EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Master of Professional Communication
Self-Study Document, Fall 2019

Author's Contact Information: Sarah Steimel, Associate Professor & Program Director
        Phone: 801-626-6535, Email: sarahsteimel@weber.edu

The following is a summary of the self-study document, highlighting important points. For complete information, please refer to the full, self-study document itself.

Mission Statement:
The Master of Professional Communication program prepares working professionals with the advanced communication knowledge and skills needed to excel in a range of communication-related careers. The program trains students to utilize theoretically-grounded and creative applications of research, writing, presentation and design to lead in academic and professional organizational contexts.

Curriculum:
Our curriculum underwent a substantive overhaul in 2014-2015 (reported on our last five year program review). These curriculum standards have served our graduates well in general and have been largely retained (with small edits/additions to the list of electives our students may choose from) in the five years since.

Program Requirements
1. 33 credit hours (at least 30 at the 6000-level).
2. Grade of B- or better in all courses counting toward the degree.
3. Overall GPA of at least 3.0.
4. Successful completion of a thesis, project and/or appropriate course work.

Course Requirements for MPC

Foundational Courses (12 credit hours)

MPC 6010
MPC 6150
MPC 62100 1 1

MPC 6600   Strategic Communication (3)

Students may choose to complete the final 9 credit hours in one of the following tracks:

Project Track (9 credit hours) Take both 6900 & 6950 + 1 elective OR 6900 + 2 electives)
  MPC 6900 Thesis/Project I (3)
  Elective 1 (3) Chosen in consultation with the MPC program director.
  Elective 2 (3) Chosen in consultation with the MPC program director Or MPC 6950
  (Thesis/Project II)

Thesis Track (9 credit hours)
  MPC 6900 Thesis/Project I (3)
  MPC 6950 Thesis/Project II (3)
  Elective 1 (3) Chosen in consultation with the MPC program director.

Coursework Track (9 credit hours, chosen in consultation with the MPC program director)
  Elective 1 (3)
  Elective 2 (3) (all chosen in consultation with the MPC program director)
  Elective 3 (3)
  (no more than 3 credit hours at the 5000 level)

Please see our most recent list of approved electives at
https://www.weber.edu/mpc/Requirements.html

(meeting our previously-

standards which we are starting to use in 2019-2020 that include I = Introduced (end with 77% proficiency at skill), E = Emphasized (end with 85% proficiency at skill), A = Assessed Comprehensively (end with 87% proficiency at skill). Please see these updates along with the updated Program Learning Outcomes (p. 5) and the updated Curriculum Map chart on p. 6-7 of this report.

introduced a project option focused on building a professional brand on the Internet and in social media. Several students have chosen to use this course to develop online portfolios and websites to further enhance their job search. Other students develop professional project content to position themselves as thought leaders in their industry or profession. The program director uses the 6900 class to provide additional guidance on the job search process for students who are seeking that information. In addition, all of our faculty in the graduate program engage in informal career advising with our students.

Faculty:
Thus far 15 full-time faculty members have taught at least one class in the MPC program. Thirteen of the 15 have earned a doctorate or terminal degree (MFA) in Communication. Two faculty have master's degrees in Communication, are ABD in a PhD program, and have at least five years of professional experience related to the subject of their MPC course. 5 adjuncts have taught in the MPC program in the last five years. Three hold PhDs and two have master's degrees (including one with an additional graduate certification) and have at least five years of professional experience.

Among the full-time faculty, in terms of ethnic diversity, 11/15 (or 73.3%) of the full-time Communication department Faculty who teach in the MPC program identify as Caucasian/non-Hispanic, two identify as Hispanic, one as black and one as Filipino. Of our adjuncts, all five (100%) identify as Caucasian/non-Hispanic. Three of those four faculty members who identify as Hispanic and/or Filipino have been hired in the last five years, and as such, our diversity in faculty has improved since our last program review. Again, increasing this diversity has been and will remain a strategic priority in the department of Communication.

Of the 15 full-time Communication department faculty who teach in the MPC program, only 3

Relations with External Community:
The MPC program maintains relationships with the external community by bringing communication professionals in as guest speakers, engaging professionals as classroom project clients and including those partners as evaluating partners on student classroom projects. The program gives back to the community by sponsoring events for the local chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), through faculty service on local and national advisory boards and through applied projects students complete for clients and their employers as part of their course work in the program.

Student, Faculty, Contract/Adjunct Faculty and Staff Statistics:
Key statistics on faculty can be found in the Faculty section above.

The table below presents interesting data about the students admitted during the last five years. On average, our students are 34-37 years of age with an average of 5-8 years of professional work experience. One of the justifications for the program is to provide further educational opportunities to alumni and mid-career communication professionals seeking a graduate degree to advance their careers. The demographics suggest we are reaching this population.

Entering Class	Ave. GRE	Ave. GMAT	Ave. GPA (undergrad)	Ave. Age (years)

**After carefully following the national research conversation about the validity and reliability of GRE scores as a measure of graduate student success, we decided to remove the GRE as an admissions requirement (see longer rationale, p. 9-10 of the self-study document).

In addition, the combination of the workforce data we are able to gather (p. 10-11 of the self-study document), the exit survey data we have from students (p. 11-13 of the self-study document) and the qualitative reports of student career success we receive (see some examples on p. 15 of the self-study document) make us confident that our students are receiving real professional value from their degree.

Results of Previous Program Reviews:

There were four challenges articulated in our last 5 year program review. Those are detailed below (with recommendations from the program review committee when appropriate)

Problem Identified	Progress
Challenge 1 - A graduate program with a professional emphasis may face pressure towards conformity with more traditional Masters programs Recommendation 1 - Give priority to professionally oriented measures of assessment, rather than theses and academic presentations by students at conferences.	We have worked to keep the focus on professionally focused masters programs in several ways (1)

Challenges 2 & 3 –
Challenge 2. The need to add a recruiting coordinator to work with employers in professional fields.
Challenge 3. The need for career placement and advising at the university level

Recommendation 3 - Recruit a larger applicant pool. When resources become available for additional staff positions, hire a professional staff member to help with recruiting.

The MPC program first started enrolling students in 2011-2012. After enrolling 22 majors in 2011-2012, we increased to 43 majors (spread over the two "years" of the program) by 2012-2013.

Enrollment remained relatively steady for the first few years. We experienced a small dip in enrollment in the 2015-2016 school year.

(1) In 2016, the MPC program worked with Weber State Marketing and Communication to rework our marketing/advertising to spread beyond the initial pent-up demand for our program with great success. Since that time, major counts have increased to at or over 50 students a year, which is the highest number of students we feel we can accommodate as a program without additional resources. Additionally, our application numbers, incoming student GPAs and rejection rates (see Chart on p. 7 titled "Evidence of ongoing demand for the program/ Admissions Chart") indicate that we have healthy enrollment and that we are able to maintain selective admission

(2) We have continued these and other marketing efforts to ensure our applicant pool remains of high quality. We have paid for and run ads in the WSU Student newspaper; we help sponsor the annual Utah Public Relations Society of America conference/awards every year; we attend graduate school fairs throughout the state of Utah, etc.

(3) We regularly feature student and alumni success stories on our MPC Social Media pages. We encourage current and former students to recommend the program to colleagues and friends.

We will continue to watch admissions numbers and engage in these efforts going forward.

(4) However, despite asking for funding for additional staff/ a recruiter at the college level, we have been told that resource is not available. Recruitment, admissions and advising is still entirely handled by the Program Director and the

	has expressed willingness to work with graduate students as part of the university's overall career services resources.
Challenge 4 - The need to work with faculty in other/emerging WSU Masters' programs to ensure that there is not too much overlap between the programs	(1) We continue to foster strong relationships with Masters programs on campus. (2) Our students regularly take electives from the MBA, MEd and MENG programs. We allow students from other programs to take our classes as electives as well. We updated our electives in 2019 in partnership with directors of other Masters programs to continue to support our program and encourage interdisciplinary study when it would benefit our students. (3) We actively participate in conversation at graduate council with new/emerging Masters programs to try and encourage all programs to have a unique identity. We are not feeling overly threatened by any new/emerging Masters programs on campus.

Information Regarding Current Review Team Members:
Dr. Jared Colton, Associate Professor of Technical Communication & Rhetoric at Utah State University and Director of Graduate Studies for Technical Communication & Rhetoric programs. jared.colton@usu.edu
Dr. Donna Davis, Associate Professor of Strategic Communication at University of Oregon at Portland and director of the Master of Strategic Communication program. dzdavis@uoregon.edu
Dr. Shaun Hansen, Associate Professor of Business Administration at Weber State University and director of the Master of Business Administration program. shaunhansen1@weber.edu