

Communications

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:

Senate in February 2023

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in January 2023

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

APPC Chair: James Mandigo

APPC Assistant: Melinda Saretzky

TO: Gerry Palmer, Vice Chair, Senate

FROM: James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

CC: Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts
Claire Carolan, Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance

DATE: January 26, 2023

RE: Communications Program Review

The Communications Program within the College of Arts, Faculty of Humanities underwent a program review in 2021-22. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its January 25, 2023 meeting and recommend to Senate for approval.

The external reviewers touched on several items, many of which the department had also noted during the review process. The department supports the action plan and will be working on a workplan in the near future. A potential cross-faculty leadership program with the School of Business was recognized as a good opportunity.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

THAT Senate accept the Dean's Summary Report of the Communication Program Review as presented.

Attachments:

- Memo to APPC
- Dean's Summary Report

Remainder of the documents located:

- UFV Drive: H:\UFVinfo\APPC
- Blackboard: COM-APPC (Senate Committee – APPC)

Dean's Summary Report, Communications Program Review, Department of Communications

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean of Arts, January 11, 2023

Introduction

Program review for the Communication program occurred in 2021-2022, in accordance with Policy 189, and culminated with a site visit on May 27 and 28. The External Review Report (ERR) was received on June 30 and an initial response was provided by the department in late September 2022.

The Program Review was informed by the Dean's scope letter and a self-study conducted by a departmental committee comprised of the Department Head, four faculty members, and the department assistant. The self-study drew on data provided by Institutional Research and from surveys conducted with students. The External Review Committee (ERC) met with several stakeholders during the site visit, including Communications permanent faculty and sessional instructors, the department assistant, the Dean and Associate Deans, the Vice-Provost, Academic, the Senior Advisor to Indigenous Affairs, an Academic advisor, representatives from the Institutional Research and Planning office, the AVP, Research, Engagement and Graduate Studies, a Teaching and Learning Specialist, and the Liaison librarian responsible for the program.

The programs under review were the Communications minor and the Professional Communications associate certificate. As identified in the scope letter, the interface of existing courses and programs with the recently approved Communications major and the proposed Journalism minor was also assessed.

The programs are administered by the Communications department within the Faculty of Humanities in the College of Arts. The Department's faculty complement is comprised of 13 FTE and approximately 15 sessional and LTA instructors.

The Department and the Dean wish to express their sincere gratitude to the external reviewers for their time, energy, and thoughtfulness. The reviewers commended the department for "a strong history of success to date and a bright future ahead." They made a number of recommendations that will guide the department as it consolidates its recently approved major and engages in further program development.

Each External Review recommendation is summarized below, followed by the Department and the Dean's responses. A compiled list of action items derived from the responses is included at the end.

Section 1. Overall Assessment with Key Recommendations

No recommendation

Section 2. Structure, Admission and Enrolment

While recognizing the value of smaller class sizes in communication and writing intensive courses, the external reviewers expressed concerns that the class size and fill rates "are not sustainable enrolments to balance the cost of delivery and providing revenue for funding of other needs or requests within the

department.” (ERR, p. 3) Lower than 100% fill rate at the lower level and smaller class size at the upper level were noted. Review of prerequisites is recommended as part of increasing numbers at the upper-level.

ERR recommended:

1. Further data analysis to better understand the cause of attrition and analyze the possibility of larger class sizes in the lower-level courses to help mitigate attrition in the higher-level courses. In addition, consider fewer prerequisites in the lower-level courses, thereby inviting other students to consider CMNS courses.

Department’s response: The department has been carefully mapping course offerings at both lower and upper levels against student demand. Traditionally high enrolment numbers at the lower-level help support running sometimes under-enrolled upper-level courses that students might need to fulfill their program requirements. The option to offer our programs to students from multiple programs is a valuable suggestion and the department has been exploring this option. The department curriculum committee carefully designs and periodically reviews all prerequisites. We are aware of the limitations that prerequisites can pose, and it is always a matter of the right balance between making the course available to as many students as possible and making sure students have what they need to successfully pass the course. Adjustment to class sizes are per the Collective Agreement.

Dean’s response: The course plan created as part of the budget development process identifies utilization targets of 92-95% for most CMNS lower-level courses. Enrolment is monitored to ensure these targets are met. Class sizes are governed by the Collective Agreement.

No action

2. For the department to have a more active role through a department faculty advisor position to assist the advising teams, which are under resourced. This will provide an opportunity to engage with the students on a deeper pedagogical level, thereby tailoring the students learning path more specifically.

Department’s response: The department is in the process of developing a student advising strategy that would involve the advising team and the faculty. Several approaches are under consideration, including:

- a) A dedicated faculty advisor to serve as a contact person for students to answer program- and course-specific questions, along with being a contact person for the advising office.
- b) A dedicated coordinator/liaison in the advising office to be a resource person to address student questions and concerns in a timely manner, to educate advisors on CMNS program requirements, and to communicate student requests and needs to the department.

- c) Create an info-centre website or Blackboard shell to provide easy-to-navigate program information for both students and advising. The types of information may include visual program mapping, course offerings for upcoming semesters, faculty expertise, possible specialization paths, etc.
- d) Targeted promotion of Communications major and minor in lower-level CMNS service courses along with the targeted promotional outreach to students nearing declaration eligibility.

Dean's response: Agree with benefit of exploring improved advising strategies in discussion with the Director of Advising and as part of SEM Planning currently underway. This will be especially important for the new major.

Action: Department to explore improved advising strategies as noted above.

3. More collaboration across the institution with other departments may indeed help with increasing enrolment, e.g., the School of Business having very little room for electives beyond the courses in the CMNS department that are already included in their credentials, more interdisciplinary courses might be of interest to both departments.

Department's response: As applied communication in the workplace is expanding beyond its traditional boundaries, more programs start to recognize the increased need for communications skills. The department is coordinating with other programs in planning and offering both upper- and lower-level courses. We are in the process of exploring interdisciplinary collaborations:

- Leadership program with the Business program
- Intercultural Essentials associate certificate with SCMS
- Science Communication minor with the Faculty of Science

Dean's response: In support of these inter-disciplinary initiatives.

Action: see 4 and 5 below

4. Increased collaboration with Journalism and Media and Communications Studies (MACS) could also result in higher enrolment, which in turn will provide the department more leverage and funding opportunities.

Department's response: MACS courses are included in the recently launched Major as requirements or elective options. The department is developing a Journalism minor that will leverage the existing JRNL courses and provide laddering opportunities for students.

Dean's response: Agrees that CMNS and MACS have been working collaboratively to maximize enrolment and provide laddering opportunities for students.

Action:

Department to continue working collaboratively on programs currently in development and approval process, specifically: Journalism minor; post-baccalaureate diploma in Digital Communication and Promotion; Science Communication minor; and Intercultural Essentials associate certificate. The department is also continuing conversations with GD and SOCA on visual competencies courses/programs.

5. Further exploration into opportunities for micro-credentials, post baccalaureate programming, and more international student recruitment.

Department's response: We have successfully experimented with micro-credentials and offered several courses based on our existing courses. The experience was positive with a high degree of student and faculty satisfaction.

We are in the process of housing one post-baccalaureate diploma in Digital Communication and Promotion, developed together with Graphic Design. We hope to learn from the experience and possibly use it as a model to address potential student and/or external demands for specific communications-related programs. As some of the potential options, we are surveying BA students' needs for visual communication competencies and the demand for a post-baccalaureate program in Public Relations.

Dean's response: The Department has been proactive in acting on, and further exploring, opportunities for micro-credentials and post-baccalaureate programming.

Action:

Department to explore student demand and faculty interest in developing a post-baccalaureate diploma in Public Relations.

Once institutional policies and procedures on micro-credentials are clarified, department will explore possibilities for micro-credentials and modularized delivery of courses.

Section 3. Curriculum/Standards of Educational Practices

Reviewers commended the department for their collaborative and team orientation that supports the general work of curriculum, and their shared and consistent knowledge of the curriculum, leading to changes and updates that are easily completed and standardization across courses. They noted that the practical nature of the curriculum is a strength in the courses/program. They queried whether this applied orientation is still at the core of the department's identity given the university's push to recruit for PhD hires and greater emphasis on theory-based education. They stressed the importance of leadership learning and the need to thread and/or revisit these applied skills along the program pathways.

They recommended:

1. Increased use of special topics shells to incubate new ideas without expanding range of electives in necessary rotation too quickly.

Department's response: There is a procedure in place for special topics. We approach them in a very limited and targeted way. If a faculty member or a departmental committee expresses interest in offering a special topic based on their assessment of the student and program needs, the department votes on whether to run the course. We learn from the experience and if students, advisors, and the faculty agree on the success of the course after several runs, the course can be regularized.

Dean's response: Agree that the departmental practice is sound.

No action

2. That the department maintain the legacy of a strong applied communication program with a narrow, but deep focus (multiple scaffolded courses in each area) as a starting point in such conversations and a stronger understanding of the capacity and student demand within the Major may be a good starting point before developing further credentials.

Department's response: Due to the recent, strategic hires, the composition of the department includes experts in different areas of communication teaching and practices. We agree with the notion to use such buckets of expertise so they can contribute more structurally to the department's existing and potential programs. Development of the Journalism Minor was one such step. A similar approach will be taken in other potential program areas, which can take different forms, such as specializations within the major or standalone programs, depending on the current needs of the market, student demand, and the alignment of such plans with the institution's strategic goals and preferences.

At this point, we are developing a Journalism minor, but planning additional concentration areas/programs is premature as we first need to see how the CMNS major evolves in terms of student interest and enrollment.

Dean's response: Agree with the department's approach to letting the major mature before initiating further program development beyond initiatives listed in 4 and 5 above.

No action

3. Align with the roots of applied communication and the new direction of theory and avoid one over the other. The combination holds great potential for growth once consensus on direction for a sustainable growth plan has been done.

Department's response: Such consensus is in place. The applied communication focus has always been and will remain the primary direction of the department. As a teaching institution, UFV values practical skills training and preparing students for their careers. Theoretical components are embedded into course structures and learning objectives; therefore, the two complement each other, as indicated in several program learning outcomes. This principle applies to most of our courses both in lower- and upper-level categories. The lower-level introductory courses teach practical communication skills and link those to the larger framework of our understanding of effective communication as described in communication research from both psychological and physiological perspectives. Upper-level courses, while having more

emphasis on the theory, nevertheless remain applied communications courses at their core and implementation.

Dean's response: Agree

No action

4. Increased work on identifying the strategic vision and goals of the program in the context of the tensions between applied communication and more theoretical areas of the disciplines, while considering both questions of upper-level capacity. The recent hiring of many new faculty, with broad and diverse expertise, has meant an amazing resource that needs a clear strategic direction.

Department's response: The reviewers' observation of the department's changing composition is thoughtful and correct. However, as mentioned in the previous comment, the department has a consensus on the understanding of collective identity. Recently hired faculty, coming with advanced degrees, ability, and passion to do quality research add valuable enhanced theoretical perspectives to our vision, but they also come recognizing the nature of the program as an applied communications program, serving primarily local communities.

Although there is a general agreement, we recognize the need to articulate the department's revised identity more clearly and formally. We are in the process of finalizing department's vision and mission statements, which are the products of a collective effort and will be posted on the department website in the coming months.

Dean's response: Commend the department for articulating their vision and mission statements, with attention to balance between applied and theoretical elements.

Action: Department to finalize vision and mission statements, with attention to balance between applied and theoretical elements, and post these to their website.

5. In the context of the need for strategic planning, careful attention to upper-level retention challenges, recommend ensuring all faculty understand and work within the enrollment patterns and graduate outcomes for the programs to drive annual work loading, curriculum development and any revisiting of PLOs.

Department's response: Enrolment planning is centralized, and the department works based on the course plan approved as part of the budget process. This includes upper-level offerings. The established workload selection procedures in the department asks faculty to express their interest in teaching specific courses from the list of offerings for the academic year. Department administration ensures fairness of the process and maximum possible accommodation for faculty's preferences, while ensuring the program and student enrolment needs are met.

Faculty is regularly informed about the current and projected enrolment and course offering decisions made according to the ongoing and projected situations. Discussion involving both faculty and administration, emphasizes, among other points, the need to align any changes with the department's strategic goals and program learning outcomes.

Dean's response: The process for enrolment planning and department allocation of work used to date is accurately described above.

No action

6. Increase emphasis on leader/leadership communication skills/learning for students to be able to navigate the working world with confidence and be able to lead through their communication, no matter the context or position within their workplaces. Leadership skills could exquisitely be incorporated into course lesson plan activities, case/scenarios, and practice-oriented courses. As leaders, graduates will be engaging in many elements of sustainability, environmental, Indigenous, equity, diversity, and inclusion advocacy and allyship endeavors. Leadership skills will be an asset.

Department's response: Although not specifically labeled as such, leadership elements are threaded through several upper-level courses offered in the Communications Department. Some examples are CMNS 345: Instructional Skills for the Workplace, CMNS 445: Facilitating Skills for the Workplace and CMNS 430: Communication for Project Management. In each course, leadership elements focus on specific areas such as effectively communicating messages to team members, recognizing, and adapting to internal and external actors, and communicating in responsible, culturally aware, and ethical ways. A specific Communication for Leadership course is under development.

In addition to our own courses, the department is exploring the possibilities to combine efforts with other programs such as Business and Integrated studies to develop a program in leadership that would combine their focus on organizational elements with our emphasis on leadership communication.

Dean's response: Agree with the usefulness of more explicit emphasis on leadership through explicit learning outcomes in the courses cited above, and discrete course and credential.

Action: Department to make explicit where leadership is a learning outcome in existing courses, complete development of Communication for Leadership course, and initiate consultations with Business on a joint leadership-oriented program.

7. As part of strategic planning for curriculum and program design, analysis of the relationship with the Media Studies program (currently administered by SCMS) and GD. Discussion with students and advising indicated frequent interest among students for learning plans that combine MACS and CMNS credentials or courses. This combination could be a part of the process in defining a strategic path, reflecting the student interest in both areas and be considered an opportunity.

Department's response: Several courses from both Media and Communication Studies and Graphic Design are elective options in Communication Minor and Major.

The department is working with MACS on coordinating our efforts in journalism education. MACS is currently offering an Introduction to Journalism associate certificate (initiated by and formerly housed in CMNS), and CMNS is developing a minor in freelance-digital journalism. Consultations have taken place to ensure that students can ladder from the certificate to the minor with minimal adjustments. We are at a point of agreement about the changes necessary

in both programs and proper curriculum/program adjustments are in the process of development for institutional approval.

Our coordination with Graphic Design primarily concerns our approaches to visual communication. As the two departments offer courses addressing different aspects of visual communication theory and practice, such coordination aims to ensure that students have a clear understanding of how they can benefit differently from each course.

As indicated above, students can currently pursue a CMNS minor within the BFA, along with a Graphic Design major. They can also combine a MACS minor or extended minor with the CMNS major in the BA starting this fall.

Dean's response: Collaboration with other departments is taking place, as discussed in Section 2, paragraph 4 above.

No action

Section 4. Delivery, Assessment, and Student Success

Reviewers commented on students' positive feedback about their experience with the department, faculty, and the university's support for students to achieve their educational goals, and flexibility in modes of delivery. Students shared thoughts on curriculum content which informed the recommendations below.

1. Negotiation skills to be incorporated into the communication courses. The reviewers are cognizant this is a business school focus; however, negotiation skill is important for any graduate in the working world and may be an interesting addition to the communication curriculum.

Department's response: We agree with the reviewers' assessment of the importance of negotiation skills and incorporating them into our courses. We are taking it one step further and planning for a separate course, specializing in communication-oriented negotiation skills, within the next two years. The department's curriculum committee is examining similar courses at comparable institutions. Unlike the business programs' typical approaches, our planned negotiation course will focus on relationship building across various settings, stakeholder and change management, and understanding and use of non-verbal language cues.

Dean's response: This relates to Section 3, recommendation 6, to a new course currently under review in the Peace and Conflict Studies program.

Action: Department to explore development of a course in communication-oriented negotiation skills in the next two years, taking into account relationship with course/program on leadership skills and related initiative in PACS.

2. Neurodiversity and ability communication skills (further details under Section 6 under Social Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion).

Department's response: We are on board with the reviewers' comment on social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, with more attention being paid to neurodiversity as it directly affects one's communication, particularly as our classes are becoming more diverse. We will continue working with the Centre for Accessibility Services as well as encouraging faculty members to partake in professional development workshops on the topic. Internally, the department has planned a series of professional development sessions on EDI for both permanent and contract faculty in the next two academic years.

Dean's response: In support of this work.

Action: Continue working with the Centre for Accessibility Services as well as encouraging faculty members to partake in professional development workshops on accessibility for neurodiverse students in Communications courses.

3. Specific courses and more inclusion of Indigenous learning related to Indigenous communities and communication.

Department's response: We find this recommendation somewhat contradictory to a half-page discussion in section 6 where the reviewers acknowledged and applauded our program's strength in responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (TRCTA). Our strengths in Indigenizing the curriculum, according to the reviewers, were shown in (1) active professional development on the topic among all members; (2) incorporating Indigenous learning in our classes; (3) working with an Indigenous course designer; (4) increasing Indigenous relations with local nations; (5) offering Indigenous content in several courses; and (6) increasing learning exposure of Indigenous culture and social justice challenges among members and between faculty and students.

As a collective, we are committed to continuing to make Indigenization one of our priorities, both in our curriculum development and everyday interaction and engagement as we believe this to be an ongoing process rather than a concrete outcome. As shared with the reviewers during their visit, we are developing an Indigenous Communication course. We also have a preliminary agreement within the department that the next permanent hire will be in the area of Indigenous communication, preferably an Indigenous scholar.

Dean's response: Department to continue in their ongoing process of Indigenization. They have designated a tenure-track vacancy for the exclusive hire of an Indigenous scholar specializing in Indigenous communication.

Action: Department to develop an Indigenous Communication course and hire a tenure-track Indigenous scholar specialist in Indigenous communication.

Section 5. Faculty, Faculty Development, and Utilization of Resources

Reviewers noted the importance of ensuring integration of sessional instructors in the department to retain experienced instructors and communications practitioners who might not have the terminal

degree required for success in a tenure-track competition. Depletion of the pool of sessionals would be detrimental to the delivery of the lower-level writing courses in particular. Undue emphasis given to hiring PhDs with research expectations might deter from the applied nature of the program.

1. Engage in formal strategic planning to explore where the department wants to go in the next five years.

Department's response: The department has developed a 5-year strategic plan, which currently serves as a general framework for the annual planning, projects, and activities.

Dean's response: I commend the Department on engaging in this strategic planning work.

No action

2. Formally discuss what the department's identity should be to continue the collegial culture for years to come. Without an identity and the resulting shared vision for the department, fracturing of the strong sense of connectedness may appear.

Department's response: As mentioned in section 3 of this response, the faculty has a consensus understanding of the department's identity. Along with benefiting from the expertise of recently hired permanent faculty, we remain focused on teaching applied communication skills.

Revisions and additions to theoretical contexts offered by new faculty complement amplify our ability to serve our student in different areas of applied communications, including expanding our capacity in areas such as public relations, social media communication, and journalism.

Dean's response: No further comment

No action

3. Revisit with leadership of the university where supports for a transition to research intensive and tenure track post-secondary structure can be more supported, either through release percentages for faculty or hiring contract faculty with the same minimum qualifications, to support their transition to permanency in the future, to avoid the limbo currently experienced by sessional contractors. Sessional contractors will be necessary, especially if a shift in workload for research faculty comes to fruition. Contractors will be the faculty who teach the sections tenure track faculty have been released from.

Department's response: See 4 below

4. Address the potential mismatch of faculty ability and career expectation with the teaching positions and research expectations of faculty.

Department's response to 3 & 4: As it was fairly assessed in the review, the department has recently had an influx of new permanent faculty members with interests and passion in research. New faculty accepted the jobs understanding that UFV is a teaching-intensive institution, and they were offered positions based on, primarily, their ability to teach applied

communications courses. However, the department also approached hiring strategically, addressing the need to cover specific areas of communication theory to complement and strengthen our programs. Therefore, supporting faculty's desire to dedicate part of their time to research practices should be one of the priorities at both departmental and institutional levels. It is also a requirement for tenure. We will continue working with the higher management to find solutions for this emerging issue.

We recognize the expressed concern about the lack of regularization for contract faculty as a prominent and urgent matter to address. Although making such changes is outside the purview of the department, we have continuously expressed our support for the efforts of the Faculty and Staff Association to revise the Collective Agreement to include provisions about a clear and transparent path to regularization. We will continue to support such initiatives.

Dean's response: Beyond the purview of the program review process.

No action

5. Consider other creative ways to support faculty researchers working full-time teaching loads when fiscal constraints prevent any substantial release for all faculty.

Department's response: One of the creative solutions is the department's ongoing work on establishing a departmental research fund to be funded by both external partners and the institution. The external fundraising would take the form of mutually beneficial relationships with industry professionals and organizations, where they can use the expertise of the faculty in finding solutions for workplace problems in exchange for contributions to the departmental research fund. The project would also involve student participation in a potential model of collaborative student-faculty agency. The details of the funding and resource distribution are yet to be determined.

Dean's response: This is being explored and any such arrangement would follow university-approved frameworks for contracted services.

No action

6. Consider a resource plan that spans multiple departments, including Media Studies and GD to maximize resources, such as camera purchases etc.

Department's response: The department has its own, limited equipment assets such as DSLR cameras to use in technology classes. In cases where internal resources are not sufficient and awaiting the launch of the CMNS-MEDA PC lab, we are coordinating our planning of the courses that require specific equipment, software, or lab access with other programs with similar needs to ensure proper access can be provided across the board.

Dean's response: The dean is assisting with coordinated use and maintenance of small equipment, keeping in mind new centralized funding mechanism for such equipment.

Action: Department to continue conversations with SOCA, GDD, and the Dean's office on sustainable use/maintenance of small equipment.

Section 6. Contribution to University's Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Goals: Strategic Plan/ Indigenization/ EDI Action Plan/ Internationalization Goals

1. Recommend Social Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (SEDI) become more explicit in the curriculum. Evidence it is addressed in several courses, but less emphasized.

Department's response: See 2 below

2. Courses specifically addressing SEDI issues. For example, the student suggestion of a course in neuro-diversity and ability. The reviewers suggest incorporating this into courses within the curriculum and then assessing the need for a course that is specifically related to this area of communication and offer varied inclusive perspectives in the curriculum.

Department's response to 1 & 2: As mentioned in the previous section, the department is planning a series of PD sessions for faculty and a standalone course on SEDI principles in communication practices. In particular, these and other initiatives will focus on the following topics.

- Educating faculty to make SEDI explicit in their course and instructional design
- Inviting RAN to offer a departmental workshop on pedagogical strategies
- Inviting TLC to offer a departmental workshop on universal design
- Identifying faculty with expertise in relevant areas both in the department and across the institution
- Gathering a database of sample course outlines, syllabi, assignments
- Gathering research resource file for faculty: Readings, conference papers
- Aiming for all faculty to include SEDI explicitly in all their courses beginning Winter 2023
- Inspiring a culture of SEDI
- Aiming for all faculty to include some aspects of neurodiversity explicitly in all their courses
- Use data from student surveys and other sources from Institutional Research to identify opportunities for additional SEDI focused courses

Dean's response: I commend the department for taking this recommendation to heart and pursuing professional development activities, as well as research, on rigorous integration of Social Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion practices, and universal design, in their pedagogy and course offerings.

Action: Plan and deliver PD training on incorporation of SEDI and universal design in pedagogy and course development.

Section 7. External Connections/Potential Community Links

Reviewers note the departmental commitment to work-integrated learning and their efforts to increase the number of applied research projects, practical industry experiences, and possibly COOP opportunities for Communications students. The department is working on creating a stable channel of communication with local employers, including through the development of an External Advisory committee and a database of industry contacts.

1. Continue to integrate practical/reality setting learning opportunities through course project work and build the planned database of contacts.

Department's response: Our faculty will continue to include and develop practical/reality setting learning in a variety of CMNS classes through community-based projects with existing and new community contacts. The department is investigating ways Communications can partner with Centre for Experiential and Career Education (CECE) to develop more practical learning opportunities for our students. The department is also working with the College of Arts External Liaison Coordinator to identify placement opportunities for students. Especially at the upper level, CMNS faculty often work with community partners to create realistic projects that engage students. Case studies and workshop scenarios are developed that require students to apply theoretical frameworks discussed in these upper-level classes.

The Communications Department will continue to participate in institution-level initiatives such as the City Studio collaboration with the City of Abbotsford. As well, our Program Advisory Committee Planning Group has curated a list of potential members for a future program advisory board. As part of their mandate, these board members will be helping the department identify experiential learning opportunities for students in the Fraser Valley as well as in Greater Vancouver. Through the work of our faculty and future advisory board, we hope to be able to formalize a central database of contacts to draw on.

Dean's response: I applaud the department's commitment to offering students experiential learning opportunities and look forward to the establishment of the Program Advisory Committee.

Action: Department to continue working with the CECE and the ARTS External Liaison Coordinator to identify placements for students.

Department to form External Program Advisory Committee

2. Utilize the External Advisory Board to make close connections with industry, but also to have fulsome feedback from industry for curricular updates and industry trends. This area should be a priority for the department. Potential to satisfy Ministry accountabilities and data/evidence linking the department offerings to the University Vision and Mission, and Academic Plan.

Department's response: With our External Advisory Board in active development, we hope to begin meeting this recommendation in the 2022/2023 year through members' community links and suggestions. Through our future board's recommendations, we can work to enrich links between the department's offerings and UFV's broader mandate. The Communications Department took a leadership role with other UFV groups to establish the PR micro-credential project in close consultation with the Ministry. Our partnership with Continuing Education is another example of the attention the department pays to the communication trends within industry, as that program seeks to engage non-traditional students already active as professional communicators.

Dean's response: I applaud the department's openness to seeking external feedback on currency of their curriculum, including opportunities for micro-credentials in line with Ministry priorities.

Action: Department to actively utilize feedback of External Program Advisory Committee to review their curriculum and identify opportunities for future offerings.

3. Build on partnerships with other similar disciplines, such as Journalism and MACS. Collaborations such as these enrich the curriculum and networks to industry and could increase contacts for practical learning experiences.

Department's response: We agree with this recommendation and see the significance and value in building partnerships with complementary areas like MACS. From its inception journalism offerings at UFV have been a joint venture between MACS, CMNS, and other departments, initially led by CMNS. The continued growth of our journalism program, including the development of a minor, will allow for more collaborations in the future. MACS and CMNS courses are integral to the Bachelor of Media Arts program, where a balance of applied communications and theory ensures our students graduate as accomplished practitioners grounded in communications theory.

Dean's response: Already discussed.

No further action

4. Review all courses (there are three at this moment) and see where practical or applied learning can be incorporated more than they are now. The applied learning does not need to be formal industry partnerships, this could be done through case studies and interdisciplinary student groups in partnership for example.

Department's response: While we do report in our department meetings on practical and applied learning that is happening in our courses, we see the value in furthering this work. The department will continue to develop and revise CMNS courses to provide applied learning opportunities and look for potential ways to increase the number and type of applied learning

projects we can include. At present, the department participates in the College of Arts initiative to track experiential learning activities across the full range of courses offered within Arts.

Dean's response: as per #1 above

No further action

5. Increasing Indigenous and other underrepresented and underserved populations (elderly, recent immigrants, refugee, and socioeconomically challenged). Students working in an applied learning opportunity with the above communities would result in more mutually beneficial outcomes for student and community while meeting the department and university's desire to serve the community holistically.

Department's response: The department is committed to the principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity. CMNS instructors have participated in programs specifically designed for Indigenous communities in partnership with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology as well as tailored CMNS offerings delivered on-site in Bella Coola. We would welcome opportunities to offer CMNS courses in such programs in the future. CMNS has a close relationship with UFV India, offering initial contact for the many South Asian students who travel to Canada after two years of instruction in Chandigarh to complete their studies. Now that face-to-face learning opportunities have resumed, the department will reach out to Elder College in Chilliwack and Abbotsford Learning Plus as a way to reach community seniors.

Building practicum partnerships with First Nations organizations in the Fraser Valley such as the Seabird Island band government and the Stó:lō Xwexwilmexw government would help to make connections between UFV and the Indigenous communities, as well as potentially offer Indigenous students the chance to complete a practicum while serving their own community. Some of the courses, such as CMNS 311: Investigative Journalism are designed to implement projects that engage students directly with local Indigenous communities. The department's efforts to engage with traditionally underrepresented groups have met with success, though we recognize there is always more to do in this regard.

Dean's response: Agree with the importance of building practicum partnerships with First Nations organizations.

Action: Department to develop its relationships and practicum placements with First Nations communities.

6. Continue to increase opportunities for work in project-based community partnerships with students. The reviewers understand the teaching methodology for courses such as these are significantly more laborious for faculty. It may be necessary to increase administrative support or alter workload assignment for these practical heavy courses. The reviewers recognize this will have budget implications and may not be possible. Refer to Section II regarding the importance of student enrolment and other revenue generating program that may have potential to better support the above.

Department's response: As the number of students in the minor program continues to grow and the major program comes online, the department recognizes there will be a need to develop additional practicum opportunities for program students as well as interested individuals majoring in other areas. So far, we have been lucky in that practicum interest has slanted towards organizations; we have tended to have more placement requests than interested students, though increased interest in our minor and new enrolments in the CMNS major may cause the balance to shift.

Other avenues for project-based learning include directed studies and special topics courses, both of which have been offered with success by a variety of instructors over the years. Managing the workload associated with practicum, special topics, and directed studies courses is a potential issue in the future should the CMNS program enrolments outpace growth in our course offerings as a whole. It is an element of a successful program of which we must be aware and we're grateful to the Program Review Committee for flagging it as a potential problem that could present workload issues in the future.

Dean's response: The Dean's office is developing strategies for sustaining an increased number of students participating in experiential learning opportunities across Arts programs.

No action at this point.

List of Action Items:

Section 1. Overall Assessment with Key Recommendations

n/a

Section 2. Structure, Admission and Enrolment

1) n/a

2) Department to explore improved advising strategies in discussion with the Director of Advising and as part of SEM Planning.

3) See 4 and 5 below

4) Department to continue working collaboratively on programs currently in development and approval process, specifically: Journalism minor; post-baccalaureate diploma in Digital Communication and Promotion; Science Communication minor; and Intercultural Essentials associate certificate. The department is also continuing conversations with GD and SOCA on visual competencies courses/programs.

5) Department to explore student demand and faculty interest in developing a post-baccalaureate diploma in Public Relations.

Once institutional policies and procedures on micro-credentials are clarified, department will explore possibilities for micro-credentials and modularized delivery of courses.

Section 3. Curriculum/Standards of Educational Practices

- 1) n/a
- 2) n/a
- 3) n/a
- 4) Department to finalize vision and mission statements, with attention to balance between applied and theoretical elements, and post these to their website.
- 5) n/a
- 6) Department to make explicit where leadership is a learning outcome in existing courses, complete development of Communication for Leadership course, and initiate consultations with Business on a joint leadership-oriented program.
- 7) n/a

Section 4. Delivery, Assessment, and Student Success

- 1) Department to explore development of a course in communication-oriented negotiation skills in the next two years, taking into account relationship with course/program on leadership skills and related initiative in PACS.
- 2) Continue working with the Centre for Accessibility Services as well as encouraging faculty members to partake in professional development workshops on accessibility for neurodiverse students in Communications courses.
- 3) Department to develop an Indigenous Communication course and hire a tenure-track Indigenous scholar specialist in Indigenous communication.

Section 5. Faculty, Faculty Development, and Utilization of Resources

- 1) n/a
- 2) n/a
- 3) n/a
- 4) n/a
- 5) n/a
- 6) Department to continue conversations with SOCA, GDD, and the Dean's office on sustainable use/maintenance of small equipment.

Section 6. Contribution to University's Vision, Mission, Values and Strategic Goals: Strategic Plan/ Indigenization/ EDI Action Plan/ Internationalization Goals

- 1) See 2 below
- 2) Plan and deliver PD training on incorporation of SEDI and universal design in pedagogy and course development.

Section 7. External Connections/Potential Community Links

- 1) Department to continue working with the CECE and the ARTS External Liaison Coordinator to identify placements for students.
Department to form External Program Advisory Committee.
- 2) Department to actively utilize feedback of External Program Advisory Committee to review their curriculum and identify opportunities for future offerings.
- 3) n/a
- 4) n/a
- 5) Department to develop its relationships and practicum placements with First Nations communities.
- 6) n/a