

# General Education Student Learning Report

Revised June 2017

## Department of Communications

For 2021-2022 Academic Year

### PART 1

#### Degree Program Mission and Student Learning Outcomes

A. State the school, department and degree program missions.

University Mission	School Mission	Department Mission	General Education Mission
Our mission is to ensure students develop the skills and knowledge required to achieve professional and personal goals in dynamic local and global communities.	The mission of the School of Science and Arts is the preparation of students to achieve professional and personal goals in their respective disciplines and to enable their success in dynamic local and global communities.	The Department of Communications supports the mission of RSU and the School of Liberal Arts by fostering the skills of critical thinking, writing, research, and oral communication among our students.	General Education at Rogers State University provides a broad foundation of intellectual skills, knowledge, and perspectives to enable students across the University to achieve professional and personal goals in a dynamic local or global society.

B. Align each of the program student learning outcomes with the institutional purposes and commitments.

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
To provide quality associate, baccalaureate, and graduate degree opportunities and educational experiences which foster student excellence in oral and written communications, scientific reasoning and critical and creative thinking.	The School will offer innovative degrees, which focus upon developing skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking, creativity, empirical and evidence-based inquiry, experimental investigation and theoretical explanation of natural phenomena and innovative technology.	Our department will provide a BA degree with a strong focus on oral and written communication, critical thinking and creativity, as well as extra-curricular activities, internships and scholarly activities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Think critically and creatively.</li> <li>2) Acquire, analyze, and evaluate knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world.</li> <li>3) Use written, oral, and visual communication effectively.</li> <li>4) Develop an individual perspective on the human experience, and demonstrate an understanding of</li> </ol>

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
			diverse perspectives and values. 5) Demonstrate civic knowledge and engagement, ethical reasoning, and skills for lifelong learning.
To promote an atmosphere of academic and intellectual freedom and respect for diverse expression in an environment of physical safety that is supportive of teaching and learning.	The School will educate its majors to think independently and have the knowledge, skills, and vision to work in all types of situations and careers and communicate with all types of people.	Foster the values of scholarship, creativity, appreciation of diversity, and community service.	
To provide a general liberal arts education that supports specialized academic program sand prepares students for lifelong learning and service in a diverse society.	The School will offer general education courses of high quality and purpose that provide a foundation for life-long learning.	This will be accomplished via quality general education classes, co and extra-curricular activities, and professional internship and scholarly activities.	
To provide students with a diverse, innovative faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarly pursuits and continuous improvement of programs.	The School will foster a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.	Through a concerted effort of engaging students in teacher/mentor scholarship, students experience scholarship both inside and outside the classroom.	
To provide university-wide student services, activities and resources that complement academic programs.	The School will offer and promote artistic, scientific, cultural, and public affairs events on the campus and in the region.		
To support and strengthen student, faculty and administrative structures that promote shared governance of the institution.	The School will foster a community of scholars among the faculty and students of the institution.		
To promote and encourage student, faculty, staff and community interaction in a positive academic climate that creates opportunities for cultural, intellectual and personal	The School will offer and promote artistic, scientific, cultural, and public affairs events on the campus and in the region.	Our department will sponsor cultural events for our students, area high school students, and the community via the RSU Theatre Program and RSU Radio.	

University Commitments	School Purposes	Department Purposes	Student Learning Outcomes
enrichment for the University and the communities it serves.			

## PART 2

### Follow-Up on Proposed Changes Made in Previous Assessment Cycle

Follow up on each instructional/assessment change proposed in Part 5 of the degree program SLR for the preceding year. Any changes the department implemented for this academic year, but which were not specifically proposed in the preceding report, should also be reported here. Indicate whether the proposed change was implemented and comment accordingly. Please note if no changes were either proposed or implemented or this academic year.

Proposed Change	Implemented? (Y/N)	Comments
Faculty members who regularly teach or provide curriculum for general education courses should meet to discuss consistency across sections of these classes and possibly reintroduce a required training session for all speech instructors before the beginning of the academic year.	N	COVID-19 moved all sections online in the previous academic year, and the effort to normalize speech classes when most of them moved back on campus became the priority, so the faculty hasn't discussed this again.
The department faculty should reassess current grade thresholds for assignments.	N	The thresholds for SLO 3 have continued to be easily surpassed, usually by at least 10-15%, although this has become less the case with the persuasive speech assignment in online sections. The department should reconsider the current thresholds, but in concert with a discussion of grading criteria for speeches.

## PART 3

### Response to University Assessment Committee Feedback

The University Assessment Committee provides written feedback on departmental assessment plans through a regular peer review process. This faculty-led oversight is integral to RSU's commitment to the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional effectiveness. UAC recommendations are not compulsory and departments may implement them at their discretion. Respond below to each UAC recommendations from last year's peer review report. Indicate whether the recommendation was implemented and comment accordingly.

Please indicate either if the UAC had no recommendations or if the program was not subject to review in the previous cycle.

Peer Review Feedback	Implemented (Y/N)	Comment
No peer review feedback on general education courses has been provided to the department in several years.	N/A	

**PART 4**  
**Evidence of Student Learning**

Provide evidence of student progress for each of the student learning outcomes associated with the degree program. See the *Appendix* for a detailed description of each component. Note: The table below is for the first program learning outcome. A copy of the table should be inserted below for each additional outcome. SLO numbers should be updated accordingly.

<b>A.</b> <b>Student Learning Outcome</b>																
<b>SLO #1: Think critically and creatively.</b>																
<b>A.</b> <b>Assessment Measure</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>Sampling Method</b>	<b>D.</b> <b>Sample Size (n)</b>	<b>E.</b> <b>Results</b>		<b>F.</b> <b>Standard Met (Y/N)</b>										
1a. In SPCH 1113, Speech Communication, student understanding of constructs by which a speech is evaluated will be measured by	At least 75% of students will earn a C or better on their mid-term speech exam.  All instructors will submit the scores on the mid-term for	All instructors submit data from one of their sections of speech communication.	N = 239 (on-ground)  N = 94 (online)	On-ground: 95% met threshold. Online: 89% met threshold.  <b>Speech Midterms On-ground</b> <table border="1" data-bbox="1176 1250 1778 1396" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th>17-18</th> <th>18-19</th> <th>19-20</th> <th>20-21</th> <th>21-22</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>91%</td> <td>93%</td> <td>86%</td> <td>90%</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	91%	93%	86%	90%	95%	Y
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**A.  
Student Learning Outcome**

**SLO #1: Think critically and creatively.**

<b>A. Assessment Measure</b>	<b>B. Performance Standard</b>	<b>C. Sampling Method</b>	<b>D. Sample Size (n)</b>	<b>E. Results</b>	<b>F. Standard Met (Y/N)</b>																														
<p>assessing students' mid-term exam scores in both on-ground and online formats.</p> <p>1b. In HUM 2413, Theatre Appreciation, students will complete a final exam over salient aspects of theatre.</p> <p>1c. In HUM 2413, Theatre Appreciation, a pre-post-test will be administered to all enrolled online students to ascertain entry and exit level knowledge related</p>	<p>all students enrolled in one of their speech sections in both the fall and spring semesters.</p> <p>At least 75% of students will earn a C or better on theatre-appreciation final exams.</p> <p>Student scores on theatre pre/post-tests will demonstrate growth of at least 25%.</p>	<p>All students' final exam scores on theatre history, literature, and practices related to theatre were counted.</p> <p>All available students' theatre pre -and post-test scores class were counted.</p>	<p>N = 20</p> <p>N = 8 (pre-test) N = 8 (post-test)</p>	<p><b>Speech Midterms Online</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1176 521 1782 643"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>97%</td> <td>93%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>85%</td> <td>89%</td> </tr> </table> <p>67% of students met the threshold requirement</p> <p><b>Theatre Final Exams</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1176 784 1782 906"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>82%</td> <td>78%</td> <td>71%</td> <td>95%</td> <td>67%</td> </tr> </table> <p>The 25% growth threshold was not attained</p> <p><b>Pre-/Post-Test Growth</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1176 1157 1782 1255"> <tr> <td>16-17</td> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>75%</td> <td>67%</td> <td>35%</td> <td>43%</td> <td>21%</td> </tr> </table>	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	97%	93%	94%	85%	89%	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	82%	78%	71%	95%	67%	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	75%	67%	35%	43%	21%	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>N</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N</b></p>
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A. Student Learning Outcome					
SLO #1: Think critically and creatively.					
A. Assessment Measure	B. Performance Standard	C. Sampling Method	D. Sample Size (n)	E. Results	F. Standard Met (Y/N)
to theatre.					
H. Conclusions					
<p>As a whole, student exam scores in Speech Communication were consistent with previous years' scores, and a notably higher in both online and in-person sections than in the 2020-2021 academic year. The previous academic year was the year of mostly off-campus instruction due to COVID-19, so it's probably not surprising that students' physical access to campus and its resources, including instructors and professors, helped them succeed. It is of possible concern that online students on every measure, from midterm exam scores to speeches, on average scored lower than in-person students. As a class that's meant to teach students to speak in front of groups of physically present people in real time, Speech Communication is not particularly well-suited to online formats. Perhaps the switch to Blackboard will provide more tools to help with delivering content and with student participation. (It should be noted that two instructors didn't provide</p> <p>When the exam scores from the Theatre Appreciation sections that reported data this academic year (two of the three sections that were taught) are totaled, the result – 67% of students earning a grade of C or higher on the final exam – fell well short of the 75% threshold. In addition, the 21% increase in students' theatre knowledge from the pre-test to the post-test is four percentage points below the 25% threshold. Both of these results are inconsistent with recent trends. Stresses from the ongoing pandemic and the problems with using Zoom to teach this course (discussed further below) are possible contributing factors. Small sample size is another. Data from the pre-test and post-test is only available from one of the three sections, and final exam data is only available from two of the three sections. Without data from one-third of all Theatre Appreciation students, it's hard to draw conclusions about student performance and/or the usefulness of these measures.</p>					
A. Student Learning Outcome					
SLO #3: Use written, oral, and visual communication effectively.					
A. Assessment Measure	B. Performance Standard	C. Sampling Method	D. Sample Size (n)	E. Results	F. Standard Met (Y/N)

**A.  
Student Learning Outcome**

**SLO #1: Think critically and creatively.**

<b>A. Assessment Measure</b>	<b>B. Performance Standard</b>	<b>C. Sampling Method</b>	<b>D. Sample Size (n)</b>	<b>E. Results</b>	<b>F. Standard Met (Y/N)</b>																																								
<p>In SPCH 1113, Speech Communication, evaluations of informative and persuasive speeches will be conducted in all sections in both on-ground and online formats.</p>	<p>At least 80% of the students should earn at least a C on both the informative and persuasive speech assignments, which are common to all sections of speech communication.</p>	<p>All instructors submitted the scores on the informative and persuasive speeches for one of their sections of speech communication course in both the fall and spring semesters.</p>	<p><u>On-ground</u> Informative: N = 243 Persuasive: N = 240</p> <p><u>Online</u> Informative: N = 90 Persuasive: N = 88</p>	<p>On-ground informative: 97% met threshold. Online informative: 87% met threshold.</p> <p>On-ground persuasive: 94% met threshold. Online persuasive: 76% met threshold.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>INFORMATIVE SPEECHES</b></p> <p><b>Informative Speech On-Ground</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1205 695 1780 799"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>96%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>97%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>97%</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Informative Speech Online</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1205 870 1780 967"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>97%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>89%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>87%</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERSUASIVE SPEECHES</b></p> <p><b>Persuasive Speech On-Ground</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1205 1107 1780 1205"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>97%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Persuasive Speech Online</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1205 1276 1780 1373"> <tr> <td>17-18</td> <td>18-19</td> <td>19-20</td> <td>20-21</td> <td>21-22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>98%</td> <td>93%</td> <td>76%</td> </tr> </table>	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	96%	96%	97%	94%	97%	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	97%	96%	89%	94%	87%	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	97%	96%	96%	94%	94%	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	100%	94%	98%	93%	76%	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Y</b></p>
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<b>A. Student Learning Outcome</b>					
<b>SLO #1: Think critically and creatively.</b>					
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<b>G. Conclusions</b>					
<p>During the 2021-2022 academic, during which students took speech classes through a variety of modalities, students' informative and persuasive speech grades indicate that whatever the format of the class – in-person, blended, via Zoom, or fully online – a large majority of students learn the principles of effective speaking and can employ them. Student success at reaching the threshold for this measure is remarkably similar and high across course delivery formats.</p> <p>A notable divergence from previous years is the inability of online sections on average to reach the threshold on the persuasive speech assignment. Instructors report that students in in-person as well as online sections seemed less involved in and dedicated to their speech classes specifically, and their college careers in general, than in previous years. This disaffection that's been widely reported by professors and instructors from across the United States is likely at least partly due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the disruptions it's created in people's lives. Many students in online and in-person speech classes reported such disruptions beyond the university environment – to their personal lives, to their work lives, and to their health – in numbers that seemed much greater than they had before the pandemic.</p> <p>Instructors remained attentive their students' personal challenges by working with students on assignment schedules, helping students find useful resources for class projects, looking at assignment drafts and giving feedback, and more. These actions undoubtedly helped a large number of students succeed on difficult speech assignments.</p> <p>While a variety of delivery platforms are useful during times like the COVID-19 pandemic, fully online and Zoom options are clearly inferior for some teaching purposes. Many students in online speech sections say that they have trouble gathering the required in-person audience of at least three adults to whom to deliver their speeches. These students are often among those who remain registered for class but fail to turn in assignments. For Theatre Appreciation, Zoom isn't an ideal platform. It doesn't allow instructors to use the full range of options in teaching aspects of theatre that they have access to in in-person classes.</p>					

## PART 5

### Proposed Instructional or Assessment Changes

Learning outcomes assessment can generate actionable evidence of student performance that can be used to improve student success and institutional effectiveness. Knowledge of student strengths and weakness gained through assessment can inform faculty efforts to improving course instruction and program curriculum. Below discuss potential changes the department is considering aimed at improving student learning or the assessment process. These proposals will be revisited in next assessment cycle.

Proposed Change	Rationale
Faculty members who regularly teach or provide curriculum for general education courses should meet to discuss consistency across sections of these classes and possibly reintroduce a required training session for all speech instructors before the beginning of the academic year.	As this department has remained without a true department head for several years, our consistency across our general education courses has suffered. The Theatre Appreciation pre-test and post-test may not be provided to all instructors who teach the course, even though it remains one of the department's general education assessment measures. Adjunct grades on speech assignments vary greatly from section to section, indicating that instructors are view and/or apply speech criteria quite differently.
The department faculty should reassess current grade thresholds for assignments.	In recent years the threshold for, for instance, SLO 3 has been easily surpassed, usually by at least 10-15%. This may mean that the threshold needs to be raised in order to better challenge students and instructors, or to counterbalance possible grade inflation.
The Theatre Appreciation pre-test/post-test should be dropped as an assessment measure for SLO #1.	As mentioned above, the Theatre Appreciation pre-test and post-test doesn't appear to be provided to instructors who teach the course. This is likely because the Department of Communication has lacked a communication-focused department head for several years, so it's not clear who should be providing adjuncts with the pre-test and the post-test, and how. A full-time faculty member who has frequently taught Theatre Appreciation didn't participate in departmental assessment by providing data from classes during the 2021-2022 academic year. As a result, the data may not be particularly useful. The sample for this measure for the entire 2021-2022 academic year was eight.
The description of SPCH-1113: Speech Communication in the Bulletin should be revised to say that online sections require students to gather in-person audiences of at least three adults for the graded speeches that students record.	Many students who enroll in online speech sections are surprised to learn that they must have in-person audiences for their speeches. Even when the requirement is emphasized in the syllabus, in speech assignments, in email messages to the class, and in posted announcements, many students upload

Proposed Change	Rationale
	videos of themselves alone in their bedrooms, whispering into a phone or laptop camera. This is nothing like public speaking.

## PART 6

### Assessment Measures and Faculty Participation

**A. Summary of assessment measures:**

- 1) How many different assessment measures were used? 4
- 2) List the direct measures (see appendix): Pre/Post Test, Informative and Persuasive Speeches, Midterm Exam, Final Exam
- 3) List the indirect measures (see appendix):

**B. Provide the names and signatures of all full time and adjunct faculty who contributed to this report.**

Faculty Name	Assessment Role	Signature
David Blakely, Associate Professor	Report/plan analysis	
Thomas Crowley, Instructor	Data collection/report/plan analysis	
Juliet Evusa, Professor	Data collection, report/plan analysis	
Bruce Hartley, Assistant Professor	Data collection, report/plan analysis	
Holly Kruse, Professor	Data collection, report/plan analysis, report writing	

Lee Williams, Assistant Professor	Data collection, report/plan analysis	
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Reviewed by:

<b>Titles</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Department Head	Mr. Steven Rosser		
Dean	Dr. Keith Martin		

## Appendix

### Student Learning Outcome

Student learning outcomes are the observable or measurable results that are expected of a student following a learning experience. Learning outcomes may address knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values that provide evidence that learning has occurred. They can apply to a specific course, a program of study, or an institution. Outcomes should be worded in language that clearly implies a measurable behavior or quality of student work. Outcomes should also include Bloom's action verbs appropriate to the skill level of learning expected of students.

#### Examples:

*Students will be able to apply principles of evidence-based medicine to determine clinical diagnoses and implement acceptable treatment modalities.*

*Students will be able to articulate cultural and socioeconomic differences and the significance of these differences for instructional planning.*

### Assessment Measure

An assessment measure is a tool or instrument used to gather evidence of student progress toward an established learning outcome. Every program learning outcome should have at least one appropriate assessment measure. Learning outcomes are frequently complex, however, and may require multiple measures to accurately assess student performance. Assessment plans should try to incorporate a combination of direct and indirect assessment measures. Direct provide concrete evidence of whether a student has command of a specific subject or content area, can perform a certain task, exhibits a particular skill, demonstrates a certain quality in their work, or holds a particular value. Because direct measures tap into actual student learning, it is often viewed as the preferred measure type. Indirect measures assess opinions or thoughts about the extent of a student's knowledge, skills, or attitudes. They reveal characteristics associated with learning, but they only imply that learning has occurred. Both types of measures can provide useful insight into student learning and experiences in a program. Each also has unique advantages and disadvantages in terms of the type of data and information it can provide. Examples of common direct and indirect measures are listed below.

#### Direct Measures

- Comprehensive exams
- Class assignments
- Juried review of performances and exhibitions
- Internship or clinical evaluations
- Portfolio evaluation
- Pre/post exams
- Third-party exams such as field tests, certification exams, or licensure exams
- Senior thesis or capstone projects

#### Indirect Measures

- Graduate exit interviews
- Focus group responses
- Job placement statistics
- Graduate school placement statistics
- Graduation and retention rates
- Student and alumni surveys that assess perceptions of the program
- Employer surveys that assess perceptions of graduates
- Honors and awards earned by students and alumni.

## **Performance Standard**

A performance standard is a clearly-defined benchmark that establishes the minimally-acceptable level of performance expected of students for a particular measure.

### Examples:

*At least 70% of students will score 70% or higher on a comprehensive final exam.*

*At least 75% of students will earn score a "Proficient" or higher rating on the Communicate Effectively rubric.*

## **Sampling Method**

Sampling method describes the methodology used for selecting the students that were assessed for a given measure. In some cases, such as most course-embedded measures, it is possible to assess all active enrolled students. In other cases, however, it is not feasible to measure the population of all potential students. In these cases, it is important that a well-designed sampling scheme be used to ensure the sample of students measured is an unbiased representation of the overall population. Where multiple instructors teach a particular course, care should be taken to assess students across all instructors, including adjuncts.

### Examples:

*All students enrolled in BIOL 4801 Biology Research Methods II*

*All majors graduating in the 2016-17 academic year.*

## **Sample Size**

Sample size is the number of students from which evidence of student learning was obtained for a given assessment measure.

## **Results**

Results are an analytical summary of the findings arising from the assessment of student performance for a particular assessment measure. Typical presentation includes descriptive statistics (mean, median, range) and score frequency distributions.

## **Standard Met?**

This is a simple yes/no response that indicates whether the observed level of student performance for a particular measure meets or exceeds the established standard. An N/A may be used where circumstances prevented the department from accurately assessing a measure.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion is a reflective summary and determination of the assessment results obtained for a specific learning outcome. Questions to consider in this section include the following:

- Does the assessment evidence indicate the learning outcome is being satisfactorily met?
- Where multiple measures are used for a single outcome, do the results present a consistent or contradictory pattern?
- What are the most valuable insights gained from the assessment results?
- What strengths and weaknesses in student learning do the results indicate?
- What implications are there for enhancing teaching and learning?
- How can the assessment process be improved?