



Office of the Acting Vice President
For Academic Affairs

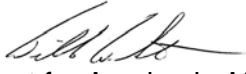
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Clay Waite
Acting Chair, Department of Media Studies

FROM: Wilbur W. Stanton 
Acting Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Undergraduate Media Studies Program Review

DATE: 21 August 05

COPY: Dr. Paul Sale, Chair of the Academic Program Review Committee
Academic Program Review Committee Members
Penelope W. Kyle, President
Dr. Ivan Liss, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

Introduction

Academic program review is designed to assure regular examination of the University's curricula and academic structure and guide recommendations for improving academic quality. In addition, the process guides the effective allocation of resources, encourages continuous faculty and program development, and provides a rationale for making decisions about maintaining, enhancing, reconfiguring, or phasing out programs as required by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and/or as indicated through other analyses and by other criteria. Further, the Program Review process provides a tool for working with departments and academic programs to implement the University's Strategic Plan. For the process to be fully effective, departments and programs must commit themselves to following through after the initial self-study and analysis by responding to the recommendations and/or required actions of the Academic Program Review Committee (APRC), the appropriate dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, the APRC and the academic programs under review worked with program review criteria that were approved in April 2003. I commend the Academic Program Review Committee for the diligent, thoughtful review of academic programs and for the

report detailing its study and recommendations. Moreover, I commend each of the academic programs that undertook the self-study required to develop and present reports that allowed the APRC to complete its work.

This memorandum completes the first stage of the Academic Program Review process. Included in this memorandum are the APRC's specific program recommendations for the Media Studies Program. Also included are the APRC's overall recommendations.

Observations Pertaining to All Programs in General

I have several general observations that come from the reading of all the program review materials:

1. Programs were encouraged to work with the QEP implementation team in the preparation of this year's reports. Those that did so had superior documentation compared to those that did not work with the team. We need to work together to ensure that programs clearly report results of the implementation of the program's Quality Enhancement Plan. Outcomes should be reported in measurable terms and changes made based upon those outcomes should be noted in the program review reports (see Quality Enhancement Plan Template column "Evidence of Improvements"). To that end, I have asked Ms. Bethany Bodo, in her role as Director of Academic Assessment, to provide, in the form of a fictitious department report, how outcomes can be reported and utilized to enhance programs. When this document has been created, I will make it available to all programs.
2. We need to continue efforts to collect alumni data. For example, helpful information may include alumni employment data, satisfaction with the program, and recommendations for improvement. This information is burdensome for individual programs to collect and maintain. Therefore, I am working with the Division of Institutional Research to enhance University coordination with programs and thus facilitate centralization of the data for program use during review processes. The APRC committee recommended that this information be gathered in possibly 1, 3, and 5 year intervals. While this would be robust and useful for program enhancement, the ability for the university to implement this will be dependent upon faculty workloads and the capacity for Institutional Research to design, gather, analyze, and disseminate resulting data. At a minimum, however, this must be part of every program review cycle meaning that alumni data must be collected once every five years as part of the self-study.
3. Finally, programs continue to make good cases for faculty and staff needs. It will remain increasingly important in a continuing environment of constrained resources that Radford University use the academic program review process to contribute to the determination of how to most effectively deploy available resources. We will continue to use the state's rubric (Schedule M) as a major determinant of workload expectations, but this metric alone cannot fully capture the uniqueness of a program and its centrality or contribution to the mission of the University. During the next academic year, I will work with the Council of Deans to explore a more inclusive set of workload criteria while retaining the state's workload principles.

Observations for the Undergraduate Media Studies Program

The following observations, recommendations, and conclusions are based on my review of APRC's analysis and Program Review Report, the self-study of the Undergraduate Media Studies Program submitted by the Department of Media Studies, and the comments and recommendations submitted by Dean Liss.

The Media Studies Program has made both a significant and positive contribution to the College of Arts and Sciences and to the University as a whole. The Program is strong as evidenced by a continued increase in enrollments -- a 32.5 percent increase in the number of Media Studies majors from 1998-2004.

I was very impressed with the extent to which the Undergraduate Media Studies Program addressed the recommendations resulting from the previous program review, which was done in 1997-98. As delineated by Dean Liss, a number of actions were taken:

- The department is in the process of changing their CIP code to one which was recently defined and made available. While no CIP code completely describes all the concentrations offered by the department, the new one will better do so.
- To somewhat relieve the advising load on faculty, the College of Arts and Sciences Advising Center now advises all freshmen and sophomore Media Studies majors. The Center works closely with the department to provide a high level of advising.
- The department has in place a three-year ongoing plan for the use and acquisition of space and equipment.
- With the use of ETF and one-time university funds, laboratory and studio equipment has been completed converted from analog to digital.
- The department determined that it could not sustain its participation in the Corporate and Professional Media Studies master's degree that it had shared with the Department of Communication. The degree now resides completely in the Department of Communication, with the Department of Media Studies contributing no courses toward it.
- The department determined that it could not maintain the number of concentrations it had. It subsequently dropped the International and Critical Media Studies concentration and Interdisciplinary concentration and combined the Print Journalism concentration and the Electronic Journalism concentration.
- In cooperation with the Department of Information Technology in the College of Information Science and Technology (CIST), the department created an interdisciplinary Web Design concentration.
- The department has consolidated its labs, offices and studios into one space (in Porterfield Hall).

The department has clearly demonstrated that it is responsive to the rapid changes in their field including technological changes. Their attention to curriculum review and revision is ongoing and impressive. As evidence of this, Dean Liss reported that:

- All concentrations require a 15-hour common core.
- Thirty-six semester hours are required in all concentrations except Web Design, which requires 37.
- All concentrations require 3-6 hours of concentration-based practica.
- Curriculum decisions have been based on the current state of the field, on the most effective and efficient way of delivering necessary instruction, and on guidance from the program's external advisory committee, made up of professionals active in the field.
- In addition to designing and offering the Web Design concentration with the College of Information Science and Technology, a 2 + 2 agreement has been forged with New River Community College which admits students with an Associate of Applied Science degree to the concentration.

The Program Review Report also suggests this program is very focused on student learning outcomes and opportunities.

- The department's approach to maximizing student engagement is by fitting appropriate techniques to each class, in concordance with their philosophy that student interaction and engagement is critical to student success in the study of media.
- The report details the goals and assessment measures for student engagement in each class the department offers. In addition the department uses a questionnaire given to current majors, an alumni questionnaire administered on line, and feedback from its Advisory Board.

As noted by the Committee, there are five areas that raised some concern and questions, and I concur with these.

1. While the department is commended for applying an outcomes approach to each course, the QEP for Media Studies as presented on Page 18 doesn't match the QEP template (Page 3 of the Academic Program Review Guidelines) making it difficult to clearly see and understand the template columns: QEP Implementation Objectives, Implementation Strategies, Implementation Assessments, Targeted Learning Outcomes, Outcome Assessments, and Evidence of Improvements.
2. Student Survey suggests that students are less satisfied with the program than in 1997. The program review report did not address the student satisfaction survey results adequately. Subsequent discussion with the department indicated that the results were obtained shortly before the program review report was completed.
3. While the department is responsive to student interests and faculty have lots of ideas about new areas and interdisciplinary options to explore, they do not seem to identify priorities for resource allocation to support current emphases and new developments.

For example, with over 100 majors in advertising, but only one faculty member in that area, would they put any new faculty resources into advertising or would they direct resources to a cinema concentration or more electives?

4. There is little information about employment in the report, either about employment trends or specifics about where media studies alumni are employed.
5. The report exceeded substantially the page limitations in the guidelines.

Recommendations and Conclusions for the Undergraduate Media Studies Program

The APRC made several recommendations and I concur with each of these.

1. The department should revise and resubmit the QEP so that it corresponds with the template on page 3 of the guidelines. The department should also provide clear and concise commentary in response to the questions on page 3 of the guidelines. Much of this is infused throughout their document. However, this information is needed, in the proper format, so program reports are consistent and comparable and to fulfill the University's reporting responsibilities to SACS and SCHEV. Note: In response to discussion with the department, a revised QEP was submitted and is appended to this report. The QEP, however, is ambitious and the department should review this plan with the QEP Implementation Team.
2. The student satisfaction survey results appear to be related to rapid growth in the major which led to larger classes, less time with each advisee, and limitations on course offerings. The department should continue to analyze the student survey and use the results in strategic planning, including requests for additional faculty resources.
3. The faculty in the department are applauded for their consideration of new ideas and long-term visions for the program. However, we caution them to articulate not only what they want to do but what it will take to do it. They need a plan that prioritizes their visions for new ideas within the context of supporting current needs. For example, if there are 100 advertising majors and only one faculty, what needs to be done to support that area if they were also to develop new areas and collaborations? What needs to be in place to maintain and support the program as currently designed? The Program Review Committee concurs with recommendation from Dean Liss that the department should develop a staffing plan which is in accordance with its long range plan for concentrations, course offerings, major requirements, and equipment and lab/studio needs.
4. The department is commended for doing an alumni survey, but as with other programs, this may be an area that the University should address systematically to collect alumni and employment data for future reviews.
5. While the level of detail may have been interesting, it makes it difficult for the program review committee to thoroughly read and review. The purpose of revising the guidelines and including page limitations was to make program reports more consistent and comparable. The detailed information included in this report is very useful in departmental planning and assessment, but should be summarized for the program

review report. In future we recommend the program adhere to the guidelines for the reports.

I commend the APRC for making recommendations whose intentions are clearly to strengthen the undergraduate program in the Media Studies Department.

It is essential that that faculty in the Undergraduate Media Studies Program immediately undertake the work required to secure these improvements. In doing so, the Department Chairperson and the faculty members in the Undergraduate Media Studies Program should work collaboratively and persistently with the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to make the changes and improvements that are recommended.

Following the Program Review Guidelines, “the Department Chair or Program Coordinator will submit a report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and appropriate Dean(s) on or before April 1 [2006], indicating how the program has addressed recommendations of the Academic Program Review Committee and any recommendations from the Dean(s) or Vice President for Academic Affairs.”

This document should include findings and results from the initial implementation of the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and an updated QEP table (see page 3 of the Program Review Guidelines) that includes a completed “evidence of improvement” column. Programs are expected to discuss methodologies utilized and any challenges encountered during the process. They should also elaborate on ways in which they utilized the findings for program improvement and note programmatic decisions that have been made as a result of the implementation. All programs should document the QEP implementation process and keep this information, including any pertinent data, on file and accessible.

In conclusion, the Undergraduate Media Studies program is a viable program that meets SCHEV productivity standards and should be maintained.

Academic Program Review 2005
Department of Media Studies

Revised Quality Enhancement Plan
April 29, 2005

The QEP template was inadvertently left out of the original document. It is included below for the purpose of clarification. The implementation objectives have been derived from the “Departmental Assessment 2004-2005: Media Studies” document.

QEP Implementation Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Implementation Assessments	Targeted Learning Outcomes Objectives	Outcome Assessments	Evidence of Improvements*
Improve quality of student advising	Conduct advising training sessions with faculty and advising coordinators, work with appropriate administrators to reduce advising loads, develop web-based interactive advising	Inventories of graduation application problems and advising workloads; administer annual student assessment; review of FARs	Students will have better advising leading to satisfactory progression through program of study	Review graduation and retention rates as possible, course availability statistics, student/alumni/parent feedback	
Improve student opportunities to write and discuss contemporary	Develop more web-based courses using WebCT, Breeze, etc. Provide	Student and Faculty inventories; syllabi review; course	Students will be able to write a research report and/or	Assessment of student projects and participation in classroom activities	

QEP Implementation Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Implementation Assessments	Targeted Learning Outcomes Objectives	Outcome Assessments	Evidence of Improvements*
media issues through the collection of secondary and primary data	faculty with lab support and multimedia training. Provide more faculty resulting in smaller course sections.	assessments; class participation counts.	short papers in approved format and discuss or debate current media topics		
Improve understanding of intercultural and international aspects of the mass media	Develop travel abroad programs. Offer elective courses in intercultural and international communication. Use student assessment to determine areas of interest. Discussion of diversity issues in course content and with media professionals	Assess number of travel-abroad programs offered and student participation numbers. Syllabi review. Assess number of courses emphasizing these areas of media.	Students will demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of the intercultural and international aspects of mass media.	Assessment of student written reports, oral presentations, participation in travel abroad programs and related opportunities	
Improve student understanding of social responsibilities of the media	Improve reading and writing assignments in course; provide discussion/debate	Student and Faculty inventories; syllabi review; course	Students will be able to write and discuss media topics using a	Review and assessment of writing and project requirements; scoring of in-class reports	

QEP Implementation Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Implementation Assessments	Targeted Learning Outcomes Objectives	Outcome Assessments	Evidence of Improvements*
through the application of critical thinking skills.	groups; require in-class group reports on related topics; provide prompt feedback and opportunities to revise reports based on that feedback	assessment	framework of social responsibility theory and an application of critical thinking skills.	and debates	
Improve student ability to use appropriate media technology to create and deliver information	Develop interactive training tutorials on various pieces of equipment. Revise individual and group projects to fit current technology. Identify technology trends and develop a short- and long-term plan for implementing new technologies. Identification of current trends through	Media Studies Advisory Council feedback; syllabi review; review of FAR's	Students will be able to use appropriate media technology to create and deliver information using "hands-on" projects.	Review and assess final student capstone (practicum) projects and internship evaluations from students and internship agency supervisors.	

QEP Implementation Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Implementation Assessments	Targeted Learning Outcomes Objectives	Outcome Assessments	Evidence of Improvements*
	participation in conferences and workshops; improve equipment accessibility				
Improve student ability to work and communicate with others and perform duties in a professional manner	Develop course schedules allowing for interaction among related courses; improve equipment accessibility; provide more opportunities for non-profit organization projects	Student and faculty inventories; syllabi review; Media Studies Advisory Council feedback; peer evaluations; feedback from clients	Students will be able to communicate well and work with others in a professional media environment, providing clients with a professional quality media product	Review and assessment of final projects by faculty, peers and clients. Peer evaluations of group performance.	
Improve student access to multiple internship and practica opportunities	Continue to re-evaluate courses and prerequisites offered in core and concentrations to provide more flexibility.	Syllabi review; course prerequisite review, counts of students participating in internships vs. taking a second practicum. Capstone	Students will be able to take advantage of more internship opportunities earlier in their Media Studies career.	Student surveys, Media Studies Advisory Council feedback, internship evaluations by students and agency supervisors.	

QEP Implementation Objectives	Implementation Strategies	Implementation Assessments	Targeted Learning Outcomes Objectives	Outcome Assessments	Evidence of Improvements*
		course (practica) assessment			

**Evidence of Improvements will be addressed in follow-up reports after data are collected and program changes implemented in the following year(s).*