



Academic Program Review

Program Name: Communication – Bachelor of Art

Academic Year 2025/2026

Recent Recommendations

Using your most recent review, please respond to all feedback and recommendations. Response:

During the program review process, we have responded to all feedback and recommendations.

Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the assessment of your student learning outcomes (SLOs). Discuss your findings, changes you are making, and what you hope to see as a result.

Response:

SLO1: Students should understand and apply communication theories and perspectives.

Assessment data indicate strong performance with an overall score of 90% on written assignments in COM F425: Communication Theory, and 88% correct on various written assignments in COM F181. These results support the finding that students comprehend and apply key theoretical frameworks to personal, professional, academic, and civic contexts.

SLO2: Students should be able to design appropriate methods of communication inquiry.

Assessment data indicate students have the knowledge, skills, and ability to engage in communication inquiry as evidenced by research proposals in COM401: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication and COMF482: Communication Capstone to further and deepen our understanding of communication as a disciplined area of study and practice.

SLO3: Students should be able to analyze and adapt messages to dyads, groups, and organizations.

Assessment data demonstrate the ability of our students to apply theoretical classroom concepts to personal, professional, academic, and civic contexts. 100% of internship supervisors affirm students are able to engage in meaningful workplace communication, message adaptation, and collaboration, further supporting the finding that students can apply interpersonal, group, and organizational communication principles and practices across multiple contexts.

SLO4: Students should be able to apply ethical communication principles to a diverse range of situations.

In COMF300: Communicating Ethics, students earned a mean score of 75% on the gender dynamics assignment, indicating proficiency in identifying and evaluating the ethical complexities of gender dynamics across contexts. Moreover, qualitative findings from the self-assessment of intercultural awareness were strong, as 100% students increased awareness of ethnocentrism and ethnorelativism. Employer feedback from internships further supports students' ability to reflect on ethical issues and apply ethical frameworks to the workplace.

SLO5: Students should be able to use communication effectively to inform, persuade, and deliberate.

Results from embedded speech assessments show consistent proficiency across introductory courses with mean scores over 80%. The rubric is competency-based, and all instructors attend a norming session, co-grading speeches, to enhance assessment practices and promote a more consistent student experience.

Moreover, pre and post-test data from the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24), a 24-item inventory that assesses a learner's perceived communication apprehension across contexts, demonstrate a reduction in communication apprehension, strengthening students' ability to inform, persuade, and deliberate with enhanced confidence and self-efficacy.

Collectively, assessment data for the BA in Communication demonstrate COM majors consistently meet or exceed expectations in theoretical understanding, methodical application, and applied communication. This is evidenced by strong performance in both theory and methods courses, internship performance, and ethical communication practices. As we plan for the next program review cycle, there needs to be additional focus on applied communication skills, emerging and non-Western theoretical paradigms, and the integration of qualitative methods into COMF482: Capstone in Communication.

Action items for next program review include the following:

- 1, Implementing co-grading and norming sessions across courses for embedded rubrics.
- 2, Integrated applied communication learning assessments in interpersonal, organizational, and other coursework.
- 3, Challenging students to engage in interdisciplinary research, broadening their understanding of communication across contexts and disciplines.

Changes from last program review

The number of SLOs has been reduced from nine (9) in 2023/2024 to five (5). Reducing the number of SLOs created a more focused and measurable approach to program review. The revised SLOs emphasize knowledge, skills, and abilities in line with best practices per the revised program revised process and central tenets of the communication discipline, i.e., theoretical understanding, message creation, inquiry, and critical analysis.

To strengthen the alignment between SLO and assessment, fewer assignments have been selected for evaluation. As recommended, the selected assignments include capstone projects, research methods assignments, and major course deliverables that demonstrate a student's mastery of SLOs. Moreover, additional measures have been added, such as capstone and communication-focused projects, allowing additional evidence of learning.

Since our program review, faculty have voluntarily added rubrics to courses, addressing an additional recommendation to connect assignments with SLOs. The rubrics allow for stronger comparison across sections and instructors and transparency in grading practices.

What you hope to see as a result

As we continue to improve our program assessment and implement changes, we move forward with the following goals:

1. Increased reliability and validity of assessment data.
2. Improved student understanding of expectations through integrated rubrics.
3. Implementation of collaborative scoring sessions using standardized rubrics to enhance interrater reliability. However, this approach may be limited as faculty specialize in different areas of the communication discipline, which may limit our ability to meaningfully assess performance outside of our areas of expertise.
4. Continue to explore indirect measures of assessment to further demonstrate mastery of SLOs.
5. Create additional opportunities for students to engage with emerging and non-Western theoretical traditions.

Did you make any curricular changes based on your most recent SLOA? If so, discuss what changes were made. If no changes were made, please discuss the strengths of your curriculum based on the assessment of your outcomes.

Response:

Our focus for this program review was revising SLOs, developing a more comprehensive assessment plan based on previous feedback, and understanding student success trends. During our last review, our programs were new as the result of the conscious uncoupling of Communication & Journalism.

As of 2017, all Baccalaureate programs are required to embed communication outcomes within their SLOA Plans. This is optional for non-Baccalaureate programs.

Communication outcomes in the SLOA plan are: **Embedded**

Check the checkbox to certify completion of the following tasks:

- ☒ Upload supporting documents to the Supporting Documents folder. This includes artifacts, rubrics, and other documents related to your SLOA.
- ☒ Upload your most recent SLOA to the Supporting Documents folder, even if no changes have been made since the last review.

Have changes been made to your SLOA document since your last review? [Yes](#)

If so, please summarize what changes were made.

Response:

The number of SLOs has been reduced from nine (9) in 2023/2024 to five (5). Reducing the number of SLOs created a more focused and measurable approach to program review. The revised SLOs emphasize knowledge, skills, and abilities in line with best practices per the revised program revised process and central tenets of the communication discipline, i.e., theoretical understanding, message creation, inquiry, and critical analysis.

To strengthen the alignment between SLO and assessment, fewer assignments have been selected for evaluation. As recommended, the selected assignments include capstone projects, research methods assignments, and major course deliverables that demonstrate a student's mastery of SLOs. Moreover, additional measures have been added, such as internship, capstone and communication-focused projects, allowing additional evidence of learning.

Since our program review, faculty have voluntarily added rubrics to courses, addressing an additional recommendation to connect assignments with SLOs. The rubrics allow for stronger comparison across sections and instructors along with transparency in grading practices.

High Impact Practices

Please indicate which high impact practices are currently being implemented in relation to the program's student learning outcomes.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Capstone Courses & Projects | ☐ Graduate Level Research |
| ☐ Collaborative Assignments & Projects | ☒ Writing-Intensive Courses |
| ☐ Diversity/Global Learning | ☐ Publications |
| ☐ ePortfolios | ☒ Communications |
| ☐ First-Year Seminars and Experiences | ☒ Scholarly Activities |
| ☒ Internships | ☐ Studios |
| ☐ Service or Community-Based Learning | ☐ Practicum |
| ☐ Undergraduate Research | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Labs | ☐ None of these |

Discuss how the HIPs in the program are reflected in the SLOA. If you have identified HIPs that are not included in the SLOA, please consider an update.

Response:

High Impact Practices include the following: Capstone courses and projects, Internships, Writing-intensive courses, Communications, and Scholarly activities.

All students are required to complete a research-informed capstone course, COMF482: Capstone in Communication, which directly connects with SLOs: Students should understand and apply communication theories and perspectives; Students should be able to design appropriate methods of communication inquiry; Students should be able to use communication effectively to inform, persuade, and deliberate; Students should be able to apply ethical communication principles to a diverse range of situations.

Internships connect with the following SLOs: Students should be able to use communication effectively to inform, persuade, and deliberate; Students should be able to analyze and adapt messages to dyads, groups, and organizations; Students should be able to apply ethical communication principles to a diverse range of situations.

Scholarly activities are completed in all of the required COM courses, including research papers, case studies, and quality assessments of communication practices across contexts, which directly connects with COM BA SLOs. Moreover, all written assignments in required coursework create space for learners to demonstrate competency across the SLOs.

Student Success

Please reference the [Resources tab](#) for information on accessing the Student Success Data Dashboard and contacting your designated data liaisons.

Student Success Data Trends

Persistence: **Increase**

Pass Rates: **Decrease**

Student Credit Hours: **Increase**

Majors: **Increase**

Degrees Awarded: **Decrease**

Other Trends (if applicable):

Noted COM faculty concern: These trends are descriptive. The data provided for analysis are aggregated averages, which limits our ability to perform significance testing, correlation analysis, or casual inference.

COM has significantly expanded its distance course modalities, reflecting an ongoing commitment to increase access and flexibility in course offerings. New online courses in Public Relations and Methods have attracted students across a wide range of disciplines. As expected, the number of face-to-face course offerings decreased, reflecting the growth of the department's fully online asynchronous degree programs.

Credit hours for lower division courses have increased while the upper division credit hours nearly doubled, demonstrating the department's success in attracting learners across disciplines.

In terms of equity and inclusion, COM has reduced the gender gap in Annual Student Credit Hour (SCH) load, reflecting targeted efforts to increase diversity. To further enhance the diversity of our learning communities, the department will continue to engage in campus events to better understand and meet the needs of learners.

Ethnicity trends indicate a significant increase in [REDACTED] SCH Load, while SCH for [REDACTED] students also reflects an upward trend. Similarly, the Annual SCH Load for [REDACTED] has nearly doubled, and there has been an increase in [REDACTED] majors, suggesting greater accessibility for students with financial or educational barriers.

In terms of Majors, Percent Demographic Characteristics category, gender parity has improved, with degrees awarded approaching a 60%-40% distribution between [REDACTED] students.

For the Average Course Pass Rate by Age, [REDACTED] year-old-learners showed a marked increase, while Graduation-Informed Persistence by Gender demonstrated reduced disparities with stability among [REDACTED] students and improved rates among [REDACTED] learners.

Achievement Disparities

Discuss any achievement disparities identified in your disaggregated student success data and explain how you plan to address them.

Response:

Noted COM faculty concern: These trends are descriptive vs. inferential. The data provided are aggregated averages, which limits our ability to perform significance testing, correlation analysis, or casual inference.

Race and Ethnicity

The Average Annual SCH Load increased for white students while decreasing for Alaska Native students. These trends, however, mirror broader institutional demographic shifts at UAF between 2023 and 2024. The Department has expressed the need to hire an Indigenous Communication Scholar to strengthen representation and scholarship in this area; however, there is no funding available. COM faculty continue to invest in professional development in Indigenous pedagogy and assessment and integrate Indigenous and other non-western perspectives into course content.

Age

SCH Load increased for students under 20 and for learners 25 and older, reflecting institutional efforts to expand dual-enrollment programs and the COM department's efforts to appeal to working professionals. However, enrollment among [REDACTED] year olds remains low. Because age data rely on self-disclosure, targeted outreach of a particular age group is challenging. Faculty will attend campus-wide programming and student engagement events to increase awareness of the personal, professional, academic, and civic opportunities available through the discipline lens of Communication. The Accelerated BA/MA program may also attract more students in this age group.

Gender

For the Average Course Pass Rate by Gender, [REDACTED] have slightly outperformed [REDACTED]. COM plans to conduct focus groups with current UG students to better understand these dynamics.

First-Generation Status

With only one academic year of data available, conclusions about first-generation learners are preliminary. Early indications suggest a slight upward trend in pass rates; however, COM will continue to collaborate with campus partners supporting first-gen learners. Moreover, faculty will monitor trends as additional data is made available for the next program review.

Persistence by Age

Graduation-Informed Persistence rates are highest among learners [REDACTED], indicating a need to bolster support for younger students. Faculty will continue to partner with student success resources across campus, along with advising, to support all learners on their path to degree completion.

Closing the Loop

Please discuss how your student learning outcomes are reflected in high impact practices and student success data.

Response:

The SLOs are integrated into HIPs, including undergraduate research, service-based learning, internships, capstone projects, and our program's commitment to distance education. Our SLOs emphasize theoretical grounding, critical inquiry, message design & delivery, and ethical communication.

While COM faculty have concerns regarding the descriptive nature of the student success data, there are trends that reflect how the SLOs are reflected in HIPs and the student success data.

Students demonstrated achievement in foundational COM theory courses (COMF181, COMF425) and applied research experiences (COM401, COMF482). Means on embedded assessments support COM learners are effectively applying communication theories and engaging in critical inquiry.

Coursework (COMF331, COMF400, COMF445) requires students to apply theoretical and ethical frameworks to real-work settings and communication challenges while creating messages that effectively inform, persuade, and deliberate. Likewise, internships, service-learning, and the COM Center provide students with opportunities to demonstrate the ability to accomplish communication goals in professional and community contexts. These experiences align with SLOs focused on applied message creation and critical analysis and other SLOs.

In terms of student success trends, COM's increase in distance modalities has broadened access and supported retention/persistence. The growth of upper-division credit hours along with Annual Student Credit Hour (SCH) load among [REDACTED], [REDACTED] students, and [REDACTED] learners support improved access and inclusion. Gender parity has also improved degrees awarded and persistence rates among [REDACTED], reducing gender-based disparities.

Increased enrollment in lower-division courses and nearly doubled upper-division SCHs demonstrate COM's ability to attract and retain students across degree programs and class standing. Additionally, the growing SCH among learners aged [REDACTED] reflects the department's success in reaching modern, professional students through our online asynchronous program offerings.

In terms of equity and inclusion, the data support COM's progress in reducing gender disparities and expanding our reach to include historically underrepresented groups. We feel a sense of urgency to address the decline in [REDACTED] students in terms of SCH load, which will be a focus in upcoming program reviews. Moreover, COM faculty remain committed to [REDACTED] representation and pedagogy as reflected in continuing faculty development in decolonial, social justice, and [REDACTED] communication frameworks.

Collectively, COM has made gains in access, diversity, and degree completion. These descriptive trends provide evidence to support progress toward equitable and meaningful competency in SLOs.

Academic Program Profile

The following questions help show how your program supports the university's mission, connects with other UA programs, engages with the community, contributes through service courses, and supports student success after graduation. Please use this section to highlight the value your program brings to students, the university, and beyond.

UAF's Mission:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public service as it educates students for active citizenship and prepares them for lifelong learning and careers.

In what ways does your program advance UAF's mission? Response:

UAF's mission fulfillment indicators include the following:

- Student success and degree attainment: Students are at the heart of UAF's mission. We are committed to the success of all students.
- Research: UAF is a Land, Sea and Space Grant University, and research is integral to our identity, mission, and goals.
- Skilled workforce: UAF's mission includes educating students for active citizenship and preparing them for lifelong learning and careers. We play a key role in preparing Alaska's workforce.
- Community and Belonging: UAF is committed to fostering a welcoming, respectful, and supportive community.

To promote student success and degree attainment across our campus community, COM directed the Communication Center, a student resource center guided by the mission to "[increase] the personal, professional, and civic impact of UAF by enhancing the communication competence of its community members" (Communication Center, Our Mission, n.d.). Communication centers play a pivotal role in supporting student success and facilitating degree attainment by providing an inclusive, structured space where learners can develop communication competence, build strategies to manage communication apprehension, and enhance overall academic performance (Staweser et al., 2020).

To further support student success and degree attainment for COM BA students, the department created a new service position, the Director of Undergraduate Programming (Professor [REDACTED] currently serving) in AY24. This position works directly with COM UG majors to ensure timely progress toward degree completion, access to internships and employment opportunities (connecting curriculum to career pathways), and support for COM-related coursework in a virtual community space (fostering community in addition to academic success). These strategies collectively promote student success and degree attainment (Finley, 2021).

Additionally, Dr. [REDACTED] served as the Department of Communication liaison with the Curricular Analytics Committee (CAC) (Gardner Institute) to interrogate and evaluate processes that leverage improvement science and curricular analytics tools to identify opportunities for equitable curriculum redesign. The work completed through CAC has been used as an exemplar for other departments. Through this work, the department critically reviewed stop gaps in the undergraduate degree programming that may negatively impact degree completion and conferment, such as evaluating the rationale for pre-requisites, updating and modernizing student curriculum, and working to standardize department policies to facilitate a consistent student experience.

Identifying gaps in current curricular programming, from 2023-2025 two additional undergraduate programs were proposed and approved to meet students' evolving needs. The first program was the Sci Com minor to address students' growing interest in the intersection between communication and the physical sciences. This second program was the Accelerated BA/MA that provides students with the opportunity to earn their undergraduate and graduate degrees in a shorter period of time.

Dr. [REDACTED] and Professor [REDACTED] also put two courses through the Learner Experience Advocacy Program, facilitated by CTL, to gather and integrate student evaluations of the GER courses.

Communication Center. (n.d.). Welcome to the Communication Center. <https://www.uaf.edu/speak/>

Finley, A. (2021). How college contributes to workforce success: Employer views on what matters most. Association of American Colleges and Universities. <https://dgm81phvh63.cloudfront.net/content/user-photos/Research/PDFs/AACUEmployerReport2021.pdf>

Staweser, M. G., Apostel, S., Carpenter, R., Cuny, K. M., Dvorak, K., & Head, K. (2020). The centrality of the center: Best practices for engaging students on campus. *Communication Center Journal*, 6(1), 94-102. <http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ccj/article/view/2130>

Faculty in the Department of Communication support UAF's mission to integrate research as it educates students. Faculty maintains an active research agenda focused on instructional design, student success, Indigenous studies, public relations, extremism in the military, and media studies. Here is a summary of research during the review period:

Dr. Amy May's Research

Published 4 articles, 4 book chapters

Edited Volumes: 3

Conference Proceedings: 18

Dr. Tori McDermott's Research

Published: 6 journal articles, 6 book chapters

Edited Volume: 1

Conference Proceedings: 23

Concurrent Sessions: 5

Received: National Communication Association's Preston Award for Leadership, 2023, 2024

Received: Top 3 Competitive Paper Session ECA 2023, Undergraduates' perceptions of inclusivity in higher education classrooms

Dr. McDermott has also served as an URSA award reviewer and outside examiner through the Graduate School.

Dr. Kevin Sager's Research

Published articles: 1

Professor Nike Jacob's Research

Published 1 article, 1 book chapter

Conference Proceedings: 10

To prepare a skilled workforce, the BA program continues to transform as the needs of students and employers continue to evolve. To better align student interests with a curriculum that ensures a skilled workforce of competent communicators, the department adopted three tracks for COM Majors: Social Interactions, Science & Environmental communication, and Public Relations. Connecting with SLOs, students gain foundational knowledge of communication theories, perspectives, and central questions that define each track and their strategic areas of focus. For example, in the Social Interaction track, students apply knowledge and develop skills to understand relational dynamics, identity, and culture, including the diverse peoples of Alaska, to promote community and belonging. In the Public Relations track, students gain the ability to design, implement, and evaluate messages that influence public perception and maintain organizational credibility. Finally, in the Science & Environmental Communication track, students integrate research and applied communication to translate complex scientific issues for diverse audiences, fostering public understanding and engagement with science, especially as it relates to the Circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. Additionally, the core curriculum has been updated to include a new research methods course that seeks to ground students in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research. As a result of this curricular update, students can now choose one of three capstone options that best meets their professional goals: research (for students pursuing continuing education), project (for students looking to connect with the community and develop a strong portfolio for the job market), or internship (to get real-world experience in the workforce).

To promote community and belonging, the BA program offers a variety of courses that challenges students to communicate across differences. Courses such as Gender Communication, Women, Minorities, & the Media, and Political Media & Discourse of the American Right invite students to critically examine how identity, power, and representation inform public discourse. These courses, in addition to others, create space for students to engage with diverse perspectives, recognize the impact of communication on marginalized communities, and apply communication practices to strengthen relationships.

To further promote community and belonging, COM adopted the following communication action statement (McDermott & May, 2023): "We recognize and make space for the communication norms and values of the Indigenous People and their ancestors who care for these lands. Although we acknowledge the communication norms we know and practice are based in white supremacy and western knowledge systems that uphold white supremacy and heteronormativity, we invite learners to share with us their language, Elder wisdom, and communication practices so that we may grow together as a community." This statement promotes community and belonging by acknowledging historical exclusion of Indigenous Peoples from white, western, and heteronormative frameworks that define higher education. By inviting learners to share their language, cultural traditions, and Elder wisdom, COM honors that all voices and knowledge systems are equal.

Dr. [REDACTED] also serves as the faculty sponsor for the Generation Action Club, a national network of young activists that advocate for reproductive freedom.

Dr. [REDACTED] also served as the co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Women, a faculty senate committee devoted to identifying and addressing gender-based challenges across the university.

McDermott, V., & May, A. (2023). Challenging the positionality of western mainstream English through the implementation of communication action statements. *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, 7(1), 165-180. <https://doi.org/10.31446/JCP.2023.1.11>

How is your program related to others in the UA system?

Response:

The Department of Communication has partnered across the UA system to build the communication competence of our community.

Communication Center (COM Center)

Under the direction of Professor Nike Jacob, the COM Center served as a strategic resource for student learning and public speaking support for students in the COM GERs and other oral-intensive courses across our campus community during AY23-25. During the review period, the COM Center supported 471 students over 566 service hours.

To modernize the student experience and offer more accessible, integrated support, the COM Center, under the direction of Professor [REDACTED] moved its physical location to the Student Success Center. As part of this transition, all operating and administrative systems were migrated to new platforms and integrated with the general Student Success Center. Dr. [REDACTED] and Professor [REDACTED] served on the interdisciplinary Student Success Center Advisory Committee, where standard operating procedures and further best practices for the new SSC were developed.

The COM Center also participates annually in the selection of the UAF Commencement Speaker and coaches the Commencement Speaker in public speaking best practices and speech writing to help them prepare for their stage appearance.

NOTE: Upcoming program reviews will not include the COM Center as CLA shifted its focus away from student resource center administration. In AY25/26, the COM Center is fully administered by the Student Success Center (SSC).

3MT

To support students across the UA system, COM faculty facilitate a series of workshops to prepare students for the 3MT competition, an international academic competition where graduate students present their research in a compelling three-minute presentation to a non-specialist audience, using only one static slide. In addition to workshops, faculty met one-on-one with competitors to refine their presentations and delivery. Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] also developed an asynchronous 3MT Canvas resource shell that graduate students can access 24/7 filled with step-by-step instructions and key resources to develop, refine, and successfully present a 3MT presentation.

Intensives

For some students living in rural communities, access to needed courses remains a persistent challenge for degree completion. One strategy employed by UA remote campus sites, e.g., Nome, KuC, is to offer summer intensives, shortened versions of semester-based courses facilitated by visiting faculty. Dr. [REDACTED] facilitated an intensive at KuC during the review period, bringing the UAF Troth Yeddha Department of Communication to Indigenous learners pursuing their teaching credentials.

Campus Workshops & Educational Outreach

In Spring 2024, the COM Center collaborated with [REDACTED] from the University of Exeter, UK, to teach a virtual Science Communication Workshop for the Alaska Center for Energy & Power (ACEP). The workshop introduced participants to science communication for the public, how to utilize storytelling in their science communication, and overviewed best practices to communicate complex concepts to political stakeholders.

In Spring 2024, Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] taught a workshop about interview preparation at the Alaska Center for Native Health.

The COMCenter offers in-person and virtual outreach for classes with an oral intensive component. For example, Dr. [REDACTED] taught a public speaking workshop for a 100-level Writing in the Sciences class in Fall 2024.

Professor [REDACTED] taught Networking Best Practices workshops for EPSCoR Student Ambassadors in Spring 2025 and as part of the Career Services Career Day Workshop series in Spring 2024.

Professor [REDACTED] developed a module about healthy discourse and team communication that was integrated into the newly developed ASUAF officer online training course.

Dr. [REDACTED] is also an affiliate faculty member with the Content Creation Certificate program, a Title III Grant funded project that seeks to prepare students to grow their skills in video storytelling, blogging and social media, and digital business development. From 2023-2025 Dr. [REDACTED] completed three trips to the Chukchi Campus to build further relationships in Kotzebue and surrounding communities and to get students engaged in the Content Creation program.

Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies

To extend the reach of our courses and attract students outside of the major, COM cross-lists courses with other departments, including Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). Dr. [REDACTED], Dr. [REDACTED], and Professor [REDACTED] maintain faculty affiliations for WGSS.

Honors College

Dr. [REDACTED] and Professor [REDACTED] facilitate Honors sections of COM 121 to assist Honors College students in their degree completion.

Impact of COM GERs

The Department of Communication offers four courses as part of the General Education Requirements (GERs) curriculum. These include the following: COMF121: Introduction to Interpersonal Communication, COM131: Fundamentals of Oral Communication: Group Context, COMF141: Fundamentals of Oral Communication: Public Context, and COMF300: Communicating Ethics. These courses impact every single student pursuing an Associate's or Bachelor's degree at UAF.

INDS

Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] also serve as committee chairs and committee members on INDS committees across campus, broadening the reach and partnerships of the Department of Communication.

Who are your key community or external partners?

Response:

The Department of Communication is committed to partnering with professional organizations that further our discipline and community-based agencies that benefit from their expertise to address social, health, and justice issues locally and nationally.

In support of furthering our discipline, COM faculty are active in professional organizations such as the National Communication Association (NCA), the National Association of Communication Centers (NACC), and Western States Communication Association (WSCA). Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] serve in leadership roles within the respective organizations to include the leadership circle of the Indigenous Caucus, Communication Centers Division, Women's Caucus, and Military Division. Dr. [REDACTED] contributions to discipline leadership has been recognized by NCA, where her efforts were awarded with consecutive Preston Awards for Leadership (2023, 2024). Dr. [REDACTED] also served as the co-chair of the IDEA+ committee within the Organization of Biological Field Stations to build interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships.

Dr. [REDACTED] serves as a board member for the Interior Community Health Center, a health center located in the Fairbanks North Star Bureau committed to providing medical, integrated behavioral health, and dental services to all community members. As a health communication scholar, Dr. [REDACTED] has supported their strategic planning efforts to better understand and address the health disparities that continue to plague not only Fairbanks but the state of Alaska.

Dr. [REDACTED] and Dr. [REDACTED] are active in larger efforts to support people traditionally excluded from higher education. Specifically, these two scholars devote service hours to delivering communication-based instruction to people who are incarcerated and committed to achieving their academic goals to help promote successful reentry to their communities and reduce recidivism

Dr. [REDACTED] supports community-based efforts to promote civic engagement and democratic participation. Communication is essential to a healthy and vibrant democracy, and Dr. [REDACTED] advocates for nonpartisan voting by volunteering as a poll worker and encouraging her students and peers to engage in civil public discourse. Through critical media literacy, students are encouraged to make informed decisions, engage respectfully across differences, and contribute in meaningful ways to the democratic process.

Dr. [REDACTED] also partners with Alaska Center ICE through grants and seeks to connect students in the Public Relations track with Alaskan businesses and organizations identified in the Alaska Center ICE network to build and develop their public relations skills and knowledge while working with real businesses and clients.

Dr. [REDACTED] has repeatedly served as a paper reviewer and judge for the Alaska Statewide Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS). He has also been a faculty advisor to the UAF Student Chess Club. Dr. [REDACTED] ties to professional associations have included membership in the Association of American Educators, the Association for Business Communication, the National Communication Association, and the Texas Computer Education Association.

What role do your services courses play, if any?

Response:

During the 2023/2024 program review, COM faculty identified service-related learning as an opportunity for further development:

Dr. [REDACTED] addressed this need by building a project-based capstone course where students apply their knowledge and education to a significant project involving their communication research interests. students have the option to complete a project with external (community) or internal (within the University) partners. This course, COMF483 completed program review during AY24/25 and will be piloted in spring 26 by Professor [REDACTED].

Students are encouraged to complete internships (COM400: Internships) as part of their degree program, creating opportunities for students to blend coursework, civic engagement, and professional development. BA may earn up to 6 internship credits when working with community partners. As a service course, COM400 allows for applied learning, extending classroom content beyond the classroom. Students apply theory to authentic practice. Reflection on their overall experience is embedded in the process, creating space for students to connect the COM discipline to broader social and/or organizational goals while building skills through service.

COM faculty recognize the value of service-based learning in a comprehensive communication curriculum, serving a critical bridge between theory and practice. COM faculty further acknowledge the opportunity to integrate service-based learning projects into courses such as:

Gender communication and health communication to examine and respond to issues of equity, access, and representation.

Organizational communication helps students gain experience in ethical and effective leadership.

Interpersonal, public relations, and oral communication to ensure students gain practical experience in message design, audience analysis, and campaign development.

[REDACTED] program. Students choose to
One challenge we continue to address is the nature of our online asynchronous program. Students choose to earn their COM degree from across the globe. As such, service opportunities are difficult to identify.

How do your graduates succeed after leaving the program?

Response:

Collectively, the discipline of communication prepares students to succeed in many different industries and occupations. Undergraduate majors in communication consistently demonstrate strong employability. Specifically, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025) demonstrates Media and Communication Occupations have a median annual wage of \$70,300 in May 2024. No Alaska specific data were available on income and occupations, which is a noted limitation.

Future trends from UA's Impact on Alaska's Workforce: An In-depth analysis of 11 Key Industries, underscores the importance of communication in growing areas such as administration, education, health, hospitality & tourism, and information communication technology, and law & public safety. Moreover, across industries, communication remains one of the most in-demand skill sets for employees (Tushar & Sooraska, 2023).

UAF UG COM majors work in a variety of positions within higher education (academic advising, public relations, sports marketing, alumni relations), outside of academia in a variety of marketing, public relations, public information officer, and website design roles, human resources, international business; moreover, some students choose to continue their education, enrolling in graduate programs both in communication and related fields.

One identified opportunity for improvement resulting from the 2025/2026 program review is the need to develop a tracking system for our UG majors to better analyze employment data and income in future program reviews.

Tushar, H., & Sooraksa, N. (2023). Global employability skills in the 21st century workplace: A semi-systematic literature review. *Heliyon*, 9(11), e21023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e21023>

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2025, August 28). Media and communication occupations. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Workforce Development. (2025). UA's impact on Alaska's workforce: An in-depth analysis of 11 key industries. <https://www.alaska.edu/research/wd/reports.php>

Submitter and Collaborator Names:

Written by Amy May (project leader and primary content developer and author) with contributions from Kevin L. Sager (revised Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) table and collaborated in the data analysis of the SLOs and student success trends), Victoria (Tori) McDermott (data contributor), and Nike Jacob (data contributor), Laura Foor (proofreading)

Submitter Email:

amay11@alaska.edu

Committee Review

Program Name: Communication – Bachelor of Art

Academic Year 2025/2026

Overall Recommendations

The college or school committees set the tone for helping each program feel seen during this process. We have provided you with feedback tags to attach to this program review. Please select as many as applicable.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Insufficient Narratives | ☐ Report Incomplete |
| ☐ Address Achievement Gap | ☐ Consider Curricular Revisions |
| ☐ Develop Online Offerings/Options | ☐ Improve Time to Degree |
| ☐ Increase Enrollment | ☐ Increase Graduates |
| ☐ Increase Retention/Persistence | ☐ Strengthen Advising Practices |
| ☐ May be asked to share Effective Practices | ☐ Recommendation to University-Wide Committee |

Explanation of Overall Recommendations

Response:

The Communications program clearly demonstrates how the department uses data to “close the loop.” The department altered assessments to address concern, and they provide a clear narrative that demonstrates the links between SLOs and SLOAs. Importantly, they have identified action items so that the department can implement continuous improvement. Identifying the goal of increasing students’ understanding and assessing it accurately illustrate the responsive nature of the program to students’ needs. To improve, the program may consider identifying undergraduate research as a HIP and connecting internships to community-based learning.

Student Learning Outcomes Feedback

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☒ Strong | ☐ Developing |
| ☐ Requires Minor Revision | ☐ Requires Major Revision |

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Strong Alignment with SLOA Plan | ☒ Clear, Concise Presentation of Findings |
| ☒ Compelling Learning Story | ☐ Missing a Direct Measure |
| ☐ Missing Active Verbs | ☐ Missing Curricular Connection |
| ☐ Missing Collaboration within Department | |

SLOA Feedback Narrative:

The assessment is generally clearly connected to the stated outcomes. Findings are presented as percentages that reflect the average of student performance, and are generally high. Direct measures are used, such as assessing whether and how well an assignment fulfills a rubric. Unable to assess departmental collaboration. Results have informed changes e.g. the SLOs have been reduced in number from 9 to 5, based on a 23-24 recommendation, and fewer assignments selected for assessment. The SLOA has been revised, based on feedback from the mid-cycle review. The assessment is clearly connected to the stated outcomes. Findings are presented as percentages that reflect student performance average, and are generally high. Direct measures are used, such as assessing whether and how well an assignment fulfills a rubric. Unable to assess departmental collaboration.

Student Success and Equity

The review provides a detailed analysis of the Student Success Dashboard, and addresses the limitations of aggregated data. The report identifies gender gaps, and importantly, identifies the trends in those gaps and how some, such as a gender gap, have been closing. To address the success of [REDACTED] students, the program offers multiple solutions and identifies the need to engage in professional development to meet their needs. The narrative includes evidence of inclusive practices to increase the success of students and the strength of the department. The department might consider engaging in cross-department cooperation to appeal to students ages [REDACTED]. For example, students in Education programs could significantly benefit from Communication courses

High Impact Practices Feedback

Narrative:

The program provides a fulsome description of the HIPs and explains how each aligns with the SLOA to measure the qualities identified. The capstone course and internships exemplify meaningful interactive experiences. I do not see opportunities for integration that are not already implemented. For instance, scholarly opportunities that include research, case studies and quality assessments are integrated into a multitude of classes throughout the program. Some practices, such as internships, need to be taken individually, and probably at a certain level within the program. Because scholarly activities are included across the curriculum and include research papers and case studies, there is an opportunity to identify undergraduate research as an HIP, which is currently not checked. I also wonder if internships might apply to service or community-based learning, which is another category which is not identified as a Communications HIP.

Profile Feedback

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Mission-Centric to College and/or UAF | ☒ Unique within UA |
| ☒ Collaborative with other UA Programs | ☐ Provides Job Placement for Graduates |
| ☐ Strong Post-Grad Success for Students | ☒ Strong Service Teaching Component |
| ☒ Strong Ties to Community or Industry | |

Financial Feedback

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ High Tuition Revenues | ☐ High Grant Revenues |
| ☒ Operates at Low Cost | ☒ Productive Faculty |
| ☐ Opportunities to Increase Revenue | ☐ Low Enrollment |

Reviewer Names:

Gerri Brightwell, Mary Ludwig, Brad Moran

Dean Review

Program Name: Communication – Bachelor of Art

Academic Year 2025/2026

Dean Feedback

Overall feedback narrative:

I agree with the committee's careful and thoughtful review of the Communication BA program. I commend the tremendous faculty effort that has gone into curricular revisions and program rebuilding following the decoupling with Journalism. The Department of Communication has seen a good increase in BA major numbers (38 currently) and faculty should continue its recruitment efforts towards further growing majors in the BA program. I recommend department faculty work closely with our PIO team to facilitate advertising and recruitment for the program, specific courses, and outreach activities. Communication also carries a heavy service teaching load for General Education courses and is commended for consistent work with adjunct faculty toward development of curriculum and policies in response to shifting student needs.

Recommendation to University-Wide Committee No

Vice Provost Review

Program Name: Communication – Bachelor of Art

Academic Year 2025/2026

Vice Provost Feedback

Overall feedback narrative:

The review comments for the BA in Communication and MA in Professional Communication are similar due to the relatedness of the programs and their full-program reviews. Please submit a revised SLOA; none was included in the supplementary documents folder, and the version on the UAF website is outdated (2022, with 9 SLOs). The program noted reducing SLOs from 9 to 5, which is a positive change for assessment purposes, but the updated SLOA with these 5 SLOs must be provided and posted online. While assessment activity is occurring and rubrics were included, the absence of an updated SLOA makes it difficult to determine the assessment procedures and implementation plan. The program should clarify where SLOs are assessed within the curriculum and include this in the SLOA. For the next review (2027 mid-cycle), include assessment data as evidence and document how curricular changes improved student success following the Communication/Journalism split. The narrative linking SLOs to HIPs and student success was strong—closing the loop is essential for NWCCU expectations. Continue to demonstrate that assessment results drive meaningful, evidence-based improvements, and provide clear evidence for each SLO in future reviews.

The program effectively uses PAIR Student Success Dashboard data, reviewing persistence, pass rates, SCH, majors, and degrees awarded, with disaggregations by gender, age, race/ethnicity, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] status. Expansion of online and distance modalities is tied to improved access and persistence, and the Accelerated BA/MA pathway supports time-to-degree and attracts underrepresented age groups. Gender-based disparities are narrowing, and Indigenous and non-Western perspectives are integrated through coursework and faculty development. Proposed focus groups will explore gender-based pass rate differences, and hiring an Indigenous Communication Scholar is identified as a long-term goal. However, retention and graduation strategies lack specific targets or timelines, and short-term, data-informed interventions are not clearly outlined. The program should connect inclusive practices to measurable changes in persistence and completion, and consider analyzing time-to-degree, excess credits, and cohort graduation rates to inform outreach and instructional support. Workforce success is discussed broadly, but program-level tracking of alumni outcomes is not in place.

The program provides detailed, descriptive HIPs that align well with the SLOA. However, internships may include undergraduate research and community-based learning, which were not checked in the report. If these activities are occurring, they should be fully documented to reflect the breadth of HIP engagement.

Department Name: Communication

Last updated: 2025/2026

Yes

[illegible]

Collaborator Name(s):

Amy May

Collaborator Email(s):

amay11@alaska.edu



Financial Data

Department Name: Communication

Academic Year 2025/2026

	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	For Data Entry Staff	For Programs and Review Committees
Total Student Credit Hours (SCH)	3995	2985	3901	Provided in SCH tab in the student success data provided by PAIR.	
Service SCH				Sum rows labeled as "In unit, outside department, Service" and "Outside unit, Service" in the SCH tab of the data provided by PAIR.	
Department FTEs	6.975	8.2125	8.35	FTE = Full-time equivalent employee. This field will auto-populate from the FTE Worksheet below.	
Total SCH per Department FTE	572.76	363.47	467.19		
Service SCH per Department FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00		

Majors in Programs				Sum for all programs from the Majors Total tab in the data provided by PAIR.	
Department FTE's	6.975	8.2125	8.35	This field will auto-populate from the FTE Worksheet below.	
Majors per Department FTE	0.00	0.00	0.00		

Total Unrestricted Expenditures				Total Expenditures made from budgets with an F1 or F7 fund type designation, from provided cycle report data filtered by Data Liaison	
Total Restricted Expenditures				Total Expenditures made from budgets with revenue of the F2 or S2 fund type designation, from provided cycle report data filtered by Data Liaison	
Total Unit/Central Support Allocated to Program(s)				Expenses incurred for direct support of instruction within orgs identified as central or academic support, if applicable	
Total Expenditures					

Tuition Revenue				Receipts to college from tuition generated by the department/program (F1). NOTE: under the current 80/20 percent tuition distribution model generating units receive 80%. PLEASE USE PAIR REPORTED SCH.	Receipts to college from tuition generated by the department/program, based on the campus's active tuition distribution model, which determines how much the unit receives of their generated tuition, and how much the campus keeps (in addition to the out-of-state surcharges) to support central offices/functions. The current distribution model is 80/20, where the unit/college receives 80% of their generated in-state tuition.
State Appropriation Revenue				Appropriations for current funds operation of the university from the general fund of the State of Alaska through the annual budget cycle. This category also includes TVEP and State Mental Health Trust funds, if allocated to the department. (F1)	Appropriations for current funds operation of the university from the general fund of the State of Alaska through the annual budget cycle.
Restricted/Sponsored Project Revenue				Revenue from external sponsors; includes grants, contracts, sponsored projects & restricted (grant) accounts funded by UA Foundation funds (F2/S2)	Revenue from external sponsors; includes grants, contracts, sponsored projects & restricted (grant) accounts funded by UA Foundation funds
Fees				Course Fees (9159)	
Other UA Receipts/Revenue				e.g. Performance and Sales Receipts, Space Rental Revenue, Indirect Cost Recovery (F1/F7); NOTE: COURSE FEES (9159) REPORTED ABOVE	
Total Revenue					

Workload Allocation	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	
Teaching Units	60	83.5	91.5	Department faculty's workload units assigned to teaching
Service Units	15	16	20	Department faculty's workload units assigned to service
Research Units	15	14	13	Department faculty's workload units assigned to research

Full-Time Equivalent Worksheet*	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	
Faculty FTEs	2.25	3	3	Base assumption: 12-month full-time = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE. Split appointments are multiplied by the % of effort assigned to this department. Part-time are multiplied by the % of effort assigned. F9 faculty on sabbatical count as 67% of one 9-month 0.75 FTE (or 0.50 FTE).
Adjunct FTEs	2.1	2.5875	2.725	Base assumption: 40 units/credits = 1.0 FTE. Total # of credits taught by adjuncts in a year divided by 40 = the FTE of adjuncts in that year.
Staff FTEs	0.75	0.75	0.75	Base assumption: 12-month full-time = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE. Split appointments are multiplied by the % of effort assigned to this department. Part-time are multiplied by the % of effort.
Graduate TA/RA FTEs	1.875	1.875	1.875	Base assumption: 40 hours/week for 12 months = 1.0 FTE. 9-month = 0.75 FTE.
Total Department FTEs	6.975	8.2125	8.35	Sum of all employee FTEs

*Note: FTE definitions and calculations for the purpose of Academic Program Review are different than for other institutional reporting processes (e.g. OMB or IPEDS reporting)

Information last updated by: Data Entered 10/12/25 Cecelia Chamberlain; Reviewed Amy May 10/21/25

Date: 10/21/25