



April 12, 2016

Dr. Danna Gibson
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Columbus, GA 31907

Re: Comprehensive Program Review Self-Study

Dr. Gibson,

After reviewing the draft Comprehensive Program Review Self-Study for the Department of Communications and meeting with Dr. Christopher McCollough to discuss our findings, Dr. McCollough has provided the External Review Committee with a revised report. Our findings on this revised draft are included in the attached report.

Overall the self-study is a very good analysis of the status, achievements, and needs of the Department of Communications and Dr. McCollough is to be commended for the effort he put into preparing it.

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External Review Team Report

Columbus State University, Department of Communications

Comprehensive Program Review, 2015-2016

I. Introduction

a. This External Review Team Report addresses the Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) prepared by the Department of Communications at Columbus State University. The format of the CPR is provided by the university's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness at the university's website at <https://ir.columbusstate.edu/assess/CPRplan.php>.

The External Review Team consisted of Thomas P. Dolan, Ph.D, Professor of Political Science at Columbus State University; Dr. Dolan is a past chair of the university's Comprehensive Program Review Committee and holds a B.A. degree in Journalism from Drake University. Alison W. Dowe, Senior Director for Corporate Communications at Synovus Financial Corp. provided stakeholder input. David Nelson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Communication Arts at Valdosta State University provided instructional and programmatic expertise.

b. Once chosen for membership on this committee by the Chair of the Communications Department, Dr. Dolan met with Dr. Christopher McCollough in 2015 to discuss the CPR format and study requirements. Dr. McCollough prepared a draft report and the External Review Committee met with him on March 11, 2016 to discuss the draft. Minor editorial and format changes were recommended, and the Committee discussed its assessment of the various indicators of program quality, program productivity, and program viability.

Dr. McCollough prepared a revised draft, which is the basis of the comments provided here. No substantive changes are recommended.

II. Findings of the External Review Committee

The guidelines for the CPR call for a maximum length of 25 pages; the revised draft provided to the External Review Committee is 53 pages. Much of the content can be separated into appendices which will not count against the 25-page goal.

The draft CPR is not paginated; it should be. Comments provided in this section will refer to page numbers assigned by the reviewers, with page 1 being the first page after the cover sheet of the draft CPR, i.e., the page containing the Executive Summary.

Minor format/spelling comments are:

Page 9, **Section II F**: Quality of Research and Scholarship should be **Section II C**.

Pages 14-25, lists of faculty publications, papers, and public lectures: put into an appendix.

Page 28, bottom entry: Dr. Lanoue's first name is David, not Greg.

Page 30, **Section II I**: Quality of Faculty and Student Achievements should be **Section II F**.

Pages 30-34, Academic Awards: use multiple columns instead of a single column.

The External Review Committees assessment of each program area follows.

Section Two – Indicators of Program Quality

II. Summary Findings of Program's Overall Quality

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Communications program is observably a very well-run program.

II A. The Quality of Faculty

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Department faculty members all meet SACS standards, and are highly productive.

II B. The Quality of the Teaching

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Self-Study describes a faculty team that is highly engaged with students and the community.

II C. The Quality of Research and Scholarship

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. Again, the Self-Study illustrates how the faculty engage students in real-world activities.

II D. The Quality of Service

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Department curriculum incorporates service learning into many upper-division courses.

II E. The Quality of Faculty and Student Achievements

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Self-Study includes a very lengthy list of student and faculty accomplishments and honors related to study in the discipline, as well as general academic and athletic honors.

II F. The Quality of Curriculum

Self Study: Above Average

Review Team: Concur. COMM 1110/Public Speaking is required of all undergraduate students at this university, requiring a substantial commitment of faculty resources. The Self-Study details how upper-division courses meet the needs of students and stakeholders.

II G. The Quality of Facilities & Equipment

Self Study: Satisfactory

Review Team: Concur. The overall growth of the University has increased the number of undergraduate students who need COMM 1101, and the size of these classes cannot be expanded without compromising the quality of education. Similarly, the Department seeks to maintain a 1:25 faculty-to-student ratio in upper-division courses.

Section Three – Indicators of Program Productivity

III. Summary Findings of Program's Overall Quality

Self Study: "Highly productive"

Review Team: Very strong.

III A. Enrollment in Program for Past 5 Years

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. Enrollment of Communications majors has increased from 178 in AY 2011-12 to 452 in AY 2015-16.

III B. Degrees Awarded Over the Past 5 Years

Self Study: Above Average

Review Team: Very Strong. Averaging over 30 graduates per year for the past five years is far above the University's average.

III C. Comparison with CSU & USG Programs

Self Study: Satisfactory

Review Team: Concur. While the Communications Department at Columbus State University has a high graduation rate in comparison with other programs at this school, the larger schools in the University System are more productive, reflecting the resources those schools have..

III D. Program Retention Rate

Self Study: Above Average

Review Team: Concur. The Department's retention rates have dropped from a very high rate in AY 2009-10, but the 5-year average is still above the University's.

III E. Student Learning Indicators

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The best measure of student success is employment after graduation, and the Self-Study catalogs a great deal of success in this area.

III F. Graduation Rate of Program

Self Study: Above Average

Review Team: Concur. The Self-Study documents how the graduation rate for recent cohorts of students has improved substantially since 2000, and that the Department graduation rate consistently ranks in the upper one-fourth of all CSU programs.

III G. Cost-Effectiveness of Instructional Delivery

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur. The Department's course delivery expenses are far below those of the University.

Section Four – Program Viability

IV A. Summary Findings of Program's Overall Viability

Self Study: Very Strong

Review Team: Concur.

IV B. Summary Findings of Program's Improvement Plans