

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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## The Communication Department of Buffalo State College

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(Considered by the Faculty of the Communication Department, Spring 2004)

## MISSION

The mission of the Communication Department of Buffalo State College is to prepare students to think analytically and creatively, communicate clearly, act ethically, and succeed professionally.

(Adopted 2001)

## VALUES

As a collegial and dedicated group of faculty and staff both individually and collectively dedicated to this mission, the Communication Department holds the following values:

Service Excellence. In its relationships with students, the Department values the ideals and best practices of service excellence, giving priority to student interests and needs in matters such as course development, scheduling, faculty accessibility, and the creation of a climate of encouragement and mutual respect.

Quality Performance. In its relationships with employers and graduate schools, the Department values the ideals and best practices of quality performance, maintaining high professional standards and developing graduates who meet and exceed these expectations.

Social Responsibility. In its relationships with the community, the Department values the ideals and best practices of social responsibility, offering leadership, scholarship, creative work and service to the communication and media professions and adding to the quality of life in Western New York and beyond.

Academic Excellence. In its relationship with higher education – at Buffalo State College, within the State University of New York, and beyond – the Department values the ideals and best practices of academic excellence, providing opportunities for students to think critically, discern ethically, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively.

## STRATEGIC VISION

The Communication Department at Buffalo State College embraces the tension inherent in offering a quality professional education within a liberal-arts context. The Department will continue to provide a comprehensive array of specialties that is reflective of our mission, consistent with our vision and values, and appropriate to our resources.

## GOALS

Specific goals inherent in this vision include:

- To develop an academic program recognized for its excellence by students, alumni and media professionals and distinguished as being professionally-oriented, student-focused and community-minded
- To gain accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
- To be recognized as a program of distinction by Buffalo State College

## SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT (SWOT ANALYSIS)

An analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats reveals the following portrait of the Communication Department.

### Strengths

- Reputation among media professionals, particularly in Western New York, for offering a quality and practical education
- Quality faculty committed to the academic integrity of the Department and to the well being of students
- Many successful alumni active in disciplines related to departmental programs
- A comprehensive professional curriculum in a continual state of revision
- Long-standing pattern as one of the largest departments most attractive to students

### Weaknesses

- Lack of a clear public reputation as a Department of excellent faculty offering a quality education
- Difficulty attracting quality students selecting Buffalo State Communication as their first choice
- Funding base only minimally adequate to meet the strategic vision of the Department
- Observation that students within the Department are less prepared and less motivated academically, particularly in areas of both critical thinking and written/oral communication skills

### Opportunities

- Potential new alliances resulting from College reorganization
- Ability to leverage college support by continuing to offer quality programs of recognized impact to the college, the media professions, and the WNY community
- Ability to supplement the budget through student- and faculty-orchestrated activities, both entrepreneurial and philanthropic
- Commitment from the college to provide and maintain equipment and faculties appropriate to our educational mission

### Threats

- Likelihood that, if the Communication Department does not define its own future, external forces will, reshaping the Department and risking a change in our mission and vision
- Likelihood that, without a strategic plan that is visionary yet practical, the Department may lose a measure of support at a time of shrinking College resources and changing College vision
- Likelihood that, without adequate support, a departmental plan to increase standards for students could result in a smaller and less-diverse student population

## SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Many recommendations are included within this Strategic Plan. While these recommendations reflect the vision and creative efforts of faculty within the Communication Department, they are not without supporting research. Following is a list of various research projects that have yielded information that was considered in preparing this plan.

Assessment data. Information generated by the Department within the last two years in a series of projects and reports coordinated by Marian Deutschman and Ron Smith as co-chairs of the Assessment Committee.

Focus-Group Research. Study conducted by Marian Deutschman in February 2004 with professional supervisors of internships.

Literature Reviews. Information gathered by several faculty members in March 2004, focusing on trends and projections within particular professional disciplines.

Best Practices Study. Information about requirements of ACEJMC-accredited institutions, gathered via content analysis of departmental Web sites, conducted by Ron Smith in March 2004, using a 50-percent systematic-stratified sample of accredited institutions. See Appendix A.

Readiness Study. Analysis of departmental readiness to address the various ACEJMC standards, conducted in 2002-03 by Rik Whitaker.

Miscellaneous Data. Various statistical analyses of departmental patterns in areas such as student population, retention, grade distribution and faculty hiring prepared in reports and commentary prepared by former chair Janet Ramsey and current chair Ron Smith.

## ACEJMC ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Communication Department's Strategic Plan will be structured to address the nine standards for ACEJMC accreditation:

1. Mission, governance and administration
2. Curriculum and instruction
3. Diversity and inclusiveness
4. Full-time and Part-time faculty
5. Scholarship: Research, creative and professional activity
6. Student services
7. Resources, facilities and equipment
8. Professional and public service
9. Assessment of learning outcomes

However, before a full Strategic Plan can be formulated, the Department must address and resolve several issues.

Consideration 1: Raising Standards Among Students

Consideration 2: Principles for Academic Program Revision

Consideration 3: Department Structure

Consideration 4: Program Requirements

These considerations will figure in the Department's application for ACEJMC accreditation, particularly Standard 2 on curriculum and instruction. See Appendix B. Additionally, some faculty members have offered comments on the circulated draft section dealing with Standard 3 on diversity and inclusiveness. A completed draft addressing all nine ACEJMC standards should be completed by June.

## CONSIDERATION 1: RAISING STANDARDS AMONG STUDENTS

We are realists. Thus we begin with the observation that many new students (both freshmen and transfers) have weak skills in various areas of communication, a weakness rooted in conceptualizing and thinking critically that manifests itself in both written and oral presentation. While we note that SUNY in general and Buffalo State in particular are moving toward increasing admission standards, we do not see ourselves as being in a position to adopt significantly different standards.

We also are teachers. As such, we see our calling and our distinctive mission as offering educational opportunities, assisting both communication professions and society at large one student at a time. As teachers, we are cognizant of the fact that, individually and collectively, some of our best success stories are the tales of students who, perhaps ill prepared for college, nevertheless grasped the assistance we offered and rose to the challenges we held out for them. Thus we aim to work with motivated students of varying academic ability, and we embrace the opportunity to help all students develop their skills to a level necessary to succeed in future professional or academic endeavors.

We are neither magicians nor martyrs. We acknowledge that the Communication Department is not a center for remediation. In dealing with students with weak skill levels, our role is primarily to provide resources, serve as mentors, and make referrals to self-help and external assistance. Additionally, we caution that a remedial Department will not appeal to average and above-average students, nor will it provide the necessary base for producing graduates of the quality we hope to mold. Thus we remain committed to maintaining high academic and professional standards.

As we have grappled with the tension inherent in trying to balance student needs with academic standards, we have become increasingly comfortable in accepting our responsibility to work with students as they exist within Buffalo State. These are women and men of average or above-average academic ability, all with the presumed potential to succeed. At the same time, we must challenge all students wishing to pursue a Communication degree to understand the special levels of both ability and motivation necessary to prepare for careers and post-graduate studies in the highly competitive fields associated with our programs. These fields demand unusually high skills, not only in areas of oral and written communication, but also in research and analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, and awareness of the world and events unfolding within it.

Thus our solution to the needs-standards tension is to remain rooted in our role as educators. Rather than impose high entrance standards that would screen out students with weaker skills, we instead adopt a diagnostic and developmental process. Our aim for this is twofold: to help students meet the necessarily high academic and professional standards and, if necessary, to facilitate an early exit from the Department for students who cannot or choose not to meet those standards with.

Overall, our intention is that the students who complete our programs will be women and men who are skilled, motivated, creative, resourceful and socially responsible communicators equipped by this academic program to succeed in their future educational and professional endeavors.

## GENERAL ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Entrance GPA for Pre-Communication. The Department wishes to give every interested student an opportunity to pursue a Communication degree. Therefore, any entering freshmen, or any student with fewer than 60 credit hours and a GPA of 2.0 or higher, may be declared into the Pre-Communication major. We will monitor enrolment patterns with an eye toward the possible future need of placing limits on the number of students who can be accommodated based on departmental resources.

Entrance GPA for Other Majors. On the premise that Communication offers a set of professional majors requiring higher-than-average skill in certain areas, we will maintain the current GPA requirement of 2.6 in SPC 205, COM 210 and COM 215 for entrance into 0703, 0707 and 0708 majors. Because the Communication Studies major is not based on professional skills, we will maintain current 2.0 minimum for the 0706 major.

Minimum Grade. Consistent with current practice, we will maintain the requirement that no grade lower than a C will be accepted in courses satisfying a requirement in the major. This applies both to courses taken at Buffalo State and those transferred from other institutions. Any grade of C- or lower must either be repeated or used as an elective outside the major.

Maximum Credits in Communication. Consistent with standards of the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, students must have at least 80 credit hours outside their major. Based on the expected College requirement of 120 credit hours, this means that no more than 40 COM credits may be counted toward graduation requirements. In departmental majors, 33 COM credits are required, as well as 9 SPC credits which are not subject to the 40-credit limit. Any COM credits beyond 40 will add to the 120-hour requirement. Also consistent with ACEJMC requirements, 65 of those 80 credits must be in liberal arts courses.

Grading Patterns. We will continue to remind faculty, particularly part-time faculty, that the Department does not view grade patterns (high or low) as evidence of effective teaching. We will focus on the need for both objective grading that adequately reflects student competencies and a demonstrated link between grading and established learning outcomes. We will continue to monitor patterns of grade distribution, and the Chair will point out the patterns to individual faculty members who vary significantly from the norm. Because the core courses of SPC 205, COM 210 and COM 215 establish precedents and expectations among students, we will give particular attention to grading patterns in those courses.

Enrolment/Retention Patterns. Concurrent with our concerns for academic standards, we will carefully monitor enrolment and retention patterns within the Department. While this is an important shared responsibility, it will be one of the primary tasks of the Advisement & Retention Committee. The Department office will begin tracking numbers of students, by major, for withdrawals, leaves of absence, graduation, drop-outs, and other movements.

Articulation Agreements. The Department will review articulation agreements with community colleges that serve as feeder schools into our program. As courses and programs are revised, the Department will initiate new agreements with those institutions. Currently the Department has articulation agreements with four schools: Erie Community College, revised in 1993; Genesee Community College, revised 1997; Monroe Community College, revised 1994; and Niagara County Community College, revised 1997.

Transfer Courses. Students may transfer 12 hours (four courses) as 1xx- and 2xx-level COM or SPC courses from a two-year college, and 15 hours (five courses) as COM or SPC courses from a four-year college to meet requirements in a Communication major. Credits beyond these limits will be placed outside the major. Courses taken at other institutions as part of a national or international exchange program or as cross-registration with other SUNY institutions are approved by the Department and thus are not considered transfer courses but rather are treated as courses taken through Buffalo State.

Honor Society. The Department will seek to establish a campus chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the undergraduate honor society of the National Communication Association. Such a chapter will serve as a focus for departmental encouragement of scholarship and recognition of student achievement in all of our majors. Requirements for student membership are 60 credits with an overall GPA of 3.0 as well as 12 credits of Communication courses with a departmental GPA of 3.25.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Writing Rubrics. While respecting pedagogical differences of instructors, we will institute a standard set of expectations and assessment tools for COM 210. For this, we might look to the ENG 101/102 model in which instructors act as coaches for students, whose final writing is graded by instructors of other sections of the same course.

Writing Diagnostic Test. We will develop a PLUS test (Punctuation, Language Usage and Spelling) specific to the Communication Departmental. [Alternatively we will investigate *WordOne* or similar computer-based diagnostic/remedial writing programs.] The purpose of this test will be diagnostic. Its outcome will be early identification of students with weak writing skills, resulting in remediation, skill development, and if appropriate, advisement to consider other academic plans. Students will be encouraged to take this test during their first semester on campus, and to retake it after meeting with their Academic Adviser or a designated writing mentor to identify and remedy writing difficulties. Students will be required to pass the PLUS test as a prerequisite to COM 210; students who transfer the equivalent of COM 210 will still be required to take and pass the PLUS test with a minimum grade of C before being admitted to a major other than 0701.

Writing Skills Course. Associated with the PLUS test, we will develop a COM 1xx course (perhaps 1 credit) in Writing Skills for Communicators to assist students in gaining basic writing skills at a level needed to pass the diagnostic test. At the 1xx level, this course would not fulfill requirements within the major.

Intro to Media Writing. Prerequisites for this course include ENG 101 with a grade of C or higher and the PLUS test, with a passing grade of 60 or higher (which will serve as an indicator that the student is capable of increasing writing competency to the minimum C grade expected within the major). We will revise COM 210 to give greater emphasis to a standard approach to relevant skills. This may lead to a standardized exam, including an Associated Press Stylebook component.

Infused Writing Requirements. We will identify specific 3xx- and 4xx-level courses and revise them to include an element of written communication. Courses such as COM 301, 303, 328, 329, 400, 450 will be infused with a writing component. Respecting pedagogical differences, the Department will develop a standard though optional rubric for presentation, critique and evaluation, in an effort to provide students with a set of expectations about their writing that is consistent throughout the Department.

## ORAL COMMUNICATION STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Infused Speech Requirements. Similar to the recommendation above regarding infused writing requirements, we will identify 3xx- and 4xx-level courses and revise them to include an element of oral communication. Respecting pedagogical differences, the Department will develop a standard though optional rubric for oral presentation, critique and evaluation, in an effort to provide students with a set of expectations about their oral presentations that is consistent throughout the Department.

Intro to Oral Communication. We will review and revise the current COM 205 specifically to address the issue of consistency of expectations. The previous decision by the Department to require COM 205 for all majors was predicated on the idea that it would incorporate basic skills useful to students in every Communication major. We will address the fact that course content remains inconsistent, particularly for presentation and interviewing skills, which are included in the current topical outline for the course.

## CORE STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS

Infused Diversity Requirements. We will identify courses at all levels that address issues of diversity and inclusiveness, generating an annual update of a list of such courses and content areas. See Appendix C.

Infused Ethics Requirements. We will identify 3xx- and 4xx-level courses and revise them to include an element of ethics as it relates to the topical content of the course. This emphasis is consistent with over-all learning outcomes associated with each major, and with the Department's prior decision to infuse professional ethics throughout the departmental curriculum. Respecting individual pedagogical styles, the Department will develop a standard though optional approach to ethical decision-making that students can use throughout the Department.

Humanities Core. We will submit SPC 103 Intro to Human Communication and SPC 321 Rhetorical Criticism for approval as a Humanities core course.

Social Science Core. We will submit SPC 100 Media Literacy for approval as a Social Science core course.

Diversity Course. We will submit SPC 333 Minority Voices in the Media and COM 3xx Intercultural Communication for approval as Diversity courses meeting core requirements.

Civilization Course. We will submit COM 310 International Communication for approval as a World Civilization course meeting core requirements.

## **SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS**

Area of Specialization. On the premise that the Communication Department offers a set of programs requiring a student to be actively engaged with the world, we will require each student to develop an area of specialization. There are three options for this: a second major in another department, a minor from another department, or a cohesive 18-credit concentration (with at least 12 credits beyond the 100 level) tailored by each student and approved by the Academic Adviser and the Department Chair. This requirement is intended to give students the opportunity to develop an area of professional or academic competence that will complement their communication skills.

Specialized Knowledge. Additionally, we will identify appropriate courses within the majors at the 3xx and 4xx levels and revise them to include a component of social awareness, general or discipline-specific historical knowledge, and relevant current events.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS**

Internship. On the premise that a professional internship is a privilege rather than a right, we will maintain the current minimum GPA of 2.6 for COM 488. We will monitor and enforce the list of appropriate prerequisite courses. We also we will monitor both the availability and quality of internship opportunities, seeking to enhance their value to students. In line with general College guidelines on internships, we will maintain the requirement for weekly meetings for interns.

Independent Academic Work. We will encourage students to undertake COM 495 Independent Project and COM 499 Independent Study, while at the same time tightening oversight and accountability for these courses. Such independent work can be beneficial to students. However, the Department has an interest in ensuring that independent work carries with it rigor and expectations appropriate to an upper-level course.

Practicum. We will develop a Practicum course for each professional major. Each semester, projects will be identified for the practicums. In particular, we will seek to develop intradepartmental practicum projects that involve students in various majors.

Professional Partnerships. We will seek opportunities to develop partnerships with WNY media and College or community organizations to involve Communication students in professional activities. For example, two current corporate initiatives include (1) plans for public relations/advertising students and

video production students to cooperate in researching, writing and producing commercials for Adelphia Cable and (2) inquiries from the Sabres for Communication students in all professional majors to be involved in projects such as news releases, an on-line newsletter, logo and graphics, audio and visual production, and so on. The various practicum courses may provide a base for such partnership activity.

Professional Cooperation. We will seek to invigorate intradepartmental cooperative activity. For example, broadcasting students might produce a radio commercial scripted by advertising students. Public relations students might assist in promotional campaign for Bengal News and BSC-TV. Students in visual communication classes might assist in graphic design, set design, and similar projects for television productions. Such activities may be part of projects in established courses, COM 495 Independent Projects undertaken by individual students, extracurricular opportunities, or activities centered on co-curricular student professional organizations. The key is that such projects should be fostered and facilitated by the faculty.

Student Organizations. The Department will be more proactive in establishing and encouraging co-curricular student organizations and activities, such as BSC-TV, PRSSA, WBNY radio, the Advertising Club, and the Record; perhaps new groups could be nurtured as well. While these organizations have different types of linkage to the Department, we embrace the concept that they can provide our students with beneficial professional experience. Thus they assist in the overall development of our students.

## CONSIDERATION 2: PRINCIPLES FOR ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVISION

Academic Flexibility. We believe that each student is the best architect of his/her academic and professional future, and we realize that programmatic prescriptions are neither a guarantee nor a predictor of future success. Likewise, we seek a balance between a program so broad as to offer no focus and one so narrow as to offer little opportunity for students to tailor programs to their particular interests and needs. Thus we resist the temptation to require students to pursue a narrowly-defined academic program and instead adopt the notion of flexibility in academic programming. Implementing this notion, we will minimize sequencing within majors.

Public Communication Major. We will rename this program Public Relations/Advertising and maintain it as a single integrated major, with advisement toward identifiable sequences in public relations and advertising.

Communication Studies Major. We will maintain this major along current lines, offering more guidance for the two distinct audiences for this major: (1) students seeking an approach to communication rooted in the speech/criticism components, and (2) students seeking a generalist approach to communication. In either case, the program is not one of professional skills leading through internships toward an applied career path. While it offers some flexibility, this major is not meant to serve as a “side door” for student access to courses in professional majors for which they lack the required GPA or prerequisites.

Broadcasting Major. We will reconstitute this as a single integrated major and rename it Media Production, with the course range remaining or expanding but without separate sequences for audio/radio and television/video. The program will offer advisement toward identifiable sequences in audio production and video production. In reorganizing this major, we affirm the essential role of both audio and video production in the Department’s current and future curriculum, particularly with expanding integration of digital media and the growing use of audio and video production for both journalistic and public relations purposes.

Journalism Major. We will reconstitute this as a single integrated major, allowing flexibility for students while offering advisement toward identifiable sequences in print/online and broadcast news.

Overview and Projections. In an effort to proactively define a vision for the Department, we will develop and continually update consensus statements with an overview of each curricular area served by the Department: journalism, public relations, media production, and communication studies and media criticism. As a type of position paper, each of these statements will include a projection of trends, challenges, opportunities, etc., supported with data. The purpose of these projections is to assist both departmental planning and student advisement.

Ideal Enrolment Patterns. Stopping short of capping admission to each major (at least, for now), we will monitor enrolment patterns with an eye toward establishing ideal ranges. These ranges will be linked with faculty, facilities and curricular resources. We also will monitor student enrolment, which currently is 545 (March 2004), a bit higher than in recent years. The current three-year graduation average (Fall 2001 through August 2004) is 98 per year. This breaks out as 32 students in 0703, 10 in 0706, 38 in 0707, and 17 in 0708 (adjusted to include Broadcast News in 0708). The current full enrolment records for majors holds true only for Public Communication (73 majors). Numbers for the other majors are unstable, because of the shift of Broadcast News from 0707 to 0708 and the overlap between 0701 and 0706. Following is an extrapolation of the current enrolment by major, based on graduation patterns and the current base of 545 students:

305 (56%) Pre-Communication	92 (17%) Broadcasting
80 (15%) Public Communication	38 (7%) Journalism
27 (5%) Communication Studies	

Integration and Convergence. We will focus on principles and concepts that supersede specific technologies, and we will integrate various media technologies (audio and visual) and disciplines (news and promotion). While much attention is placed on so-called “new media,” alternatively identified as “digital media,” we choose not to isolate these technologies but rather to integrate them within our existing majors. Courses associated with the Journalism major, for example, will be reviewed with an eye toward ensuring that students complete the major with skills and insight into writing/reporting on the Internet and other digital formats, as well as in the more traditional print media of newspapers and magazines and broadcast media of radio and television. Broadcasting courses associated with the Media Production major will be reviewed toward providing future journalists and public relations practitioners with skills and insight into techniques such as audio and video streaming on Web sites.

Special Topics Courses. We will create a Special Topics course for Production and Public Relations/Advertising to parallel the COM 390 Special Topics in Journalistic Writing, using this elective course to offer a variety of specialized courses.

Variable Credit. In order to offer more flexibility for students and more creative curriculum development, we will create or revise several upper-division courses with variable credits or set at 1 credit or 2 credits.

Contingent Registration. Students who register for any departmental class does so contingent upon satisfactory completion of prerequisite courses, including courses that may be in progress during the registration period. If a student does not satisfactorily complete a prerequisite course, his/her registration for the subsequent course will not be honored. Faculty will notify the Department office of students who receive a grade lower than C in a major course, and the Chair will notify students prior to the beginning of the subsequent semester that they have failed to meet a prerequisite and thus will be dismissed from the class.

Practicum. We will create a COM 4xx Practicum course for Public Relations/Advertising to parallel COM 388 in Production and COM 405 in Journalism. This elective course will provide a foundation for the Department to offer a variety of hands-on projects. This course will serve as a point for intradepartmental activity, as all three practicum courses would intersect to allow students in various majors to work together on projects.

Senior Portfolio. We will create a noncredit Senior Portfolio project for students in their final full semester on campus. This required project will include several group meetings throughout the semester to help students prepare a professional or academic portfolio as well as a professional résumé. Portfolios will be reviewed by faculty and/or professionals. They also will be used in program assessment.

Interdepartmental Projects. Concurrent to departmental reorganization, we will be open to cooperative ventures with other departments. One such venture is a potential for a Communication focus within a new minor in Sports Management. Another venture involves the Communication, English and Performing Arts Departments and focuses on a potential interdisciplinary program in entertainment or episodic television. Additionally, we will be more proactive in offering our departmental services, within the limits of our resources, to the wider campus community. For example, we might produce audio and video promotional spots for use on Web sites, or we might create a student competition with awards for the creation of media materials to promote a topic of social relevance of interest to students.

Equipment and Facilities. Since our current five-year plan for the television/radio studios and edit suites is behind schedule, we will rework the plan and expand it to include other equipment and facilities implicit in our curricular revision. We also will investigate the possibility of inviting USG to purchase some video equipment for the priority use of BSC-TV productions; this equipment would be housed in and maintained by the Department.

Faculty. We will abandon the pretense of “lines” associated with particular professional disciplines (such as broadcasting, speech, etc.). Instead, we will develop and monitor a listing a competencies within the full-time faculty to meet curricular needs, using such a list to identify hiring criteria. (See Appendix D: Current Faculty Academic Specialties.) We will identify the current need for faculty staffing, particularly to serve curricular needs no longer being served because of recent departures from the faculty. [As an initial point of consideration, we should address faculty skills that have recently been lost: visual communication and public relations/advertising experience with the departure of Mukhbir Singh, journalism courses taught by Janet Ramsey, a public relations focus with the reassignment of teaching time for Ron Smith, and video production expertise with the pending departure of Ken Nagelberg.]

Faculty Ratio. As a proportion of full-time and part-time members of the Communication faculty, we identify 75:25 ratio as our ideal and our goal. This is calculated on the number of sections offered by full-time and part-time faculty, respectively. The current full-time/part-time pattern (Spring 2004) is 57:43 (24 part-time, 34 full-time, 56 sections total). If calculation is based on the number of students served by faculty members, the current full-time/part-time ratio is 67:33 (1013 full-time, 506 part-time, 1519 students total).

## CONSIDERATION 3: DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

The Communication Department undergraduate program will be organized into two separate divisions, a formalization of the process begun during a previous program revision in the mid-1990s in which non-core courses were designated at the 3xx and 4xx levels. The Lower Division will include foundational courses at the 1xx and 2xx levels that are required of all potential majors. The Upper Division will house the four regular majors that meet graduation requirements, offering courses at the 3xx and 4xx levels specific to each major.

### LOWER DIVISION

The Department offers a Pre-Communication major (0701) to provide potential departmental students with advisement and registration assistance; however the pre-major is not required. Freshmen or transfer students with a minimum GPA of 2.0 may register into the Pre-Communication major with no additional limitations. Lower Division students must pass four departmental courses with a minimum grade of C:

(Potential 0703, 0707 and 0708 majors): SPC 100 Media Literacy

(Potential 0706 majors): SPC 100 Media Literacy or SPC 103 Intro to Human Communication

SPC 205 Intro to Oral Communication

COM 210 Intro to Media Writing

COM 215 Intro to Visual Communication

Lower Division students must pass ENG 101 with a minimum grade of C. They also must pass the departmental PLUS Test. Both of these requirements must be met before a student may take COM 210. Students who do not pass the test may retest twice, though they are advised to identify and deal with the problem before retaking the test. Alternatively, students may take COM 104 Writing Skills for Communication. This course does not be applied to major or to 120-credit graduation requirement. Note that students may not graduate if they are still in the Pre-Communication major.

### UPPER DIVISION

Students are admitted to the Upper Division of the Department into one of four majors. Three of these are professional majors: Public Relations & Advertising 0703, Media Production 0707, and Journalism 0708. One major is academic in nature: Communication Studies 0706. In order to declare a major in the Upper Division, a student must meet the following requirements:

- Minimum of 45 and maximum of 90 credit hours at the completion of the current semester
- Minimum overall GPA of 2.0
- Minimum GPA of 2.6 in SPC 205, COM 210 and COM 215 to declare a professional major, or a minimum GPA of 2.0 to declare the academic major (GPA's will be calculated for the relevant courses for transfer students)
- Successful completion of PLUS test by transfer students
- Evidence of an area of specialization outside the Communication Department

The Department will prepare an application form for students wishing to enter the Upper Division. This will include a brief Statement of Intent in which the student explains his/her interest in a particular field of study and discusses career and educational plans associated with it. It will require the signed endorsement of the student's Academic Adviser before submission to the Department office, along with the standard College "change of major" form.

Admission to an Upper Division major is a prerequisite for taking any 3xx or 4xx-level class.

## MINORS

The Department supports a minor in Speech, which will remain unchanged for the present in terms of academic requirements. The minor currently has only 2 students enrolled; we have no records of any student who has graduated with the minor in recent years. A departmental task force will be convened to consider both the academic content of the minor and its promotion. If, despite promotion of the minor, it continues to fail to attract adequate numbers of students, the Department will consider retiring the minor.

The Department also is involved in a number of interdisciplinary minors, including a Writing minor (jointly with the English Department), which currently has 6 Communication majors (2 in 0703, 3 in 0706, 1 in 0707). We also are involved in a pending Sports Management minor (jointly with the Health & Wellness Department).

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Following are graduation requirements that each undergraduate student must meet before being granted a degree for a Communication major:

General Requirements: Students must complete College requirements for graduation, including 120 credit hours (45 of these at the 3xx or 4xx level) and requirements for general education courses, foreign language proficiency, diversity, writing intensive and civilization courses. Students must achieve a minimum overall GPA of 2.0, regardless of the number of credit hours.

Major Requirement: Students must complete 42 credit hours in courses that satisfy their major, achieving a minimum major GPA of 2.0, with no course grades lower than C. Note that students must have a higher GPA of at least 2.6 within a professional major to register for COM 488 Internship; to maintain integrity of this requirement, students with a major GPA lower than 2.6 will not be allowed to receive academic credit for internship work, whether on campus or off, under the guise of COM 495 or 499. Of additional note, the academic major generally does not prepare students for an internship and thus does not require a GPA higher than the College requirement. No more than 40 credits may be in COM courses.

Specialization Requirement: Students must complete a minimum of 18 credit hours in courses fulfilling requirements for their area of specialization (second major, minor or approved concentration). No Communication degree will be given until this requirement is met.

## TIMELY PROGRESS TOWARD GRADUATION

Each major in the Communication Department is designed to be completed within eight semesters, with an average of five courses a semester. Satisfactory progress toward graduation is the student's responsibility.

Students who slow their scheduling pace – because of outside jobs, family responsibilities, illness, failure to satisfactorily complete courses for which they are registered, or any other reason – are likely to find that they require more than eight semesters to complete their graduation requirements. Completion of an Upper Division major generally requires four semesters after acceptance into the major, and students who declare a major after their fourth semester may likewise find that they require more time to complete their graduation requirements.

The Department acknowledges its responsibility to schedule courses in a way that facilitates students' timely completion of graduation requirements. However, it is the responsibility of each student to develop a semester schedule to make progress toward those requirements. Any student who – because of outside obligations or personal decisions – limits his/her own availability to take scheduled classes is likely to establish a slower pace toward graduation, a choice that obviously may result in the need for a longer time to complete degree requirements.

## GRADUATE DIVISION

The Communication Department will to include a graduate division. Currently the Department operates a graduate program in Public Relations Management within the framework of the Multidisciplinary degree program of the College. This program has two components:

- A 10-course Master of Science degree option with four required COM courses and six electives (including one additional COM course)
- A 4-course Graduate Certificate option with the same four required COM courses as the MS degree option

Both programs operate on the same course base, which requires faculty resources of one person a semester for the required courses. Since the program began, each course has been team taught by two faculty members (Marian Deutschman and Ron Smith) both receiving a half-course teaching load.

The program was begun in 1993 after both academic, professional and market research and with the involvement of the local chapter of the Public Relations Society of America, which sought out Buffalo State for graduate-level professional education. Operating on a two-year cycle of one required COM course per semester, the graduate program with both degree and certificate options has averaged 36 students a year.

Tentative discussions have been held toward expanding the program to a full master's degree. Likely, this would feature the current five courses, redesignation of up to three undergraduate courses (such as COM 407, COM 401 and COM 450) to have a 5xx equivalent taught without additional staffing resources, and incorporation of approximately three electives of courses offered by other departments.

Additionally, some interest has been expressed within the Department in offering a master's program in other areas in applied communication, perhaps incorporating some of the existing public relations base and redesignating/redesigning not only COM 401 and COM 450 but a selected few other departmental courses as well. Before any plans are made, research would have to be undertaken to determine the market usefulness and viability of such a program. Careful attention would have to be given to the graduate-level offerings of other colleges and universities in Western New York so that any program expansion by Buffalo State will not be redundant or weak.

Within the framework of its Strategic Plan, the Department presumes to continue its present offerings at the graduate level and commits itself to consider the possibilities of expanding those offerings. We are aware of the risk of stretching our resources too thin; consequently a particularly engaging idea is the twinning of 4xx and 5xx-level courses, allowing for greater use of personnel resources.

## CONSIDERATION 4: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Three professional majors focus on applied areas of communication, each with a total of 42 credits – 33 COM credits, plus 9 SPC credits. Requirements include four courses from the lower division: SPC 100, SPC 205, COM 210 and COM 215. (Note: Asterisk indicates prerequisites for COM 488 Internship)

### **Public Relations/Advertising 0703**

COM 301 Public Relations/Advertising\*  
 COM 307 Group Communication  
 or COM 407 Organizational Communication  
 COM 308 Public Relations Writing\*  
 COM 322 Communication Graphics  
 COM 401 Communication Research  
 COM 418 Campaigns in PR/Advertising  
 SPC 450 Communication and Society  
 Plus COM Electives (9 credits)

### Related 0703 Electives

COM 336 Web Publishing  
 COM 408 Public Relations Case Studies  
 COM 3xx Special Topics in PR/Adv  
 COM 4xx PR Practicum  
 COM 488 PR/Adv Internship

Advisement for PR Sequence: COM 408  
 Advisement for Adv Sequence: BUS 320, BUS 327, BUS 328

### **Digital Media Production 0707**

COM 304 Broadcast Copywriting\*  
 COM 317 Media Management  
 COM 327 Media Graphics  
 COM 328 Audio Production I\*  
 COM 329 Video Studio Production I\*  
 COM 400 Communication Law  
 COM 428 Audio Production II  
 or COM 429 Video Studio Production II  
 SPC 450 Communication and Society  
 Plus COM Electives (9 credits)

### Related 0707 Electives

COM 324 Technical Production  
 4xx Broadcast Practicum  
 4xx MultiTrack Audio Production  
 COM 3xx Special Topics in Broadcasting  
 COM 488 Production Internship

Audio Concentration: 328, 4xxMultiTrack, 428  
 Advisement for Video Sequence: 329, 429, 432  
 Advisement for Graphics Sequence: 327, 332, 336

### **Journalism 0708**

COM 302 Information Gathering\*  
 COM 303 Writing for News Publication\*  
 or COM 337 Broadcast News Writing\*  
 COM 319 News Editing  
 or COM 338 Broadcast Field Reporting  
 COM 325 Feature Writing  
 or COM 440 Electronic News Gathering  
 COM 400 Communication Law  
 COM 405 News Practicum  
 SPC 450 Communication and Society  
 Plus COM Electives (9 credits)

### Related 0707 Electives

COM 337 Great Journalistic Writing  
 COM 390 Special Topics in Broadcasting  
 COM 415 Computer-Assisted Reporting  
 COM 488 Journalism Internship

Advisement for Print/Online News Sequence: 303, 319, 325  
 Advisement for Broadcast News Sequence: 337, 338, 440

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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The academic major focuses on a liberal arts approach to communication; with a total of 42 credits in SPC and COM. Requirements include four courses from the lower division: SPC 100/103, SPC 205, COM 210 and COM 215.

## **Communication Studies 0706**

### Oral Communication (3 credits)

SPC 306 Public Speaking  
or SPC 307 Group Communication

### Written Communication Requirement (2 credits)

COM 303 Writing for Publication  
or COM 304 Broadcast Copywriting  
or COM 308 Public Relations Writing  
or COM 325 Feature Writing  
or COM 337 Broadcast Newswriting  
or COM 390 Special Topics in Journalistic Writing

### Visual Communication Requirement (3 credits)

COM 322 Communication Graphics  
or COM 329 Video Production I  
or COM 336 Web Publishing

### Theory & Criticism Requirement (6 credits)

SPC 309 Persuasion  
or SPC 321 Rhetorical Criticism  
or COM 327 Great Journalistic Writing  
or SPC 333 Minority Voices in the Media  
or COM 400 Communication Law  
or COM 401 Communication Theory  
or COM 407 Organizational communication  
or COM 410 Mass Communication History  
or COM 422 Mass Media Criticism

### Senior Requirement (3 credits)

SPC 450 Communication and Society

Plus COM Electives (9 credits)

## **Speech Minor**

### Required courses (9 credits)

SPC 103 Intro to Human Communication

SPC 205 Intro to Oral Communication

SPC 306 Public Speaking

### Elective courses (9 credits)

COM 307 Group Communication

or SPC 309 Persuasion

or SPC 321 Rhetorical Criticism

or SPC 401 Communication Theory

or COM 407 Organizational Communication

or SPC 422 Media Criticism

## **Interdisciplinary Major in Entertainment Television**

Talks currently are underway for an interdisciplinary minor in Entertainment Television (jointly among Communication, English and Performing Arts). The major would include foundational courses and sequences by advisement in two areas: dramatic television and performance television. This leaves public affairs television for news and events programming as the focus of the Communication Department's Media Production major.

## **RE-LABEL SPEECH/CRITICISM COURSES AS SPC:**

SPC 100 Media Literacy (revise for Intellectual Foundations "Social Sciences" requirement)

SPC 103 Intro to Human Communication (revise for IF "Humanities" requirement)

SPC 205 Intro to Oral Communication

SPC 306 Public Speaking

SPC 309 Persuasion

SPC 321 Rhetorical Criticism (revise for Intellectual Foundations "Humanities" requirement)

SPC 333 Minority Voices in the Media (revise for Intellectual Foundations "Humanities" requirement)

SPC 401 Communication Theory

SPC 422 Media Criticism

SPC 425 Media Criticism in Presidential Elections

## **RENAME/RENUMBER/REVISE/UPDATE COURSES**

All SPC and COM courses will be updated during a three-year cycle. All or most courses associated with a particular major will be revised at the same time. In particular, revision will reflect changes in course names, learning outcomes, infusion of written and oral communication standards, infusion of diversity and ethical components, and blending various courses to fulfill overall program goals and expectations.

## **DEVELOP NEW COURSES**

COM 1xx Writing Skills for Communication (1 credit)

## STRATEGIC PLAN

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COM 3xx Special Topics in Public Relations/Advertising (1-3 credits). Possible topics: Sports PR, Advertising Copywriting, Entertainment PR, Crisis Communication, Issues Management

COM 3xx Special Topics in Broadcasting (1-3 credits). Possible topics: Music Audio Production, Television Set Design (1 credit), Advanced Microphone (1 credit)

COM 3xx Special Topics in Visual Communication (1-3 credits). Possible topics: Digital Graphics for Print/Broadcast/Online Media (1 credit), Digital Photography for Print/Broadcast/Online Media 1-2 credits)

COM 3xx Public Relations/Advertising Practicum (1-2 credits)

COM 4xx Communication Research



# STRATEGIC PLAN

<b>Winthrop</b>	profcy B	2		12	2.0	C	25		min	
<b>East Tenn</b>		3		12						9 speech
<b>Mid Tenn</b>		3		12					min	
<b>Tennessee</b>			30	15	2.75					
<b>Tenn-Martin</b>		4								
<b>Baylor</b>		2				C			min	
<b>Tex Christian</b>	profcy	4				C			min	req ECO & Stats
<b>Texas Tech</b>	profcy				2.5	C			min	only 2 re-tests
<b>Texas</b>	profcy	3		12	2.25	C		250 wd		news/history test
<b>Utah</b>		4								488 once
<b>Norfolk State</b>	grad wrtg									technology exam
<b>Washington</b>		3	45		2.5			400 wd	3 crs	20 admits/quarter
<b>West Virginia</b>	profcy	3	45			C			min	
<b>Wis-EauClaire</b>		4			2.5	C	yes			exam first semester
<b>Wis-RiverFalls</b>		3								

## Appendix B

**ACEJMC ACCREDITATION STANDARD ON CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

*The unit provides a curriculum and instruction that enable students to learn the knowledge, competencies and values the Council defines for preparing students to work in a diverse global and domestic society.*

Professional Values and Competencies

*The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:*

- *understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of groups in a global society in relationship to communications;*
- *understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;*
- *demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;*
- *think critically, creatively and independently;*
- *conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;*
- *write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;*
- *critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;*
- *apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;*
- *apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.*

Indicators:

- a) *The unit requires that students take a minimum of 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of the unit.*
- b) *The unit provides a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses and professional skills courses to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.*
- c) *Instruction is demanding and current; achievements in teaching and learning are recognized and valued.*
- d) *Student-faculty classroom ratios facilitate effective teaching and learning in all courses; a student-teacher ratio of 15-1 in skills and laboratory sections is strongly recommended and the ratio in each section should not exceed 20-1.*
- e) *The unit advocates and encourages opportunities for internship and other professional experiences outside the classroom and supervises and evaluates them when it awards academic credit. Schools may award academic credit for internships in fields related to journalism and mass communications, but credit should not exceed one semester course (or its equivalent) if the internship is away from the institution and, for the most part, supervised by media professionals rather than academics. Students may take up to two semester courses (or their equivalent) at an appropriate professional organization where the unit can show ongoing and extensive dual supervision by the unit's faculty and professionals. Students may take up to three semester courses (or their equivalent) at a professional media outlet owned and operated by*

*the unit where full-time faculty are in charge and where the primary function of the media outlet is to instruct students.*

Evidence:

- *Student records and transcripts*
- *Unit bulletins and brochures*
- *Syllabi and other course materials*
- *Records of teaching awards and citations, curricular and course development grants, attendance at teaching workshops, and publications and papers on teaching*
- *Class rosters*
- *Records and statistics on and evaluations of internships, with and without academic credit*

## Appendix C

### **DIVERSITY**

Many courses within the Communication Department have components associated with issues of diversity, inclusiveness, global awareness, and related concepts.

#### Required Courses

SPC 100 Media Literacy: Media stereotypes, global communication

SPC 103 Intro to Human Communication: Black language and culture

COM 301 Public Relations/Advertising: Advertising for advertising markets such as African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, gay/lesbian

COM 308 Public Relations Writing:

COM 418 Campaigns in Public Relations and Advertising: Public relations & advertising clients have included AIDS Community Services, minority-owned businesses...

SPC 450 Communication and Society: Issues of representation and access, power dynamics, and cultural hegemony in cultural communication

#### Elective Courses

COM 310 International Communication:

COM 333 Minority Voices in the Media: Entire course explores representations of race, class, gender, age, ethnicity and religion

COM 390 Intercultural Communication: Entire course focuses on communication within and among various cultural, ethnic, racial and other demographic groups

## Appendix D

### **CURRENT FACULTY SPECIALTIES**

Bryski: Speech, criticism  
Deutschman: Public Relations, advertising, visual communication  
DeWald: Video  
Kaye: Writing & reporting, law  
Marren: Writing & reporting, new media  
McCray: Audio, broadcast management, speech, media literacy  
Nagelberg: Visual communication, video  
Niman: Visual communication, media literacy, criticism, writing and reporting  
Rabin: Speech  
Raffel: Writing & reporting, law  
Rera: Visual communication, Web, graphics, video  
Sanger: Speech, criticism  
Smith: Public relations, research, media literacy  
Whitaker: Writing & reporting, history, international, media literacy

### **CURRICULUM SPECIALTIES**

Applied Research: Deutschman, Smith, Whitaker  
Audio: McCray  
Broadcast News: Raffel, Whitaker  
Communication Law: Kaye, Raffel  
Criticism & Rhetoric: Bryski, Niman, Sanger  
Graphics: Deutschman, Rera  
History: Whitaker  
Print News: Kaye, Marren, Niman, Whitaker  
Public Relations: Deutschman, Smith  
Speech: Bryski, Rabin, Sanger  
Video: DeWald, Nagelberg, Rera  
Web & New Media: Marren, Rera

### **CORE COURSES**

COM 100: McCray, Niman, Smith, Whitaker  
COM 103: Rabin, Sanger  
COM 205: Bryski, McCray, Sanger  
COM 210: Kaye, Marren, Raffel, Smith, Whitaker  
COM 215: DeWald, Deutschman, Nagelberg, Niman, Rera  
COM 450: Netzhammer, Niman, Smith, Whitaker