

**Undergraduate Programs in Communication and Media Studies
Update on Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Action Plan
Programs Being Reviewed: Bachelor of Communication and Media Studies
Completed by: Josh Greenberg, Director SJC, Program Head COMS
Approved by Dean: David Mendeloff, Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs)/1 November 2023**

Note: This document is made available for public posting on the Vice- Provost's website.

***** Denotes items that SQAPC would like the unit to pay particular attention to based on their past review of the original action item.**

External Reviewer Recommendation	Original Action Item	Owner & Timeline	Progress Update June 2023	Have calendar changes been initiated or completed (Not applicable/Yes/No), if Yes, when
<p>1. That the program hire one full-time staff member. (Weakness) This is the only recommendation we identify as a weakness in the program. And it is based in a need that was continually made clear throughout our visit. The existing staffing complement is less than the normal amount of other, comparable units in the Faculty. We commend the existing staff for handling the significant workload associated with the program and their clear dedication to helping students; however, it is also quite apparent that the current workload of staff is unsustainable. A dedicated, full-time staff position is essential.</p>	<p>The program head made a formal request to the Dean of FPA in March 2021 for an increase in staffing resources to support student advising and program administration needs. The Dean acknowledges the staffing challenges in the program and has agreed to work with the program head to explore solutions to address staffing concerns.</p>	<p>Dean FPA</p>	<p>Given turbulence in recruiting and enrolment during and since the pandemic, no further progress has been made since the March 2021 request for an increase in staffing resources. The program is exploring ways of streamlining the administrative workload associated with the program, and the program head will continue conversations with the Dean on an annual basis.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>2. That the program receive increased TA support. (Concern) We heard and noted concerns about both the workload of existing TAs and the lack of sufficient number of TAs to meet program learning outcomes. Given the size of the program and its 1000-level undergraduate classes, it is imperative that B.CoMS receive more TA support.</p>	<p>The program head submitted a formal request and proposal to the Dean FPA during the 2021 annual budget negotiations to adjust the TA numbers allocated by FPA to Communication and Media Studies. This request was not accepted as it would have required making an exception to the TA allocation formula that is currently applied to</p>	<p>Dean FPA</p>	<p>The program has worked closely with the Dean's office to make necessary adjustments to TA numbers that are consonant with current budget realities. The Dean's office has agreed to a better TA-to-student ratio for the program's "central corridor" classes (i.e., degree requirements and those courses with tutorial components) and has regularly ensured the availability of a TA mentor. The program would like to see an even better ratio in the 1000 and 2000 level courses and will</p>	<p>N/A</p>

	comparable units in the Faculty. The program head will continue to push for this change moving forward.		continue working with the Dean's office on this priority.	
<p>3. That the program investigate standardizing class sizes. (Concern)</p> <p>It is expected that class sizes vary across 1000 through 4000 level courses; however, there are uncommon levels of variation within individual years. This is most pronounced at the 3000-level where class size can reach 150. 4000-level 'caps' seem overly flexible, ranging from 10-40, within and between academic terms. Standardizing class sizes could help build stability into the program, mitigate disparities in workload and improve planning.</p>	The program head and Dean FPA agree on the need for better standardization of class sizes across all levels of the program. A budget request was submitted and approved by the Dean FPA to achieve incremental progress on this recommendation for the 2021-22 academic year. Both the program head and Dean will continue to work together to ensure even greater levels of consistency in future planning cycles.	COMS & Dean FPA	With very few exceptions, class sizes have been standardized across all levels of the program. At the 4000-level, it is rare for courses to have enrolments less than 20 students. Workshop courses typically have 20 students, whereas seminars range from 25-40 students.	N/A
<p>4. That the program's load measure be reduced. (Concern)</p> <p>The load measure in Communication and Media Studies is significantly higher than what is considered normal in the Faculty. This has clear, negative impacts on the effective administration of the program as well as the quality of teaching and learning. We recommend that the program and Dean work to establish a more realistic and equitable load measure with the goal of meeting this target by the next cyclical review.</p>	The program head will request that the Dean advocate for additional faculty teaching positions for COMS in her annual budget request to the University while also advocating to ensure that positions lost through retirements and/or pre-tenure resignations are returned to the program. The program head also intends to actively seek more faculty positions through the Faculty's competitive position allocation process, as positions become available.	COMS and Dean FPA	The program load measure has been reduced over time, mostly due to declining enrolments during the pandemic and a small increase in full-time faculty positions.	N/A
<p>5. That the program re-examine its 1000- level courses. (Opportunity)</p> <p>While we didn't hear specific complaints about the 1000-level courses from students or faculty, there could be benefit in reexamining the courses to better reflect the program's goals at the introductory level. There is a clear desire to enhance writing instruction at the 1000-level, though this is contingent on better TA support as in Recommendation #2.</p>	The program feels that the current 1000-level courses are fulfilling stated DLEs and learning outcomes. However, we are open to re-examining our first-year courses to identify ways in which we might place greater emphasis on teaching interculturally aware and equity-minded fundamental writing instruction specific to Communication and Media Studies and of developing additional courses and/or modules to be delivered throughout all years of the program. This	COMS	COMS 1001 and 1002 remain two of our most effective and popular courses, and as such have not been retooled in any significant way. B.CoMS also sees high rates of internal transfer students in second year, typically those from other programs who take COMS 1001/1002 as an elective in their first year. This suggestions to us that the courses already work very well. The program has also introduced a new optional 1000-level course (COMS 1003: Digital Skills for Media Studies) that will begin in September 2023. This course emphasizes skill development across a range of	<i>Completed (COMS 1003 added to undergraduate calendar 2023/04/17)</i>

	<p>would require a new hire in the broad area of composition studies.</p>		<p>professionally relevant apps, platforms, and digital services. It introduces an experiential learning element early in the program outside of the context of an introductory course tutorial/seminar. Finally, the course will be delivered in a hybrid model with both in-person and online instruction, offered in both terms only to students majoring in B.CoMS.</p>	
<p>6. That the program consider creating a set of governing principles. (Opportunity) The program has steadily grown in size since the last cyclical review. For purposes of continuity, clarity and equity, we wondered if the program should consider creating a set of guiding principles. We stress that this is not something the program should be made to do, nor that it need be a long list of rigid policies; instead, we ask that they take up the issue for consideration.</p>	<p>There are no problems currently with the program’s organizational culture to suggest this as a necessary step. However, we recognize the benefits of establishing a written set of governing principles or at the very least a program mission statement that would serve as a guiding framework for organization decision-making at the program and committee levels. Given the large numbers of faculty members who will be on sabbatical in 2021-22, the program will commit to initiating a discussion about this opportunity in the 2022-23 academic year.</p>	<p>COMS</p>	<p>We have held discussions with our dean and are beginning the work necessary to develop clear governing principles for our program, and more generally for the School of Journalism and Communication as it undergoes a period of leadership change. We expect to have these principles articulated in time for the next CPR.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Undergraduate Programs in Communication and Media Studies

Update on Learning Outcomes Assessment Activities

Programs Being Reviewed: Bachelor of Communication and Media Studies

Completed by: Josh Greenberg, Director SJC/Program Head COMS

1. Who is responsible for the assessment of program learning outcomes?

- Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee
- Undergraduate/Graduate and/or Curriculum Committee(s)
- All faculty in unit
- Other:

2. Which program learning outcomes have been assessed since your last CPR? If no assessment activities were undertaken, please provide a rationale and describe what is required in order for assessment to take place moving forward.

LO 1: Students will display an awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of the field of Communication and Media Studies through the ability to articulate key arguments and theoretical debates that have helped define the field over time.

3. Did you follow your assessment plan? If not, how did your assessment plan change and why?

We followed our assessment plan for the most part, however our ability to do so comprehensively was challenged by the pandemic. We conducted a comprehensive audit of our course syllabi and held many faculty discussions about our curriculum, degree level expectations, and learning outcomes. Abilities to directly assess student work were challenged by major changes in learning assessment due to the university and program's flexible learning plan during the pandemic; our alumni chapter also fragmented during the pandemic and has not been able to return to the same level of activity and cohesion as in previous years, making it difficult to know how our learning outcomes and DLEs track after students leave our program and pursue their careers.

4. What methods have been used to assess the program level learning outcomes? (check all that apply)

- Reviews of examples of student work
- cuPortfolio
- Student surveys or focus groups
- Faculty retreats or discussion sessions
- Reviews of program curricula and courses (*includes efforts to align course and program learning outcomes*)
- Other _____

Provide additional details if necessary:

5. What assessment activities are planned between now and your next CPR? Provide specific LOs and timeframes.

Our Standing Committee on Anti-Racism developed a proposal in consultation with our Undergraduate Committee to formalize an a new B.CoMS degree-level expectation that would ensure all students complete their degree with a strong understanding of anti-oppressive approaches in communication and media studies. This new requirement involves completion of at least 0.5 credits in coursework that contains substantial attention to anti-oppressive approaches which challenge the discipline and field's histories of colonialism, institutional racism, and white supremacy. This recommendation follows from a comprehensive review of our current curriculum. Analysis of the curriculum and consultation with faculty and instructors over the 2022-23 academic year indicates that we are already informally delivering on this priority. An assessment of enrolment patterns show that a strong majority of our students (> 85%) fulfil the requirement of completing a minimum of 0.5 credits in coursework in this area already by the time they graduate. A formal discussion and motion to approve this new learning outcome and degree-level expectation passed at our final meeting of the 2022-23 academic year, in June 2023.