

# The Instructional (Academic Affairs)

## Program Review Narrative Report

### 1. College: Berkeley City College

Discipline, Department or Program: *COMMUNICATION (Dept. Arts and Cultural Studies)*

Date: November 5, 2012

Members of the Instructional Program Review Team: Dr. Laura Ruberto (Dept. co-chair) and Dr. Cora Leighton

### 2. Narrative Description of the Discipline, Department or Program:

#### Department Description:

The Department of Arts and Cultural Studies was formed in Fall 2008 out of a number of pre-existing departments and programs. The reorganization offers a cohesive grouping to inter-related programs, it offers more visibility to the smaller disciplines housed within it, and it promotes students' interdisciplinary perspective on culture, critical theory, and the visual and performing arts. The department is divided into distinct disciplines and programs all within the liberal and applied arts, including: Art History, Communication, Humanities (Film Studies, Religious Studies, Liberal Arts), Music, Philosophy, and Studio Art (Mural Art, Figure Drawing, Painting, etc.). Together these programs all support BCC's overall goals, missions, and ILOs.

#### Communication Discipline Description

The discipline of Communication is represented at Berkeley City College by a series of core communication courses. These courses are structured as primarily transfer classes and as such focus not only on the major lines of inquiry within communication (rhetoric and speech) but also on strengthening general educational skills such as critical thinking, student writing, and student study skills. Communication 1A, the basic communication course, does an excellent job providing students with basic public speaking skills and also providing them with a foundation regarding rhetorical principles used in most professional settings. Communication courses at BCC are part of cohort programs at the college (i.e. PACE ). The majority of sections of Communication classes offered at the college are those classes required of students for transfer through IGETC, primarily Introduction to Speech and Interpersonal Communication, but also including Public Speaking, Persuasion/Critical Thinking, and the Dynamics of Group Discussion. Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Oral Interpretation of Literature are elective classes. We are beginning the process to implement the AA-T in Communication at BCC. We have a new, contract faculty member as of Fall 2012.

### **Recommendations**

-Review existing curriculum, develop more online courses and implement the AA-T in Communication.

### **3. Curriculum**

The Communication curriculum is current and effective, reflecting recent trends within the discipline and keeping in mind the changing needs of BCC's student.

The majority of sections of Communication classes offered at the college are those classes required of students for transfer through IGETC, primarily Introduction to Speech and Interpersonal Communication, but also including Public Speaking, Persuasion/Critical Thinking, and the Dynamics of Group Discussion. Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Oral Interpretation of Literature are elective classes.

-The curriculum is current and effective, but could benefit from three adjustments.

1. The Communication SLOs need to be revised for most of the classes. The current (new Fall 2012) full-time faculty member has been working with the assessment committee to revise the SLOs and has a time frame to complete that work before the start of Spring 2013. Adjusting the SLOs will help to ensure that classes with similar content are distinct. For example, COMM 1A (Introduction to Speech) and COMM 45 (Public Speaking) have almost identical SLOs but are different courses. Adjusting the SLOs will help to ensure appropriate and equal preparation for all students.

2. Second, the curriculum is currently very basic. Although this helps students to fulfill the basic needs in terms of transfer, it does nothing to stimulate students' minds. Additionally, it does not address students who may be opting for the AA as their terminal degree. The curriculum should be expanded by adding classes that involve some deeper theoretical concepts. Again, the current full-time instructor is in the process of proposing new classes.

3. Lastly, technology advancements would help bring the curriculum into the 21st century. First, online courses would help to serve students with geographical and time conflicts with face-to-face classes. Additionally, public speaking courses would benefit greatly from dedicated public speaking labs. These labs should include computers and screens for power-point presentations as well as cameras within projectors so as to video the speeches.

### **Recommendations**

- One course release time for two semesters for the new contract faculty to updated course outlines and SLOs, as per above.

-A dedicated Speech Technology lab

## **4. Instruction:**

Each classroom at BCC is equipped with the latest in video projection and internet access. This allows communication instructors to demonstrate on-line research skills to students. Also, given the proliferation of multi-media presentations in the professional world, students now have the ability to practice those skills in a classroom setting. Finally, the ability to incorporate on-line resources in the classroom provides a flexibility in accessing and sharing content.

Communication instructors hold students to the highest standards. Given communication skills are noted as vital for personal and professional advancements, the faculty strive to teach these skills as part of an individual's basic life experiences. Course syllabus are annually shared and reviewed to help maintain department consistency.

Multiple sections of the same course are offered at different times of the day/week (as well as through distant education) in order to meet the needs of students with diverse schedules.

All instructors are actively involved with service to the college—from attending department meetings, to sitting on committees, to participating in Title III and other important initiatives.

Moreover, the contract instructor and the part time instructors remain active in their respective scholarly disciplines beyond their work at BCC. They are each, as individuals, connected to larger academic communities (both within and beyond community colleges). They frequently attend conferences, present papers, and publish articles. Many of our part-time instructors hold other positions, including teaching other colleges and universities where they are likewise involved in disciplinary conversations about pedagogy and scholarship.

The program has a new, first-year tenure-track instructor. The program has also kept up with the evaluation of part-timers and the prioritized hiring pool.

## **Recommendations**

- Keep COM 1A/COM 45 enrollment at a maximum of 30 students, in order to provide enough time for all students to practice their public speaking skills. Music instructors should be encouraged to stay active in their fields and take advantage of any available funding (staff development) to attend discipline-specific conferences or enroll in disciplinary professional associations, etc.
- Communication instructors should be encouraged to stay active in their fields and take advantage of any available funding (staff development) to attend discipline-specific conferences or enroll in disciplinary professional associations, etc.
- Communication instructors should be supported and encouraged to incorporate new media and new pedagogical methods into their teaching through proper administrative support of such training and implementation.

- Communication instructors should be encouraged and supported to continue to meet regularly in order to exchange ideas and teaching approaches..
- Work with counselors and BCC's PIO to improve the marketing of the course offerings.

## **5. Student Success:**

Review of attached data shows the following trends:

Productivity rates have been steady, even with the cuts to sections and the fact that we have had uneven full-time instruction (we have a new full-time instructor who started Fall 2012 but we had a resignation of a tenure-track contract faculty two years ago).

Our persistence rates and success rates are not only consistent but they have increased to 85% retention and 76% success. With our new contract faculty and the revision of SLOs and assessment rotations, we will be mindful of this increase in the hope of keeping the numbers steady.

Course outlines need to be reviewed and updated (including SLOs)— the new full-time instructor has begun this process and is working with the assessment and curriculum committees to review the materials.

Assessment of the courses began in Fall 2010.

### **Recommendations.**

- Complete assessment—administrative assistance and/or release time for instructors to work on this is important.
- Review all course outlines—release time would be beneficial
- Work with counselors to better connect students to appropriate courses
- Improve the marketing of the course offerings.

## **6. Human and Physical Resources (including equipment and facilities)**

Each classroom at BCC is equipped with the latest in video projection and internet access. This allows communication instructors to demonstrate on-line research skills to students. Also, given the proliferation of multi-media presentations in the professional world, students now have the ability to practice those skills in a classroom setting. Finally, the ability to

incorporate on-line resources in the classroom provides a flexibility in accessing and sharing content.

**DEDICATED LAB:** public speaking courses would benefit greatly from dedicated public speaking labs. These labs should include computers and screens for power-point presentations as well as cameras within projectors so as to video the speeches.

The BCC Library is very supportive of the program with online links and other aids for our classes. However, more communication books should be added to the catalogue and a subscription to JSTOR would be beneficial.

### **Recommendations**

- a Dedicated Speaking Lab is needed.
- All Communication courses should be offered in 2050 Center Street unless offsite locations have current technology easily accessible in the classroom.
- We would like to have appropriate Communication texts available in the BCC library. The library also should be funded adequately so that it can get a subscription to JSTOR.

## **7. Community Outreach and Articulation**

The Program in communication ensures that the curriculum responds to the needs of the constituencies that it serves by keeping into close communication with the four-year public and private universities within our service area. The new instructor is beginning to work with local performance spaces, projects and venues to find new ways to get students involved in the curriculum.

Since the majority of our instructors teach part-time at other colleges and universities, they bring those experiencing to BCC as well.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to find ways to collaborate and dialogue with four-year universities, community organizations, high schools, and private and non-profit institutions.

## **8. BUDGET-RELATED QUESTIONS:**

*a. If your department experienced a reduction in resources, describe the impact of that reduction on the overall educational quality of your unit and the College.*

Because we had had steady but careful growth in the years prior to budget cuts we have been able to cut sections with minimal impact. We were able to cut sections but keep a diversity of offerings (i.e., juggling daytime and night time and online offerings, create a rotation, etc.). Nevertheless, the impact was felt by students who turn to our classes to fulfill basic transfer needs (especially with COM 1A)—we were not always able to meet those student's needs.

*b. How does the department plan to sustain the quality of instruction and/or services offered through your department in the current environment of reduced resource?*

We will continue to offer courses on a rotation when necessary and cut multiple sections when necessary. We will advocate for the need for BCC to have its basic GE transfer disciplines all represented by at least one full-time instructor per discipline before expanding other programs or starting new ones (i.e., for careful and steady growth). We are fortunate to now have a new full-time instructor who can assist in this careful growth plan.

*c. What does the department recommend that the college do to maintain quality educational programs and services?*

- a. Hiring of full-time faculty in each core collegiate discipline which does not currently have a full-time faculty member before further growth of new or existing programs.
- b. Focus on success and retention with AA-Ts
- c. Focus on 4 year institution preparation and transfer skills
- d. Hiring of more dedicated counselors
- e. Hiring of an Academic Dean
- f. Faculty advising with stipend/ release time and training
- g. Sabbaticals for Faculty
- h. Assess interdisciplinary programs for effectiveness
- i. Development of a Transfer committee to oversee specific transfer needs

