

#7

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Email Invitation 1 (Email)  
**Started:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 6:33:41 PM  
**Last Modified:** Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:02:24 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:28:42  
**First Name:** Nancy  
**Last Name:** Jennings  
**Email:** Nancy.Jennings@gcccd.edu  
**Custom Data:** Communication  
**IP Address:** 68.101.242.185

---

## Page 1: I. Program Overview and Update

### Q1

I.1. Department(s) Reviewed:

Communication

---

### Q2

I.2. Lead Author:

Nancy Jennings and Nanette Wier

---

### Q3

I.3. Collaborator(s) - List any person that participated in the preparation of this report:

Adjunct Instructors Christie Pearson-Wolwhend, Kelly Togerson, Brian O'Donnell, Michael Kidwell, and Torey Ramos

---

### Q4

1.4. Dean/Manager:

Alicia Munoz

---

## Page 2: II. Program Reflection and Description

### Q5

II.1. Provide your program's mission statement:

The mission of the Communication Department is to provide courses that enhance students' understanding of the human communication process, promote communication competence in their personal, academic and professional lives and to ensure that students are prepared to study Communication at a four-year institution.

---

## Q6

## II.2. How is this program advancing the college mission, vision and values?

The Communication department takes pride in the fact that our working philosophy when it comes to program development and implementation are driven by our desire to advance the seven values set forth by the college. A description of our programs, services and methodologies that promote the values of our college are listed below:

**Equitable Access:** We value equitable access that facilitates participation in academic programs and support services needed to meet students' educational goals.

Communication is a program component in the Language and Communication branch of the Guided Pathways program. We offer nine courses that facilitate and meet students' educational goals of earning our AA Degree for Transfer to four-year institutions. Since our Communication studies transfer degree was added in 2012 we have awarded significantly more degrees each semester. We increased the number of degrees earned from an average of 3 to 4 per year to 15 to 20. Although the number of degrees we have awarded in recent years has dropped, we are confident the number of degrees awarded will increase as our department facilitates the academic goals of students utilizing the Guided Pathways approach. In addition, our partnerships with local high schools offers students, who are not in our normal service area, an excellent opportunity to make connections with the Communication Department and with Cuyamaca College. Currently we offer Communication 122, Oral Communication, at Health Sciences High and Middle College. This program has been successful and we embrace the opportunity to add more high schools in the future. Our program allows hard working and motivated students, in a diverse and vibrant high school context, to jump start, explore, facilitate, and begin to achieve their collegiate academic goals.

To help quell equity gaps in the skill levels of our students, in the hope of bolstering success and retention rates, our instructors used to consistently refer students to the writing tutors for support on their assignments. The writing tutors were able to help with writing skills issues but students, although expressing gratitude, regularly expressed frustration that the type of help they needed to do well on various communication assignments was not available through the center. Many of our assignments, such as the persuasive speech for example, require complex and solid skills in research, critical analysis, and organizational structuring and argument development. To help facilitate students in achieving their academic goals we approached and elicited the help of the Academic Resource Center to recruit and train tutors specifically for our communication students. Thus far our one communication tutor has been very successful in helping students complete and be less fearful of their required assignments in all courses. Students have expressed that having the tutor was a tremendous support for them. Instructors have noticed that the having a communication tutor in place allows them more time to devote to all enrolled students who seek help and support from them directly. Our goal is to maintain the health of our recent tutorial program by actively encouraging students to take advantage of this valuable opportunity and by adding an additional tutor should the current budget challenges allow.

**Individual Student Success:** We offer courses and programs leading to degrees, certificates, transfer, employment, personal enhancement, and lifelong learning.

The Communication Department supports this value by offering courses that fill requirements for transfer, meet general education requirements and enhance and support educational skills for employment. We are bold enough to believe the subject matter taught in all of our communication courses leads to personal enhancement and lifelong learning because it involves understanding the human experience and students learn skills they can apply throughout their lifetimes in both their personal and professional communication interactions. A more detailed listing or discussion of how we support each student success category follows:

**Transfer:**

For the University of California, Communication 120 (Interpersonal Communication) and 122 (Public Speaking) both meet the Area 1 English Communication requirement. For the California State University, Communication 120, 122 and 130 (Fundamentals of Human Communication) meet the Oral Communication requirement in Area A, and Communication 137 (Critical Thinking in Group Communication) and 145 (Argumentation and Debate) meet the critical thinking requirement for Area A.

**General Education:**

Communication 120, 122, 130, 137 and 145 meet the Oral Communication and Analytical Thinking requirement in Area A. In area D, Social and Behavioral Sciences Communication 110 (Mass Media and Society) and Communication 124 (Intercultural Communication) meet a general education requirement.

**Employment Success:**

All of our courses deal with improving communication competence skills and it is rare to find an employment context in which solid human communication skills are not a necessity for entry into and advancement in employment contexts. Students who exit our classes successfully or earn degrees and certificates in our discipline acquire a number of various strong and vital communication

skills. A sampling of the classes we offer that allow students to begin to master those skills valued and sought by employers are as follows:

Communication 120, Interpersonal Communication

In this course students learn: situational and cultural differences in interaction, conflict reduction strategies, managing difficult emotions, employing active listening skills and recognizing and avoiding types of non-listening, perception checking to improve communication misunderstandings, nonverbal skills, communication approaches that acknowledge and respect diversity among participants, and more.

Communication 122, Oral Communication and Communication 123, Advanced Oral Communication

In these courses students learn: Expressing ideas coherently and clearly, critical thinking skills, adapting a message to a target audience, tailoring messages to respect those who hold divergent perspectives, methods of persuasion, verbal and nonverbal presentation skills, and more.

Communication 137 Critical Thinking in Groups, Communication 145 Argumentation

In these courses students learn: Critical thinking and decision skills, problem solving techniques, leadership strategies, conflict management, decision making plans, development of arguments and more.

Growth and Life Long Learning:

Many students report that they take both Public Speaking and Human Communication for personal growth in addition to professional growth. Both classes improve useful skills, such as public speaking and interpersonal skills (e.g. listening skills, relationship skills, and conflict management skills). These classes also offer students the opportunity to overcome or better manage communication fears they face when expressing themselves in both private and public contexts. A noticeable number of students report that when they took one of our classes the outcomes lead them to take another class in our discipline because the skills they acquired had a measurable impact on their personal communication needs and challenges. After taking additional communication classes, some students enthusiastically report to us that they love what they are learning and have switched their degree goal to communication studies.

In addition, non-native speakers often report to instructors that they take Communication courses to improve their skills in English and to be better understand how to use verbal and nonverbal communication to decrease being misunderstood or misperceived when interacting in United States culture. Lately, an increasing number of non-native students have reported that they enroll in Communication 124 (Intercultural Communication) because previous nonnative students have told them the course is a good way to learn about and understand U.S. cultural norms and expectations. Also, that this course gives them an opportunity to teach others about their culture, and is valuable in helping them to assimilate into a new culture.

Academic Excellence: We employ a variety of methodologies and technologies responsive to students' needs and conducive to students' varied educational and experiential backgrounds and learning styles.

Instructors in the Communication Department use varied methodologies as a way to promote student success. We use lectures, in class group discussions or brainstorming assignments, and group projects and individual assignments in a calculated way so that methodologies for presenting information are varied enough to accommodate various learning styles. Also, in assignments, lectures, projects, class materials, media selections, and classroom examples we incorporate exploring different diversity perspectives into our curriculum planning and execution when possible. Because we teach communication, diversity and equity discussions are easily incorporated when teaching communication and the human experience.

It is not unusual in our courses for students to be given more than one option to fulfill a given assignment so that they can choose the assignment that better fits with their learning styles or benefits their academic path more directly. For example, in Intercultural Communication an instructor created list of topics for extra credit papers are offered to students. They can select from that list the topic they most prefer or they can choose to create their own by selecting and investigating a research topic they feel better aligns with their chosen academic area of study. For example, a nursing major may choose to explore how approaches to health care differ among cultures, a business major may investigate how business practices differ among cultures, a child development major can research cultural differences in approaches to child rearing, or a student pursuing a field in social work may explore cultural differences in approaches to death rituals and processing grief.

Our instructors have taken the steps to learn, use and stay updated on the technology needed to disseminate information to students and promote the success of this new technologically savvy generation. We are aware of that some students lack the access to or skills in technology because of factors like financial challenges or age. In an attempt to be sensitive to how we can promote the academic success of those students we provide links to technology tutorials online or in our syllabi, we refer them to campus resources for additional support, and sometimes give them some leeway or options for completing and turning in assignments with the understanding that they are sincerely undertaking the effort to bolster their technology skills.

## Instructional Comprehensive Program Review Spring 2021

To promote academic excellence we have secured and trained, in conjunction with the Learning Resources center, a Communication tutor to support our students with the specific requirements of their assignments. Our Communication tutor has been a valuable support asset to both our students and our faculty. The Communication tutor services are consistently used and we hope to employ an additional tutor should the budget challenges allow. We advertise this service in online postings, in class posters, and orally in the classroom to encourage students experiencing frustration or difficulty to seek support to complete their assignments.

In addition, we maintain good relations and work closely with the DSPS program to better understand the needs of students using that service. It is not unusual for us to identify students who might benefit from those services and urge them to investigate the support DSPS has to offer. For example, we are comfortable initiating a discussion with a student who has excellent classwork but fails examinations or a student who privately reports to us that anxiety or post-traumatic stress interferes with the completion of a given assignment or consistent class attendance. Also, it is not unusual for one of us to walk a student who appears to be experiencing instability, with his or her permission, directly to the health office. Also, our classroom always includes posting for financial and emotional health services put out by the community and the college.

**Innovation and Creativity:** We value innovation and creativity in order to encourage our students to question and to expand their thinking.

We address innovation and creativity in the methodologies and the technology we use to offer instruction. We have face to face classes, fully on-line classes and blended classes when the college is operating normally. We also include innovation and creativity in the creation of assignments for our students. For example, in our department meeting an adjunct instructor introduced us to a new innovation called the liquid syllabus. We see the adoption of this new innovation as a creative way to entice our technology loving student generation to better understand, and to be familiar with the course syllabus. Based on the repeated class and email questions we receive asking us to convey information already covered well in our syllabi, we suspect that, after the first day in class syllabus review, students rarely refer back to the syllabus. A liquid syllabus might be an innovative way to better engage students. Increased familiarity with syllabus material would help students to plan better, to understand assignment requirements and turn assignments in on time, and better understand and pay attention to class policies that affect their successful course completion.

We create varied assignments that offer our students creative ways to question or expand their thinking on given topics. For example: We advocate use of journaling assignments so students can track and investigate how they are incorporating class material and newly learned skills into their attempts to improve communication competency in their personal and professional interactions.

We teach and encourage students how to creatively use of technology to design speech visual aids that will not only help convey and clarify information for their classmates but also keep them engaged and motivated to pay attention.

We use assignments and group projects that encourage students to communicate with groups or individuals in the community who hold divergent perspectives and to compare and contrast those perceptions with their own.

We encourage students to attend numerous campus events that celebrate topics, individuals, events or cultures. We heavily promote attendance at the annual Culture and Community Circle Workshop series and offer extra credit for attendance or options for students to use workshop information for assignments.

We create assignments in some classes that require students to research, discuss and argue for ideas and beliefs that are different from the ones they hold. Also, we offer assignments that keep them abreast of current events and current voting issues. And we encourage them to become registered voters and exercise their right to vote on the local and national issues that affect them personally and professionally.

We invite guest speakers to promote cultural understanding and career options. Recent past guest speakers include individuals from China and Saudi Arabia who spoke on cultural differences in communication and human resource and marketing directors from Scripps Health and Apple who spoke on exploring communication careers in their industries.

**Diversity and Social Harmony:** We value and embrace diversity and create opportunities for our college community to work together to meet the challenges of a complex global society.

With our student community, diversity and social harmony are issues that are always components in our classroom assignments and instruction. We urge students to offer examples in class discussions or in assignments of how cultural or co cultural differences based on their own background or the backgrounds of those with whom they closely interact relate to the information we teach. We advertise and encourage students to attend the Culture and Community Circle Workshops. We use this program to offer them extra credit options and to encourage them to attend enough sessions to obtain the certificate to bolster their resumes. Specifically, in Intercultural Communication for example, students are asked to conduct an interview with a person from a culture or co-culture to which they do not belong. Students report information obtained from the interview orally in class and the entire class has the opportunity to address their

## Instructional Comprehensive Program Review Spring 2021

belong. Students report information obtained from the interview orally in class and the entire class has the opportunity to address their stereotypical or prejudicial misconceptions regarding the different groups presented. They learn and discuss ways to interact more respectfully with those who hold divergent perspectives. Also, in our classrooms and office windows we proudly display safe spaces posters and make ourselves available to discuss issues with students. Faculty in our Department were instrumental in bringing gender neutral bathrooms to our campus to help secure the psychological and physical safety for members of our LGBTQ community. With our college community the Communication Department has been very active in presenting issues involving diversity or improving social harmony with colleagues via our Professional Development presentation offerings. We have lead workshops on conflict resolution in personal and professional contexts, effective listening skills, appropriate self-disclosure, gender differences in communication, managing effective meetings, Safe Zones workshops, and this semester a workshop on communicating about grief and loss. No doubt this current workshop will be an invaluable support to those who have lost close loved ones due to the pandemic.

**Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability:** We take pride in our campus and its resources, and we strive to be on the forefront of sustainability and green technology.

Both full time instructors are strong advocates for environmental issues and those issues often appear in lectures, readings and activities. For example, students often choose worldwide water issues, global warming or rainforest depletion as topics for their speeches or argumentation and group projects. This leads to in depth classroom discussions on environmental stewardship following those presentations. We address environmental issues in both the assignments offered and college committee choices. For example, one instructor offers the opportunity in her intercultural communication class to write a paper outlining 20 possible reuses for an aluminum can. After listing and describing reuse options, students are asked to add commentary comparing the U.S. view of environmental stewardship in comparison to other cultures, why they believe the typical American uses resources in such a wasteful manner and whether this assignment will change their waste habits. When they turn in the assignment they also have to bring and show the class a can they repurposed. They creativity of their repurposed cans leaves their classmates amazed and inspired. The students often relay that they completed the list and created the project with the help of their children and it resulted in discussions that lead to changes in the way the family reduces waste. An example of college service that promotes the environment is one instructor's undertaking to research and compile a history of Cuyamaca's Grand Lawn in an effort to save it from development at the college.

We practice what we preach by using online postings as much as possible to reduce the use of paper handouts. The old school in us still sees the value of using scratch paper for office needs and we make scratch paper available in the classroom for in class brainstorming assignments or to assist the student with financial supply concerns. We remind our students to use the recycle bins in the classroom and to educate them on what can be placed in those bins. We sure classroom lights, heating or cooling systems, and smart carts are not on when not in use between extended class gaps or at the end of the day.

**Strong Community Relations:** We recognize our role in the cultural, educational, technological, and economic/workforce development of the communities we serve.

One undertaking of the Communication department faculty is our participation in an annual Communication Summit with our colleagues from other campuses. The Communication Summit brings together the Communication Department Chairs from Communication programs at all of the community colleges in San Diego County with our colleagues from the Communication Department at San Diego State University. This meeting creates an opportunity for us to share our needs and issues with our colleagues and to learn how best to help our students to transfer to SDSU and other CSU campuses in the Communication major.

We also support this college value by participating with local high schools in the community. Our department has partnered with two local high schools to give students, including one which is not in our normal service area, the opportunity to take public speaking courses to jump start their college education and make connections with the Communication Department and the College. The program has been valuable for the students and for the department in serving students' needs and promoting the college. Currently we are partnering with Health Sciences High and Middle College and we are excited about approaching additional high school campuses to extend our program and course offering to them in the future.

**Q7**

II.3. How does your program support the college's strategic goal of implementing guided pathways?

The communication department offers and supports a Communication AA Degree Transfer Program under the Language and Communication Arts major area. We offer a variety of courses tailored to students who want to pursue any professional field that requires strong language and communication skills. More specifically our degree allows students to take courses that empower them to express their ideas clearly and coherently, develop critical thinking and presentation skills and to educate themselves on diverse cultures and co cultures to gain the sensitivity and skills needed to interact successfully with those who hold divergent perspectives. All of our instructors help in guiding students by discussing the AA transfer degree, course options and course descriptions, and career opportunities available to those who earn our degree. We also encourage them to complete their degrees, not matter what field they are majoring in. We encourage students to contact Financial Aid, DSPS, Veteran's Services, EOPS, or Counseling, depending on their needs. And we have an open door policy so that students can bring any issues to us. We try to help them in any way we can, or steer them to the campus department that can help them.

---

**Q8**

**Yes**

II.4. Is the program description in the current college catalog up to date and accurate?

---

Page 3: II. Program Reflection and Description continued

**Q9**

**Respondent skipped this question**

II.4a. What steps will you take to revise the college catalog description?

---

Page 4: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success

**Q10**

**Yes**

III.1. Access the Five Year Curriculum Review Cycle (requires GCCCD login). Have all of your active courses outlines been reviewed within the last five years?

---

**Q11**

III.2. What is your program doing to prepare students for successful transition (e.g. transfer and career readiness)?

Instructors in the Communication Department work closely with Communication majors to encourage them to earn a Communication AA Degree at Cuyamaca We also encourage them to transfer to a 4 year college to complete a Bachelor's Degree in Communication. The Department has developed a plan for the Communication AA Degree that encourages students to take particular classes in a recommended order. We also included recommendations for out of major GE courses that fit in well with the Communication AA Degree. Communication instructors hold informal discussions with students in our capstone classes about courses that are required for the degree and which classes to take in which order. Students are encouraged to meet with a counselor to create a plan that works best for them. We also assist and advise students as they apply for acceptance at 4 year colleges and universities. When students are not accepted into San Diego State's Communication major, for example, we advise them in filing an appeal. Each May for the last 10 years, one of the full time Communication instructors from Cuyamaca attends a meeting with the Undergraduate Advisor for the Communication program at SDSU and the Department Chairs from the Communication Departments at each of the Community Colleges in San Diego County. It is an opportunity to learn how best to prepare our Communication majors for admission to SDSU. We work closely with the Undergraduate advisor to identify typical challenges students face getting admitted and how to prepare our students for success. We learn about helping our Communication students navigate the SDSU Communication program once they are admitted, also.

---

**Q12**

III.3. Please list any planned changes for curriculum and the rationale for those changes:

The Communication Department has recently revised our SLOs for several courses (COMM 110, 120, 122, 145). The course outline for COMM 124 (Intercultural Communication) has been significantly revised (including the SLOs) in order to meet the diversity graduation requirement for General Education at Cuyamaca College. About 5 years ago, we were notified that our Interpersonal Communication course (COMM 120) would no longer meet the CSU Oral Communication GE requirement. While we appealed the decision, in conjunction with the Communication Department at Grossmont College, we developed a course (COMM 130) that would take the place of COMM 120, in case our appeal was not successful. Thankfully, the appeal was successful. We have decided to delete COMM 130, as it is no longer needed. The course was never actually offered at Cuyamaca. These revisions have been completed, and will be presented to the Curriculum Committee for approval early in the Spring 2021 semester.

---

Page 5: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

**Q13**

III.4. Please upload the most recent version of your program's course SLO assessment plan. [Click here for an Assessment Plan Template](#)

**COMM SLO Assessment Plan.docx (15.6KB)**

---

## Q14

III.5. Please provide a high-level analysis of your SLO findings over the past year and what changes, if any, were made as a result:

NOTE: Due to the abrupt shift in March, 2020 from face-to face instruction to online instruction and the ensuing challenges with training instructors and accommodating students' needs, we were unable to do SLO assessments for the Spring 2020 semester. The College Administration agreed not to enforce the requirement to assess SLOs. Because of that, the results below are only for the Fall 2020 semester. A high-level analysis follows.

### Results

#### SLO Assessment Results for Fall 2020

The Communication Department assessed two courses: Comm 137 Small Group Communication and COMM 145 Argumentation and Debate.

#### COMM 137 2585

##### SLO#1 Organize a group discussion

Assessment: Students who receive grade of 22 out of 25 or higher on the group evaluation plus receive a grade of a B or higher on the Group Presentation have passed the assessment

Goal: 75%

20/28 students passed the assessment 71%

##### SLO#2 Demonstrate successful conflict management strategies

Assessment: Exam/Quiz Identify the three types of conflict and illustrate effective strategies for handling all three types

Goal: 75% success

26/28 students passed the assessment 92%

##### SLO#3 Identify the principles of small group discussion (e.g. group roles, decision-making, leadership).

Assessment: Exam/Quiz Bales and Cohen in 1979 developed a model for measuring 3 psychological dimensions for personalities in groups. Name the model and dimensions and place yourself on each scale.

Goal: 70% success

25/28 students passed the assessment 89%

#### COMM 145 7553

##### SLO#1 Identify and Classify Claims

Assessment: Exam/Quiz Identify the parts of the Toulmin Model

Goal: 70% success

19/21 students passed the assessment 90%

##### SLO#2 Apply the basic elements of critical thinking to evaluating an argument in both written and oral communication

Assessment: Assignment Students who receive a B or better on the Demonstration Debate Assignment pass the assessment.

Goal: 70% success

13/17 students passed the assessment 76%

##### SLO#3 Formulate an Argument using research and evidence

Assessment: Presentation Students who completed their graded debate with a B or better

Goal: 70% success

13/17 students passed the assessment 76%

### Analysis of SLO Assessment Results



## Instructional Comprehensive Program Review Spring 2021

In general, we are pleased with our SLO Assessment results in any given semester. For this fall 2020 semester, our pass rates for each assessment fell between 71% and 92%, meeting or exceeding our goals in every case, except for Comm 137, SLO #1. The numbers show that we are meeting our goals and that, hypothetically, means our students are learning the material we are teaching. These assessment results are not unlike the results we have had over the past four years. We generally reach a 70% or greater pass rate for all but a few of our SLOs. Overall, we have been pleased to see that we are meeting our goals. But we decided that we wanted our assessments to be more effective. In the Fall 2019 semester, Communication Department instructors met during Professional Development Week and decided to take a hard look at our SLOs and our SLO assessments. We started by asking ourselves if we were really assessing what we thought we were assessing and if those assessments were meaningful. We decided that in some cases, the SLOs needed to be revised. One SLO, for example,

COMM 120 SLO #2 Identify, explain and analyze the psychological, social, cultural and linguistic factors which affect the interpersonal communication of humans

is far too complex to assess. There are four different factors listed and it was difficult to find an assessment that would measure all of them. In consultation with the SLO coordinator, we rewrote the SLO to focus on what we agreed was the most important factor we wanted to assess: cultural. And the new proposed SLO is below.

COMM 120 SLO #2 Identify, explain and analyze cultural factors which affect the interpersonal communication of humans.

We revised the SLOs for five of our course outlines. We determined the SLOs for the other two courses are clear and effective as they are. Then we set about revising the SLO assessments to better measure the outcomes. We worked closely with the SLO coordinator to determine how to best assess the outcomes we were most interested in. For example, we needed to improve the assessment for Communication 120 (Interpersonal Communication).

COMM 120 SLO#3 Identify and practice good listening skills.

The old assessment was a multiple choice question that gave students an opportunity to identify poor listening skills. But the assessment didn't really get at the second part of the SLO: practice good listening skills. So we came up with a free response question with several parts.

SLO #3 Assessment: Exam Question (or can be given as a separate assessment): What is one tip for good listening? Describe an example of a challenge listeners face (like a distraction, or a type of nonlistening) and how you might use listening to overcome it.

We believe this assessment does a much better job answering for us whether the student has mastered the SLO. Although we did not make progress in having our new course outlines approved by the Curriculum Committee (mainly due to a shift in focus during the pandemic), we are back on track and will be submitting the new outlines for approval in January 2021. We will implement the new SLO assessments as soon as the new SLOs are approved.

---

**Q15**

III.6. What student learning-related successes and challenges have SLOs results revealed for your department? Note: If SLO data are not offering useful feedback regarding student learning, and are not currently informing program improvements, please instead discuss the specific steps you plan to take to make learning outcomes and assessments more meaningful.

Although in general our SLO assessment pass rates have met our department goals, there have been a few results that have created concerns for us. These concerns led to changes in our approach. In the Fall 2015 semester we discovered a very low pass rate for COMM 122 (Public Speaking) SLO#3 Demonstrate effective critical thinking skills. The SLO assessment results showed that only 61% of students passed the assessment. After a great deal of discussion, we determined that it wasn't the assessment that was the problem, but instead the way we were teaching that particular subject. We revised our approach and decided to teach the topic in a way that was more accessible to students and more consistent from instructor to instructor. We have since seen an improvement. In the Fall of 2017, for example, the assessment results for SLO #3 showed that 83% of students passed the assessment. We have continued the practice of teaching critical thinking in the revised way since then. As we mentioned in the answer to III.5 above, we have also decided to revise and improve our SLO assessments and hope to have those approved in early 2021. In addition, in consultation with the SLO Coordinator, we revised our SLO assessment schedule. In the past, we assessed one SLO for each course each semester. It was complicated and did not give a comprehensive picture of how students in each class were doing and the data were not as useful as a result. Our new assessment schedule will have us assessing all of the SLOs for two courses every semester, and the PLOS also all in one semester. We believe the data will be more meaningful with the new assessment schedule.

**Q16**

III.7. How was the department of discipline's success rate across all courses changed within the past 4 years (the time frame covered in this comprehensive program review)?

Although this question is only asking about success rates, we have decided to address retention rates, as well, because we found some interesting trends and would like to create goals to address both success and retention. Overall, over the past 4 years, the Communication Department's success and retention rates have stayed roughly the same. Our success and retention rates are slightly higher for female students than for male students. This trend comports with the college wide data.

**Retention**

Our department wide retention rate did not vary much over the past four years. It was 92% in Fall of 2015 and 94% in Fall 2019. These trends were also present in the spring semester data, with very little variation. There are some notable trends by course, however.

**Success**

Our overall success rate was also fairly steady. It was 83% in Fall of 2015 and 84% in Fall 2019. These trends were also present in the spring semester data, with very little variation. There are some notable trends by course, however.

**COMM 110**

There was an alarmingly low success rate of 53% in Communication 110 (Mass Media and Society) in Spring 2016. The department had an in depth conversation about the course at our department meeting in the Fall of 2016. At the time, we thought that it was perhaps the method of delivery, as COMM 110 is the only course we teach 100% online. The instructor who teaches that course made an effort to be more present in the course and engaged with students. The success rate was up to 82% in the Spring 2020 semester. We hope that trend continues in the future. This course generally has the lowest retention rates of all of our courses. We also attributed this to the fact that this is our only course that is offered 100% online. We will discuss the difference in success and retention rates between online, blended and face to face classes in more depth in the Distance Education question below.

**COMM 122**

Success rates for Communication 122 (Public Speaking) improved from 79% in the Fall 2015 semester to 86% in the Fall 2019 semester. We are not sure why the success rates increased. We did not make any notable changes in that course. Retention rates for COMM 122 tend to run slightly lower than for our other bread and butter course, COMM 120 (Interpersonal Communication). We attribute this to the fact that public speaking courses nationwide have a higher attrition rate than other courses due to a very common problem: fear. Public speaking in most nationwide surveys is one of the top 10 fears of humankind. We struggle with fear every semester. Instructors go out of their way to make students feel welcome, relaxed and comfortable, but we generally see about a 10% attrition rate (usually around the time the first graded speech is due) despite our efforts to reduce fear.

**COMM 124**

Success rates in COMM 124 (Intercultural Communication) decreased over the four years. The course had a success rate of 91% in Fall 2015 and only 73% in the Fall 2019 semester. The Communication Department will discuss these trends in our next department meeting.

**COMM 137**

Retention rates decreased significantly in Communication 137 (Small Group Communication) over the four years. Retention rates went from an impressive 100% for Fall 15, Fall 16 and Fall 17, to only 84% in Fall 2019. The reason for the decrease could be due to the fact that the instructor who usually teaches the course was on sabbatical in the Fall 2019 semester and the course was much smaller. In the Fall 15-18 semesters, the course had an average of 32 students enrolled. In the Fall 2019, the course only had 15 students who completed the course. The small number of students may be the reason the retention rate was lower in the Fall 2019 semester. It is interesting to note that the group communication class has significantly higher retention rates than the other courses in the department. In our curriculum, we teach that groups are helpful in education and in the workplace because members have a higher level of accountability to each other and as a result, absenteeism decreases. That phenomenon is certainly clear in the Communication Department.

**COMM 145**

Communication 145 (argumentation and Debate) also has fairly low retention rates, compared to other courses. The retention ranged from 81-88% over the four years, rather than in the low 90%, like the other courses. We attribute this to the fact that the material in the course is more difficult than the other courses we offer.

### Q17

III.8. The College has set a 2024 goal of reaching a 77% course success rate (students passing with a grade of A, B, C, or P out of those enrolled at census) for the College as a whole. What is your department or discipline's four-year (2024-25) goal for success rate across all courses in the department or discipline?

We have not had a department wide success goal in the past. But we agree that a 77% success rate across all courses in our department is a great goal. According to the data from the past 4 years, there is only one semester where our overall success rate fell below that goal; the Spring 2016 success rate was only 75%. We will need to keep an eye on the two courses that have had lower success rates than our other classes: COMM 110 and COMM 145. We will discuss how to improve success rates in our upcoming Communication Department meeting on January 27th, 2021.

---

### Q18

III.9. Please review the college-wide and program data sets, which have identified equity gaps based on the following criteria: 3% n=10 students/enrollments. Which groups are experiencing equity gaps in your program?

I want to start by saying, as one of the authors of this report, I found it really helpful that in the data the equity gaps are already clearly highlighted. It made it easy to see what the potential areas of concern are for the Communication Department. Equity gaps highlight areas where we need to work hard to address our success and retention rates. We see notable equity gaps in success and retention with our African American, Latino and Asian students. The equity gap for Asian students was noted only in the fall semesters, not the spring semesters. There is also an equity gap in the Communication Department for the multiple races group. These gaps are not unexpected, as they mirror the campus-wide data. But the gaps show we have a lot of work to do. There were some unexpected anomalies in the data that we will need to take a closer look at. It is interesting to note that the equity gap for African American students is particular to face-to-face classes. When the data are split out by delivery method, there does not appear to be an equity gap for our African American students in online classes. Another interesting finding is that, unlike the college wide data, there is no notable equity gap for our Middle Eastern students. We are curious to know why. These points will be discussed in our next Communication Department meeting, scheduled for January 27th. And just as in interesting side note, in the Communication Department, we have had a slightly higher number of African American students than the college wide data show. We have a significantly higher number of students who are age 20 and below. And we have a significantly lower number of students in our department who are over the age of 25.

---

### Q19

III.10. What department/discipline (or institutional) factors may be contributing to these lower rates of success for these groups of students?

What is causing these gaps is the million dollar question. If we can identify what is causing the gaps, we can more easily address the problem. We strive to learn more about what we are doing well and what we are doing poorly every semester. One thing we are certain of is that these gaps are not caused by ethnic or biological differences between students. In other words, it is not because the students are Latino or because they are Asian that these gaps exist. It is most likely that the institution itself—the instructors, the curriculum, etc., must be a significant contributor to the equity gaps. In the past, we have been able to significantly raise success rates among our African American students. We noted that the success rates, particularly for African American males were lower than for other groups. We took a close look at what we were doing in lectures and activities and came to the conclusion that these students may have felt left out or overlooked in our course material. At that time, the faculty in the Communication Department were almost exclusively White females. While we were sure we were not doing anything deliberately to exclude the African American male students, we realized that the material we were teaching didn't include enough examples or illustrations that they could relate to. This is just one example, of course. We will talk below about what we tried that actually worked. In any case, we need to revisit our strategies and come up with more ideas about what we are doing and what we can do to reduce and eventually eliminate these gaps. Certainly historical inequities have compounded the problem.

---

**Q20**

III.11. What action will the department or discipline take to address these equity gaps in the short-term (next year) and long-term (next four years)?

When we noted the equity gap for our African American male students in particular several years ago, we put our heads together and decided to make a concerted effort to use more examples, photos, and news events that included African Americans. When discussing the topic of Perception, for example, we talked about perceptions of African American males. We talked about perceptions of crime rates among various ethnicities, for example. We found our students generally believed that more crimes are committed by African Americans than Whites in the United States. The statistics, of course, do not bear that out. So we asked our students to help identify why these faulty perceptions continue to exist. We facilitated discussions among our students about issues such as being pulled over or followed in stores simply because of their ethnicity. Often our White students were shocked to hear their African American fellow students tell stories about being profiled, harassed or dismissed based on their ethnicity. A student in interpersonal communication, for example, shed tears as he described being followed and watched closely in a convenient store because he is Latino. A female African American student told stories of sitting on a bus and having the white woman next to her pull her purse in toward her body, as though she thought the African American woman might try to steal it. We believe facilitating these discussions is helpful for the White students as well as the African American and Latino students. We also made an effort to make sure all of our student were comfortable contacting us. We made efforts to be more available during office hours and encouraged students to come by for help. We encouraged students to email us if they had questions or concerns. Since students rarely came in to our office hours, we held informal discussions with students before and after class, trying to increase students' level of comfort, in the hope that they would be more likely to email us or come to office hours for help if they felt more comfortable with us. When we implemented these changes in our classes, we saw the success rates, particularly for African American males, rise significantly. We were happy to see the success we had, but the gaps have returned. We need to revisit this strategy, as well as others, to make our students feel included and to address their particular needs.

Our faculty are closely focused on diversity related issues in our department. One faculty signed up for a course in equity and hopes to learn more about how to address these gaps. Another faculty purchased a book from a course in educating African American men in the community college. We certainly have the desire and the tools to begin to address these issues. We are hoping to have Department, Division and campus-wide discussions about how to address these equity gaps.

**Q21**

III.12. What other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source) is the program using to inform its planning for this comprehensive program review?

At this time, we do not collect additional data for the Communication Department. We are open to learning how to conduct more research in our classes and how to use the data to improve success and retention for all of our students.

**Q22**

Respondent skipped this question

OPTIONAL: Please use the upload button to attach any supporting documentation you would like to include.

Page 7: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

**Q23**

Yes

III.14. Does your program offer courses via distance education (excluding emergency remote teaching in 2020)?

Page 8: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

**Q24**

**Yes**

III.15. Are there differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person sections?

**Q25**

III.16. If there are differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person classes, what will the program do to address these disparities?

When reviewing the success and retention data for Communication, we discovered some disparities that we were expecting and some we weren't. We weren't surprised to learn that our online classes have lower success and retention rates than our blended (or hybrid) sections, and in-person classes. But, as the chart below shows, although the range of success and retention dropped lower for online and blended sections than for in-person sections, there are some very high success and retention rates in both blended and online sections for particular semesters. These findings are in line with the college wide statistics. The statistics are difficult to compare straight across because (until very recently, due to the pandemic) the vast majority of our students are enrolled in in-person sections. What surprised us, was how the success and retention rates varied by groups. For example, although we have equity gaps for our African American students in face-to-face classes, there are no such gaps in our online or blended classes. This may also be due to the small number of students we have served in our online and blended classes until the Spring 2020 semester. Since all of our instruction has been delivered online in the Fall 2020 semester, it will be interesting to compare our success and retention rates across the various groups in our next Program Review.

Communication Courses 2015-2020	Success	Retention	Students Enrolled
Online	53-93%	73-100%	576
Blended (hybrid)	73-93%	88-100%	371
Face-to-face	78-86%	90-93%	5,783

Page 9: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

**Q26**

III.17. What mechanisms are in place to ensure regular and effective contact (see the Guide to Best Practices in Online) within online courses across the discipline or department?

All of the instructors in the Communication Department have had training in online teaching before or during the summer of 2020. All of our instructors are either fully certified as online instructors or they completed the ERT training. In those trainings, instructors learned the importance of regular and effective contact. To insure regular and effective contact is taking place, instructors are encouraged to check in with students before the semester begins to let them know what to expect. These welcome messages are intended to create a connection with students even before the semester begins and to encourage continued contact between the instructor and student. All of our instructors are encouraged to use discussion boards, announcements, submission comments in the gradebook, and Canvas messages to stay in close contact with students. Full time instructors are required to hold office hours via zoom, and adjunct instructors are encouraged to do so. Our instructor evaluations (peer and manager) require the evaluator to confirm that such contact is taking place, and to note in the evaluation if regular and effective contact is not taking place.

**Q27**

III.18. What innovative tools and strategies are you using in your online courses to engage students and support student success?

Although online and blended classes are relatively new in the Communication Department, we have had one course that has been offered in online format for many years now, COMM 110 Mass Media and Society. Of course, since the pandemic, all of our courses are online. These are some of the strategies and tools we use in the Communication Department's blended and online classes.

Canvas allows us to provide a clear and consistent structure in the weekly modules for the course and to make sure that students know where information and materials are located. Materials can be presented in a consistent manner. Assignments in Canvas allow us to include rubrics for assignments to help students understand what is expected and how an assignment is going to be graded. The submission comments allow us to comment on each piece of work that the students turn in. Canvas also allows us to post all sorts of media for our students, so we use YouTube videos, articles from magazines and newspapers, and current events. Some instructors have the students watch local, national and 24 hour cable news shows. In the COMM 110 course, the instructor requires students to go an entire day without any type of media (including internet, phone, email, TV, radio, etc.) and write about the experience. One instructor posts some Ted talks and asked the students how they would apply the information to their own lives.

One instructor noted that he uses Canvas to Create problem-based scenarios that students must tackle as a team and which are aligned with student learning outcomes. Students create and upload videos for group presentation and critique the contributions of fellow group members.

Our online discussion boards in Canvas require students to respond to a prompt and to other students. This format helps to recreate class discussions that would take place in a normal classroom setting. Because of the fact that they are online, though, they allow students to organize their thoughts. The online discussion board also encourages shy or reluctant students to present their thoughts, which might normally get talked over or get lost in the shuffle in an in-person class. While not every student can participate in every classroom discussion due to time constraints, every student has that opportunity to post in these forums during the course of a week. We use group discussions and wikis to help students work and experience a collaborative environment. A group discussion further helps to foster a sense of community when working on assignment.

Zoom (although only used in ERT classes, not online classes), also has some advantages that have been tremendously helpful. We have used breakout rooms to create group meetings even more easily than in in-person classes. We have also learned that we can record lectures and post them to Canvas for students to review and study. We enable the transcript option for recordings so that students who are deaf or non-native speakers can more easily understand the material. This facilitates accessibility for all students. Students can engage in live feedback for student speeches through zoom. Zoom allows us to provide students with instructor produced videos about current assignments and expand on topics being covered in each module. We are able to maintain regular effective contact by sending announcements and support and feedback time with Zoom office hours.

Page 10: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs

**Q28****Yes**

IV.1. Does your program offer any degree/certificate programs?

Page 11: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

**Q29**

IV.2. Please upload for each degree and certificate indicating how many awards were conferred in the past five years

**Communication Degrees Awarded.docx (12.1KB)**

**Q30**

IV.3. Please indicate when each degree and certificate was last reviewed and updated (semester):

The Communication AA and ATT Degrees were last reviewed in conjunction with our colleagues in the Communication Department at Grossmont College in the Spring of 2019. No changes were made at that time. Since we are making some minor curriculum changes in January of 2021, we will make the necessary changes to those two degrees to accommodate our curriculum changes. The other two degrees are shared with colleagues in the World Language Department. The chairs of both departments will plan to meet in the spring 2021 semester to review and update those.

---

**Q31**

IV.4. How are these degrees/certificates meeting the needs of students, and/or articulation with four-year institutions?

Since we are awarding so few Communication degrees per year, it would seem they are not adequately meeting the needs of our students. There have been years that we awarded far more degrees (as many as 15 in one spring semester) but in the last 5 years, the numbers of degrees has dropped off sharply. This is a concern the Communication Department needs to address.

---

**Q32**

IV.5. Are there any changes planned if the degree/certificates are not meeting these needs?

The instructors in the Communication Department will informally survey our majors to see if we can determine the cause. We also plan to encourage our students to pursue an AA degree. Both AA Degrees need to be reviewed and possibly modified, if we can determine how to better meet our students' needs. The ATT Degree was developed with our colleagues at Grossmont and following the recommendations from our CSU colleagues and cannot easily be updated or changed.

---

**Q33**

**Yes**

IV.6. Can students complete the degree/certificate requirements within a two-year period?\*\*\*requirement of Title 5, California Code of Regulations and Accreditation Standard II.A.

---

Page 12: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

**Q34**

IV.7. How are you currently assessing your PLOs?

Our SLO assessment schedule requires us to assess our PLOs all at once. They have all been assessed in the last two years. We are scheduled to assess them next in the Spring 2022 semester.

---

**Q35**

**Yes**

IV.8. Are the PLOs in the catalog an accurate reflection of the department or discipline's current learning objectives?

---



**Q36**

Yes

IV.9. Are the PLOs mapped to the course SLOs?

Page 13: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

**Q37**

IV.10. How is your program helping students explore careers in your program area?

The two full time instructors in our department have over 50 years of teaching in the Communication Department at Cuyamaca. Over those years we have reassured students that a variety of careers are available to students who earn communication degrees. Students take a class or two in the Communication Department, find they have a true passion for the subject and begin to understand how the skills they learn improve their personal and professional lives. They hear educators and industry leaders espouse how important communication is but because communication degrees do not come with preset, recognizable labels like nurse or engineer they are unsure of what careers they can seek with their degree.

We often meet one on one with our students to discuss career options. Some instructors in our department host guest speakers from Apple and Scripps Health who discuss communication related positions within their given industries. In addition, we often refer our students to the campus Career Center specialists to get help exploring a specific communication related career once they have identified communication as their intended area of study.

A communication degree will prepare students for specific career options such as:

- Public Relations Specialist                      Communications Officer
- Advertising Manager                              Media Planner
- Public Services                                      Sales Representative
- Business Executive                                Educator
- Social Media Manager                            Health Communication Specialist
- International Relations                         Human Resources Specialist

A degree in Communication prepares students with the skills employers are seeking in potential job candidates. For example, regardless of the field, it is common for job announcements to specify that employers are seeking candidates with the following communication based skills:

- Communicate and work collaboratively in a team environment.
- Develop and maintain strong relationships with others.
- Clearly communicate ideas, concepts, methods, and recommendations to individuals and groups.

(www.oup.com)

In addition, a communication degree gives students a considerable edge in the job interviewing process because a communication degree prepares them to document their skills when answering typical interview questions such as:

- Give some examples of how you work in a team when completing a critical project
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a supervisor or a colleague and how you handled the disagreement.
- How would you deal with an angry customer or client?

(www.oup.com)

**Q38**

IV.11. What do the latest labor market data reveal about the careers (including those for transfer students) for which your program prepares students? Labor market data may be sourced from the Program Review Data webpage and California Employment Development Department. You can also contact the Institutional Effectiveness, Success, and Equity Office to access additional labor market information related to your program.

Communication is a broad, diverse, flexible field of study as a major or a minor. A degree in Communication is valued in business, marketing, education, politics, law, and public relations fields, among others. The following job statics from labor market data show the value of a degree in Communication.

- 1980-2015 83% increase in jobs requiring better interpersonal, communication or management skills (Pew Research Center, 2016 the State of American Jobs Report)
  - Communication skills are reported in the top three most desirable employability skills, regardless of major (2018 National Association of Colleges and Employers Survey)
- 

**Q39**

IV.12. What are the labor market implications for the program's curriculum (degrees, certificates, courses)?

Although Communication isn't a CTE program, and as such does not have specific career data associated with job placement, the data do indicate that Communication skills are desirable and beneficial for job candidates. We anticipate a continued demand for these skills and hope to award more degrees in the future. We believe that a Communication degree provides students with the skills that most employers seek.

---

**Q40**

**Respondent skipped this question**

If your program has labor market data to include in your program review, please use the upload button below to attach the file.

---

**Q41**

IV.13. Please describe your program's strengths:

## Instructional Comprehensive Program Review Spring 2021

One of the most notable strengths of the Communication Department is that we have two long serving full time faculty. The years of experience they have allows them to mentor others, such as new faculty, adjuncts, and SDICCA interns. The faculty in the department (both full time and adjunct faculty) also value and support one another. In the four years since the last Program Review Report, the two full time instructors have both faced several life altering crises, including accidents and serious injuries, illness, divorce, and the deaths of beloved family members. Luckily, the faculty in the Communication Department stepped up, even on very short notice, to cover classes, field student questions and concerns, and to assist with grading. Our department faculty were there for each other, to ensure students' needs remained served, enabling instructors to take the necessary time to heal. The support and collaboration in the Communication Department also helped when, in March of 2019, the campus closed due to the pandemic, and we were expected to convert all of our classes from in-person to online instruction in the matter of about two weeks. The Communication faculty didn't miss a beat and were up and running effectively in short order. The faculty were trained in online instruction over the summer. Most importantly, the faculty with online skills and experience helped the faculty who were new to online instruction. It was heartening to see how they worked together, holding bi weekly zoom meetings, and helping each other via text and email.

Another strength of the Communication Department is the way we work collaboratively to plan and complete college and department goals. We are pleased to report that all of our goals from the previous Program Review Report have been met and we have rectified many of the issues we described as challenges or weaknesses in the previous report. The Communication tutor has been a valuable resource for our students. We worked with the Academic resources specialist and we now have a highly qualified tutor who is well trained and serving students well. We have addressed the lack of diversity that existed in our instructional staff. We have initiated ongoing discussions with all faculty to address how to deal with plagiarism, cheating, and writing skills issues that we encounter in our courses. We have revised our PLOs and SLOs and our assessments so that they will be more reliable measures of student and department success.

In the Communication Department, we collaborate with the community to improve access and success for our students. We offer Communication courses through our dual enrollment program at a high school outside of our typical service area, to serve those students and to promote Cuyamaca in the hope that they will consider attending Cuyamaca College after they graduate. We collaborate with other Communication departments throughout the county and with the Communication Department at San Diego State University via our participation the Annual Communication Summit. We gather together to discuss curriculum, transfer, tips for applying to the program, and other topics that help us work together for the success of our students.

Faculty in the Communication Department have an ongoing commitment the community. We regularly present Professional Development Communication workshops for our Cuyamaca family. The topics we present, including listening skills, conflict, relationships, among others help staff and faculty improve communication in the classroom, communication in the workplace and also in the participants' personal lives. Two of our faculty are scheduled to present a workshop this January 2021 called "I Don't Know What to Say: Communicating about Grief and Loss." The workshop is based on one Communication Instructor's sabbatical project, which was completed in the Fall 2019 semester. Grief and loss are universal experiences, and yet most of us are at a loss about what to say when we encounter someone who is grieving. The research project looked at dozens of works on grief and loss and compiled tips and suggestions for helping individuals communicate more effectively about grief and loss. The sabbatical offers tips from two perspectives: to those who are grieving, and to anyone who interacts with a person who is grieving. The sabbatical project distilled and compiled the research into a 2 hour workshop and a course unit for our Interpersonal Communication courses.

Another strength of the Communication Department is our strong enrollments. Although the current pandemic has had an impact on our usually consistent healthy enrollments, before Fall 2020, we only rarely have had to cancel classes due to low enrollment. Our fill rates have consistently been in the mid to high 90% for many years. We are also proud of our strong success and retention rates. In past semesters, we have made a concerted effort to identify and improve success rates for particular student demographics. Currently we are pleased to note that in Communication, we do not see an equity gap for our Middle Eastern students. We believe this is largely due to our efforts in equity and inclusion. We have very high numbers of middle eastern students in our classes, largely due to word of mouth. We consistently address cultural differences and make an effort to be inclusive in our classes. WE teach students how to respect cultural differences and how to communicate more effectively across cultures. One of our Program Learning Outcomes is "Interact respectfully with those who hold divergent perspectives." We address this issue and teach this skill in all of our Communication classes. We actively participate in the Safe Zones program, an ally training program that helps to create a safe campus for members of the LGBTQ+ community. We display posters and stickers in our offices and classrooms and discuss issues in class. We make an effort to honor student requests for particular pronouns and do whatever we can to promote equity in our classrooms. One full time instructor acts as a trainer in the Safe Zones program. We are also committed to student success by participating the in the food supplement program to combat food insecurity. Students cannot focus when they are hungry. And no one should have to drop out of college because they do not have access to food.

**Q42**

**IV.14. Please describe your program's challenges:**

We have identified four different challenges facing our department that we feel the need to investigate and address over the upcoming four years.

**Challenge One: Addressing Impending Retirements**

We have two full time instructors in the Communication Department. One has been teaching full time at Cuyamaca for 31 years and the other over 20 years. Both have reached retirement age. Although we understand and appreciate the tight budget, we believe it is time to begin the process of applying for a new position in the department. Without at least one full time faculty at the helm, we worry about the health and sustainability of the department. We have a qualified and enthusiastic adjunct pool who would no doubt willingly step in to cover classes and serve as chair. However, experience tells us that with a full time instructor in place, success and retention rates are higher, enrollments are higher, and more students earn degrees.

**Challenge Two: Bolstering Our New Tutor Program**

As a result of our last Comprehensive Program Review, we recruited and trained a Communication tutor. Prior to having a Communication tutor, instructors sent large numbers of students to the writing center for help. Students relayed that the tutors there were able to assist them with writing, but that they were not as helpful with the research and structural requirements of specific Communication assignments, such as speech outlines. Since we hired a Communication tutor, we have seen a marked increase in success on particular assignments for students who have utilized the service. We have also noticed a decrease in anxiety levels for oral presentations. We would like to encourage more students to seek help from our tutor. The challenge is that we currently have only one tutor. Should that tutor leave her position we have no second tutor identified, trained, and hired to keep the program running.

**Challenge Three: Student Assignment Completion Issues**

As a department we are concerned about an increase in incidences of cheating and plagiarism. Apparently, outlines, papers and speeches are widely available for purchase on the internet. Identifying and disciplining students who cheat or plagiarize has become more difficult. Many of our faculty also struggle with student writing that is below college level. Many of the students who struggle with writing are nonnative speakers. Sometimes the writing is difficult to decipher and therefore difficult to grade. Since writing is only a part of the grading rubric and less weighted in the grade than content, a student can receive an F on the writing portion of an assignment and still pass the assignment with an acceptable grade. We are concerned about passing students in a class who go on to other classes with substandard writing skills is an ongoing challenge for us.

**Challenge Four: Maintain and addressing Adjunct Support needs**

As full time instructors we are well aware of how the pandemic has taken its toll on our personal and professional lives. We are also keenly aware of the tremendous challenges and changes the college is facing and will be facing for years to come. Luckily we have job security that affords us some degree of comfort in these turbulent times. As difficult as current and future changes have been for us, we are concerned about how these changes will impact our dedicated and vital pool of adjuncts. Even in the best of times prior to the pandemic, adjuncts had to face serious challenges. We take to heart the future challenge of finding ways to ensure our adjunct pool feels supported and valued.

---

## Q43

IV.15. Please describe external influences that affect your program (both positively and negatively):

The main external factor that is affecting the Communication Department (and all of the other departments on campus) is, of course, the budget crisis. The state budget crisis (which is largely due to the pandemic) has caused us to significantly decrease our course offerings. There is no easy solution to this crisis. We are hopeful that things will get better once the effects of the pandemic diminish. Another external factor that has had a significant impact on the Communication Department is the increasing number of Iraqi immigrants in the El Cajon area since the beginning of the Iraq war. This significant change in demographics in the local communities we serve has led to a need for additional ESL classes and other resources. Many of the immigrant students struggle with reading, writing, speaking, and personal challenges that stem from prejudice, misunderstanding, and equity issues. Many also continue to deal with trauma from being oppressed and threatened in a war torn country. Because they are nonnative speakers, they often lack sufficient skills necessary for success in our classes. We have a large number of Chaldean (Iraqi Catholic) students. We have also seen a notable increase in the number of Muslim students. In past semesters we experienced growing tensions and unrest (particularly in the Intercultural Communication course) between the Muslim and Chaldean community and among the two factions of the Muslim community. We enlisted the support of on campus leaders, officials and subject experts to quell the tensions. We have been proactive since and believe this has minimized incidences of unrest but we need to continue to be alert and proactive given this growing and changing demographic. As instructors we welcome, learn and grow substantially from our nonnative students and the experiences they bring to our classroom. Nevertheless, there are specific challenges with this increasing demographic that we need to address. Learning the best way to serve our Iraqi students is an ongoing goal.

The pandemic has, of course, significantly affected the academic/professional and personal lives of students and faculty in the Communication Department. We anticipate a surge in students who suffer from grief, post-traumatic stress, generalized anxiety, anger, sleep problems, domestic violence and financial hardships that result in problems with transportation, housing, childcare, food insecurity and more. It goes without saying that students carry the burden of these issues with them into the classroom and these stressors will affect success and retention for those students. As scholars of Communication we pride ourselves in recognizing the verbal and nonverbal behaviors that alert us to troubled students. We want to make sure we have the resources and referrals to help these students in whatever way we can.

We anticipate that the external budget crisis resulting from the pandemic will continue to affect our internal, ongoing problem with facilities. On the second floor of the B building, there is a strong sewage, mold smell that emanates from both the men's and women's restrooms. At times the smell is overpowering. Faculty, staff and students complain about the unpleasant smell and report it interferes their ability to use the second floor bathroom where all our classrooms and offices are located.

In addition, the faculty office for our Department, B251 has not had working heat since we moved into the building in 2007. Every January, Nancy Jennings has contacted Facilities to notify them about the problem. One year, technicians worked in and around the office for several days. The heating in B 251 still does not work. Most of the year, it is comfortable enough in the office to work, but in January the temperature in the office in the mornings sometimes drops below 60 degrees. Needless to say, temperatures that cold do not create a comfortable working environment. The classrooms also have serious and continual issues with temperature control and air flow. Classroom B 262 is very difficult to cool or heat properly. The students complain constantly and it is difficult to teach or learn when individuals are uncomfortable. The only way to get the room to cool off or heat up is to call someone in facilities and ask them to make adjustments. Instructors should have some reasonable ability to control the temperature in offices and classrooms without interrupting instruction to make a call and hope someone is available to rectify the situation in a timely manner. Adequate air flow and air quality are imperative issues in pandemic times. Prior to the close of campus we noticed work taking place on the roof of the B building. We are hoping that work was being undertaken to address some of the above conditions.

Another potential pandemic related issue is the use of office space, when we return to campus. Two full time faculty share an office. Social distancing is not a problem with two people in the office, but if a student stops in for help, the office space does not allow for proper social distancing. There are also issues stemming from the large number of students who congregate in the hallways of the B building while they wait for classes to begin. It is often tricky and frustrating to maneuver through these groups while navigating hallways in the building. Also, the large groups can be quite loud, and even with closed classroom doors, they sometimes disrupt instruction.

**Q44**

IV.16. Given these factors, what opportunities exist for the program to advance student success and equity in the next 4 years?

Certainly the largest external factor affecting our department is the pandemic and the effect it will have on our ability to execute our four year plan. We will prepare for the unexpected by staying flexible, engaging in frequent and ongoing communication to help ensure our students and members of our department feel supported and valued during these difficult times.

Due to the anticipated pandemic related mental and physical student health concerns discussed above, our faculty will need to be diligently proactive to ensure we are prepared to recognize and address student behavioral problems that might be present in the classroom. We need to plan to have campus and community resources readily available and be prepared to strongly advocate that students seek those resources.

To alleviate crowding and loud noise in the hallways, we advocate that the furniture on the second floor outside landing be replaced so that students can sit outside. This would also be a good option for mitigating health concerns.

---

Page 15: V. Previous Goals

**Q45**

Previous Goal 1:

Review and update Communication Courses

---

**Q46**

**Completed**

Goal Status

---

Page 16: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q47**

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

All courses were reviewed during the 2019-2020 academic year. Course outlines were updated (primarily SLOs) for COMM 110, 120, 122, and 145. The outline for COMM 124 was modified more significantly to reflect Cuyamaca's emphasis on anti racism. We decided to delete COMM 130, as it was developed to replace COMM 120 in case we needed to and it is no longer needed (see detailed explanation in the Curriculum Review and Assessment question III.3.).

---

Page 17: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q48**

**Yes**

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

---

Page 18: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q49**

Previous Goal 2:

Mid Semester Department Meeting

---

**Q50**

**Completed**

Goal Status

---

Page 19: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q51**

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

4. We planned to meet in person this past May 2020. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we were unable to meet in person. However, because of the pandemic, we met via Zoom. And instead of meeting just once, we met 3 times during the Spring 2020 semester. We were able to feel more connected and closer as a result of the extra meetings. The adjunct instructors felt less isolated, which was especially important this year, as we are all feeling a bit isolated during the pandemic.

---

Page 20: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q52**

**No**

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

---

Page 21: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q53**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Previous Goal 3:

---

**Q54**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Goal Status

---

Page 22: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q55**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

---

Page 23: V. Previous Goals continued



**Q56**

Respondent skipped this question

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

---

Page 24: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q57**

Respondent skipped this question

Previous Goal 4:

---

**Q58**

Respondent skipped this question

Goal Status

---

Page 25: V. Previous Goals continued

**Q59**

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

---

Page 26: VI. 4-Year Goals

**Q60**

Goal 1:

Explore Offering More Blended Classes.

The purpose of this goal is twofold. One is to update and expand the methods by which we offer curriculum and the second is to better serve students' needs. In the past our department has offered a sparse number of blended classes. Our data reveals these courses were successful and functioned well for the students enrolled. Blended classes would offer the student who prefers online learning to do so while also having access to the face to face interaction that is a valuable component to all communication courses.

---

**Q61**

Student Validation & Engagement

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

---

**Q62**

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

Additional blended classes will be a blessing for students for various reasons. Having a course that is face to face for only half the scheduled semester hours can be a welcome option for those students who experience communication apprehension, especially when it comes to public speaking. Also, additional blended classes will allow students to only have to be on campus half the scheduled class hours. This will be an enticing and valuable option for those who maybe experiencing financial difficulties that effect transportation, child care costs and unpredictable work schedules due to the pandemic. Also, since students are now more familiar with online classes, this format should be more comfortable for most of the students.

---

**Q63**

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

The data referenced in question III.14. of this report show that the highest success and retention rates have been in our in-person classes. But the blended classes are a close second, with success and retention rates that are notably higher than our online classes. In particular, this format, we believe will be effective for our public speaking classes. The blended format allows students to learn and practice skills for delivering speeches in person, and also online. Both skills are important. The goal of adding additional blended classes will support student learning out comes by giving the online preference students more convenient options to succeed.

---

**Q64**

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

Identify the best time to schedule additional blended sections Communication 122, Oral Communication and Communication 120, Interpersonal Communication for upcoming semesters.

Incorporate the blended options into the schedule.

Identify instructors who would be eager to structure and instruct blended classes.

Possibly create and administer an exit questionnaire for students to complete regarding their perceived strengths and challenges in their blended communication course experience.

---

**Q65**

How will this goal be evaluated?

We plan to review success rates, retention rates, achieved percentages of SLO assessment responses for students enrolled in blended classes. We will compare that collected data with data outcomes from students who completed these courses in face to face formats to asses if our blended and online offerings. We will review the exit questionnaire and use student feedback to refine blended courses and adjust assignments or instruction accordingly.

---

**Q66**

**Yes**

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

---

**Q67**

Goal 2:

Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion

Our department would like to begin collecting feedback from students who use our Communication tutor and from the tutor herself. Our Communication tutor is a vital resource in serving students in their specific Communication course needs. This data will be used to advocate for a second tutor and to ensure our tutor program is operating as effectively as possible. We have only one tutor to serve the needs of students in all of our different Communication courses.

---

**Q68**

**Student Validation & Engagement**

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

---

**Q69**

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

Students who used the writing center to get help with their communication assignments have expressed gratitude that a Communication specific tutor had been hired. Prior to our tutor students relayed to us that the writing center was able to assist them in the basic writing skills needs but was of limited help when it came to the specific requirements for Communication assignments. For example, the persuasive speech, requires complex research, writing, analysis and organizational structure. Students have told us that the Communication tutor is very helpful to them. Knowing that a tutor is there to support them was also a big help in reducing their apprehension.

A second tutor would give students more access to tutoring services. A second tutor would give us an opportunity to offer speech delivery practice as a tutorial option. Research documents that the more a speaker practices prior to a presentation the more his or her reticence (stage fright) is reduced. Depending on only one tutor to serve the needs of a large department does not provide the safety net we want to make sure our goal of student validation and engagement is adequately addressed.

---

**Q70**

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

The tutoring Center periodically send us a list of students who used tutoring services from our Communication tutor. This process was helpful in the past. Since we have been delivering classes remotely (due to the pandemic) our tutoring services have been used less. Our goal is to collect data for the spring and fall semesters of 2021 and use that data to document our need for an additional Communication tutor.

---

**Q71**

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

Create a feedback questionnaires to administer to the tutorial staff and to students who have used tutoring services each semester.

- Sample questions for students would include items to measure the type and extent of help students sought, whether the tutor times were convenient and sufficient, the degree to which working with a tutor may have reduced their apprehension, and the degree to which they felt services affected their earned grade. Questions for the tutor would be designed to assess problems they may have working with students and how we as a department might help to mitigate those problems and how we can support them in her effort to tutor students.

Create a questionnaire to gather feedback from the tutor regarding any issues she recognizes when undergoing her tasks that the department can her to mitigate or resolve.

Compile data obtained via the questionnaires.

Discuss gathered data at department meetings to utilize feedback from Communication Department instructors on how to support the tutor and the students using tutor services to ensure our tutor services are meeting student needs.

Use feedback and data to work with the Academic Resource Center to advocate for the need to train and hire an additional tutor to cover tutorial needs and provide a safety net should our current tutor is unable to continue her employment in the tutor program.

---

**Q72**

How will this goal be evaluated?

We plan to collect as much data as possible (as described above) and move forward with hiring a second tutor, should the data support that action.

---

**Q73**

No

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

---

Page 28: VI. 4-Year Goals continued

**Q74**

Respondent skipped this question

Goal 3:

---

**Q75**

Respondent skipped this question

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

---

**Q76**

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

**Q77**

Respondent skipped this question

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

---

**Q78**

Respondent skipped this question

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

---

**Q79**

Respondent skipped this question

How will this goal be evaluated?

---

**Q80**

Respondent skipped this question

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

---

Page 29: VI. 4-Year Goals continued

**Q81**

Respondent skipped this question

Goal 4:

---

**Q82**

Respondent skipped this question

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

---

**Q83**

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

---

**Q84**

Respondent skipped this question

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

---

**Q85**

**Respondent skipped this question**

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

---

**Q86**

**Respondent skipped this question**

How will this goal be evaluated?

---

Page 30: VII. Resources Needed to Fully Achieve Goal(s)

**Q87**

**My program is currently not requesting any resources at this time**

What resources is your program requesting this year to achieve the program's goals? (Check all that apply)

---

Page 32: Final Check

**Q88**

**I am ready to submit my program review**

Are you ready to submit your program review? If you would like to go back and review a section, select a section a click "Next."

---