

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
BOULDER**

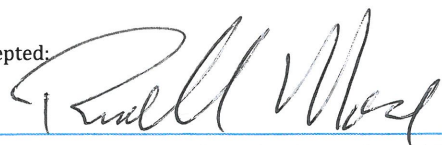
**ACADEMIC REVIEW AND PLANNING ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

**FINAL REPORT FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

Presented to Provost Russell Moore

December 17, 2013

Accepted:



03-06-2014

Provost & Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs : Date

I. REVIEW PROCESS

The review of the Department of Communication (COMM) was conducted in accordance with the 2013 review guidelines. The department prepared a self-study, which was reviewed by an internal review committee (IRC) of two faculty members from outside of COMM as well as a graduate student and an undergraduate student from outside of COMM. The IRC found the report complete and accurate overall. An external review committee (ERC) visited the unit during April 2013. The committees, having reviewed the relevant documents, met with faculty members, students, and university administrators.

Subsequently, COMM prepared a Mission Statement and Strategic Plan for its move to the College of Media, Communication, and Information (CMCI), which is anticipated but not finalized at the writing of this report. The Mission Statement and Strategic Plan incorporate changes from the original self-study that were prompted by the ERC. Where such changes amplify or alter plans or requests in the self-study, the Mission Statement and Strategic Plan for CMCI supersede the COMM self-study in this report. Should COMM's move to CMCI not come to pass, ARPAC may reconsider this report in light of COMM's continued affiliation with A&S.

This public document reflects the assessment of and recommendations for COMM as approved by the members of the Academic Review and Planning Advisory Committee (ARPAC).

II. OVERVIEW OF THE UNIT: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP/CREATIVE WORK

The campus's standardized description of the unit may be found on the website of the Office of Planning, Budget and Analysis (PBA) (<http://www.colorado.edu/pba/depts/arp/index.html>). PBA updates the unit profiles annually in the fall semester. The PBA data in this report are from the latest profile of COMM available in September 2013. (These data are as of November 1, 2011. More recent data from the February 2013 COMM self-study and CMCI Mission Statement and Strategic Plan are cited where appropriate.)

Research and graduate education are organized in terms of three areas of emphasis: Discourse & Society, Organizational Communication, and Rhetoric, which are described in the self-study as follows:

Discourse and Society – Investigates how the practices of verbal and nonverbal expression accomplish social forms (e.g., identities), and how these processes vary across different speech communities (e.g., ethnic and national cultures). Topics explored here include applied communication, family communication, health campaigns, deliberation, and democracy.

Organizational Communication – Examines communication's essential role in both

constituting and performing the processes of *organizing* in contemporary government, private and non-profit settings. Topics explored here include organizational change, culture, identity, knowledge, technology, gender, power, and discourse.

Rhetoric – Integrates contemporary critical-theoretical approaches to the study of discourse in public culture with an ethnographic focus on textually-mediated relationships developed between institutions and audiences. Topics explored here include the rhetoric of science, national security, the public sphere, urban space, and social thought.

Undergraduate education cuts across these three areas. Generically described as “analytic work in both humanistic and social-scientific perspectives,” it focuses on “the basic contexts in which communication is enacted (e.g., interpersonal, group, organizational, and public contexts) and the various processes of interaction within these contexts.”

Personnel and Governance

At the time of the latest revision to the self-study (February 2013), COMM had 17 TTT full-time faculty members (FTE), one rostered in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric. They are distributed across the three areas as follows: 6 FTE in Discourse and Society, 5.5 FTE in Rhetoric, and 5.5 FTE in Organizational Communication (one faculty member is split between Rhetoric and Organization Communication). The department employs one full-time instructor, two instructors at .5 FTE, and one at .25 FTE. The department has 33 TA/GPTI teaching assistant and graduate part-time instructor (TA/GPTI) positions according to the most recent PBA data.

The department is governed by by-laws adopted in 1991 and amended eight times since (most recently in 2012). Voting members elect a chair to a four-year term, renewable once. Seven standing committees see to routine business. The department generally conducts other business as a committee of the whole, but the chair may appoint *ad hoc* committees as appropriate. These structures conform to university norms.

The self-study reports that the department underwent some “turbulent” times in the 1980s, following a failed attempt to merge COMM with Journalism and Mass Communication and an unfavorable program review that prompted the campus to terminate the department’s graduate programs. The department subsequently recovered as a consequence of four successful waves of hires. More recently, the department experienced significant conflict and rancor, leading in the extreme to the separation of a leading senior scholar from the department. That faculty member is administratively housed in the Graduate School and does not participate in teaching or service in COMM.

The climate has significantly improved in COMM, according to the self-study as well as the IRC and ERC. The ERC, in particular, lauded COMM’s efforts in this vein, including its newly formulated Faculty Conduct Policy (approved by the faculty in May 2012), which the ERC suggests might serve as a model for other units.

The department is currently in the midst of preparing for its likely relocation to the proposed College

of Media, Communication, and Information.

Research and Scholarship

The ERC describes COMM as “a well-respected leader in the Communications discipline,” whose “senior faculty include recognized leaders” that who have been complemented in recent years by the addition of “a group of promising junior faculty.” The IRC praised “the overall dynamic and productive faculty.”

The self-study identifies several lines of research in each of the department’s three areas in which faculty members excel and enjoy national and international reputations. The Discourse and Society group is recognized for work in “interaction, collaboration and conflict-related issues in community and public settings; managing and solving significant social issues from and applied perspective; promoting social justice; and designing communication processes.” The Organizational Communication group is recognized for work in the *constitutive* (v. *representational*) role of communication in human organizations and the “connections among organizational change, power, culture, technology, gender, identity, knowledge, and discourse.” Finally, the Rhetoric group is recognized for work integrating rhetorical theory with cultural studies and the “interpretive turn in social science.” Emphases under this general description include “the rhetoric of science; the [role of] gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality; space and place; and social thought.”

Evidence for the quality and impact of COMM’s faculty research comes from five sources discussed in the self-study: faculty awards, the 2004 National Communication Association (NCA) reputational study, the 2008 CU Boulder Unit Merit Study, the 2010 National Research Council (NRC) rankings, and the CU Boulder Institutional Research and Analysis (IR&A) unit’s modified Academic Analytics (based on 2010 data), and a published citation analysis by Allen and colleagues.ⁱ PBA provides data that compares COMM (including grants) to other CU units in the review cycle. (The PBA data are less easily interpretable than data from the other sources, which pertain specifically to communication units.)

Noteworthy faculty awards include the following: College Professor of Distinction; Provost’s Faculty Achievement Award; Distinguished Scholars of the National Communication Association (two); President’s Diversity Award; and President’s Teaching Scholar.

The 2004 NRC rankings of doctoral programs placed COMM third of 16, eighth of 19, third of 12, and twelfth of 18 in the four categories of Critical Cultural Communication, Small Group Communication, Organizational Communication, and Rhetorical Communication, respectively. The 2008 Unit Merit Study compared COMM faculty productivity to four other public Research I Universities: Illinois, Penn State, UCLA, and Wisconsin-Madison. In that study, COMM ranked first overall in average number of publications per faculty member. The 2010 NRC rankings of doctoral programs placed COMM in the 80th percentile of research activity. IR&A Academic analytics ranked COMM research productivity 23rd of 110 peer institutions. Finally, the communication department citation analysis by Allen and colleagues ranked COMM fourteenth of 60 among peer institutions.

Based on IR&A Academic Analytics, the COMM faculty ranks 1.5 standard deviations (SD) above the mean on awards per faculty member, 0.8 SD above the mean on books and conference proceedings

per faculty member, at the mean in citations per faculty member, 0.6 SD above the mean in journal publications per faculty member, and 0.4 SD below the mean in citations per publication. PBA data rank COMM eighth of 11 in grant funding over the past five years among units in the review cycle. IR&A Academic Analytics ranks COMM 0.3 SD below the mean of other communication units in grant dollars per faculty member and 0.4 SD below the mean in grant dollars per faculty member. (Note: the distribution of grant dollars is heavily negatively skewed, so a large majority of communication units fall below the mean.)

Undergraduate Education

Undergraduate majors are required to take 33 credit hours in COMM, 18 of which must be at the 3000 or 4000 level. Requirements are distributed across introductory courses in human communication, public speaking, and group interaction (nine hours); theory and methods (nine hours); a senior seminar (three credits), and three additional courses (nine hours) selected from a menu representing the span of the department's three divisions. The department's Technology across the Curriculum program (TAC) commitment integrates technology throughout. For students who meet certain requirements (not specified in the self-study), the undergraduate curriculum also includes opportunities for study abroad, internships, honors, the COMM Residential Academic Program, and other forms of experiential learning beyond what can be provided in the classroom.

COMM's undergraduate major is in very high demand. The self-study reports 1,020 majors in 2012, calculated in a way that excludes first-year students. (The calculation previously had included first-year students when they declared themselves as "pre-COMM.") The average number of majors between 2003 and 2010, including pre-COMM, was 813. By adding 175-200 first-year students estimated to become COMM majors to the 1,020 majors for 2012, the self-study estimates the growth of undergraduate majors to be twenty-five to fifty per cent relative to the 923 majors in 2011. With 50.8 undergraduate majors per TTT faculty member, COMM ranks first by a wide margin among the units in this review cycle. Sociology, ranked second, has an average of 30.8 undergraduate majors per TTT faculty member. COMM TTT faculty members ranked third among units in this review cycle in student-credit-hour production. COMM TTT faculty members teach a relatively low percentage of non-majors, 41%, ninth among ten units in the review cycle (which is to be expected given the exceedingly high number of COMM majors they must serve). TTT faculty members taught 46% of undergraduate courses, ranking sixth of ten units in this review cycle. However, because only seven of these units teach graduate students, COMM ranks third of seven among the more relevant comparison group of units who teach both graduate and undergraduate students.

The self-study, IRC, and ERC agree that the rapid growth of undergraduate majors has put significant strain on the unit, which compromises the quality of its undergraduate program and other functions by drawing away effort and resources. Although it is plausible to suggest that growth helps explain the results of the 2012 spring senior survey, in which COMM ranked at or near the bottom of other units in the review cycle on seven of eight survey items measuring student satisfaction with their program major, responses by seniors on the 2009 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) were also relatively negative. FCQ ratings, which include 41% non-majors, tell a more positive story: students' rating of COMM courses ranked sixth of ten among units in the review cycle, and their rating of instructors ranked second of ten.

In the CMCI Mission Statement and Strategic Plan, COMM indicates its intention to reexamine the four concentrations in the undergraduate program—social advocacy, organizational communication, cultural diversity, and communication and human relationships—and to consider the possibility of developing a minor in communication as the department’s role in CMCI becomes clearer. The plan also includes pursuing other programmatic changes to strengthen the program, such as better linking lower- and higher-level courses, culminating in the senior seminars; increasing the number of non-major courses; and, targeted at majors, creating a public debate society and building stronger out-of-class experiences by increasing the number of majors participating in honors, in the Eta Phi honor club, and in study-abroad programs. These last several curricular revisions may serve to increase the satisfaction of COMM undergraduate majors.

Graduate Education

As indicated earlier, COMM organizes its graduate program into its three areas of scholarship: Discourse & Society, Organizational Communication, and Rhetoric. It offers both MA and PhD degrees, and most students, particularly in the PhD program, have traditional scholarly interests. The Discourse & Society area is relatively new, growing out of the 2003 program review. The MA program is also relatively new, enrolling its first cohort in 2002. TTT faculty members teach 100% of COMM graduate courses; the department ranks first among the nine units in this review cycle as well as first among the 51 units ranked by PBA in this category.

Seventy-five to ninety students apply to the COMM graduate program each year, of whom ten to fifteen are admitted and enroll, approximately a third in the PhD program and two-thirds in the MA program. Total enrollment in 2011-12 was 55 students, 38 PhD and 17 MA.

The department admits all of its PhD students with funding (“with rare exceptions,” according to the self-study). MA students may be admitted without funding. The department provides funding for 35 PhD students: 13 GPTIs, 20 TAs, one RA, and one GA. Two to three COMM PhD students receive GPTI funding through the Program in Writing and Rhetoric; one receives GPTI funding through CE and another through CASE (external grant funding).

The 2004 NCA and 2010 rankings of communication doctoral programs described earlier provide evidence of the effectiveness of the COMM graduate program in the discipline. Compared to other units in the review cycle for 2011-12, COMM ranked sixth of seven in MA graduates and fourth of six in median time to degree. It ranked first of seven for both total PhD graduates and median time to degree. According to the self-study, the department has been successful in placing its graduates. Graduates of the PhD program have filled faculty positions at the University of North Carolina, the University of Nebraska, and St. Johns University, among others. Others have received post-doctoral fellowships and pursued careers in non-profits. Many MA students pursue doctoral studies in universities such as University of Pittsburg, University of Michigan, and the University of Texas-Austin, among others. The self-study includes an appendix with a relatively long list of articles jointly authored by graduate students and faculty members, further attesting to the quality of the graduate program. On the 2009 graduate students satisfaction survey, the latest data provided by PBA, COMM was ranked first of seven in the review cycle on “program quality.” However, paralleling the

undergraduate survey, the department was ranked at or near the bottom on the other items, including the “relationship between faculty and graduate students.” (Note that these results pre-date the surge in the number of undergraduate majors.)

Space, Staff, and Infrastructure

The department is housed in the basement of the Hellems Building. The self-study indicates that the location is problematic for three reasons: (1) it is too small, (2) it is dilapidated, leading to frequent electrical and plumbing problems as well as flooding, and (3) it is split between the east and west sides of the building, adversely affecting the department culture. The self-study asserts, “renovation and expansion of office space will soon be an urgent need.” The department is not keen on the alternative of moving to East Campus, in part or in whole, because of its perceived “deep integration” into Central campus, because cognate units are housed there, and because of the nature of the units housed on East Campus.

The department has three staff members responsible for things such as scheduling, supervising work study-students, managing graduate programs, and managing various office operations. Each is 1.0 FTE, holding the classifications Office Manager I, Administrative Assistant III, and Administrative Assistant II.

Budget

The self-study claims two primary sources of funding: the College of Arts & Sciences, by far the largest, and the Josephine Jones Endowment, used primarily for instructional costs for graduate students and lecturers. Program fees for Technology across the Curriculum generate a modest additional amount. The self-study commends A&S for its willingness to provide funding from Leaves and Replacements on short notice while expressing dissatisfaction with the low lecturer pay rate (\$4300), which threatens the quality of instruction. The self-study claims that a (modest) strength of its budget model is its flexibility and diverse sources, made possible by A&S Leaves and Replacement infusions and the Josephine Jones Endowment.

III. HISTORY OF PROGRAM REVIEW

COMM last underwent program review in 2003. At that time, it had 13 TTT faculty members distributed across three areas: organizational communication, social interaction, and rhetoric. The graduate program enrolled 34 PhD and 18 MA students (approximately the same as 2012). While organizational communication was recognized as the department’s strength, the PRP agreed with the ERC that the department had the potential to attain national prominence in all three areas and endorsed this organization for the department. The ERC and PRP agreed that new TTT faculty lines should be allocated to COMM. The department requested two immediately. The ERC recommended that the department ultimately be allocated 20 TTT faculty lines. The PRP was less specific in its recommendation: “...the dean is encouraged to allocate additional positions as resources permit.”

The department has grown to 17 TTT positions since 2003 although it is difficult to determine what this increase means for teaching and advising workloads, given that one TTT faculty member does not engage in the activities the department, five have partial administrative releases, and one teaches in

the Program for Writing and Rhetoric. The addition of TTT faculty has enabled the department to successfully build the rhetoric program, under that name, and the social interaction area, now Discourse & Society. The department has also articulated an informal mentoring plan for junior faculty, as recommended by the PRP.

Several problems identified in the 2003 program review persist:

1. COMM majors had ballooned to over 800, prompting the creation of the Pre-Communication major that permitted the department to control enrollment. The Pre-Communication major has since been abolished, with the consequent surge in undergraduate majors (estimated to be 1200).
2. Hellems remains in need of renovation for health and safety reasons, which the 2003 program review (the IRC) asserted “can’t wait for the scheduled renovation...that may be ten years in the future.” Those ten years have now elapsed.
3. The department continues to depend on last minute allocations from the Leaves and Replacement budget to support course offering continues.

IV. COMMUNICATION IN A CAMPUS CONTEXT

The department has been involved in a number of new campus initiatives since COMM’s 2003 PRP review, including the following: forming the *Communication and Society Residential Academic Program* (COMM RAP) and the *Civic and Social Engagement (CASE) Project for Sustainability*; becoming administrative home for the College of Arts and Sciences’ *Peace and Conflict Studies* certificate program (PACS); founding the *Center for the Study of Conflict, Collaboration and Creative Governance* (3CG); founding the *Technology across the Curriculum* (TAC) initiative; and playing a central role in the development of the *Technology, Arts and Media* (TAM) undergraduate certificate offered by the campus’s *Alliance for Technology, Learning, and Society* (ATLAS) program.

Department faculty members have been active in service across the College and campus in a variety of roles: (College of) Arts and Sciences Support and Education for Teaching Technology (ASSETT); Arts and Sciences Faculty Council (ASC); Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society (ATLAS); Boulder Faculty Assembly (BFA); Center for the Advancement of Research in the Social Sciences (CARTSS); the Center for the History and Philosophy of Science (CHPS); the Center for Humanities and the Arts (CHA); the Center for Language and Social Policy (CLASP); the Center for Science and Technology Policy Research (CSTPR); International and National Voluntary Service Training (INVST) / Community Studies Program; Peace and Conflict Studies certificate program (PACS); Program for Writing and Rhetoric (PWR); and the Renewable Alternative and Sustainable Energy Institute (RASEI).

V. COMMUNICATION IN A DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

COMM enjoys a high reputation for the quality of its faculty, graduate students, and research. Within the discipline, senior faculty members are highly visible and esteemed in regional, national, and international professional associations. For example, two are past-Presidents of the International Communication Association (ICA); another is past-President of the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA). Other senior faculty members have served as presidents of association divisions (e.g., for the

NCA's Nonverbal Communication, Ethnography, and Organizational Communication Divisions). COMM faculty members have also been Editors-in-Chief and Associate Editors of leading disciplinary and interdisciplinary journals, such as *Rhetoric and Philosophy*; the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*; *Research on Language and Social Interaction*; and *Human Relations*. From the associate professor rank, one faculty member is currently President of the Western States Communication Association (WSCA); another recently managed the Summer Institute of the Rhetoric Society of America (RSA).

VI. ANALYSIS

Structure, Growth, and Planning

The COMM Strategic Plan is focused on four general goals:

First: to further elevate the visibility, impact, and centrality of our three major faculty research programs within the discipline;

Second: to liberate the unit's potential to contribute to (and lead) college and campus interdisciplinary initiatives;

Third: to further increase the quality of our graduate program (e.g., by increasing the size of both our graduate student enrollments and our graduate faculty...); and

Fourth: to serve our undergraduate majors by providing communication-related knowledge and skills that facilitate their life-long effectiveness in personal and professional relationships, and their potential for leadership in their increasingly-mediated and -globalized communities.

Of these, the first, which is couched in terms of plans for strengthening the three program and research areas, receives the most discussion in the strategic plan. The hiring plan, which is elaborated in the self-study response to Question 2, coincides with this emphasis.

By design, COMM faculty members are evenly distributed across program areas. There is a tilt in numbers toward the senior ranks, with six professors, seven associate professors, and four assistant professors. (As indicated previously, one senior professor does not engage in the activities the department, rendering the *functional* number of professors as five.) With the anticipated hire of a new assistant professor in Organizational Communication and the retirement of senior professor in Discourse & Society as of May 2013, the total number of TTT faculty members rostered in COMM will remain the same for AY 2014-2015. The distribution of faculty members across program areas and rank will change slightly. The ERC notes that COMM's total of 17 TTT faculty members is considerably lower than the 25 that the committee believes is typical. The ERC supports a relatively immediate addition of three to five TTT faculty members. Under a complex set of assumptions enumerated in the self-study, the department requested meeting the goal of 23.25 FTE Total Faculty by AY 2017-2018 with the following composition.

Distribution across rank: five assistant professors, six associate professors, and nine professors.

Distribution across program areas: 6-7 FTE in Discourse and Society, 6.5-7.5 FTE in Organizational

Communication, and 6.5-7.5 FTE in Rhetoric.

COMM moderated its request for additional TTT faculty members in the CMCI Mission and Strategic Plan. It is now requesting hiring four TTT faculty members in the following order of priority: first, a scholar of rhetoric, preferably at the senior level, to maintain COMM's high reputation in rhetoric; second, a Communication-RASEI hire, to which the provost has made a commitment; and third, two open-rank positions, one each in Organizational Communication and Discourse and Society. The request for TTT faculty positions in the CMCI, like that in the self-study, is focused on preserving the status quo organization and emphases of the department. This focus may be warranted but it should not be presumed. A reasoned justification is required.

The ERC report, although favorable overall, was quite critical of COMM's strategic plan. In general, the ERC argues, the planning described in the self-study does not get beyond "identifying the academic specialties that would be sought in future hiring." Among the issues the ERC suggests COMM should attend to in its planning are the following: formulating entrepreneurial and revenue generation strategies; reexamining the department's emphasis on cultural studies in favor of a greater emphasis on "discourse and democracy"; and beginning a nuanced conversation about fostering a "grants culture."

COMM is not unreceptive to these suggestions. The chair has responded with descriptions of actions planned or already undertaken to address them. First, the department is undertaking an effort to assess the feasibility of a revenue-generating professional MA in COMM. Second, although the department is not prepared to give up its emphasis on cultural studies, the CMCI Mission and Strategic Plan incorporates research on "public participation" and "enacting democracy" among the areas it seeks to strengthen in faculty hiring. Finally, although the COMM chair does not commit to significant increases in external grant funding (a source that is presumed limited due to the fact that the faculty is largely composed of humanists and interpretive social scientists for whom grant funding is scarce), she embraces the idea of making efforts to increase external grant funding, including making it a consideration in hiring. In this vein, the department's most recent hire brings several grants to CU with her, and the department anticipates the upcoming Communication-RASEI hires to be involved in grants.

As COMM endeavors to increase its grant-winning capacity, it should avoid depending heavily on incoming junior faculty members to foster the kind of "grant culture" the ERC advised building. The department needs senior faculty to take on this role, and it should be a consideration in its TTT faculty hiring proposal (at least, within areas of COMM in which grants are available). The department should also seek out collaborative relationships on the Boulder Campus with individuals and units proficient in grantsmanship.

Remarkably, the words "grant" and "funding" appear nowhere in COMM's annual merit review or reappointment, promotion, and tenure procedures. As a step toward what it calls "advancing [the] important goal" of increased grant funding, the self-study acknowledges that it needs to revise its faculty merit evaluation system to reward those who receive grants (see response to Question 9, Interdisciplinary Research, p. 6).

At the time of their visit in spring of 2013, the ERC described the COMM faculty as "apprehensive—to

put it mildly” about the prospect of being relocated to a new college. This issue has significantly faded in importance, if not disappeared, in the interim. COMM has been actively participating in planning and implementing the proposed new College of Media, Communication, and Information, with approximately a third of its faculty members participating on various committees. As noted at the outset of this report, COMM has crafted a Mission and Strategic Plan for the new college that speaks to a number of the concerns of the ERC that were tentatively shared by ARPAC. Among the ERC’s recommendations for the new college are the following: the college should be an umbrella that includes more than Communication and Journalism; COMM should receive additional resources; COMM’s integrity as a department should be preserved; and COMM should play a significant role in the planning, leadership, and governance of the new college. All of these recommendations seem to have come to pass.

Undergraduate Education

As indicated previously, the most notable issue with respect to COMM’s undergraduate program is the huge number of majors. If its projection of over 1200 by 2014-2015 is accurate, the ratio of majors to TTT faculty will be more than double that of the department with the next highest ratio. That this change would adversely affect student satisfaction is quite likely. But as the 2009 NSSE survey reveals, undergraduate student satisfaction was comparatively low (though not as low as currently) before the surge in the number of majors. In response to the CU 2012 senior survey, COMM offered its own senior survey results, which it asserts, “provides a more complete and nuanced portrait of how communications majors regard the major.” The department is to be commended for its efforts in this vein, and the survey, no doubt, provides useful information. It also has a relatively high return rate (70% v. 33% for the CU 2012 senior survey). But it cannot be used to counter the CU 2012 senior survey, if that indeed is the intent in the self-study. The scales and the content of the two surveys are different. Furthermore, there are no comparison groups for the COMM survey that would lend it interpretability beyond differences over time in COMM itself. For example, the CU 2012 senior survey item “your major as a whole” meets the COMM program’s educational goals received a positive rating by 68% of COMM seniors, which is higher than several items on the COMM internal survey. Yet COMM students rank tenth of ten units in the review cycle on this item. ARPAC agrees with the IRC and the ERC that the enrollment surge is not likely the sole explanation of student dissatisfaction among COMM undergraduate majors.

Graduate Education and Support

As indicated above, the graduate program is ranked highly in various comparisons with other graduate programs, and the ERC views it as highly regarded in the field. The ERC also noted several areas of concern about the program, including admissions, professional socialization, and placement.

The COMM graduate program has remained the same size since the 2003 PRP report (approximately 55, made up of two-thirds PhD students and one-third MA students), and the department self-study sees expanding the size of the graduate program as an important goal. The ERC does not support an expansion, observing that this would be counter to the trend in the communication field overall, which is adjusting to a shrinking academic job market. Effort should be directed instead toward maintaining and improving the current graduate program by addressing the weaknesses noted above. In addition, the department should examine the mismatch in the PhD program between the four-year

funding model and the median 5.2-year time-to-degree of its graduates. The ERC also suggests that the department should reexamine its MA degree, which is primarily a feeder for PhD study, and direct its efforts toward strengthening the PhD program, using the MA only as a “way station.”

The COMM CMCI Mission and Strategic Plan speaks to several of the recommendations of the ERC. The Mission and Strategic Plan does not request an increase in the size of the PhD program, and it describes exploring the feasibility of a professional MA that would, presumably, generate revenue for the department. It also proposes developing a “qualitative methods certificate” with the same end in mind. Finally, it proposes exploring establishing linkages between the COMM PhD program and other units in the proposed new college, particularly media studies and information sciences, linkages that could strengthen each.

The COMM CMCI Mission and Strategic plan also contemplates revisions to the graduate program that speak to student dissatisfaction and the need for greater attention to professional socialization by, for example, instituting a doctoral seminar within COMM, possibly enrolling additional students from across the college. The seminar would be linked to a two-day national or international symposium, with students playing a part in planning and conducting the event. The department will also endeavor to ensure that all PhD students have the opportunity to serve as an RA rather than having to depend on teaching for all of their support through the program.

The self-study reports that COMM often loses its top PhD program candidates to other institutions with better funding packages. The ERC sees remedying this problem as essential if the department is to increase its stature in the field.

Staff, Space, and Fundraising

The poor quality of the COMM department’s space is an issue that has existed since at least the last unit review in 2003. The ERC asserts, however, that the importance of the space issue pales in comparison to the department’s need for filling faculty lines vacated by esteemed senior faculty members and creating three to five new faculty lines. The ERC might be a bit too sanguine if, as the self-study claims, space arrangements adversely affect faculty-student relationships,. The ERC, the IRC, and measures of student satisfaction all suggest that the department needs to work on improving relationships between COMM faculty members and their students.

The self-study requests an increase in staff support (among requests ranked last in priority in three clusters of requests): funding for a .25 FTE staff member to help support a new 1.0 FTE profession exempt position for the TAC program and funding for a .5 FTE advisor plus at least a .25 FTE Admin Assistant II if the number of undergraduate majors continues at or above 1200. These requests are difficult to evaluate in light of the likelihood that COMM will move to the proposed new college.

Seeing the increased need for fundraising brought about by shrinking state funding, the department has increased its collaboration with the CU Foundation. The results of these efforts are not reported. In the future, the department plans to revive its newsletter and hire a staff person (contingent on funding) to oversee and execute fundraising efforts.

Diversity

The COMM self-study affirms a strong commitment to diversity, which is clearly evident across teaching, research, and service. However, this commitment is not reflected in the demographics of the students or faculty with respect to underrepresented minorities: COMM ranks eighth of ten units in the review cycle on the diversity of its undergraduate majors; fifth of seven on the diversity of its graduate student population; and sixth of eleven, on the diversity of the TTT faculty. It should be noted that the reference group for these comparisons consists of other CU social science units, including Ethnic Studies. It would be useful for COMM to determine how it compares to communication units at other universities to get a better grasp of problem. More specificity than that provided in the faculty and student recruitment plans described in the self-study (12 III B) should be pursued as well.

Faculty Mentoring and Retention

The department does “not see mentoring as a process of one individual taking responsibility for another” but “as a matter of providing a system of support that provides the feedback and resources needed to achieve professional goals.” Prompted by the resignations of two assistant professors and the failure of another to be reappointed in the period from 2003 to 2007, COMM created several informal mechanisms to provide feedback to assistant and associate professors about their promotion and tenure status including, for example, annual meetings with the faculty personnel committee, linking hiring to a match with graduate student interests, implementing a research lunch series, and creating an executive committee that must include an assistant professor among its members.

These mechanisms are well considered and were to be formalized by a department task force as of spring 2013. However, although a “system” of mentoring might be superior to relying on single faculty mentors to take responsibility for single junior faculty members, it is not necessarily superior to an arrangement that includes both. The department should explore incorporating one-to-one mentoring assignments into its mentoring system, with input from assistant professors.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS (Note: these recommendations assume the COMM’s move to the new College of Media, Communication, and Information (CMCI) will meet with board approval. We recognize and applaud the efforts of the department in its Mission Statement and Strategic Plan for CMCI to respond positively to the move and to see this as an opportunity to rethink its curriculum, its research foci, its relation to other disciplines, and its relation to other departments in CMCI.)

To the unit:

1. Compile an accurate and up-to-date data base on graduate student placements and maintain it into the future.
2. Further investigate the causes of low student satisfaction, both undergraduate and graduate, beyond what may be attributed to the growth in undergraduate majors, and develop strategies to address the problem. (We acknowledge that some attention has already been paid to this issue. See the undergraduate and graduate education sections under the **VI Analysis** division of this report.)

3. Provide more by way of mentoring of graduate students in professionalization. While we acknowledge that some attention has already been paid to this issue (see the graduate education section under the **VI Analysis** division of this report), more formalized, deliberate activities are needed. For example, consider implementing pro-seminars in each of the department's program areas, with the seminars giving attention to various aspects of professionalization.
4. Develop a TTT faculty hiring plan that conceives of additional positions in terms of the current and anticipated trends in the field. Do not presume that maintaining the status quo by replacing vacant positions in the three specialty areas is a compelling rationale. The hiring plan should also speak to the issue of enhanced external funding. Finally, the hiring plan should describe specific strategies to attract faculty members from underrepresented groups.
5. Develop a recruitment plan for undergraduate and graduate students that describes specific strategies to attract students from underrepresented groups.
6. Reevaluate the purposes of the MA in COMM to render it a step in route to the PhD or a terminal degree for students who begin but do not complete the PhD. Continue with plans to investigate the feasibility of a professional MA as indicated in the COMM CMCI Mission and Strategic Plan.
7. The unit should review its bylaws to make sure that they comply with university and campus rules. In particular, all departments should have explicit bylaws regarding instructors and senior instructors, in keeping with the Academic Affairs Response to the Task Force on Instructors, mentoring of faculty, and spousal hiring procedures. In addition, guidelines for comprehensive review, tenure, and promotion need to define clearly the criteria for findings of "excellence," "meritorious," and "less than meritorious" in personnel reviews. Units should take care to include within such criteria appropriate credit for interdisciplinary work undertaken by its faculty.
8. Revise the department's annual faculty merit review and reappointment, promotion, and tenure procedures explicitly to reward grant seeking and procurement.
9. Develop and execute a plan to increase fundraising for the department.

To the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and to the provost:

10. Explore ways to improve graduate student support and recruitment.
11. Put in place some mechanism that enables COMM to have control over the number of its undergraduate majors and stabilize the ratio of TTT faculty members to undergraduate majors at a reasonable level.
12. Stabilize the COMM instructional budget, reducing its dependence on last-minute infusions of instructional funding.
13. Give full consideration to hiring additional COMM TTT faculty members, provided the department

develops a forward-looking hiring plan consistent with Recommendation 4 to the unit (above).

The chair of the Department of Communication shall report annually on the first of April for a period of three years following the year of the receipt of this report (i.e., April 1st of 2015, 2016, and 2017) to the dean of the Graduate School and to the provost on the implementation of these recommendations. Likewise, the dean shall report annually on the first of May to the provost on the implementation of recommendations addressed to the college. The provost, as part of the review reforms, has agreed to respond annually to all outstanding matters under her/his purview arising from this review year. All official responses will be posted online.

ⁱ Allen, M., Maier, M, and Grimes, D. Evaluating doctoral programs in ommunication on the basis of citations. Electronic Journal of Communication. (Retrieved 12-5-13: <http://www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/022/1/022122.html>)