

WORKING DOCUMENT

**Department of Communication  
Unit Plan  
2008-2009**

Focus of the **communication program** aligns with the University's mission to enhance the intellectual, social, cultural and economic qualities of urban life by focusing on the role of communication in sustaining the cultural vitality of the metropolitan region. Our curriculum, research and community partnership programs mirror this role.

**PRIORITY I  
Student Success**

<b>Goal</b>	<i>The Department of Communication will increase student success through active retention of current students and sustaining graduation rates.</i>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <u>Advising</u>. Objective is to increase retention and graduation rates by maintaining and creating new avenues of communication between faculty, staff and students of incoming and continuing students.</li> <li>b. <u>Achievement</u>. Objective is to increase retention and graduation rates by offering one-on-one assistance for students with class assignments, paper writing and test-taking.</li> <li>c. <u>Partnerships</u>. Objective is to increase retention and graduation rates by creating avenues for students to serve as interns with community agencies and businesses.</li> <li>d. <u>Assessment</u>. [See separate assessment planning document].</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy:</b> Advising	<u>Advising</u> . Strategies to meet the objectives above include the following strategies: (1) Assign .33 FTE advisor each academic term and .50 FTE during the summer for student advising;(2) Develop online advising FAQ sheet for students and record number of visitors to the page.
<b>Indicators</b>	(1) Track number of students seen by advisor, staff and students to assess contact hours using measurement tools developed by advisor; (2) Track number of visitors to website to assess contact via online tool; (3) Track effectiveness of current advising, information FAQs and web information via survey questionnaire; (4) Develop and initiate survey questionnaire for students to assess effectiveness of current advising, determine unmet student needs, and plan future activities to address student advising needs. Initiate Fall 2009.

<b>Strategy:</b> Achievement	<u>Achievement</u> . Strategies to address objective to increase retention and graduation rates by offering one-on-one assistance for students with class assignments, paper writing and test-taking include the following strategies: (1) Develop sustainable achievement program that pairs successful junior and senior “peer mentors” with students who need help succeeding in courses with class assignments, paper writing and test-taking; (2) Assign peer mentors office hours to meet with students who need assistance, and provide mentors course credit in exchange; (3) Develop online FAQs for paper writing, test-taking, plagiarism issues, etc., based on issues that arise with student interactions.
<b>Indicators</b>	Annual tracking of the number of students participating in the program; Develop evaluation questionnaire to track types of assistance offered and for whom; Assess unmet needs; Assess use of FAQs by students by Fall 2009.
<b>Strategy:</b> Partnerships	Develop curricular support for internship credits through community partners and establish program objectives for the department, students and community partners.
<b>Indicators</b>	Annual tracking of the number of students and number of businesses participating in the program; Evaluation of program director, students and businesses that measures whether and how objectives have been met and report back to faculty by Fall 2009.
<b>Strategy:</b> Assessment	<u>Assessment</u> . [See separate assessment planning document].
<p>PRIORITY II</p> <p><b><u>Expand Innovative Scholarship</u></b></p>	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>The Department of Communication will expand and encourage innovative scholarship among faculty.</i>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <u>Develop five-year plans</u>. Objective is to expand and encourage innovative scholarship by ensuring tenure and tenure-track faculty create five-year plans that describe and set goals for their research programs.</li> <li>b. <u>Apply for external funding</u>. Objective is to expand and encourage innovative scholarship among tenure and tenure-track faculty through external grant applications.</li> <li>c. <u>New hires</u>. (1) Objective is to expand and encourage innovative scholarship by hiring 2 new tenure-track faculty fall 2009 who have promise in innovative and grant-funded scholarship related to mission of the communication program and sustainability; (2) Objective is to apply for University Studies-funded position for a tenure-track faculty mem-</li> </ul>

	<p>ber with research interests in innovative scholarship related to sustainability;(3) Objective is to apply for tenure-track position for a faculty member whose research program centers on sustainability and communication through the PSU sustainability initiative.</p> <p>d. <u>Engage students in research.</u> Faculty will actively engage undergraduate and graduate students in their research.</p> <p>e. <u>Identify linkages with sustainability.</u> Objective is to continue discussions among faculty of linkages with research and curriculum relevant to the University's mission of sustainability. Objective is to identify programmatic and research opportunities in communication of sustainability.</p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> Five-year plan</p>	<p><u>Develop five-year plans.</u> Outcomes to meet the objectives above include the following strategies: (1) Tenured and tenure-track faculty create and/or refine 5-year plan directed at advancing innovative scholarship and create timeline for external funding; (2) Create annual progress report outlining activities that address 5-year plan; (3) Update vitae and profile information for files and web; (4) Distribute plans among tenure and tenure-track faculty and discuss; (5) Assign graduate students to assist with grant development and research.</p>
<p><b>Indicators</b></p>	<p><i>Indicators</i> that strategies are met include: 5-year plans and funding timelines are completed and on file by September 15 each year; annual progress report on file by September 15; hire student to assist faculty in updating profile information for files and web beginning winter 2009; distribute plan briefs among tenure and tenure-track faculty and discuss in Spring 2009; assign 2 graduate students in 2008-2009 to assist with grant development and research.</p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> External funding</p>	<p><u>Apply for external funding.</u> All tenured and tenure-track faculty submit at least 1 externally funded grant during their 5-year program plan.</p>
<p><b>Indicators</b></p>	<p>Indicators that strategies are met include one major grant application for each tenured and tenure-track faculty member during the 5-year cycle.</p>
<p><b>Strategy:</b> New hires</p>	<p><u>New hires.</u> Outcomes to address objectives include the following strategies: (1) Hire 2 new tenure-track faculty fall 2009 who have promise in innovative and grant-funded scholarship; (2) Apply for University Studies-funded position for a tenure-track faculty member with research interests in innovative scholarship in 2009-2010; (3) Apply for tenure-track position for a faculty member through the PSU sustainability initiative in 2009-2010.</p>
<p><b>Indicators</b></p>	<p><i>Indicators</i> that strategies are met that expand and encourage innovative scholarship among faculty include: hiring faculty</p>

	members above and applying for positions above; ensuring that new hires are committed to innovative scholarship and external grant-funding by creating 5-year research program plan that will include publication of 1-2 peer-reviewed articles annually and by applying for external funding during the first 5 years.
<b>Strategy:</b> Student Research	<u>Engage students in research.</u> Faculty will actively engage undergraduate and graduate students in their research.
<b>Indicators</b>	<i>Indicators</i> that strategies are met will be included in annual reports by faculty of student engagement such as: (1) Co-authored manuscripts of conference papers presented where faculty member served as co-author or mentor; (2) Posters presented by students as a result of partnerships; (3) Presentations or public forums resulting from partnerships; (4) Other forms of collaboration. <i>Indicators</i> that graduate students are engaged in faculty research will include the indicators above in addition to graduate theses completed that reflect faculty research.
<p>PRIORITY III  <b><u>Enhance Educational Opportunity</u></b></p>	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>The Department of Communication will increase opportunities to diversify the student profile over the next 5 years.</i>
<b>Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <u>Assess demographics.</u> Examine the demographic profile of current students</li> <li>b. <u>Ascertain barriers.</u> Discover barriers to success among students, particularly underrepresented students, and develop methods to reduce barriers.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy:</b> Assess Demographics & Barriers	Assess demographics via current statistical data of students to determine student profile by gathering data from OIRP and department-wide survey method; Ascertain barriers to success by asking students to describe barriers.
<b>Indicators</b>	Create report of student profile and perceived barriers through OIRP data and from qualitative and quantitative instruments that measure demographics and barriers to be executed by Spring 2009.
<p>PRIORITY IV  INCREASE GRADUATE PROGRAM RIGOR  <b><u>Graduate Curriculum &amp; Research</u></b></p>	
<b>Goals</b>	<i>The Department of Communication will strengthen the linkage between the graduate curriculum and faculty research programs, and strengthen linkage between graduate and undergraduate programs.</i>

<b>Initiatives</b>	<p>a. <u>Revamp graduate curriculum</u>. Assess current program based on external and internal assessments and create better linkages between curriculum with research focus and to sustain enrollments in 2008-2009.</p> <p>b. <u>Assess and strengthen linkages</u> between graduate and undergraduate programs.</p>
<b>Strategy:</b> <u>Revamp graduate curriculum</u>	<u>Revamp graduate curriculum</u> . Strategies: (1) Increase total credits from 45 to 50; eliminate coursework option; (2) Reconsider thesis-only option; link student interests with faculty interests; (3) Add courses that link with faculty members' research programs; (4) Change from low-enrollment seminar courses to 400-500 level courses to draw more students; (5) Increase course requirements within the department to avoid losing student credit hours; (6) Offer core requirements during evening slots to fit student needs; (7) Increase advising role of faculty to enrich student experience; (8) Recruit high calibre students; highlight research elements of the program; (9) Schedule 2-year sequence of courses.
<b>Indicators</b>	Curricular changes approved by PSU bodies by 2009; Faculty reconsider thesis-only option in 2009; SCH met in all graduate-level courses by Fall 2009; Student calibre reflected in quality of completed theses and projects assessed in Spring 2010; 2-year sequence of courses with evening offerings of core courses by Fall 2009
<b>Strategy:</b> <u>Link graduate with undergraduate curriculum</u>	<u>Graduate and undergraduate linkages</u> . Strategies: Design and revamp undergraduate courses based on graduate core courses that combine the discipline's traditions and innovative department scholarship and initiate new and revised core undergraduate courses in 2009-2010 and new and revised electives in 2010-2011.
<b>Indicators</b>	Re-design of undergraduate core courses based on graduate core courses offered in 2009-2010; new and revised electives offered in 2010-2011.
<p>PRIORITY V INCREASE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM RIGOR <b><u>Undergraduate Curriculum</u></b></p>	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>The Department of Communication will revamp and invigorate the undergraduate curriculum.</i>
<b>Strategies</b> <u>Revamp curriculum</u>	Create and revise core courses in theory and methods that link undergraduate program with the discipline's traditions and innovative department scholarship and increase program rigor.

<b>Indicators</b>	Initiate new and redesigned core courses in 2009-2010; Initiate new and redesigned elective courses in 2010-2011.
<b>Strategies</b> <u>Assess curriculum</u>	Evaluate the following program areas: public speaking courses; role of graduate teaching and research assistants; internship and peer mentor programs; role of 100-level introductory courses; role of 200 and 300-level core courses; role of 400-level courses; role of 200, 300 and 400 elective courses
<b>Indicators</b>	<i>Indicators</i> that changes have successfully increased program rigor include evaluation of student learning will be addressed in the separate assessment document.
<p>PRIORITY VI INCREASE EXTERNAL FUNDING <b><u>Alumni &amp; Development Program</u></b></p>	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Launch initiatives to build alumni relations and community partnerships to increase external funding.</i>
<b>Objectives</b> <u>Build relationships</u>	<p>a. <u>Build relationships with alumni.</u> Create alumni connections in order to build relationships and encourage donations.</p> <p>b. <u>Build community partnerships.</u> Create community connections with the department to in order to build relationships and encourage donations.</p>
<b>Strategies</b>	Hire part-time student worker to create web-based communication forums to publicize accomplishments and activities of alumni and business partners; Establish scholarship programs to engender alumni and business support; Discover ways in which alumni and other partners seek involvement.
<b>Indicators</b>	Success will be measured by increased communication from alumni and partners and increased donations to foundation funds.
<p>PRIORITY VII INCREASE DEPARTMENT SUSTAINABILITY <b><u>Department Sustainability</u></b></p>	
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Launch initiatives to enhance sustainability efforts in the daily working operation of the Department of Communication.</i>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>a. <u>Increase department office sustainability.</u> Work with staff, faculty and students to identify creative ways to reduce waste and increase sustainable <i>office</i> practices.</p> <p>b. <u>Increase classroom sustainability.</u> Work with staff, faculty and students to identify creative ways to reduce waste and increase sustainable <i>classroom</i> practices.</p>
<b>Strategies</b>	To increase department office sustainability we will develop an

	office plan in 2009 that outlines strategies to reduce waste and increase sustainable office practices. To increase classroom sustainability we will (1) Develop measureable plans to reduce waste and increase sustainable office practices; (2) Increase faculty online class participation by 95% by Fall 2009; (3) Execute online class evaluations by 95% by Fall 2009.
<b>Indicators</b>	Indicators will include meeting plans to reduce waste and increase sustainable office practices. Assess faculty participation in online classroom support and online class evaluations by Fall 2009.