College: Fairmount College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department/Program (s):   Elliot School of Communication (ESC)

Degree (s) Offered: B.A. in Communication and M.A. in Communication

Triggers: None

Brief Description of Each Degree:
B.A. in Communication – An integrated communication program composed of the speech communication and mass communications disciplines. Includes an integrated "core curriculum" required for all students, regardless of emphasis area, which combines the subfields of speech, journalism and mediated communications. The emphasis areas are: 1) Integrated Marketing Communications, 2) Strategic Communication, 3) Journalism, 4) Electronic Media, and 5) Open Emphasis.
M.A. in Communication – Requires completion of 36 hours of coursework in communication and related fields. Fifteen of these hours are in the graduate core, a set of five courses designed to provide the student a strong foundation in communication theory and research methodology.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:
The learning outcome statements listed in the self-study (on page 8, section 3c) are not tied to direct measure of student learning. Therefore, the assessment process described does not provide information on the level of achievement of the undergraduate and graduate program learning outcomes.

Placement of Graduates:
No specific data on the B.A. or M.A. in Communication is presented regarding types of positions graduates obtain. However, the report states that "Students earning a degree in communication from the ESC are prepared for a wide variety of careers." The BLS report suggests job growth, but with strong competition for entry-level positions." The integrated program offered by the ESC plus the co-operative and work-based learning opportunities available to the ESC students appear to provide their graduate a competitive advantage. Average salary for graduates in 2009 was $32, 500 while in 2010 this average went down to $29,619.

Sources of External Support/Faculty Comments: The sources of external support include the Elliot Endowment, Kansas Health Foundation and individual donors. The School has five named faculty positions of distinction.

Conclusions:
    Commendations:
- The analysis of strengths and weaknesses was well done.

- The short-term plan presented includes efforts to expand the School's interdisciplinary initiatives which could strengthen both the B.A. and M.A. programs.
- The School has strong support from donors and the community.

By April 1, 2012 (send to the Office of the Provost):
- Efforts should be made to document that the program review process is a part of a continuous improvement approach involving all departmental faculty.
- The learning outcomes for both programs should be further developed and a revised assessment process needs to be implemented to include the following:
  - Learning Outcomes: Statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. These relate to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students acquire through their program (e.g., graduates will demonstrate advanced writing ability).
  - Assessment Methods: Direct measures used to identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes (e.g., writing project evaluated by a rubric).
  - Targets: Expectations of students to achieve the desired outcome to demonstrate program effectiveness (e.g., 90% of students will demonstrate at least the benchmark performance on a writing project).
  - Results: Actual achievement on each measurement (e.g., 94% of the students achieved at least the benchmark performance on the writing project).
  - Analysis: An evaluation that determines the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved and leads to decisions and actions to improve the program. The analysis and evaluation should align with specific learning outcomes and consider whether the measurement and target remain valid indicators of the learner.

Prior to the next review in 2014:
- Data should be collected and evaluated in terms of student perceptions about the program. The University implemented an electronic undergraduate and graduate student exit survey in 2011 (by program) for this purpose.
- Data should be collected and evaluated from all program graduates to include salary, employment location, and employment in the field. The University is implementing an alumni survey (by program) for this purpose in 2012.