

**Collin County Community College District
APPLICATION FOR SABBATICAL LEAVE**

Instructions

Please complete this application by responding to **all** items. Attach requested documentation (in the order requested) and secure the appropriate signatures prior to submitting the application to the chair of the Sabbatical Leave Committee. Please submit the original and 10 copies.

Name Kerry Byrnes-Loinette CWID 100066204

Title Professor, Communication Studies Division Academic Affairs

Have you ever been granted a sabbatical? NO If yes: Dates of Prior Sabbatical(s): _____
Please provide a brief description of your previous sabbatical project:

Sabbatical Leave Period Being Requested

Dates: Beginning Date Jan. 2019 Ending Date May 2019

Length: [☒] One semester [☐] Two semesters Other _____

Applicant's Agreement

ABSTRACT

Please give a summary description of the project and its significance in improving teaching and learning at Collin College. Please use language that can be readily understood by persons in areas of expertise other than your own. **PLEASE DO NOT EXCEED SPACE PROVIDED BELOW.**

The purpose of the proposed project is to align the program-level learning outcomes of the certificate in the communication studies field of study (FOS) to the learning outcomes formulated and disseminated by the National Communication Association (NCA). Program-level outcomes address what a graduate, or a student who has completed coursework and earned a credential, should know and be able to do. To achieve this purpose several steps will be conducted including: 1. Reading materials about assessment and student-centered learning; 2. Create and distribute surveys, that are informed by the readings, to faculty and students to determine perceptions of the program-level learning outcomes and the learning outcomes created by NCA; 3. Analyze survey results and determine program-level outcomes; 4. Create curriculum map(s) that align courses to the program-level outcomes; 5. Share results with faculty; 6. Invite faculty to assignment creation workshops; and 7. Disseminate information in a publication.

If granted a sabbatical leave by Collin County Community College District (Collin College), I agree to return to Collin College for one full year upon completion of the sabbatical leave. I further agree to abide by the Sabbatical Leave Contract, and Sabbatical Leave Policies and Guidelines.

Applicant: _____

Date: 12-7-17

Title: Aligning and Mapping the Communication Studies Field of Study to The National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication

1. Specific Objectives and Procedure:

The purpose of the proposed project is to align the program-level learning outcomes of the certificate in the communication studies field of study (FOS) to the learning outcomes formulated and disseminated by the National Communication Association (NCA). Program-level outcomes address what a student should know, understand, and be able to do when they finish a degree. Students can be awarded a certificate in the communication studies FOS with emphasis in one of four sub-areas of study. These sub-areas include a) Advertising/Public Relations; b) General Communication; c) Journalism/Mass Communication; and d) Radio and Television Broadcasting/Broadcast Journalism. Currently, Collin College has four program-level outcomes for the communication studies FOS that apply to all of the sub-areas. The current program-level outcomes are documented in Appendix A.

In order to complete alignment of Collin's program-level outcomes to the NCA's learning outcomes, several steps will be used including:

- A. First, learn more about learning systems paradigm which encourages curricular decisions to be student-centered
- B. Second, grow faculty awareness about the National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication
- C. Third, include students and faculty in discussions of curriculum and learning outcomes through surveys
- D. Fourth, generate a curriculum map (or multiple maps) for the certificate in communication studies FOS that align Collin's current curriculum and national standards for learning outcomes
- E. Fifth, invite faculty to assignment creation workshops that will provide information on producing assignments that align to and assess learning outcomes
- F. Sixth, produce a manuscript for publication – outlets considered will be *Communication Teacher*, *Communication Education*, and/or the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*

These steps are guided by the notion that the purpose of assessment is to improve student learning (Aitken & Neer, 1992). Because teaching is inherently collaborative, I will gather information from a number of sources (Steps A and C above). After reading and preparing surveys, I will distribute surveys to the communication studies faculty. The survey will include two sections. First, they will be asked about the current program level outcomes. Second, the survey will ask for their perceptions of NCA's LOCs (Steps B and C above). As this project is informed by a student-centered approach, I will also survey students in communication studies courses (Step C above). The student survey will ask students to identify what they expect to learn from their communication studies course. I will then analyze data and use it to determine the program-level outcomes for the certificate in the communication FOS. During this time, I will also determine, from faculty and student input, if program-level outcomes need to be tailored to each of the sub-areas within the communication FOS. Using this information, I will then create a curriculum map that aligns the FOS to the learning outcomes previously identified (Step D above). Once mapped, the results will be shared with faculty. At this time, faculty will be asked for input regarding the curriculum. Discussions in this stage are directly connected to the results gathered but they have potential to include topics such as potential additions to curriculum and/or expansion of curriculum offerings. The faculty will then be invited to assignment creation workshops (Step E above). The assignment creation workshops will work to align curriculum, pedagogy, assessments, and assignments to not only course-level learning outcomes but also to the program-level learning outcomes that have been generated. As a result of this process, I will create a manuscript for publication in *Communication Teacher*, *Communication Education*, and/or the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* that addresses the specific process and data used in this sabbatical (Step F above).

2. Rationale and Significance:

The communication studies discipline, guided by task forces in conjunction with the National Communication Association, has made concentrated efforts to identify learning competencies in the introductory communication course (Engleberg, 2016; Engleberg et al., 2017) and, on a larger level, program-level learning outcomes (Backlund et al., 2011). The proposed project will extend the work of NCA and their focus on program-level learning outcomes by reviewing current Collin College program-level learning outcomes in the communication FOS certificate and aligning them to national, discipline-specific standards of learning.

The National Communication Association began the work of developing a standardized set of learning outcomes that seek to answer what a student who completes a program of study in a communication studies should know, understand, and be able to do (National Communication Association, 2015). The LOCs were created in 2015 and are now being implemented by departments. The LOCs are adaptable to departments and programs. They do not need to be adopted in total; rather, a department should work to determine which of the outcomes best aligns with what is done at and valued by the specific institution. The community college may only be able to use a portion of the outcomes as students are receiving instruction in first-and second-year courses (Tucker, Byrnes-Loinette, & Bodary, 2017). Appendix B contains the nine LOCs that departments can use to guide program-level learning outcomes.

The LOCs are “specifically tailored to assist departments in the enhancement of teaching and learning and in the assessment of curriculum design and implementation” (National Communication Association, 2015, p. 5). Additionally, Brown, Castor, Byrnes-Loinette, Bowman, and McBride (2016) indicated that the LOCs support a student-centered approach to instruction because they encourage departments to think critically about the student and what skills he/she should leave a program with. Moreover, they stated that “the acquisition of knowledge is the result of thoughtful and deliberate classroom pedagogy where assignments and learning outcomes are considered in tandem” (p. 494). Adopting the LOCs as program-level outcomes is a natural fit for a college that prides itself on serving students first. The proposed project embraces the student first mentality by pushing the department to consider the curricula taught, the pedagogy and assessments practiced, and the assignments used to measure learning.

The current Collin College FOS program-level learning outcomes have several areas for improvement. First, learning outcomes should be single declarative ideas. Several of the outcomes contain multiple ideas within a single outcome (see, for example, Outcome 1, 3, and 4). Second, there is a lack of focus on the sub-areas. The current outcomes account for the certificate in the communication FOS and fail to recognize specific nuances that are associated with studying, for example, advertising, interpersonal communication, or journalism. These industries are unique in their demands, type of work, and needed credentials. It is possible that more focused learning outcomes are needed that speak to the particulars of the sub-areas within the communication studies certificate. Third, the current outcomes can be refined to be more specific (see, for example, 1, 2, 3, and 4). Some of the current outcomes are too general in their language (see, for example, outcome 2). As a result of a more specific outcome, the assessment of the outcome becomes easier to measure. Finally, there is a lack of focus on the program-level of learning and more of a focus on an outcome that would be associated with a specific course (see, for example, outcome 2 and 4). The outcomes should be focused on the demonstration and application of knowledge and skills as a result of a complete program, not through the taking of one class.

Taken collectively, this project is significant in that it extends the work of the National Communication Association’s efforts to align student learning outcomes in communication programs. It will also include faculty and students in the decision-making processes to increase the number of people talking about curriculum and student learning outcomes. Once decisions are made, it can identify gaps in the curriculum and determine if students need additional learning experiences. Finally, it can align curriculum, pedagogy, and assignments to student learning outcomes at the course and program-level.

3. Relationship to Previous Work:

NCA received a half million dollar national grant from the Lumina Foundation to support the process of forming, developing, and articulating the learning outcomes, and I was one of the 30 competitively selected faculty to participate in the process. Since the completion of the two-year work, I have presented at regional and national conferences and published about the LOCs. Specifically, I have presented about assignment creation, hosted workshops on curriculum mapping and aligning, and co-published articles focusing on how community colleges can use the LOCs in their programs. The proposed project takes my previous involvement and work with the LOCs and puts them into practice at the college.

4. Timetable:

Phase 1: January 2019

In this phase, I will be reading and preparing survey materials. The proposed reading list is attached. The texts have been selected for a variety of reasons. First, the Jankowski and Marshall (2017) text was selected because both authors worked with and guided NCA and the task force as we created the LOCs. Additionally, their text echoes the notion that students need to be considered when making curriculum decisions. The Banta and Palomba (2015) text will serve as a guide for outlining and conducting phases 2, 3, and 4 of this proposal. The Suskie (2009) and Houser and Hosek (2018) will serve as tools for assignment creation and curricular alignments.

Phase 2: February 2019

In this phase, I will begin the collaborative efforts. I will distribute surveys to faculty and students. The surveys will be informed by the readings completed in phase 1. Additionally, I will ask survey questions that gather faculty perceptions of the NCA LOCs and students' expectations for knowledge obtained in communication courses. As a result of these collaborative efforts, we will be able to identify which program-level outcomes we, as a communication studies department, want our graduates to know, understand, and be able to do.

Phase 3: March 2019

In this phase, I will create the curriculum maps. I will distribute the curriculum maps to faculty and institutional services for feedback. I will edit work based on their suggestions. A curriculum map for each of the sub-areas in the certificate will be generated. That is, during this time, I will be working reflexively between the curriculum maps and survey data obtained in phase 2 to determine which NCA LOCs best align with our curriculum and departmental perceptions of the program. I will also schedule meetings with individuals in Academic Services to ensure all standards and curriculum are being met.

Phase 4: April 2019

In this phase, I will host faculty workshops that highlight assessment and assignment creation and alignment with course-specific learning outcomes and larger field of studies LOCs. These workshops will be supported by the curriculum maps made in phase 3. I will share the curriculum maps with faculty, discuss in-class assessments that can be used to gather information about student learning, and share information about how to create graded assignments. The discussion will be guided by the Teaching Goals Inventory (Angelo & Cross, 1993).

Phase 5: May 2019

I will write an article for publication in *Communication Teacher*, *Communication Education*, and/or the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* that outlines the process, results from data collection, and the subsequent methods use to align and map program-level outcomes.

5. Benefit to The College:

The benefits to the college are multifaceted. First, upon completion of the sabbatical, I will have developed a process for alignment program outcomes to national learning outcomes. The proposed process can be duplicated by others in the college. Second, the sub-areas within the communication FOS will have been mapped to curriculum. With this map, faculty are able to determine when/if current curriculum provides students an opportunity to learn, demonstrate, and be assessed on a learning outcome. Third, the map will provide guidance for assessment and assignment creation that will ensure students have the opportunity to learn. Fourth, because this project incorporates faculty and student voices, it provides a unique opportunity to cultivate discussions among multiple audiences. Finally, while the proposal benefits the communication studies faculty and program, having a strong academic curriculum can serve to strengthen the growing workforce programs. Specifically, as new workforce programs are developed and seek to include core courses, the communication studies department is particularly situated to advise others about the course that can best serve their students.

Appendix A:
Current Collin College Certificate in Communication Studies Program-Level Outcomes

Current Program-Level Learning Outcome #1: Evaluate communication artifacts against a field-appropriate set of standards and construct a competent critique.

Current Program-Level Learning Outcome #2: Demonstrate effective collaboration skills in small group interaction.

Current Program-Level Learning Outcome #3: Apply the communication model to relevant communication situations and analyze vulnerabilities in those contexts

Current Program-Level Learning Outcome #4: Create a presentation appropriate to the communication context and deliver it to field-appropriate standards.

Appendix B:
National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication (LOCs)

LOC #1: Describe the Communication discipline and its central questions

- Explain the origins of the Communication discipline
- Summarize the broad nature of the Communication discipline
- Categorize the various career pathways for students of Communication
- Articulate the importance of communication expertise in career development and civic engagement
- Examine contemporary debates within the field
- Distinguish the Communication discipline from related areas of study
- Identify with intellectual specialization(s) in the Communication discipline

LOC #2: Employ Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts

- Explain Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Synthesize Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Apply Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts
- Critique Communication theories, perspectives, principles, and concepts

LOC #3: Engage in Communication inquiry

- Interpret Communication scholarship
- Evaluate Communication scholarship
- Apply Communication scholarship
- Formulate questions appropriate for Communication scholarship
- Engage in Communication scholarship using the research traditions of the discipline
- Differentiate between various approaches to the study of Communication
- Contribute to scholarly conversations appropriate to the purpose of inquiry

LOC #4: Create messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context

- Locate and use information relevant to the goals, audiences, purposes and contexts
- Select creative and appropriate modalities and technologies to accomplish communicative goals
- Adapt messages to the diverse needs of individuals, groups and contexts
- Present messages in multiple communication modalities and contexts
- Adjust messages while in the process of communicating
- Critically reflect on one's own messages after the communication event

LOC #5: Critically analyze messages

- Identify meanings embedded in messages
- Articulate characteristics of mediated and non-mediated messages
- Recognize the influence of messages
- Engage in active listening
- Enact mindful responding to messages

LOC #6: Demonstrate the ability to accomplish communicative goals (self-efficacy)

- Identify contexts, situations and barriers that impede communication self-efficacy
- Perform verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that illustrate self-efficacy
- Articulate personal beliefs about abilities to accomplish communication goals
- Evaluate personal communication strengths and weaknesses

LOC #7: Apply ethical communication principles and practices

- Identify ethical perspectives
- Explain the relevance of various ethical perspectives
- Articulate the ethical dimensions of a communication situation
- Choose to communicate with ethical intention
- Propose solutions for (un)ethical communication
- Evaluate the ethical elements of a communication situation

LOC #8: Utilize communication to embrace difference

- Articulate the connection between communication and culture
- Recognize individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Appreciate individual and cultural similarities and differences
- Respect diverse perspectives and the ways they influence communication
- Articulate one's own cultural standpoint and how it affects communication and world view
- Demonstrate the ability to be culturally self-aware
- Adapt one's communication in diverse cultural contexts

LOC #9: Influence public discourse

- Explain the importance of communication in civic life
- Identify the challenges facing communities and the role of communication in resolving those challenges
- Frame local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Evaluate local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Utilize communication to respond to issues at the local, national, and/or global level
- Advocate a course of action to address local, national and/or global issues from a Communication perspective
- Empower individuals to promote human rights, human dignity and human freedom

References

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- Angelo, T. A. & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Backlund, P., Bach, B., Procopio, C., Johnston, D., Mello, B., & Sypher, H. (2011). NCA program review standards: Background, application, and data. *Communication Education*, 60, 279-295.
- Brown, T. J., Castor, T., Byrnes-Loinette, K., Bowman, J., & McBride, C. (2016). The LOCs and the shift to student-centered learning. *Communication Education*, 65, 493-495.
- Engleberg, I. N. (2016). The case for core competencies in introductory communication courses. *Review of Communication*, 16, 151-161.
- Engleberg, I. N., Ward, S. A., Disbrow, L. M., Katt, J. A., Myers, S. A., & O'Keefe, P. (2017). The development of a set of core communication competencies for introductory communication courses. *Communication Education*, 66, 1-18.
- National Communication Association. (2015). *What should a graduate with a communication degree, know, understand, and be able to do?* Retrieved December 1, 2017 from https://www.natcom.org/sites/default/files/publications/LOC_1_What_Should_a_Graduate_with_a_Communication_Degree.pdf.
- Tucker, M., Byrnes-Loinette, K., & Bodary, D. (2017). Articulating and utilizing communication studies learning outcomes in the community college. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. DOI: 10.1080/10668926.2017.1289865

Proposed Reading List

- Banta, T. W., & Palomba, C. A. (2015). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Houser, M. L., & Hosek, A. M. (Eds). (2018). *Handbook of instructional communication: Rhetorical and relational perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jankowski, N. A. & Marshall, D. W. (2017). *Degrees that matter: Moving higher education to a learning systems paradigm*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Suskie, L. (2009). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.