



C U Y A M A C A
• C O L L E G E •

Comprehensive Program Review Report

Academic - Communication (COMM) - (AHSS)

Program Goals

Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion (Goal 1)

Program Goal: Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion

Goal Status: Active

Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success:** Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion (X)
- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion (X)
- **Increase Equitable Access:** Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion (X)
- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Communicator Tutor Program Assessment and Expansion (X)

Summary of Progress or Results

Summary Date: 09/19/2024

Summary of Progress or Results: TBD

Reporting Period: 2024 - 2025

Status: In Progress - will carry forward into next year

Action steps for this academic year.:

Our action steps for next year are as follows: Create a feedback questionnaire each semester to administer to the tutorial staff and to students who have used tutoring services. For students, questionnaires would include closed and open ended questions to measure the type and extent of help students sought, whether the tutor times were convenient and sufficient, the degree to which working with a tutor may have reduced their apprehension, and the degree to which they felt services affected their earned grade. Questions for the tutor would be designed to assess any problems the tutor encountered working with students and how we as a department could help to mitigate those problems. We are committed to learning how we can support our tutor in her effort to tutor students.

Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (Goal 2)

Program Goal: Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program

Goal Status: Active

Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success:** Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (X)
- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (X)
- **Increase Equitable Access:** Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (X)
- **Increase Hiring and Retention of Diverse Employees:** Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (X)

Program Goals

- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Improve diversity and equity in the Communication Program (X)

Summary of Progress or Results
<p>Summary Date: 09/19/2024 Summary of Progress or Results: TBD Reporting Period: 2024 - 2025 Status: In Progress - will carry forward into next year Action steps for this academic year.: We will begin with an effort to hire both full-time and adjunct instructors who reflect the diversity of our students. We will advertise the position in a variety of publications that reach a wide variety of people. We will make sure members of the hiring committee have received the district HIRE training. We will continue to attend workshops and trainings and learn as much as we can in order to support our students.</p>

Increase innovation and currency in the field (Goal 3)

Program Goal: Increase innovation and currency in the field

Goal Status: Active

Mapping

2022 - 2028 Strategic Plan: (X)

- **Eliminate Equity Gaps in Course Success:** Increase innovation and currency in the field (X)
- **Increase Completion and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Increase innovation and currency in the field (X)
- **Increase Equitable Access:** Increase innovation and currency in the field (X)
- **Increase Hiring and Retention of Diverse Employees:** Increase innovation and currency in the field (X)
- **Increase Persistence and Eliminate Equity Gaps:** Increase innovation and currency in the field (X)

Summary of Progress or Results
<p>Summary Date: 09/20/2024 Summary of Progress or Results: TBD Reporting Period: 2024 - 2025 Status: Not Started</p>

Program Overview and Update

Lead Author

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Collaborator(s)

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Initial Collaboration Date with Program Team

08/22/2024

Dean/Manager(s)

Lauren Halsted.

Initial Collaboration Date with Dean

10/23/2024

Program Reflection and Description

Provide your program's mission statement. If your program does not have a mission statement, what is your timeline for creating a mission statement?

Communication Department Mission Statement:

The mission of the Communication Department is to provide courses that enhance students' understanding of the human communication process, promote communication competence in their personal, academic and professional lives and to ensure that students are prepared to study Communication at a four year institution.

Is the program description in the current college catalog up to date and accurate?

Yes

Describe how your program advances the College's vision of equity, excellence, and social justice through education. How does the program reflect the College's mission and values?

The faculty in the Communication Department are proud of our work to meet the College's Mission, Vision and Values. Details for how the Communication Department meet the Mission, Vision and values are below.

Cuyamaca College Vision Statement

Equity, Excellence, and Social Justice Through Education

Equity, excellence and social justice are very important to the Communication Department. We believe in training as much as we can to understand the issues our students face, and to learn the best ways to support them in our classes. Most of the instructors in our department have completed the EMTLI (Equity minded teaching and learning) course through Cuyamaca College. We have a focus on equity in all of our course outlines.

Cuyamaca College Values

- **Student-centered:** In the Communication Department, we put students first. That means we schedule our classes at days and times that work best for them. We survey our students informally to ensure that the times and days we offer classes meet their needs. We encourage our students to get involved with decision-making opportunities at the department, division and college levels by serving on committees and responding to surveys, like instructor evaluations. Then we close the loop by incorporating that feedback into what we do.
- **Equity:** As we indicated above, most of the instructors in our department have completed the EMTLI (Equity minded teaching and learning) course through Cuyamaca College. We have been teaching about cultural differences in all of our courses, since the college began offering Speech courses in the 1980s. We have a course that focuses entirely on cultural differences, called Intercultural Communication (COMM 124). In more modern times, we have modified the course so that we are more focused, not just on understanding and appreciating cultural differences, but also on recognizing privilege, bias and stereotypes and teaching students to work to overcome privilege, bias and stereotypes. We are proud to note that Intercultural Communication is one of the few courses that have been approved to meet the Diversity Graduation requirement at Cuyamaca. The following topics are included in the course:

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- Awareness of white privilege, heterosexual privilege, and other types of privilege, including how they impact non privileged groups.
- Biases, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
- Overcoming biases, stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
- The ability to code switch and adapt to a variety of communication situations.
- Ethics in intercultural communication.

We do everything we can to honor and validate our students' cultural background and cultural wealth. After the Program Review prepares data for us, we track and address equity gaps among our students. In the past, we have addressed those gaps by increasing the diversity of our texts, examples in our lectures, and supplemental material like video clips and images. We make an effort to listen to students' concerns and to address their needs. Our emphasis on equity and diversity is also evident in our partnerships with local high schools. This dual enrollment program offers students, who are not in our normal service area, an excellent opportunity to make connections with the Communication Department and with Cuyamaca College. Currently we offer Communication 122, Oral Communication, at Health Sciences High and Middle College. This program has been successful and we embrace the opportunity to add more high schools in the future. Our program allows hard working and motivated students, in a diverse and vibrant high school context, to jump start, explore, facilitate, and begin to achieve their collegiate academic goals.

· **Student Success:** Student success is the main goal of our courses. The Communication Department supports this value by offering courses that fill requirements for transfer, meet general education requirements and enhance and support educational skills for employment. The subject matter taught in all of our communication courses leads to personal enhancement and career success because students learn skills they can apply throughout their lives in both their personal and professional situations. These classes also offer students the opportunity to overcome or better manage communication fears they face when expressing themselves in both private and public contexts. This is important since, fear of public speaking is one of the top ten fears of humankind.

· **Innovation:** In the Communication Department, we value and foster creativity among students and employees. We push ourselves to get out of our comfort zone and stretch ourselves to try new things. Our adjunct instructors have been pioneers in learning and incorporating new technologies in instruction. One of our adjuncts, Brian O'Donnell has been recognized repeatedly for his work in creative ways to serve students without the use of expensive textbooks, for example. We are proud of our hybrid Public Speaking class, which takes advantage of much of what we have learned about remote instruction during the pandemic. It splits the difference between in person and online instruction and creates a perfect blend of necessary instruction in the difference between in person and online presentations, since it is clear in post pandemic times, that students need both sets of skills.

· **Excellence:** In the Communication Department, we are proud of our long tradition of excellence in instruction and student performance. We have high expectations for our students' success and we build in support to help them get there. Many of our assignments, such as the persuasive speech for example, require complex and solid skills in research, critical analysis, and organization and argument development. To help our students, we approached and elicited the help of the Academic Resource Center to recruit and train tutors specifically for our communication students. Our communication tutor has been very successful in helping students complete their required assignments in our Communication courses. The tutor has helped many of our students achieve excellence in their work.

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- **Social Justice:** In the Communication Department we acknowledge social injustices that have affected many of our students. We honor these injustices by opening conversations about privilege, bias and stereotypes in our classrooms. We listen to students and make sure we are actively supporting them and referring them to resources on and off campus.
- **Community:** The Communication Department at Cuyamaca College acknowledges and values relationships with the many diverse local communities that we serve, including indigenous, border, and international communities. We acknowledge our role within larger historical and economic contexts, including recognizing the responsibilities we have as an educational institution. We recognize our role in the cultural, educational, technological, and economic/workforce development of the communities we serve. Each May, the Communication department faculty participate in an annual Communication Summit with our colleagues from other campuses. The Communication Summit brings together the Communication Department Chairs from Communication programs at all of the community colleges in San Diego County with our colleagues from the Communication Department at San Diego State University. This meeting creates an opportunity for us to share our needs and issues with our colleagues and to learn how best to help our students to transfer to SDSU and other CSU campuses in the Communication major. We also support this college value by participating with local high schools in the community. Our department has partnered with local high schools including one which is not in our normal service area, to give students the opportunity to take public speaking courses to jump start their college education and make connections with the Communication Department and the College. The program has been valuable for the students and for the department. Currently we are partnering with Health Sciences High and Middle College and we are excited about approaching additional high school campuses to extend our program and course offering to them in the future.
- **Mutual Respect:** It is important to the Communication Department that we honor and value students' and employees' diverse talents and cultural capital by focusing on kindness, empathy, and compassion in every interaction. We make an effort to create safe, supportive, and equitable spaces to ensure all voices and perspectives, especially those from historically marginalized or excluded groups, can participate and share their insights, experiences, and feedback. Specifically, in Intercultural Communication for example, students are asked to conduct an interview with a person from a culture or co-culture to which they do not belong. Students report information obtained from the interview orally in class and the entire class has the opportunity to address report information obtained from the interview orally in class and the entire class has the opportunity to discuss privilege, biases and stereotypes as well as other misconceptions. They learn and discuss ways to interact more respectfully with those who hold divergent perspectives. Also, in our classrooms and office windows we proudly display safe spaces posters and make ourselves available to discuss issues with students. Faculty in our Department were instrumental in bringing gender neutral bathrooms to our campus to help secure the psychological and physical safety for members of our LGBTQ community. With our college community the Communication Department has been very active in presenting issues involving diversity or improving social harmony with colleagues via our Professional Development presentation offerings. We have lead workshops on conflict resolution in personal and professional contexts, effective listening skills, appropriate self-disclosure, gender differences in communication, managing effective meetings, Safe Zones workshops, and this semester a workshop on communicating about grief and loss

Curriculum Review and Development

Have all of your active course outlines been reviewed within the last five years?

Yes

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Please list any planned changes from the current semester forward for curriculum (courses, degrees, and/or certificates) and the rationale for those changes.

The Communication curriculum has been through quite a few changes over the past year. The changes are a result of the new California state legislative-mandated changes to the GE package. The legislature has mandated that the separate GE patterns for the University of California system and the Cal State University system be combined into one new pattern, called Cal-GETC. The traditional Public Speaking class (COMM 122) has met the oral communication requirement at CSU campuses for many years. In order to get the course to meet the new standards, in a combined effort with our colleagues at Grossmont, we revised our COMM 122 course significantly to (hopefully) meet the Oral Communication requirement for Cal-GETC. The public speaking course is a good fit, but our Interpersonal Communication course (COMM 120) is a little more of a longshot. It has been approved to meet the CSU Oral Communication requirement for many years, but is not a natural fit for the new Cal-GETC requirement. At the urging of our articulation officers, we also revised COMM 120 and have submitted it for acceptance by Cal-GETC. We will not be able to submit COMM 120 and 122 for consideration until December of 2024. We are hopeful that both will be accepted. We revised and submitted our COMM 145 (Argumentation and Debate) course to meet the critical thinking requirement in the new Cal-GETC GE pattern. Both Grossmont and Cuyamaca had our COMM 145 courses initially rejected, but we are currently revising it and hope to resubmit during this fall 2024 semester. Wish us luck! We also recently—in conjunction with our counterparts at Grossmont, have revised COMM 122 once again, to comply with the Common Course Numbering legislation. It has been a busy year for curriculum changes.

For Transfer Programs: How is your program meeting the transfer needs of students, and/or articulation with four-year institutions? If not a transfer program, please enter N/A

As we mentioned earlier, we have been working hard to make sure our core GE courses continue to meet requirements for the institutions that our students are transferring to. We currently have three courses that have been significantly revised to meet the new requirements for the new Cal-GETC GE pattern. We are submitting COMM 120 and COMM 122 for the Oral Communication requirement and COMM 145 to meet the critical thinking requirement. We are hoping all three will be approved for the 2025 academic year.

For Career Education Programs: How is your program meeting labor market demand and preparing students to enter the workforce? If not a career education program, please enter N/A

N/A

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Assessment

What do your SLO data suggest about student experiences, successes, and challenges in your service area?

Course	201- S23	Column F23	Col S24	15-16 F24	Column S25	Col F25	16-17 S26	Column F26	Col S27	17-18 F27	Col S28	Col F28	18-1 S29	Colu F29
Comm110 1,2,3	X				X				X				X	
Comm 120 1,2,3,4		X				X				X				X
Comm 122 1,2,3			X				X				X			
Comm 123 1,2,3,4				X				X				X		
Comm 124 1,2,3		X				X			X					X
Comm 137 1,2,3	X				X				X				X	
Comm 145 1,2,3			X				X				X			
Prog Level SLOs (same for both degrees) 1,2,3,4,5,6,7				X				X				X		

Looking at the SLO assessment data is enlightening in many ways. We were alarmed to note that one of the courses in our discipline, COMM 110: Introduction to Mass Communication has not been assessed since 2014, even though we offer it every semester. There is only one section of the course and it is taught by one instructor. We need to exercise more oversight over the assessments to make sure the data are being submitted every semester. For COMM 120: Interpersonal Communication, the pass rates for our SLO assessments for the most part met our goal. For SLO #1, for one section, the pass rate was only 70%. The instructor who teaches that course hypothesized that the rate was a little lower in that section, because the assessment was part of a discussion Board assignment. The instructor speculates that students were not passing the assessment due to lack of replies, rather than a lack of understanding of the material. As a result, the instructor plans to change the assessment to an exam question, so that the assessment will be based on content.

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Share an example of meaningful, innovative, equitable, and/or student-centered SLO assessment happening in your program.

One of our assessments that is both innovative and student centered is from COMM 124: Intercultural Communication. The assessment is for SLO #1, which is "Compare and contrast one's own culture and communication style with those from other cultures." The assessment asks students to successfully complete the immigrant interview paper, which is a paper that requires students to interview an immigrant with a different cultural background from their own. Students report significant insights after writing the paper. They express a renewed compassion for others. Many students were not aware of the struggles faced by our Chaldean students (Iraqi immigrants), many of whom have suffered loss during the War in Iraq. One student shared her experience of living through a bombing that took both of her children and her own eyesight. As a result of this assignment, students expressed a much deeper understanding of the cultural experiences of others. Our most recent data (Spring 2021) show a 95% pass rate for SLO#1.

Discuss how your SLO data are being used for course and/or program improvements for student retention, success, and/or goal achievement.

We saw significant improvement in COMM 122: Public Speaking for SLO#1: Analyze a communication situation, including audience, occasion, purpose; and selection of subject matter. The last data we had, from Spring 2020 showed a low pass rate (60%). At our next department meeting in Fall of 2020, we discussed the way this content is being taught in our classes. We shared ideas, and revised our approach to the topic. The latest data show our pass rate for SLO#1 at 90%. We are pleased to see this improvement and plan to continue the new approach to teaching the unit on audience analysis.

Degree and Certificate Programs

For each degree and certificate indicate how many awards were conferred in the past five years. Please comment on any trends and provide context to explain any increases or decreases.

The Communication Program has both an local AA Degree and an AA-T degree. We have not awarded many of our local AA degrees over the past 5 years. Our AA-T Degree has been much more popular. See the chart below for details. I am including Communication and Language Arts data in the chart, but not in our totals, as they involve other subjects in addition to Communication. The data do not reveal any notable trends, except that it appears we were awarding many more degrees in 2019-2020, a total of 16. Whereas in the most recent year that data are available (2023-2024), we awarded only 6 degrees. My best guess is that our numbers were affected by the lack of enrollment we had on campus between 2020 and 2022. The pandemic had a significant impact on enrollments during that time. We are finally (in the Fall 2024 semester) seeing our in-person enrollments fully recover. There will likely continue to be a lag in degree numbers for the next couple of years as we continue to be affected by the low enrollments during the pandemic. It is also worth noting that we revised the AA-T degree in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. We did not award any AA-T 2.0 degrees until the 2023-2024 fiscal year. We will see those numbers increase and the old AA-T degree numbers decrease over the next couple of years.

	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	TOTAL
AA	1	2	1	0	1	5
AA-T	15	11	9	5	3	43
AA-T 2.0	0	0	0	0	3	3
GS- Comm&LA	6	8	11	3	5	33
US-CSU-Comm&LA	10	10	7	10	8	45
US-IGETC-Comm&LA	2	0	2	4	1	9

Indicate when each degree and certificate was last reviewed and updated (semester), if this information is available (e.g., via internal program records or Curriculum Committee minutes).

Both our AA Degree and our AA-T were revised in the spring 2023 semester.

Can students complete the degree/certificate requirements within a two-year period?

Yes

How is your program currently assessing its PLOs? Please select all that apply.

SLO-to-PLO Mapping

Direct assessment (e.g., capstone course project)

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Please provide the following for each degree/certificate: ? The most recent semester each of your program(s) assessed PLOs; ? Brief summary of findings; and ? Overview of changes made as a result.

PLOs are being assessed this current (Fall 2024) semester for both our AA Degree and our AA-T degree. As I look at eh SLO assessment data, I do not see when the PLOs were last assessed. We will have a list of assessment findings in December or 2024.

Are all of your degree maps completed?

Yes

Are the degree maps posted to the college website?

Yes

How are you currently assessing your PLOs? If you are not currently assessing PLOs, what is your plan to assess PLOs in the future?

We are currently assessing our PLOS through SLO assessments in each of our courses. PLOs are mapped to SLOs in those courses.

How are your PLO assessments informing improvements/changes to your program?

Since I cannot see any of the previous PLO data in the SLO Assessment report, we have not yet made any adjustments in the way we deliver the material covered by the PLOs. We have made several changes in how we teach particular topics and how we assess them based on SLO assessment results.

This is an example of how our SLO assessments have inspired changes in how we teach the material in our courses (from the SLO section of this report):

We saw significant improvement in COMM 122: Public Speaking for SLO#1: Analyze a communication situation, including audience, occasion, purpose; and selection of subject matter. The last data we had, from Spring 2020 showed a low pass rate (60%). At our next department meeting in Fall of 2020, we discussed the way this content is being taught in our classes. We shared ideas, and revised our approach to the topic. The latest data show our pass rate for SLO#1 at 90%. We are pleased to see this improvement and plan to continue the new approach to teaching the unit on audience analysis.

Student Access and Achievement

Data are required to answer these questions. If no data are available, please describe the plan to gather, discuss, and use these data in the future.

Our enrollments have fluctuated between 660 and 389 over the past four years. Our highest enrollment over the past 4 years was 660 in the spring 2020 semester, the semester the pandemic began. The next semester saw a very significant drop. We saw our lowest enrollment of only 389 in the Fall 21 semester. In the middle of the spring 2020 semester, the college shut down in person operations and went to an entirely remote delivery until we returned to in-person delivery in the fall 2021 semester. Though there were only a few classes that returned to in-person, Communication led the way by offering half of our courses in in-person format. We struggled with very low enrollments in the fall 2021 semester (down to 389) and had to cancel many sections due to low enrollment, but saw some improvement in enrollment throughout 2022 and 2023. As of the spring 2024 semester, we are back up to 586. It is good to see enrollments beginning to return to normal.

Please describe any enrollment changes (increases/decreases) over the past 4 years and the context for these changes.

Our enrollments have fluctuated between 660 and 389 over the past four years. Our highest enrollment over the past 4 years was 660 in the spring 2020 semester, the semester the pandemic began. The next semester saw a very significant drop. We saw our lowest enrollment of only 389 in the Fall 21 semester. In the middle of the spring 2020 semester, the college shut down in person operations and went to an entirely remote delivery until we returned to in-person delivery in the fall 2021 semester. Though there were only a few classes that returned to in-person, Communication led the way by offering half of our courses in in-person format. We struggled with very low enrollments in the fall 2021 semester (down to 389) and had to cancel many sections due to low enrollment, but saw some improvement in enrollment throughout 2022 and 2023. As of the spring 2024 semester, we are back up to 586. It is good to see enrollments beginning to return to normal.

If your program has seen a significant decline in enrollment over the past 4 years, what resources or support would be helpful to improve program enrollment and access?

I wouldn't say we have seen an increase over the past 4 years, but rather a correction back to where we were before the pandemic. We hope to see the trend continue.

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What is the program doing to increase student enrollment or access?

In order to increase student enrollment and access, we are working on 3 areas: flexibility, availability, and a student centered approach. First of all, we are implementing more flexibility. Most of the instructors in the Communication Department have completed the EMTLI (equity minded teaching and learning) course. We learned that flexibility with assignment types and due dates helps students to have more opportunities for success in our courses. These flexible policies also make the course more accessible. If students know we offer flexibility, they are more likely to enroll in our courses. Instructor availability is also important. We have tried to be more accessible to our students via Canvas message, email or office hours. Our goal is to respond to students quickly when they have questions, particularly on days and at times when assignments are due. Students often have last minute questions. We want to be there for them when they need us. Last, we have tried to be more student centered. We have informally surveyed our classes to find out what changes we can make to help them to be successful. Based on student feedback, one instructor changed quizzes in Canvas to allow students to see the correct answers. Although that makes it easier for students to share answers with other students, the higher value is that students learn more when they can see the correct answers. At a student's request, the instructor made these changes to increase student access. We have surveyed students about scheduling, as well. We asked what times are best to offer classes. One instructor learned by asking that very few students were interested in taking a public speaking course at 8:00 AM, for example. So we made changes to the schedule to offer more classes at times students want them. As a result, several of our in person classes were full this fall 2024 semester for the first time in four years.

What is your program's overall course success rate? How has it changed over the past 4-5 years?

The success rate in Communication courses over the past four years has been high, with the exception of the Fall 2022 and Fall 2023 semesters. Our department goal is to have an 80% success rate. If the success rate is close to 80%, we feel pretty happy with it. I am curious about why it was lower in the Fall 2022 and 2023 semester. We will keep an eye on it and see if we can keep our overall success rate at 80% or higher.

Here are the success rates for the past four years:

Fall 2019	84%
Spring 2020	80%
Fall 2020	79%
Spring 2021	80%
Fall 2021	83%
Spring 2022	81%
Fall 2022	76%
Spring 2023	79%
Fall 2023	72%
Spring 2024	79%

Which groups are experiencing equity gaps in your program for success rate and/or retention rate?

In the Communication Department, we have equity gaps in our success rates with the following groups:

African American

Asian

Hispanic/Latino

And Middle Eastern Students (though not for Spring 2023 and Spring 2024).

The largest equity gaps seem to be with our Hispanic/Latino students. There is also a significant gap with African American students. We noticed, after looking at our success data, that there was a large drop in success rates for African American students in the Fall 2020 semester. The success rate for African American students went from about 77% to 59% in the Fall 2020 semester. That is the first semester that the college was fully remote, following the shut down during the Spring 2020 semester due to the pandemic. Looking more closely, there was a drop in success rates in the Fall 2020 semester for almost every group, even in the college-wide statistics. Although the pandemic was likely the cause for success rates dropping across the board, the pandemic seemed to have an even greater impact on populations that may have already been more vulnerable than others. We are concerned about the equity gaps and will continue to investigate and address them.

What department/discipline (or institutional) factors may be contributing to these lower rates of success for these groups of students?

We have discussed this at length in the EMTLI course, in our department meetings and informally as colleagues.

As noted above, we can trace part of the drop in success rates to the pandemic over the past few years. Perhaps

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the pandemic disproportionately affected vulnerable populations compared with others. We have had some success decreasing our equity gaps for African American students in the past by including topics and examples that reflect the diversity of our students. We spent more time opening conversations with students about what they need to be successful in our classes. We have tried to be more student centered in our approach to scheduling, and flexible in our assignment choices and due dates. Honestly, I wish I knew the answer to this question. If we had a better idea what was causing the gap, we would be much more able to address it.

How has this data shaped your comprehensive program review goals and action steps?

This equity gap data will help inform our New Goals for this comprehensive program review report. Our hope is that when we revisit this issue 4 years from now, we will see some changes in these equity gaps. We will continue doing what we have been doing to address inequity in our classrooms and on our campus. We are continuing to encourage our faculty to educate themselves about equity and diversity, in order to continue to close our equity gaps. Our faculty continue to support and help facilitate the Safe Zones training, in an effort to create a safe place for our LGBTQ+ community. We use examples and illustrations that include these diverse groups of students. We encourage students to talk about differences themselves, and to tell their own stories of success and privilege, as well as their stories of discrimination and prejudice. We also ask them to share their ideas about how we can help close these gaps. We admittedly have a long way to go, but we will continue to keep this goal front and center and learn as much as we can from our colleagues and our students.

Discuss your department/discipline's plan for diversifying department faculty in alignment with the GCCCD Board Resolution 20-015.

We are in the process of requesting a new faculty hire in the Communication department. Our staffing request is part of this year's comprehensive program review report. The faculty in the Communication Department have been rather homogenous over the years. The first full time instructor in the Department is a white female. Our second full time hire is also a white female. Our adjunct instructors are marginally more diverse. Among adjunct instructors in the department, we currently have 3 white female instructors, one white male instructor, and one African American male instructor (who just accepted a full-time position at another college). We hope a new full-time hire will significantly improve our diversity in Communication. In order to ensure that we hire diverse faculty, we will take the following steps: We will begin with an effort to hire both full-time and adjunct instructors who reflect the diversity of our students. We will advertise the position in a variety of publications that reach a wide variety of people. We will make sure members of the hiring committee have received the district HIRE training. We will continue to attend workshops and trainings and learn as much as we can in order to support our students.

What other qualitative or quantitative data, if any, is the department/discipline using to inform its planning for this comprehensive program review?

We did not use any other data than what was provided by the Program Review Committee.

Distance Education Course Success (If Applicable)

If your department offers distance education classes, how do you ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) is being implemented?

To insure regular and substantive contact is taking place, instructors are encouraged to check in with students before the semester begins to let them know what to expect. These welcome messages are intended to create a connection with students even before the semester begins and to encourage continued contact between the instructor and student. All of our instructors are encouraged to use discussion boards, announcements, submission comments in the gradebook, and Canvas messages to stay in close contact with students. Our instructor evaluations (peer and manager) require the evaluator to confirm that such contact is taking place, and to note in the evaluation if regular and effective contact is not taking place.

If there are differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person classes, what will the program do to address these disparities? If there are no differences, what did the program do to achieve that?

The data show that there are differences in success rates based on modality. Here are our overall success rates for each modality over the past four years:

On campus: 81%

100% online: 76%

Less than 50% online: 79%

Since we began teaching fully online classes, our success rates in those classes has been consistently lower than the success rates for our in person classes. Our success rates for hybrid classes are very similar to the success rates for in person classes. Interestingly, we have the fewest equity gaps among our hybrid classes. We are not sure why this is, but we plan to keep an eye on those success rates.

Strengths, Challenges & External Influences

Please describe your program's strengths.

An important strength of the Communication Department is our strong enrollments. Although, over the past four years, the recent pandemic has had an impact on our usually consistent healthy enrollments, before Fall 2020, we only rarely had to cancel classes due to low enrollment. Our fill rates have consistently been in the mid to high 90% for many years. We are pleased to report that this Fall 2024 semester, our fill rates are back to normal for the most part. Several of our in person classes were actually full with a wait list. We are also proud of our strong success and retention rates. In past semesters, we have made a concerted effort to identify and improve success rates for particular student demographics. We have very high numbers of middle eastern students in our classes, largely due to word of mouth. We consistently address cultural differences and make an effort to be inclusive in our classes. We teach students how to respect cultural differences and how to communicate more effectively across cultures. One of our Program Learning Outcomes is "Interact respectfully with those who hold divergent perspectives." We address this issue and teach this skill in all of our Communication classes. Another notable strength of the Communication Department is that we have two long serving full time faculty with 60 years of service between them. The years of experience they have allows them to mentor others, such as new faculty, adjuncts, and SDICCA interns. The faculty in the department (both full time and adjunct faculty) value and support one another. When a need arises, faculty in the Communication Department step up, even on very short notice, to cover classes, field student questions and concerns, and to assist with grading. We have initiated ongoing discussions with all faculty to address how to deal with plagiarism, cheating, and writing skills issues that we encounter in our courses. We have revised our PLOs and SLOs and our assessments so that they will be more reliable measures of student and department success. In the Communication Department, we collaborate with the community to improve access and success for our students. We offer Communication courses through our dual enrollment program at a high school outside of our typical service area, to serve those students and to promote Cuyamaca in the hope that they will consider attending Cuyamaca College after they graduate. We collaborate with other Communication departments throughout the county and with the Communication Department at San Diego State University via our participation the Annual Communication Summit. We gather together with the department chairs for all Communication programs in the county to discuss curriculum, transfer, tips for applying to the SDSU Communication program, and other topics that help us work together for the success of our students. Faculty in the Communication Department have an ongoing commitment to the community. We regularly present Professional Development Communication workshops for our Cuyamaca family. The topics we present, including listening skills, defensiveness, conflict, relationships, and communicating about grief and loss, among others, help staff and faculty improve communication in the classroom, communication in the workplace and also in the participants' personal lives. We actively participate in the Safe Zones program, an ally training program that helps to create a safe campus for members of the LGBTQ+ community. We display posters and stickers in our offices and classrooms and discuss issues in class. We make an effort to honor student requests for particular pronouns and do whatever we can to promote equity in our classrooms. One full time instructor acts as a trainer in the Safe Zones program. We are also committed to student success by participating the in the food supplement program to combat food insecurity. Students cannot focus when they are hungry. And no one should have to drop out of college because they do not have access to food.

Please describe your program's challenges.

We have identified several different challenges facing our department that we feel the need to investigate and address over the upcoming four years. Our biggest current challenge is addressing impending retirements. We have two full time instructors in the Communication Department. One has been teaching full time at Cuyamaca for 35 years and the other over 25 years. Both have reached retirement age. Although we understand and appreciate the tight budget, we believe it is time to begin the process of applying for a new full time position in the department. Without at least one full time faculty at the helm, we worry about the health and sustainability of the department. We have a qualified and enthusiastic adjunct pool who would no doubt willingly step in to cover classes and serve as chair. However, experience tells us that with a full time instructor in place, success and retention rates are higher, enrollments are higher, and more students earn degrees. Another challenge we face is student assignment completion. In recent semesters, there are a large number of students who fail to complete assignments in our classes. This brings down student grades significantly. We need to find ways to encourage students to complete assignments, including more flexibility on due dates. As a department we are also

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concerned about an increase in incidences of cheating and plagiarism. Apparently, outlines, papers and speeches are widely available for purchase on the internet. Identifying and disciplining students who cheat or plagiarize has become more difficult. With recent improvements in artificial intelligence, students can easily use AI to write papers, discussion boards, and even answers to exam questions. Luckily, we have innovative faculty who are finding ways to use AI that are ethically sound and potentially helpful to both faculty and students. With time, we will find ways to work with AI and can find answers to this difficult problem.

Please describe external influences that affect your program (both positively and negatively).

The pandemic has, of course, significantly affected the academic/professional and personal lives of students and faculty in the Communication Department and across the campus. We have seen a surge in students who suffer from grief, post-traumatic stress, generalized anxiety, anger, sleep problems, domestic violence and financial hardships that result in problems with transportation, housing, childcare, food insecurity and more. It goes without saying that students carry the burden of these issues with them into the classroom and these stressors will affect success and retention for those students. As communication instructors, we are trained to recognize the verbal and nonverbal behaviors that tell us students are struggling. We want to make sure we have the resources and referrals to help these students in whatever way we can. Another external factor that has helped to shape the Communication Department is the large number of Iraqi immigrants in the El Cajon area since the beginning of the Iraq war. This significant change in demographics in the local communities we serve has led to a need for additional ESL classes and other resources. Many of the immigrant students struggle with reading, writing, speaking, and personal challenges that stem from prejudice, misunderstanding, and equity issues. Many also continue to deal with trauma from being oppressed and threatened in a war torn country. As instructors we welcome, learn and grow substantially from our nonnative students and the experiences they bring to our classroom. Learning the best way to serve our Iraqi students is an ongoing goal. We continue to have facility issues. On the second floor of the B building, there is a strong sewage smell that emanates from both the men's and women's restrooms. At times the smell is overpowering. Faculty, staff and students complain about the unpleasant smell and report it interferes their ability to use the second floor bathroom where all our classrooms and offices are located. In addition, the faculty office for our Department, B251 has not had working heat since we moved into the building in 2007. Every January, Nancy Jennings has contacted Facilities to notify them about the problem. One year, technicians worked in and around the office for several days. The heating in B 251 still does not work. Most of the year, it is comfortable enough in the office to work, but in January the temperature in the office in the mornings sometimes drops below 60 degrees. Needless to say, temperatures that cold do not create a comfortable working environment. The classrooms also have serious and continual issues with temperature control and air flow. Classroom B 262 is very difficult to cool or heat properly. The students complain constantly and it is difficult to teach or learn when individuals are uncomfortable. The only way to get the room to cool off or heat up is to call someone in facilities and ask them to make adjustments. Instructors should have some reasonable ability to control the temperature in offices and classrooms without interrupting instruction to make a call and hope someone is available to rectify the situation in a timely manner. Adequate air flow and air quality are imperative, as we have learned from the recent COVID pandemic. There are also issues stemming from the large number of students who congregate in the hallways of the B building while they wait for classes to begin. It is often tricky and frustrating to maneuver through these groups while navigating hallways in the building. Also, the large groups can be quite loud, and even with closed classroom doors, they sometimes disrupt instruction.

Given these factors, what opportunities exist for the service area to advance the College's goals in the next 4 years?

Certainly the largest external factor affecting our department over the past four years has been the pandemic. We have largely come through it and can feel things finally getting back to normal. We have learned a great deal about our capabilities and about our resilience through this experience. All of us have learned some skills in online teaching that have helped us with our online and in person classes moving forward. We have learned that anything can happen. But we have also learned that our college community is amazingly resourceful when we have a problem to overcome. We worked together to continue to serve our students and our community. We will prepare for the unexpected in the future by staying flexible, engaging in frequent and ongoing communication to help ensure our students and members of our department feel supported and valued during these difficult times. We need to plan to have campus and community resources readily available and be prepared to advocate for students and help them access those resources.

Program Goals

Program Goals Status

Updated progress on my previous goals & added new.

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Program Goals Mapping

Mapping for all active Program Goals complete.

Submission
