

Final Assessment Report

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review
Communication Studies and Multimedia Undergraduate Programs

Date of Review: March 5 - 6, 2012

Review Team Members: Dr. Pierre Belanger, University of Ottawa
Dr. Sheila Petty, University of Regina
Dr. Catherine Graham, McMaster University

Summary:

The External Reviewers recognized the significance of the Communication Studies and Multimedia Studies programs within the Faculty of Humanities as dynamic and vital components of the University and of the community beyond the University. The report highlighted that the faculty are extremely committed to their programs and to the students. It also identified the Department's strengths in combining theory and practice. The Reviewers went on to say that they found a productive blend of both traditional assessment techniques along with some innovative and applied ones. The Reviewers were pleased to see the level of involvement of students in both the McMaster Journal of Communication and the Journal of Professional Communication. The report also noted that the admissions requirements seem to align with the learning outcomes of the programs.

The reviewers indicated several areas for improvement in the Communications Studies (CMST) and Multimedia programs. The Reviewers suggested that the Department needs to make a decision about how it is going to manage the relationship between analytical and training components of the curriculum and develop a plan to address these in a consistent manner across the curriculum of each undergraduate degree program. The Reviewers also suggested further cooperation in curriculum development between Multimedia and Communication Studies and a focus on branding of the two programs.

The Department was pleased by the Reviewers' acknowledgement that CMST has worked to provide students with a learning experience that provides a mix of theory and practice, underpinned by critical thinking and other transferrable skills. The Faculty of Humanities noted that the External Reviewers' Report found a great deal to commend about the undergraduate programs in Communication Studies and Multimedia. The programs are among the most popular in the Faculty.

The Quality Assurance Committee noted that while the external reviewers did not present any major concerns about each of the undergraduate programs that are currently housed in the Department of Communication Studies and Multimedia, they raised a number of issues on the relationship between the programs, on the department's organization and on its branding. As a result, the Committee is recommending that the Faculty of Humanities initiate a Department review, as outlined in the Procedures for University Reviews of Academic Departments. It is also recommending that an IQAP

review be conducted in four years to assess how the outcomes of the Departmental review are impacting the academic programs housed therein.

Recommendation	Implementation Plan
Create a strong strategic plan (vision) from a student experience perspective	This issue will be addressed at the Curricular Retreats as well as through the Curriculum Task Force
Increase faculty and staff complement	The Faculty will make it a priority to for a mid to senior level appointment in the unit The Faculty will look into a possible joint staff position (qualified lab assistant) with the School of the Arts (SOTA) to address both of their specialized technical needs
Develop a mission statement	The Department will discuss the development of a Mission Statement at the Curricular Retreat
Branding of programs	The Department will attend to this issue at the Curricular Retreat and through the crafting of a Mission Statement