an excellent education. These were all quite original papers, certainly exemplary for the undergraduate level. . . . Their questions, analyses, and interpretations were largely ‘above average,’ while writing mechanics and other dynamics etc. might have been improved. Would you send me some Westmont students? Seriously.” The reviewer also commented on the rubric used for the analysis, “This following comment applies to all of the papers: I found your rubric very helpful as I read through this essay, and I’d like to borrow and adapt it for one of my own classes, if possible. Just running down the rubric, it becomes clear where this paper might have been improved. There are a number of unsupported assertions. The mechanics are choppy and word-usage a bit repetitive in several places, and of course, there are parts where we could quibble with the research setup and design. But overall, these are clear criteria.” The second reviewer was also complimentary: “As a whole, the papers are absolutely remarkable: great writing, great research
I am so very, very impressed. After 10 years of student papers at Penn State, UMD, and KU, I would never have expected undergraduate writing to be so strong…The papers were consistently stronger in design than in content. Content varied more by paper…I am actually quite glad I had the opportunity to read them."

In discussion of our individual evaluation, we learned that although we appeared to have acceptable “agreement” on the scoring of the rubric, we did have differences. We noted that some differences were due to different understandings of the rubric, but some differences were due to valuing things differently. Also, we have collected and will continue to collect papers written for other courses and assignments.

Note: We hoped to have outside readers analyze “pre- and post-“ student papers as well – to compare research papers done by students without a rigorous research methods course, with papers done by students with a rigorous research methods course. This was scheduled to happen in December 2008, but due to the Tea Fire and its aftermath, the earlier student papers have been lost to us. Outside reviewers were able to evaluate the “post” papers given that these were electronic copies and easily backed-up. With or without outside review to confirm our suspicions, we believe that a rigorous, prerequisite research course dramatically improves student performance on upper division research papers.

As to our program goals and specific learning outcomes, we think these papers indicate some good progress in terms of students being able to find, read, and make use of communication theories. What they seem a bit less able to do is master communication effectiveness in their written work, given our own review and our outside reviewers’ comments about style, mechanics, and argument. We are also impressed with our student choices of topics, from the empowerment of marginalized others to the critical examination of many questionable mediated messages. For this reason, we think they are well on their way to being skilled critical thinkers and articulate citizens.

In terms of what we’ve learned about student learning, we are in ongoing discussion about how to improve student writing. It seems clear from our own analysis as well as from anecdotal evidence that students are often capable of more than they deliver in the form of a student paper. We discussed that students take 4 courses in common (006, 015, 098, 101). The three lower division courses require at least one paper or essay, and 101 requires multiple essays. Similarly, our upper level courses for the major require students to write several kinds of papers of varying length. Therefore, students are being provided with multiple opportunities for improving their writing. Our task, it seems to us, is to figure out how to encourage students, whether through informal and/or formal means, to write more than one draft, and to think through the argument being made or the conclusion being drawn. We’ve discussed the possibilities of adding peer-review to force more than one draft, as well as the possibilities of grading multiple drafts. We’ve also compared our experiences in sending students to the college “Writers’ Corner” (WC) for help with papers. All of us encourage our students to use the service, and some of us build this encouragement into the course. One professor allows students to re-write papers on which they’ve earned a grade lower than a B if they go to the WC and one professor requires that students work with the WC staff before turning in the final paper.

We intend to assess writing and research again in a few years to be able to capture any improvements in writing gained from using different methods we implement as a result of our ongoing discussions.
2. Disciplinary Knowledge (Theories, Research, Historical concepts).

To a great extent, this was also assessed in the analysis of the research papers (see item #1 above). In addition, we also found the information gleaned from a 2005 pilot survey of alumni (43 respondents; 50% response rate) somewhat helpful. A full account of this survey is provided in the annual report of 2005-2006. One of the questions asked alumni to tell us about theories or concepts they remember from their communication program. Of the 22 who responded to this open-ended question, 20 of them named (and sometimes discussed the value of) theories and/or communication concepts. Five respondents indicated that they remembered “a lot” (or “most”) but did not specifically name any of them. Most respondents mentioned more than one concept or theory, with the range being from 1 to 12. Additionally, the concepts were from a variety of courses and instructors. It is clear from these responses that alumni were naming concepts/theories that made a difference in their lives that they are still applying. We cannot draw conclusions about those who did not respond to this question (Did they not want to take the time? Did they not remember any?). So, what did we learn from this section of the survey? We learned that students retain and value a lot of their communication theories, concepts, and research findings once they are out in the work world.

3. Skills for Effectiveness.

Internship Evaluations by Supervisors. One way to assess the communication effectiveness skills of our students is to ask the people they work for. Students taking the internship course in communication consistently receive very high performance ratings from their supervisors. Some of the verbal and conversational skills assessed by supervisors include:

- Listens to others actively and attentively
- Participates effectively in group settings
- Communicates well (whether face-to-face, online, or on the telephone)
- Manages and resolves conflict effectively
- Demonstrates assertive, yet appropriate behavior
- Asks pertinent and purposeful questions.

Upon reviewing the most recent feedback for student interns in communication (Spring 2009), we find that 85% of the students receive the highest possible rating on the categories listed above. About half of the students are marked “average” or “could be better” when it comes to taking initiative, such as being assertive or seeking out information through pertinent questions.

Public Speaking. We have further plans for assessing oral communication in 2009-2010. We will use an adapted version the National Communication Association’s rubric for evaluating student learning in public speaking. We believe this assessment will serve two purposes: 1) we will assess student progress in a GE credit course; and 2) we will assess student progress as graduating seniors. We also plan to revise our pilot alumni survey this year and include questions that will give us more feedback on how our graduates perceive their own communication skills both interpersonally and professionally.

Alumni Survey. In the pilot alumni survey (see the 2005-2006 report), we asked graduates to rate their satisfaction with their own skills, abilities, and accomplishments in several areas. One notable finding is that the majority of those surveyed were very satisfied with:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication leadership</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to acquire and evaluate information</td>
<td>Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciate different communication styles</td>
<td>Effectiveness, Other-Centeredness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work productively in groups</td>
<td>Effectiveness, Other-Centeredness, Citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop rewarding personal relationships</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, when asked, “which of the skills were most carefully honed or positively impacted in the communication major, alumni chose (multiple answers were accepted):

- Oral communication skills (71%)
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills (69%)
- Written communication skills (66%)
- Appreciation of different styles of communication (60%)
- Skills for rewarding personal relationships (60%)
- Ability to acquire and analyze information (54%)

*Culture/ethnicity/gender* (diversity, discernment, and effectiveness skills). The alumni survey also revealed that the majority of our alumni (94%) believed that the communication program gave them a greater appreciation for culture, gender, and ethnicity.

When alumni were asked, “what they were least prepared for in their first real job/graduate school,” the common themes were: dealing with office politics, dealing with the “lack of good communication skills” of others, and working with non-Christians. These are topics we cannot teach in class, but are the result of being out in the work world and learning through interacting with others. Although we teach about diversity and differing levels of integrity in our courses, dealing with it in the “business world” is always messier and more striking and complex.

What do we conclude from this survey? Alumni reaffirm our belief that the Communication Studies program is achieving most of its student learning objectives. The alumni are satisfied to very satisfied with their communication skills/abilities (85-98% of the alumni responded in this manner on all but one item on the survey) and that the Communication Studies department played a large role in developing these skills. On the whole, it was very reaffirming and complimentary of the program and the professors. In order to at least begin to address some of the concerns raised by alumni, one professor has incorporated a lecture and additional readings on “office politics” in the organizational communication course, and we have revised the practicum course to include some reflections on working with others who may seem difficult for a variety of reasons.

We believe this survey was effective in gathering alumni perceptions of their abilities/skills and the communication program. We would like to conduct another alumni survey in the next couple years and cast the net wider so as to collect a larger sample and to ask questions directly tied to our student learning outcomes.

**C. Conclusions**

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Communication Studies Program Review 2009
We believe that our students get a good education and are well prepared for the next phase of their lives by majoring in Communication Studies. Anecdotal evidence suggests that students use what they have learned and are well equipped. Our students perform well in their internships and are rated highly by supervisors.

Now that the program has been tended (writing mission statement, determining program goals and student learning outcomes, revising the curriculum), we will devote more time toward systematic assessment. We would also like to design an alumni survey that helps measure student learning outcomes beyond Westmont. The support of the College in sharing systematically collected “up-to-date” contact information will help us achieve our alumni survey goals. We will utilize survey monkey for gathering the data and we have some draft questions that we are considering.

V. General Education

The Communication department plays a vital role in the General Education Curriculum. The department offers a number of courses that are cross-listed as General Education classes.

A. Student learning Outcomes for GE in Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GE Requirements</th>
<th>How the Course Satisfies GE Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common Contexts: Understanding Society. Social or cultural phenomena, examining in particular basic social institutions such as: Family and Marriage, Religion, Education, Gender, Government, and the Economy. Students should be able to analyze social situations using a disciplinary framework. Students will acquire basic competence to read studies and understand claims about social phenomena.</td>
<td>Com 006 seeks to help students understand the centrality of communication to the nature of being human, of living in community, and in apprehending and understanding our world. The following demonstrates, in part, how the course touches on universal social institutions as they function in our society:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY: Watzlawick’s “Interactional View” sees families as systems, and Burgoon’s “Expectancy Violations Theory” explains aspects of interpersonal conflict.</td>
<td>RELIGION: Bok argues against lying, and Schultze considers “shalom” as a central part of his Christian theology of communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION: Sherif’s “Social Judgment Theory” and Fisher’s “Narrative Paradigm” help explain how we learn and why we change our minds.</td>
<td>GOVERNMENT: Burke’s “Dramatism” accounts for public political choices, and Kramaræ’s “Muted Group Theory” raises issues of power and voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMY: Hall’s “Cultural Studies” asserts that the media are a tool of capitalistic institutions, and Gerbner’s “Cultivation Theory” leads to questions about the use of mediated violence for profit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent and Compassionate Action: Integrating the Major.</td>
<td>We believe most, if not all, of our courses attempt to make these connections, but Com 103 does this specifically:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stated outcomes stress that students understand multiple perspectives and are able to identify the discipline’s place within the larger educational program. These courses are also supposed to help students reflect on the relationship of the discipline and the Christian faith.

- Articulating the major theories of rhetorical studies and demonstrates how these theories illuminate a variety of rhetorical artifacts. Articulates the philosophical assumptions of rhetorical criticism as a research method.
- Articulates the history of the study of rhetorical criticism and connects this to the history of the discipline.
- Articulates the major rationales for the practice of rhetorical criticism and how this is connected to the major goals of education.
- Articulates the connection and place of Communication Studies to the humanities, social sciences, and, where pertinent, to the natural sciences.
- Articulates how rhetorical studies can illuminate and is in turn illuminated by other theories and concepts emergent in other disciplines.
- Articulates how the epistemological debates within rhetorical studies engage questions of truth, faith, and ethics in Christianity.
- Articulating how the Christian faith makes a difference to the practice of rhetorical criticism.

**Competent and Compassionate Action: Research.**

Students in Com 125 and Com 196R are required to conduct and write-up original research in communication. They may choose to write from a rhetorical perspective, or they may choose to write from a social scientific perspective. They must format the paper and write in such a way that they satisfy the requirements of the genre. They are also required to locate and use appropriate sources to justify their own research and make sense of their findings.

**Competent and Compassionate Action: Productions & Presentations.**

Students in Com 129 showcase their ability to craft persuasive messages as well as call attention to propaganda via a public showing of a short film or some other creative exhibition of their work.

**Common Skills: Speech Intensive Course.**

Students in Com 015 acquire the character, knowledge, skills and practice vital in preparing, delivering, analyzing, and critiquing public speeches. Students present several major speeches, including an informative speech, a persuasive speech, and a memorized speech. Students in Com 015 get a grounding in the theory and practice of public communication. To that end, they are taught how to conduct extensive research on their topic, how to evaluate research, and how to analyze, synthesize, and organize their ideas in oral discourse.
discourse. Speech intensive courses are meant to develop students’ ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences, within the academy, the church, and the public.

Students in Com 015 are encouraged to use their creativity and imagination to make their speeches appealing and effective to diverse audiences, and they are tested on course material that highlights rhetorical sensitivity, the use of appropriate language and examples, and audience adaptation.

**Common Skills: Writing Intensive Course.**
- Engage students in an intense examination and refining of their writing skills

Students in Com 101 learn to model thoughtful, loving communication through writing projects. Students write reflective essays as part of ongoing course journals. Each journal entry is three pages in length. Students also write two short essays, ranging from 4-6 pages, one of which is written in a dialogue form.

In the wake of our extensive program review and ongoing GE discussions, we determined that our GE courses serve our students well, especially in terms of introducing students to the study of communication (Com 006), helping our students complete their writing and speaking intensive courses (Com 015, Com 101, Com 103) and competent action courses (Com 103, Com 125, Com 129, and Com 196R). In the near future, we would like to complete the proposal that the new International Rhetoric course be submitted for GE credit, and that we explore and develop creative and integrative ways to help our own majors meet the serving society requirement. We plan to continue our departmental discussions on how best to serve the college and our students via the GE curriculum.

Discussion and Conclusions Regarding Department and GE: The department’s conversations on General Education yielded the following items:

- The department’s presence in the General Education curriculum is fairly healthy. The department contributes in a number of categories of the General Education curriculum.
- At the moment, Com 006 Messages, Meaning and Culture is the class that serves the highest number of non-majors in the department. Increasingly, however, Com 015 Public Speaking has seen a substantial rise in the number of non-majors taking the class.
- The department is resolved to propose a class in the “Serving Society” section of the “Competent and Compassionate Action.”
- The department has agreed that Com 138 International Rhetoric should be proposed as a General Education course in the “Thinking Globally” category.
- The department has also agreed to engage in more extended conversations concerning other potential course offerings in the General Education curriculum.

**B. Evidence Collected in the Department**

We understand that some standardized forms of assessment are being developed by the GE Committee, and we look forward to implementing some of these tools as they are developed.

**Effectiveness – Writing & Research GE.** As previously noted, we set out to systematically understand and assess our majors’ writing and research abilities. To this end, we formulated the...
rubric for evaluating papers, and then used the rubric to evaluate research papers collected in Com 125: Mass Communication. Our rubric has also proved helpful in previous conversations regarding work in Com 006: Messages Meaning and Culture. Finally, we posted the rubric on our departmental web site so that students might examine the rubric as well.

**Effectiveness & Eloquence – Productions and Presentations GE.** We also invited outside reviewers (professors and alumni) to attend the public presentations of students in Com 129: Persuasion and Propaganda. Both the department and the students in the class discussed the feedback from outside others in order to refine the assignment for future classes. See Annual Report 2006-2007 in Appendix I.

**Effectiveness – Speech Intensive GE.** As mentioned previously, we are also in the process of formulating a method for evaluating student speaking. This rubric, originally developed by the National Communication Association will be adapted to fit our needs specifically.

**C. Departmental Conclusions & Recommendations to the General Education Committee**

For the purposes of assessment, we would like to see the GE committee’s student learning outcomes for each area. We suggest more inter-disciplinary assessment of students as a logical and helpful next step for the committee. For example, it would be helpful to interview students in the natural sciences on what they learned in their “humanities” classes, and vice versa.

**VI. Resources**

**A. Financial Resources**

1. **Adequacy of Current Budget and Financial Resources.** Based upon our program review and experiences of living with the budget from year to year, we find that our financial resources are far below what we need to accomplish our priority goals and learning outcomes. Ironically, however, we have come in well under budget for over a decade now. This is because we know how under-funded we are, and so we are very frugal with every penny. For 2008-2009, we were asked by the administration to spend as little as possible due to the way the poor national economy was affecting the college budget. Nevertheless, we are now so far under budget it is time we work together as a department to more intelligently manage the funds we do have. This may well be accomplished via budget updates throughout the year (and this would be helped by timely accurate billings from auxiliary departments such as the reprographics area).

We recognize that these are tough economic times, but we know that by documenting needs that exist, regardless of funding, we are practicing good program review and providing a foundation for good future budgeting decisions.

Below is a table of the budget numbers from Fiscal Year ending in 2002 to Fiscal Year ending in 2009. The allocated budget numbers are available for the past three years only. Note that the last two budget years we were specifically asked to limit spending as much as possible, by at least 3% for 2008-2009, and by at least 5% for 2009-2010. Our budget prior to 2004-2005 was about $6800, and as of now is about $8500. Given the number of students we serve as majors, and given that we have
one of the smallest academic budgets in the college, we probably quite literally turn the lights on for other departments!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51410 Student wages</td>
<td>1806.89</td>
<td>1504.53</td>
<td>1018.10</td>
<td>28.16</td>
<td>120.90</td>
<td>141.93</td>
<td>872.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54210 Printing &amp; repro</td>
<td>1546.21</td>
<td>1820.36</td>
<td>1240.05</td>
<td>2075.66</td>
<td>1756.86</td>
<td>1235.69</td>
<td>1868.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>52310 Postage</td>
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<td>262.27</td>
<td>202.57</td>
<td>114.50</td>
<td>132.20</td>
<td>110.48</td>
<td>69.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>52410 Hospitality</td>
<td>977.18</td>
<td>1134.51</td>
<td>986.27</td>
<td>1013.21</td>
<td>1507.36</td>
<td>1939.31</td>
<td>623.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52631 Media equipment</td>
<td>100.72</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>225.35</td>
<td>323.03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1002.81</td>
<td>238.05</td>
<td>357.24</td>
<td>231.71</td>
<td>85.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>53020 Supplies Classrm</td>
<td>936.99</td>
<td>620.13</td>
<td>1509.22</td>
<td>1611.23</td>
<td>2634.57</td>
<td>784.99</td>
<td>577.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53110 Furniture Equipmt</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>410.08</td>
<td>78.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>230.37</td>
<td>138.12</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>268.94</td>
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<td>55050 Phone Long Dist</td>
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<td>54.95</td>
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<td>192.80</td>
<td>78.43</td>
<td>52.08</td>
<td>49.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>58910 Dues Subscription</td>
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<td>400.00</td>
<td>255.00</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>340.00</td>
<td>855.10</td>
<td>293.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Totals</td>
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<td>6285.93</td>
<td>6389.33</td>
<td>7388.71</td>
<td>5982.37</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Budget (07-09 only)</td>
<td>8310.00</td>
<td>8750.00</td>
<td>8572.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Following are the areas in which our budget is lacking:

*Speech and Debate.* For the past decade we have sponsored a speech and debate tournament. The operating budget runs about $12,000, but our donor has provided less money over the years and just recently passed away. At this time, we have no way of knowing if any future bequests are pending, so we’d either have to find an additional $12,000 to continue this tradition, or discontinue this wonderful event and activity for Westmont students.

Furthermore, we have eager current and prospective students who would like to participate in intercollegiate debate competitions, fielding a team. Since we currently have no budget for this, we have relied on the enthusiasm of current students to find their own fundraising. Even these funds are inadequate, and both the provost’s office and student life offices have contributed money toward the debate team. We do not know if any of this funding will continue, however, which means that
we may not be able to field a team this year or the next. To fund the team as a student club, completely organized and supported by themselves alone, would cost about $5,000 a year. To fund the team with a forensics coach, appropriate scholarships, tournament fees, and travel monies would most likely require an endowment. We were preparing a proposal for the donor most interested in speech and debate at Westmont but, given his recent death, this is at a standstill.

**Student Research.** Currently there are no funds in our budget for student research, especially summer student research programs. The increasing importance of providing students with research opportunities is not lost upon our department; however, we have no funds to enable students to stay in campus housing over the summer break, and we do not have a large budget for student assistant money. It is clear that we are inconsistent in our need and use of student assistants. This is due mostly to our inability to sustain student interest and faculty availability due to lack of funds. What we mean is that if we split about $1600 four ways among four professors working with students, $400 does not go far toward room, board, and actual work performed. Since this has not been a well-funded exercise for us, we have not built a tradition in the department, which means we have few students initiating these opportunities. While we might devise a way within the department to trade-off each year, so that we may recruit suitable students as researchers, this would still be a problematic sum of money given that students would have to pay for their own room and board, as well as tuition units if they were enrolled in a research course. In short, we have not been well set-up financially or traditionally to make this a viable option. New funds could jumpstart a summer research program, and then it would depend on how well we do to firmly establish a tradition and expectation among our students.

**Fostering Intellectual Community.** One of the goals that emerged in our recent program review discussions was to better foster a rich intellectual community among our students. We want to encourage them in their intellectual explorations beyond the classroom, to help them grow as researchers on their own, to stimulate conversations that would enrich classroom learning, to create a climate in which students felt both safe and enthusiastic about being scholars. To do this, we would like to help students attend and present research at conferences, help students pay for posters to display their research, to have speakers at brown bag lunches and evening events, to develop the potential of the honor society, Lambda Pi Eta by funding events for honor students, to have more interactions among faculty and students in social settings. These kinds of activities require funding.

**Funds for faculty development,** both in terms of research and in terms of teaching. Funds for developing research programs with students would help achieve several goals and outcomes, especially including students in research and fostering intellectual community. It would also help, however, if we were able to send our faculty to workshops and international seminars, especially when this activity would clearly benefit our teaching and therefore our students. For example, a seminar in Vietnam on reconciliation would enable a faculty member to broaden his or her worldview, to select more culturally diverse readings and topics, and ultimately better serve the students in helping them become global thinkers. Or, if a faculty member wanted to become more involved in service learning on the Eastside of Santa Barbara, it would be great to have funds to send that faculty member to an intensive language immersion experience in Mexico, have that faculty person come back and get students involved in service learning in the local community, or have release-time to put together a local program.

**Funds for adding a specialty course and speakers for students.** The addition of even one regular adjunct teaching in a specialty area that we ourselves cannot realistically cover would help enormously, as
would funds to bring in speakers for our students. Again, we recognize that economic times are tough, and that relative to some other departments we are doing well with four full-time faculty members. Nevertheless, it is challenging to cover the breadth of our discipline while also providing depth for students in particular sub-disciplines, even with some department members doing five and six preps a year. This is partly the nature of the discipline. Communication Studies encompasses both social sciences and humanities. We have made choices over the years to provide a broad base, a grounding in many different areas, such as interpersonal communication, group communication, organizational communication, persuasion and propaganda, and mass communication. During the course of our program review, however, we have come to realize that students only get specialized, deeper training in rhetoric – there are both introductory and advanced courses offered by two different professors. We are working as a department to balance the breadth and depth issues, and we have made difficult choices as to what we cannot offer because we don’t want to stretch ourselves too thin. Given the number of majors we have, given many programs and departments in Communication Studies, and given expectations graduate programs will have of our students, we are stretched too thin as it is. Finally, we need a bit more flexibility to pursue our own research projects by reducing the amount of time we spend prepping for numerous courses and advising students that may number from 25 to 65 depending on our staffing needs in any given year. Note that we have experienced some enrollment anomalies very recently, but we believe this is due to new elective courses with unfamiliar titles taught by new staff. Enrollment over the course of six years has been high, and several classes regularly exceed (many doubling) the typical lecture/discussion enrollment of 25 students. In terms of full-time faculty available to teach, advise, and serve, we’ve ranged from 32:1 to 17:1 – both well above Westmont’s advertised ratio.

B. Program Resources

1. Space. We lack adequate space for the realization of our goals and student learning outcomes. As other departments will undoubtedly report, classroom space is problematic on campus at large, not just for our majors.

   Offices. One of our faculty members is located directly across from the men’s room, and due to a variety of social and hygienic issues, this is not optimal. Another faculty member, a female, has an office that shares a wall with the men’s room, which is awkward at best. Furthermore, in the last year and a half there have been several leaks from the sink/water cooler upstairs which have created a mildew problem in her office and which makes the space unpleasant to work in – for both students and faculty. How can we encourage students to work with us when we barely have space for ourselves and our materials, let alone additional space for a student and his or her materials? Formal proposals have been submitted (2004 and 2008) to address this pressing need.

   Laboratory / Experiential Learning Center. We have submitted plans and pleas for laboratory and experiential learning space. Some years ago we were led to believe that when the Art faculty vacated Reynolds Gallery some this space would be made available to Deane Hall departments. It appears this is no longer the case. One of the things that we believe would increase student learning and provide greater student research opportunities is the establishment of an experiential learning center, a kind of communication laboratory. This space would accommodate simulation kinds of activities as well as practice spaces for presentations and laboratory research space for the observation of communication interactions. There really are no good places on campus to conduct simulations during
regular class hours, which means that we do not conduct simulations at all, or we have to modify them in such a way that they are less effective, or that we must offer these kinds of learning activities in our own homes or off campus) Formal proposals were made (2003) to and solicited (2005) by the Provost.

Classrooms. Too many classrooms are cramped, leaving little room for activities that go beyond a traditional lecture format. If we want students to break into groups, this can usually only be done by leaving the classroom altogether. If the weather is fine, the class is well located, and construction is not disruptive, going outside can be a good option. Lately, due to campus construction, however, these challenges are more intense and will likely continue for a few years. There are a couple of classrooms that offer more flexibility in this regard, including the upstairs KSC, although this flexibility has diminished over the years as that space is required for student life offices, conferences, and meetings. Even with a traditional lecture class, the rows are so crammed in many classrooms that students have difficulty concentrating while taking exams, have difficult seeing visual aids, and have difficulty exiting and entering.

2. Other Programs on Campus.

Library: We are quite pleased with the online access to journals in our discipline and related fields of study, particularly Sage and EBSCO’s Communication/Mass Media Complete. We have met with our library liaison, and have found the library staff helpful, friendly, and willing to assist our students. We would like to know what other campus libraries are doing or have done, and what kinds of services and materials could be available. It is difficult to imagine all that we might accomplish in working together if we don’t have any food for thought. Technology is changing so quickly, student expectations change with the times and technology, and the cultures of libraries and how they might be used by students and faculty are changing. To begin to envision new ways forward, we would need some help.

Internship: Our students make use of the internship office and the service learning opportunities there. We are limited, however, in the number of students we can send to them, which means that we do not get much relief in our department, and which means that we must offer at least one course a year for them. We believe that internships are worthwhile, and we’d like to encourage more internships among our students, but this is difficult to do given the resource limitations.

Office of Life Planning: Our students make use of this office. We have not tracked how much they interact with the staff, but we suspect that they are more likely to take advantage of the services offered if required as part of a class or a student leadership program. Many of our students go there for tests (personality, career interests, temperament) rather than career advice. Students looking for jobs will often ask for advice or seek sources for resumes and cover letters.

Off-campus programs: Our students make regular use of off campus programs. We have recently changed our curriculum which will require either off campus experience or coursework that increases cultural and global involvement. We have not tracked this in the past. We have offered four off-campus programs specifically for Communication Studies majors (though not limited to them) in the past nine years, and many of our students go off
campus. The most frequent semester-long programs include Europe Semester, Urban Semester, Consortium Semesters, and the Best Semester Programs. We have not assessed the learning on off-campus programs in a systematic way. Though we are generally pleased with the programs our students choose, we had past concerns with programs that did not seem very rigorous. These concerns were shared by others on campus, and this has not been a problem in recent years.

VII. Conclusion and Long-Term Vision

A. Major Departmental Accomplishments

- Wrote Mission Statement
- Established Program Goals
- Established Student Learning Outcomes
- Revised Curriculum
- Added Courses and Requirement for Global Communicators
- Solicited and Incorporated Feedback from Three Outside Reviewers (two for student work; one for departmental structure, culture, and curriculum)
- Successfully led three off-campus summer programs abroad
- Hired two new full-time colleagues
- Developed, implemented, and published comprehensive website designed for both majors and potential Westmont students
- Earned two teaching awards for faculty (2007 & 2008)
- Sent four students to communication ethics conferences
- Sent two students to undergraduate research conference in communication
- Made excellent progress in diversifying the department in terms of both gender and ethnicity

B. Six-Year Hopes, Goals, and Plans

Six years from now we hope to find that we have improved the ways we encourage a vibrant intellectual culture that involves our students and faculty in ongoing, supportive discussions of:

- triumphs and quandaries in our scholarly work
- successes and challenges in being both wise and eloquent
- commitments and setbacks in calling our communities to care about justice and mercy
- joys and struggles in living out the Good News of the gospel.

Goals. In addition to our ongoing assessment of student learning in the area of communication skills, we would like to think through a number of issues related to our big picture program review:

- We plan to make a concerted effort to explore how we might measure the concept of wisdom, an important element of our departmental mission statement. How do we know if our students are wiser after graduating with a degree in Communication Studies from Westmont College? Along these lines, we would also like to explore how we conceive of, teach, and evaluate knowledge of biblical and ethical principles (one of our programmatic goals). What kind of knowledge in this area do our students bring to Westmont? How do they change because of their connection to our department? What principles can we expect all or most of our students to pick up as they matriculate through our curriculum? How are these principles manifested in
papers, presentations, and conversations? Finally, what kinds of activities will most productively and accurately assess student growth in this area?

- We would like to begin discussions about our program goals for both other-centeredness and discernment.
- We would like to continue to create an intellectual culture for both students and faculty that encourages growth, creativity, transparency, and celebration.
- We would like to continue the conversations begun with this report regarding the best financial stewardship of our limited resources, especially in terms of forensics, an experiential learning center, and student research.

**Assessment Plans.** In an ongoing effort to assess the learning of our students, we plan to engage in a continuous cycle whereby we assess, analyze our data, formulate plans of action, act, and then re-assess. So, in year one we may focus on a particular aspect of “skills” by collecting relevant data, in year two determine what our data tell us and make plans to correct problems or reinforce strengths, in subsequent years continue to act on the corrections and strengthening, and then in the fourth or fifth year re-assess the learning outcome, and so completing one loop and beginning another. What this will look like in the immediate future is illustrated below.

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Some of the tools we envision using, though we certainly would not limit our thinking at this stage will include alumni surveys, rubrics (existing and potential), outside reviewers, senior portfolios, senior exit interviews, observations and recordings of oral presentations, and internship supervisor evaluations, other survey data (such as NSSE).

**Immediate Action.** As part of our overall program improvement, we plan to immediately:
- Submit Com 138 International Rhetoric to the GE committee for inclusion as a “Thinking Globally” option (Ochieng)
• Make plans to offer a “Serving Society” and/or “Cross-Cultural Communication” GE option (Stern & Department)
• Review resources and plans for speech and debate (Dunn & Ochieng)
• Again submit CIP requests for office space (Spencer)
• Submit budget request for student research funds (Stern & Spencer)
• Continue departmental discussions regarding the meaning of the word “master” in terms of student learning