

Institutional Effectiveness 2023-2024

Program: Communication BS

College and Department: College of Interdisciplinary Studies – Department of Communication

Contact: Scott Christen

Mission: The Bachelor of Science degree in Communication supports the department's goals to help students "tap the power of words and images in a variety of media to create meaning and understanding, to pursue intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness, and creative expression, and to build effective communication skills." The communication program at TTU is dedicated to fostering a strong sense of public citizenship preparing students for civic participation in an increasingly complex world that requires sophisticated, practical, critical, and theoretical understanding of the human communication process. The B.S. in communication degree program includes both communication studies and journalism and supports these outcomes by using active learning strategies and experiential learning to develop students' critical-thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills for their professional goals and personal success. Our mission is to provide general education instruction in oral communication and a variety of undergraduate courses in communication studies and journalism including mass communication, print and broadcast and multimedia journalism, literary journalism, public relations, advertising, photojournalism, interpersonal, intercultural, computer-mediated, and multimedia communication, persuasion, and conflict resolution. Besides those majoring in communication with an emphasis in communication studies or journalism, Tennessee Tech students take our courses for general education requirements or sometimes as a minor that will enhance their communication skills and their versatility in whatever career they choose. Students are encouraged to get hands-on, real-world experience in their field through the internship or co-op program. Our program provides students the opportunity to participate in various clubs related to their major as well.

Curriculum Map (Educational Programs Only):

See Appendix 1

Program Goal 1: The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

Define Outcome:

The program will prepare students for entry-level positions in a number of different fields that emphasize effective communication skills or for a graduate program.

Assessment Methods:

1. Senior Exit Survey: We specifically ask graduating seniors to report their progress on the program goals and learning objectives in each concentration.

- Senior Exit Surveys provide feedback for continuous quality improvement of our program and to determine students' perceived progress on our program goals and learning outcomes 1-4. The majority of comments are positive which indicates to us that students are pleased with our program. We review the data and implement improvements annually.

2. Internship Extra-Curricular Experiences: All program goals and student learning outcomes are evaluated on an ongoing and systematic basis. Students are evaluated through coursework, internships, and extra-curricular experiences on their performance of effective written and oral communication skills in various settings.

- Faculty oversight of internships is maintained by interns supplying written monthly summaries of their internship work.
- Students receive a grade for internships to reflect their level of performance in relevant, real-world settings. Students are expected to make at least a "B" on the recommendation of their internship supervisor. If a majority of students make below a "B" in a given semester, the internship coordinators will consult with the employment supervisors to determine why overall student performance is low and develop a strategy for improvement.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

1. Senior Exit Survey Criteria:

- Thresholds of acceptability are the following:
 - **Target performance**=*We expect a majority of students to express satisfaction in our offerings.*
 - **Current performance**=*The majority of comments are positive which indicates to us that students are pleased with our program.*

- **Minimum performance**=*We review the data and implement improvements annually. If a majority of comments were negative, we would make adjustments based on specific items addressed and the judgement of faculty and staff.*

2. Internship Extra-Curricular Experiences Criteria:

- Thresholds of acceptability are the following:
 - **Target performance**=*Students are expected to make at least a B upon the recommendation of their internship supervisor.*
 - **Current performance**=*For the past five years most students have earned As.*
 - **Minimum performance**=*If a majority of students earn below a B in a given semester, we will consult the internship supervisors to identify and correct student performance deficiencies.*

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.A Experiential Learning,1.E Stackable Credentials,3.A Efficiency and Effectiveness

Results and Analysis:

Senior Exit Exam

A majority of comments have been positive and compliment either the program or specific professors.

Internships

COMM Studies	A	B	C	D	F	Total	Journalism	A	B	C	D	F	Total
2023-2024	6					6	2023-2024	2					2
2022-2023	16					16	2022-2023	12					12
2021-2022	10					10	2021-2022	11	1				12
2020-2021	3					3	2020-2021	9					9

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

The number of graduates for 2023-2024 are lower due the Covid-19 pandemic. We believe that this lowered the overall number of students interested in Internships. We will monitor this situation to see if it continues past this group of graduates.

SLO 1: Demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings

Define Outcome:

Students will demonstrate effective communication skills in their respective settings.

1. Journalism students will demonstrate the ability to write, edit and create content competently for various media and in public relations settings
2. Communication students will demonstrate effective oral presentation skills that correspond with various communication events and the ability to evaluate written and oral presentations.

Assessment Methods:

1. National Survey of Student Engagement: The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses students' confidence in their abilities to communicate effectively using written and oral communication skills.

- Through coursework and extra-curricular experiences, communication majors will be required to write, edit, and present to a variety of audiences and through several media. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses students' confidence in their abilities to write and speak clearly and effectively. These results are compared to other TTU students and our Carnegie peer institutions. Students are expected to score at least as well as other Tech students and Carnegie peers. If Communication majors fall below the average scores in both of these categories for three consecutive testing periods, faculty will review our course content and student participation in extra-curricular experiences to determine if adjustments are needed.

2. Speech and Debate Team and Student Media Extra-Curricular Experiences: Debate and Forensics team experience offers students training and application opportunities for their public speaking skills in argumentation and persuasion. While participation on the team is open to all students, speech majors are required to participate. The team travels to and participates in state and regional speech contests and tournaments. The number of various awards received by our students provides a measure of success in achieving the learning objectives and has grown each year.

- For decades, Tech's journalism program has produced a weekly newspaper, a year-round radio station and an annual yearbook that are supplemental to the curriculum and provide practical experience in both print and broadcast media. In 2012 we added a campus magazine, Eagle Eye, to the media mix, and in 2016 we added a broadcasting club, Eagle View Productions. An internship program is available to students that provides experience in organizations on and off campus for news reporting and public relations and with the PBS-affiliate on campus for television broadcasting experience.

- Student media experience is guaranteed through a “campus beat” system in reporting and editing classes. We include beat assignments in one introductory and two advanced journalism courses. All three of these courses are required for the journalism degree program. Students may also take an introductory broadcasting course with a campus beat assignment for the broadcast media. Other opportunities for hands-on learning include management positions on the student media and the internship or co-op program. Students receive a grade in courses and internships to reflect their level of performance in relevant academic assignments and real-world settings. Academic assignments are designed to provide practical instruction for news reporting and editing and for public relations. These courses prepare students for work at internships and co-ops as well. The Speech and Debate team, student media and Society for Collegiate Journalists members compete regionally and nationally for external assessment and recognition of their skills. Students set individual and team goals for these competitions. The student media goal is to enter publications in at least three categories of competition each year. The speech and debate team compete in at least two tournaments each semester.

3. General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of Oral Communication: The General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of the oral communication competencies of students enrolled in COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication course is conducted annually every spring semester. This assessment provides very useful data on student progress in oral communication competencies across multiple sections of the COMM 2025 Fundamentals of Communication including the following oral communication competencies:

1. Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement; 2. Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose; 3. Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition); 4. Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics; and 5. Students are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources. Our students are expected to score at or above the satisfactory level. If a majority of students fall below the satisfactory level for two consecutive testing periods, we will review the COMM 2025 course content to determine if adjustments are needed.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

1. National Survey of Student Engagement Criteria:

Thresholds of acceptability are the following:

Target performance=Students are expected to score at least as well as other Tech students and Carnegie peers

Current performance= Communication students have shown strong gains in both categories for all the testing periods except the senior written communication category in 2020. We will continue to monitor student performance on this assessment.

Minimum performance=*If Communication majors fall below the average scores in both of these categories for three consecutive testing periods, faculty will review our course content and student participation in extra-curricular experiences to determine if adjustments are needed.*

2. Speech and Debate Team and Student Media Extra-Curricular Experiences Criteria:

Thresholds of acceptability are the following:

Target performance=*The student media goal is to enter publications in at least three categories of competition for a national or regional contest each year. The speech and debate team goal is to compete in at least two tournaments each semester.*

Current performance=*We are exceeding these goals*

Minimum performance=*If student media do not compete in a national or regional competition for two consecutive competition cycles, we will consult media advisers to determine the reason for lack of participation. If the speech and debate team does not compete in at least one tournament for two consecutive semesters, we will consult the team coaches to determine the reason.*

3. General Education Learning Outcomes Assessment of Oracle Communication Criteria:

Thresholds of acceptability are as follows:

Target performance=*Students are expected to score at or above satisfactory.*

Current performance=*Students are exceeding our expectations.*

Minimum performance=*If a majority of students fall below the satisfactory level for two consecutive testing periods, we will review the content of COMM 2025 to determine what adjustments may be needed*

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.A Experiential Learning,1.B General Education Curriculum,1.D High Impact Practices,1.E Stackable Credentials,2.A Technology Infused Programs,3.A Efficiency and Effectiveness

Results and Analysis:

NSSE

		Oral Communication		Written Communication	
		First Year	Senior	First Year	Senior
2021	TTU Communication	3.3	2.3	3.3	2.3
	TTU Total	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.9
	Carnegie Peers	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.9
2020	TTU Communication	3.5	3.6	3.1	2.9
	TTU Total	2.4	2.7	2.5	2.9
	Carnegie Peers	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.9
2017	TTU Communication	2.0	3.3	3.0	3.4
	TTU Total	2.2	2.7	2.4	2.9
	Carnegie Peers	2.3	2.6	2.6	2.9

Student Media Awards

Association of Collegiate Press/College Media Association (ACP/CMA) Awards	
Eagle Yearbook – 2 nd Place Pinnacle Awards – Best Magazine Contents Page/Spread	
Eagle View Productions – Honorable Mention “Best of Show” – TV Station of the Year	
CMA Apple Awards	
Eagle 2023 yearbook – 3 rd Place – Best Yearbook Cover	
Eagle Eye 23S magazine – Honorable Mention – Best Magazine Cover	
Eagle View Productions – Honorable Mention – Best Podcast	
Society for Collegiate Journalists (SCJ) National Awards	
Eagle Eye 23S magazine – 1 st Place - Magazine General Interest Overall Excellence	
Eagle 2023 yearbook – 2 nd Place - Overall Excellence	
Eagle 2023 yearbook – 3 rd Place – Yearbook Display	
Eagle 2023 yearbook – 3 rd Place – Best Yearbook Photography	
Eagle 2023 yearbook – 3 rd Place – Best Concept of the Book	
Eagle View Productions – 1 st Place – Best Television Sports Package	
WTTU – 2 nd Place – Live Radio Sports Show Overall Excellence	
Southeastern Journalism Conference (SEJC) – Best of South	
Eagle Eye 23S magazine – 2 nd Place - Best Magazine Writer	
Eagle Eye 23S magazine – 7 th Place - Best Arts & Entertainment Writer	
Eagle View Productions – 1 st Place Onsite Competition – Social Media Marketing	
The Oracle – 1 st Place Onsite Competition – Current Events	

Public Speaking Gen Ed Assessment									
Year	Number of Students	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Average
2024	187	3.17	3.05	3.21	2.87	3.16	2.87	2.89	3.03
2023	377	3.17	2.92	3	2.82	2.98	2.76	2.8	2.92
2022	286	2.72	2.76	2.69	2.59	2.76	2.51	2.64	2.67
2021	242	2.57	2.84	2.87	2.66	2.95	2.71	2.69	2.75

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

There was an issue with data collection of the Public Speaking General Ed Assessment which have hindered our ability to gather data.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

Define Outcome:

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate the knowledge and critical-thinking skills to be discerning consumers of the media.

Assessment Methods:

1. California Critical Thinking Skills Test: The California Critical Thinking Skills Test is given each semester to graduating seniors to assess general education learning outcomes of our graduates. Critical-thinking skills are necessary to be discerning consumers of media and for the practical application of theoretical concepts (learning outcomes 2 and 4).

- Employers cite communication and critical-thinking skills as top qualifications for potential employees. The CCTST permits test-takers to demonstrate the critical-thinking skills required to succeed in educational or workplace settings where solving problems and making decisions by forming reasoned judgments are important. Communication students are expected to perform as well as their campus peers and the national average for the test. If scores fall below these two benchmarks for three consecutive testing periods, we will review course content to determine whether adjustments are needed to improve critical-thinking skills and we will seek added extra-curricular opportunities for students to build these skills.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

1. California Critical thinking Skills Test Criteria:

- Thresholds of acceptability:
 - **Target performance**=At or above the campus and national averages

- **Current performance**= *Communication students outperformed the campus and national average one of the past five years and outperformed the national average two of the past five years. However, scores were lower than both the national and campus average for three of the five testing periods but not in consecutive years. We will monitor their performance to determine whether course adjustments are needed.*
- **Minimum performance**=*If students score lower than their campus and national peers for three consecutive testing periods, we will review course content and seek ways to improve students' skills in these areas.*

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.A Experiential Learning, 1.D High Impact Practices, 1.E Stackable Credentials

Results and Analysis:

CCTST

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
COMM N	25	27	18	16
COMM AVG	72.2	70.6	71.5	71.5
TNTECH AVG	74.5 (97%)	75.2 (94%)	74.3 (96%)	74.4 (96%)
NATIONAL AVG	74.0 (98%)	73.3 (96%)	73.3 (98%)	72.8 (98%)

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

This year we scored just below the Tennessee Tech and the National average. We will continue to monitor this situation to ensure that we meet our goals.

SLO 3: Communication students will demonstrate an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to Interpersonal, Intercultural, Public Address, and Business Communication.

Define Outcome:

SLO 3: Communication students will demonstrate an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to Interpersonal, Intercultural, Public Address, and Business Communication.

Assessment Methods:

1. **Area Concentration Assessment Test (ACAT) for Communication:** Communication majors take the ACAT (Area Concentration Assessment Test) for Communication which

tests students in the following areas of the communication discipline: Interpersonal Communications, Laws and Ethics, Mass Communication/Mass Media, and Public Speaking/Debate. Students are expected to score at least as well as the average score in their reference group. Students' overall performance score should be at or above the 50th percentile. If scores in subject categories fall below the 30th percentile for three consecutive testing periods, we will review the course content for that subject area to determine if adjustments are needed.

2. **Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24):** The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) typically has an α of .93-.95 (McCroskey, Beatty, Kearney, & Plax, 1985). The scale accesses four dimensions of communication apprehension: interpersonal, group, meeting, and public speaking (McCroskey, 1982; Rubin, 2009). Instructors in COMM 2025, a required general education communication course, use the instrument to measure progress on building confidence in students' communication skills. The instrument can be scored both by adding the value of items in individual sub-measures to assess communication apprehension in a particular context or by combining the scores of each sub-measure to assess overall communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1982). The norms for the PRCA-24 are listed below. Our goal for Comm 2025 is to reduce communication anxiety scores of students from the pre-test to the post-test, or beginning and end of the courses.

Criteria for Success (Thresholds for Assessment Methods):

1. Area Concentration Assessment Test (ACAT) for Communication criteria:

- Thresholds of acceptability are the following:
 - **Target performance**=*Overall average at or above the 50th percentile*
 - **Current performance**=*Between 62nd and 83rd percentile overall for past five years*
 - **Minimum performance**=*Below the 50th percentile overall or below 30th percentile on subject categories for three consecutive testing periods.*
 - ACAT scores range from 200-800 with an average score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Nationally, 68% of scores in any given year should fall between approximately 400 and 600. Year-to-year variations in the size of the reference groups will cause scores to fall outside these limits. The content area scores are compared with a reference group of other examinees taking the same content area. The overall performance score is compared with other examinees taking the ACAT in this discipline with the same number of content areas. The overall score is a separately determined performance appraisal rather than a numerical average of the area scores. From ACAT Departmental Score Report. For more information, visit www.collegeoutcomes.com

2. Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) criteria:

- Thresholds of acceptability are the following:
 - **Target performance**=Our goal for Comm 2025 is a Communication Anxiety mean reduction of 6.25 from the pre-test to the post-test, or beginning and end of the courses.
 - **Current performance**=The average mean for reduction of Communication Anxiety for the past year was 10.44. We are exceeding our target performance.
 - **Minimum performance**=If the mean reduction in Communication Anxiety falls below 4.25 for two consecutive testing periods, we will reevaluate the COMM 2025 course to determine what adjustments would improve student outcomes.

Norms for the PRCA-24	High Anxiety	Medium Anxiety	Low Anxiety	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interpersonal	19 or more	18-11	10 or lower	8.1	4.3
Group	20 or more	19-11	10 or lower	8.4	4.7
Meeting	21 or more	20-13	12 or lower	10.4	4.4
Public	25 or more	24-14	13 or lower	10.1	4.8
Overall Communication Anxiety	81 or more	80-51	50 or lower	10.44	14.3

**<http://www.jamescmccroskey.com/measures/prca24.htm>*

Link to 'Tech Tomorrow' Strategic Plan:

1.B General Education Curriculum,1.D High Impact Practices,1.E Stackable Credentials,2.B Research, Scholar, Intellect, and Creativity

Results and Analysis:

ACT

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
# of Students	29	30	20	15
Interpersonal Communications	499	458	518	433
Laws and Ethics	521	468	535	506
Mass Communication/Mass Media	601	487	522	420
Public Speaking/Debate	524	465	502	488
OVERALL	548	449	522	438
National Comparison for THEC	500	500	500	500
Percent of National (THEC)	110%	90%	104%	88%

PRCA

PRCA-24 Contexts	2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024	
	Reduction in the Mean	Results	Reduction in the Mean	Results	Reduction in the Mean	Results
Public Speaking	2.5	t(189) = 7.4, p < .05 d= 0.53	2.6	t(353) = 10.1, p < .05 d= 0.54	12.44	t(313) = 21.2, p < .05 d= 1.196
Meeting	1.4	t(189) = 2.67, p < .05 d= .19	2.4	t(353) = 10.4, p < .05 d= 0.6	2.1	t(313) = 6.3, p > .05 d= 0.35
Interpersonal	1.5	t(189) = 6.7, p < .05 d= 0.48	1.9	t(353) = 8.1, p < .05 d= 0.43	2.8	t(313) = 9.8, p < .05 d= .55
Group	.44	t(189) = .94, p < .05 d= 0.06	2.1	t(1353) = 8.4, p < .05 d= 0.45	2.8	t(313) = 6.1, p < .05 d= 0.34
Comm Anxiety	5.8	t(189) = 5.9, p < .05 d= 0.43	9.0	t(353) = 11.8, p < .05 d= 0.63	20.2	t(313) = 13.7, p > .05 d= 0.78

Use of Results to Improve Outcomes:

Seeking Improvement: The Communication (BS) Department has identified students demonstrating an understanding of theory and research and their practical application to interpersonal, intercultural, public awareness, and business communication as an expected outcome for the program. The department assesses this desired outcome through the use of the ACAT for Communication exam. During the 2022-23 academic year, the department decided that they would like to see an increase in student scores on the ACAT for Communication exam. To achieve this goal, the department made the following curriculum changes to two senior level classes: We have implemented a change in the COMM 3100. The class now requires students to cover specific theories that cover the areas tested by the ACAT. In the COMM 3200 Research Methods classes have included examples from the areas tested by the ACAT

Summative Evaluation

The program will continue to monitor the ACT, General Education Assessment, Senior Exit exam, the NSSE, and CCTST to ensure that we continue to our current progress.

Assessment Plan Changes

None at this time.

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

Course Number	Course Title	CS/J/ Both	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4
COMM 1020	Foundations of Comm	CS				X (I)
COMM 2025	Fundamentals of Communication	Both			X (I, A)	
COMM 2075	Organizational Comm	CS			X (I)	X (I)
COMM 2090	Interpersonal Communication	Both			X (I, A)	X (I, A)
COMM 2800	Interviewing	CS				
COMM 3000	Computer Mediated Communication	CS			X(I)	X(R)
COMM / JOUR 3030	Principles of Event Planning	Both				X(I)
COMM / JOUR 3040	Event Planning and Risk Management	Both				X(R)
COMM 3080	Communication and Effective Teamwork	CS			X(R)	X(R)
COMM 3100	Communication Theory	Both				X (M)
COMM 3120	Visual Communication/Rhetoric	CS			X(R)	X(R)
COMM 3130	Speech Activities	CS			X(M)	X(I)
COMM 3200	Research Methods in Communication	Both				X (M)
COMM 3400	Nonverbal Communication	CS				X(I)
COMM 3620	Intercultural Communication	Both			X (R)	X (R)
COMM 3630	Discussion & Parliamentary Procedure	CS			X (R)	X (R)
COMM 4420	Advanced Organizational Communication	CS			X(R)	X(R)
COMM 4430	Advance Interpersonal Communication	CS			X(M)	X(M)
COMM 4440	Semiotics	CS			X(R)	X(R)
COMM 4540	Historic American Public Address	CS			X(M)	X(R)
COMM 4550	Contemporary American Public Address	CS			X(M)	X(R)
COMM 4620	Advanced Public Speaking	CS			X (M, A)	
COMM 4630	Persuasion	CS			X (M, A)	X (M, A)

Course Number	Course Title	CS/J/ Both	LO1	LO2	LO3	LO4
JOUR 1110	Media & Social Institutions	Both		X (I, A)		
JOUR 2200	Mass Comm in a Changing Society	Both		X (I, A)		
JOUR 2220	News Reporting & Copy Editing	J	X (I, A)			
JOUR / COMM 3030	Principles of Event Planning	Both				X(I)
JOUR / COMM 3040	Event Planning and Risk Management	Both				X(R)
JOUR 3350	Newspaper Production & Design	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 3370 or 3400 or 3500	Photojournalism or Intro to Broadcasting or Multimedia Storytelling	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 3420	Podcasting	J	X (I)			
JOUR 3460	Intro to Public Relations	J		X (R, A)		
JOUR 3470	Public Relations Writing & Publications	J	X (R)			
JOUR 3480	Social Media Management	J	X (I)			
JOUR 3740	Advertising Copy & Layout	J	X (R)			
JOUR 3750	History of Journalism	J		X (R)		
JOUR 3770	Law of Journalism	Both		X (R, A)		
JOUR / COMM 4030	Field Experience / Event Management & Promotions	Both				
JOUR 4360	Magazine Production & Design	J	X (R, A)			
JOUR 4460	Public Relations/Cases and Practices	J-PR	X (M, A)	X (M, A)		
JOUR 4500	Advanced Multimedia Storytelling	J	X (M)			
JOUR 4710 or 4830	Literary Journalism or Feature Writing	J	X (M, A)			
JOUR 4820	Advanced Reporting	J	X (M, A)			
JOUR 4930	Advanced Copy Editing	J	X (M, A)			

"I"=Introduced; "R"=reinforced and opportunity to practice; "M"=mastery at the senior or exit level; "A"=assessment evidence collected.