Internal Self-Study Report

Department of Communication

University of Maryland

December 2007

Internal Self-Study Committee

Elizabeth L. Toth—*Chair*

Sabine Fritz—*Graduate Student Representative*
Franklin J. Hildy—*Department of Theatre*
James F. Klumpp—*Professor, Faculty Representative*
Meina Liu—*Assistant Professor, Faculty Representative*
Shirley Logan—*Department of English*
Shawn J. Parry-Giles—*Director of Graduate Studies*
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Leah Waks—*Director of Undergraduate Studies, Staff Representative*

Department of Communication Internal Self-Study Report

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Introduction

The Department of Communication at the University of Maryland has as its mission "the study of the strategic use of discourse in the public sphere." It provides programs of study at the undergraduate and graduate level. The department also houses the Center for Political Communication and Civic Leadership and the Center for Risk Communication Research.

This self-study responds to the University of Maryland's requirement for a periodic review. The primary goal of the review, according to Senate Document 00-01-134Z, is to "improve the unit's effectiveness and quality—by providing the unit and administration with a clear assessment of the unit's strengths and weaknesses and by providing the unit with the opportunity for periodic self-examination." The Department of Communication also takes this self-study as an opportunity to represent itself to the College and the wider University of Maryland community.

The Department of Communication provides this report through the work of a self-study committee made up of nine individuals. In addition to the Department Chair and elected members of the department's Faculty Advisory Committee, the self-study committee included the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Graduate Studies. Two individuals on the self-study committee were faculty members from outside of the unit appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities. One Communication graduate student served on the self-study committee.

This report presents the analysis of data gathered through the university's "Profiles" database, discusses the results of an undergraduate survey and a survey of graduate students, and invited comments and interviews with faculty and graduate students. All of the surveys included in the report were conducted in October of 2007. The completed narrative was presented to the full Departmental Assembly on December 2, 2007 for comments and suggestions and that input was fully considered in the composition of this narrative.

Specifically, this internal self-study report addressed fifty-three questions provided by the College of Arts & Humanities self-study procedures and guidelines. Questions concerned faculty, the undergraduate program, the graduate program, general department organization, and facilities. The final section of the report addresses specific issues derived from the self-study and asks for assistance and guidance from the external review team and university officers in developing appropriate and reasonable solutions and recommendations. The department anticipates that the feedback forthcoming from this assessment process will assist it in developing the next departmental strategic plan in 2008.

I.   **Faculty**

   A.   *Faculty Research Productivity and Influence*

The department's instructional faculty roster in 2007 includes 17 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members (five assistant professors, six associate professors, six full professors), nine lecturers and visiting faculty members, three staff members and one research professor. Three faculty members joined the department in the fall of 2007 (one associate professor and two assistant professors). In addition, during the period covered by this self-study (2002-2007), the department saw the retirement and promotion to emeritus status of two full professors in 2005 (see Appendix II.A.—List of Faculty by Rank & Teaching/Research Specialty).

From 2002-2007, the department's tenured and tenure-track faculty produced ten scholarly books or monographs, eight textbooks/student manuals, 44 edited book chapters, 48 articles in refereed journals, 16 non-refereed journal articles/book reviews, and 173 refereed presentations at international, national, and regional conferences. The faculty also have edited three disciplinary journals, frequently served as reviewers for journals and conventions, and provided leadership in international, national, and regional associations. In addition, department faculty members have received numerous awards for their research (see Appendix II.F.—List of Fellowships, Grants, & Awards).

The Department of Communication's faculty and its graduate program are organized into four research specialties: Intercultural Communication, Persuasion & Social Influence, Public Relations, and Rhetoric & Political Culture. Each of these areas is distinct in curricula, disciplinary theory and emphasis, and method. Yet despite these differences, the department is unified by its commitment to achieving its mission and faculty members work across specialties on research projects, in faculty governance, with graduate students, and in the department's research centers.

Intercultural Communication

The Department of Communication's emphasis in Intercultural Communication is dedicated to research and theory-building using quantitative methods, with a focus on cognitive and emotional processes as the basis for studying the cultural roots of logic and investigating how people in different cultures make decisions, resist or support persuasive messages, evaluate arguments, and manage conflicts.

In the department's 2002 Strategic Plan, initiatives for this area included an increase in the number of both graduate and undergraduate courses, continued recruitment of quality graduate students, and the hiring of faculty with strong quantitative expertise.[1] Though the number of faculty members in this area remains small, the initiatives from the 2002 plan have largely been fulfilled.

The senior scholar in the area of Intercultural Communication is associate professor **Deborah A. Cai**. Cai is an international researcher with ties to China. Her current research examines the influence of culture on communication processes and the relation between cultural differences and differences in cognitive processes, such as decision-making. Her research includes studies on cultural differences in negotiation plans, enactment of face-management strategies, and the mediating effects of role on culture in business negotiation.

The department's other Intercultural Communication scholar is assistant professor **Meina Liu**. Dr. Liu's research focuses on the effect of emotion on conflict management and negotiation, cross-cultural differences and similarities in message production processes, and the mutual influence that negotiators have on each other.

Faculty members in Persuasion & Social Influence support the research in Intercultural Communication, particularly **Edward L. Fink** and the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies, **Leah Waks**.

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[1] *Advancing Excellence: Toward a Second Century of Achievement: The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication, University of Maryland*, May 3, 2002.

Persuasion & Social Influence

Focused on building theory in persuasion and social influence using quantitative methods, the department's research emphasis in this area contributes directly to advancing the understanding of cognitive processes, with a specific commitment to rigor and strength of research methods.

The 2002 Department of Communication Strategic Plan called for initiatives in this research area that would create an undergraduate research pool, host "splash" events to bring recognition to the area, an additional faculty member in political communication who employs quantitative research methods, and intensified recruitment of quality graduate students.[2] The department has created an undergraduate research pool and recruits quality graduate students in this area.

The senior member of the faculty in Persuasion & Social Influence is distinguished scholar-teacher **Edward L. Fink**. Even while serving as chair of the department for ten years, Fink maintained his position as an internationally recognized expert in persuasion and research methods. He studies the creation and testing of mathematical models of the communication process, including cultural differences in cognition, persuasion, and conflict. Some of his research focuses on the cognitive processes involved in persuasion, some on the cultural and social aspects of information diffusion. In addition, he has published work concerning the problems of measurement and analysis associated with empirical research. He teaches persuasion, communication theory, research methods, and data analysis.

Associate professor **Monique Mitchell Turner**'s research examines the effect of emotion on the cognitive processing of persuasive messages, the effect of perceptions of others' emotions on interpersonal judgments, and the development of emotion-based messages. In addition, Turner has been developing theories related to anger and guilt appeals, primarily in the domains of risk and health communication. Turner is currently an associate editor of *Communication Research Reports* and is the director of the university's Center for Risk Communication Research.

The department's new assistant professor in Persuasion & Social Influence is **Torsten Reimer** who joined the department from the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. Reimer studies the role of communication in decision making and organizational behavior. His current projects explore how communication principles can facilitate interpersonal interaction and decision making by guiding information processing and reducing information overload.

In hiring **Dale Hample** in 2007 as an associate professor, the department added a nationally recognized scholar in argumentation who studies how people take conflict personally in interpersonal interactions, the processes of interpersonal arguing, particularly the role of argument frames and emotions in interpersonal exchange, and inventional capacity, or the number of things an individual can say in an interpersonal exchange. Hample is also the incoming editor of *Argumentation & Advocacy*.

Faculty members in the Persuasion & Social Influence research area are supported by the work of faculty members in Intercultural Communication, **Deborah Cai** and **Meina Liu**, as well as by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, **Leah Waks**.

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[2] *Advancing Excellence: Toward a Second Century of Achievement: The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication, University of Maryland*, May 3, 2002.

Public Relations

Scholars and students of Public Relations in the department study how organizations and other entities interact with publics, the management function of public relations within the organizational structure, the ethics of public relations, and the increasing globalization of public relations.

The department's 2002 Strategic Plan called for this research area to increase placement services and to intensify alumni networking, to hire a senior faculty member to replace retiring senior faculty members, maintaining certification by the Public Relations Society of America, and increase the strength of the department's chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America.[3] The department's faculty members, in this area, have achieved all of these initiatives to varying degrees of success.

In 2004, the Public Relations research area saw the retirement of the nation's preeminent scholars in this area, **James E. Grunig** and **Larissa A. Grunig**, the hiring of a senior faculty member and the recruitment and hiring of additional faculty members who have contributed to the emphasis and allowed it to maintain its national status as the premier program in this area.

The department's senior scholar in Public Relations is **Elizabeth L. Toth**. Now serving as the department chair, Toth has conducted research for the Public Relations Society of America on its members' work, life, and gender issues. Toth edited the *Journal of Public Relations Research* for six years and currently serves as an associate editor of *Journalism Studies*.

Associate professor **Linda Aldoory** is also a nationally known scholar of Public Relations. Aldoory examines public relations, health communication, and feminist scholarship. She is the current editor of the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, the leading research journal in this area. Her research focuses on how people from different backgrounds perceive health campaigns and on the relationship between media and health. She also studies race and gender as they relate to the public relations profession.

In 2005, the department hired **Shannon A. Bowen** as an assistant professor in Public Relations. Bowen's work addresses public relations ethics and theory, organizational communication, and strategic issues management. She was also the principal investigator on a grant sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation to study communication ethics.

The department has hired **Sahar Mohamed Khamis** in the area of Middle Eastern media in support of the College of Arts & Humanities Middle Eastern Institute. Khamis's areas of teaching and research interest include public relations, mass media campaigns, gender and media studies, women's media images and portrayals, and mass media and national development.

The department has commenced a search for another assistant professor in Public Relations.

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[3] *Advancing Excellence: Toward a Second Century of Achievement: The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication, University of Maryland*, May 3, 2002.

Rhetoric & Political Culture

As the 2004 NCA reputational study indicates, the Rhetoric & Political Culture research area of the department is one of the most respected rhetoric programs in the nation as it seeks to critically and historically explore the power of public discourse. Over the past five years, this research area has been strengthened by continued research productivity and enhanced national prominence through disciplinary leadership.

The 2002 Department of Communication Strategic Plan urged that this research area increase the number of courses offered, that it increase its national visibility by hosting the 2004 Biennial Conference on Public Address, that it support the publication of *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* when this publication is housed and edited by the department, and that it hire a faculty member who studies minority rhetoric.[4] Aside from the last initiative, all of the goals from the 2002 Plan were achieved.

The Rhetoric & Political Culture area is led by three full professors. **Robert N. Gaines** is concerned with the idea of rhetoric as a matter of historical and practical interest. His primary research program addresses the individuals and intellectual forces that shaped rhetorical theory in ancient times. Gaines is currently the editor of *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* and is co-principal investigator of the *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, funded by an NEH grant of over $195,000.

James F. Klumpp is a rhetorical critic interested in the use of discourse to effect social structure. His work in contemporary rhetorical theory concentrates on Kenneth Burke and the European continental critics. Argumentation is another interest, particularly social argumentation processes.

The third full professor in the Rhetoric & Political Culture area is **Shawn J. Parry-Giles**. Parry-Giles studies rhetoric and politics. Parry-Giles serves as the department's Director of Graduate Studies and as the director of the University of Maryland's Center for Political Communication & Civic Leadership. In 2005, as principal investigator, Parry-Giles with colleagues at Baylor University, the Pennsylvania State University, and UM, was awarded an NEH grant for over $195,000 to support the *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*.

At the associate professor rank in Rhetoric & Political Culture are two faculty members. **Trevor Parry-Giles** studies rhetoric and political culture and legal rhetoric. He has received the Diamond Anniversary Book Award from the National Communication Association (NCA), the Kohrs-Campbell Prize in Rhetorical Criticism, and the Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award for Outstanding Scholarship from the Public Address Division of NCA.

Mari Boor Tonn specializes in feminist and rhetorical criticism, political communication, and public address, especially women labor movement leaders and first- and second-wave feminists. She has received the National Communication Association's Karl Wallace Memorial Award for excellence in rhetorical scholarship, the Eastern Communication Association's Past Presidents' Award for excellence in scholarship and service, and the Best Essay of the Year Award from the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language, and Women.

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[4] *Advancing Excellence: Toward a Second Century of Achievement: The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication, University of Maryland*, May 3, 2002.

The department hired in 2007 assistant professor **Kristy Maddux**. Maddux is a rhetorical critic with particular interests in religious and gendered rhetorics in both contemporary and historical American contexts.

Other Faculty

The research mission of the department is also supported by other faculty members. Research professor **Kathleen Kendall**'s research and teaching interests focus on American political campaign communication, particularly the interaction of the candidates and the media. Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies **Leah Waks** supports the research efforts of faculty and students in Intercultural Communication and Persuasion & Social Influence; her research interest is in the interplay of cognitions, attitudes, and emotions in conflict creation and conflict management, in organizations and in groups.

Supporting the research underway in all of the specialties of the department is full professor **Andrew Wolvin** who is recognized as one of the foremost international experts on listening and communication pedagogy. Wolvin has been identified on a list of the 100 "Top-Ranked Active Researchers in Communication Studies," and he was ranked 21st for number of books published and 40th for articles and books among communication scholars in *Communication Research Reports*.[5]

Extramural Funding, Research Centers, & Multidisciplinary Activity

Appendix II.F.—List of Fellowships, Grants, & Awards, 2002-2007 reveals the extent of faculty success at securing extramural funding. Extramural funding to the department has come from major grant agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Agriculture, as well as from more specialized sources like the Public Relations Society of America and the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. In sum, the department's faculty members have garnered **$1,480,023** in extramural funding from 2002-2007. The department will continue to pursue extramural funding, and is implementing plans to form a Departmental Advisory Board and to establish a Foundation to encourage donations to the department from interested community members and alumni.

The department also houses two research centers that engage in multidisciplinary activity and that attract extramural funding. The Center for Political Communication & Civic Leadership (CPCCL) sponsors programs and conducts research on political communication. The CPCCL unites research, education, and public engagement to foster democratic communication by a diverse people and is committed to the advancement of a diverse and productive democracy through the study of human communication. The CPCCL develops projects and sponsors events designed to explore the nexus between communication behavior and political life. The Center also is a resource for the political community, offering expertise, analysis, and commentary about political communication. Under the auspices of the CPCCL, department faculty received a grant from the NEH of over $195,000 to study the history of American public address and to establish a multimedia Web site.

The Center for Risk Communication Research (CRCR) studies issues of health communication and risk communication with scholars from around UM and the nation. The mission of the CRCR

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[5]Jean Bodon, Larry Powell, Mark Hickson III, "An Analysis of Book Versus Article Productivity Based on Top Researchers Careers," *Communication Research Reports* 16 (1999): 213-222.

is to advance dialogue and understanding about how communication helps control and prevent risk; about how publics perceive risk communication; and about the political, economic and social contexts for risk communication through research, education, and outreach. Risk communication is viewed as the strategic use of discourse in relation to threat and risk to health, food safety, security, and the environment. The CRCR is engaged in sponsored research and has brought to the department considerable extramural funding.

Department faculty members also engage in other multidisciplinary activity. Locally, faculty members serve as outside readers on dissertations committees in various units across the UM campus and are affiliated with many different academic units and centers at UM including, the Departments of African-American Studies, American Studies, Psychology, Sociology, and Women's Studies as well as the Center for American Politics & Citizenship, the Center for Information Policy and Electronic Government, the Institute for Global Chinese Affairs, the James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership, and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Faculty members also publish in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary outlets, and they are frequently consulted to review for such journals.

B.   *National Rankings*

1.   The National Communication Association (NCA) conducted a reputational study of doctoral programs in 2004. Programs self-identified faculty in seven specialty areas and respondents were asked to rate programs according to three criteria: 1) scholarly quality of program faculty; 2) program effectiveness in educating researchers; and 3) quality change in the last five years. The department was ranked as a top ten program in three specialties: Intercultural/International Communication, Political Communication, and Rhetoric. See Appendix II.E. for all of the departmental rankings in the 2004 NCA study.

2.   In 2005, Academic Analytics (a company partially owned by the State University of New York—Stony Brook) released a study that measured scholarly productivity by faculty members in 7,294 individual doctoral programs in 104 disciplines at 354 institutions. The study's results were reported in a cover story in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.[6] According to the *Chronicle* story, "Faculty members [were] judged on as many as three factors, depending on the most important variables in the given discipline: publications, which can include the number of books and journal articles published as well as citations of journal articles; federal-grant dollars awarded; and honors and awards." In each individual discipline, the top ten programs were reported by the *Chronicle*.

The Department of Communication ranked **seventh** in this survey of scholarly productivity. Of the aspirational peer programs identified in the department's Strategic Plan 2002 Codicil,[7] only Michigan State University and the University of Pennsylvania also appear on the Academic Analytics list of top ten programs in Communication.

3.   In 2007, the Communication Institute of Online Scholarship (CIOS) ranked programs in Communication and Journalism across an array of research areas and topics. Basing its rankings on faculty publication records, the CIOS rankings offer a detailed and comprehensive review of

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[6] Piper Fogg, "A New Standard for Measuring Doctoral Programs," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 12, 2007, p. 8.

[7] *Advancing Excellence: Toward a Second Century of Achievement: The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication, University of Maryland* (Codicil), October 1, 2004.

publication patterns among Communication scholars across and array of specialties and sub-specialties.

The Department of Communication was ranked as a top ten program in fourteen different research specialties/topic areas. Specifically, the top ten designations were in the areas of publications about the following: Asia, Critical Theory, Democracy, Ethics, Gender, Intercultural, Law, Memory, Persuasion, Political Elections, Politics & Government, Popular Culture, Presidential Figures, Public Relations, Public Speaking, and Social Structure.

Department faculty members were ranked highest in Politics & Government (#2), Presidential Figures (#3), Public Relations (#3), Democracy (#5), and Popular Culture (#7).

4.   *PR Week* magazine, a leading trade publication in the public relations industry, published an article in a supplemental career guide for public relations, about training and higher education in PR and identified the Department of Communication's public relations program as part of the "PR Ivy League."[8]

The analysis of public relations education identified the University of Maryland, the University of Florida, and Syracuse University as the top three public relations programs in the nation. Other institutions mentioned include Northwestern University, Boston University, the University of Georgia, USC, and Notre Dame.

C.   *Faculty Diversity and Balance*

Of the seventeen tenured and tenure-track faculty, ten are women (two full professors, four associate professors, and four assistant professors). The chair of the department, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies (a staff position) are women. Among the instructional faculty, one associate professor is Hispanic while a post-doctoral graduate fellow who teaches in the department is of African descent. In addition, the department's faculty includes several scholars who have come to UM from other nations—three tenure/tenure-track faculty members are international scholars, from China, Egypt, and Germany, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies is from Israel.

The department has an EEO officer who monitors hiring procedures and practices and actively seeks to diversify the faculty. The department is committed to increasing diversity within its instructional faculty.

D.   *Faculty Survey and Interview Responses*

As part of the self-study process, input was solicited from the instructional faculty of the department. The members of the self-study committee from outside the Department of Communication who were appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities sought this input in two ways. First, these committee members organized a confidential one-on-one interview schedule, with interviews held in facilities outside the department, for instructional faculty who asked for time to provide input. Second, these committee members distributed an e-mail to faculty members asking for their input. All interview and e-mail responses from faculty

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[8] Hamilton Nolan, "PR's Ivy League," *PR Week: CareerGuide*, 2005, pp. 22-23.

members were treated confidentially and were only available in their original form to the outside committee members.

E-mail responses were solicited from the instructional faculty using the e-mail reflector commfac@umd.edu. Thirty-five individuals were contacted of whom twenty-five were current members of the instructional faculty (the e-mail reflector is outdated and includes past members of the instructional faculty of the department). Five members of the instructional faculty of the department provided input to the outside committee members either in interviews or through e-mail responses.

Those faculty responses, as summarized by the outside self-study committee members, are as follows:

1.   Activities not directly related to achieving excellence in research and teaching limit the department's ability to focus on this central mission and to nurture intellectual growth. These activities include service on committees and in administrative positions. This pull on faculty members especially affects the ability of untenured assistant professors to fully pursue their research agendas.

       A.   The department should investigate whether the amount of committee work currently being done by its faculty members is necessary or productive and should act to reduce it.

       B.   Other departments in the College of Arts & Humanities have developed plans to reduce the service burden on untenured faculty members. The Department of Communication should create such a plan.

       C.   An Associate Chair should be appointed and given assignments that reduce the administrative burden currently assumed by faculty members.

       D.   The department should conduct a review of its staffing needs, should consider strategies for increasing the productivity of existing staff, and should find ways to increase the assistance provided by staff to faculty members and departmental administration.

2.   The department Chair needs to develop external funding sources to supplement the existing budget. A staff member with grant writing experience is needed to assist in these extramural funding responsibilities.

3.   The departmental specialties of Intercultural Communication and Persuasion & Social Influence would be more valuable to the department with a broader range of methods that would allow for more diverse research projects and would justify these specialties' share of allocated resources. One suggestion is that these two specialties count as a single specialty for resource allocation purposes because of overlap, thus apportioning department resources across three broad research specialties instead of the current alignment of four research specialties.

4.   Faculty members expressed concern that too many undergraduate courses, including courses at the 300-level, are taught by graduate students. These concerns accompanied suggestions that graduate students receive more credit-based mentoring by ladder faculty.

5.   Inadequate facilities continue to challenge the department. The department's Media Center needs a director and an operating budget to support the instruction in COMM 107 more effectively and to enhance its function as a research and instructional space. The department has

outgrown Skinner Hall and needs its own building that would create additional space for graduate seminars and graduate student offices.

There was considerable optimism expressed in the interviews and written statements received.

II.   **Undergraduate Program**

Overview: The undergraduate program in Communication serves the university in two ways. First, the department also provides a number of service courses at the introductory level and advanced courses that provide knowledge and skills to students enrolled in other colleges and departments. Second, it provides an undergraduate program with four tracks for students who are majoring in communication.

The major departmental service course is COMM 107, (*Oral Communication: Principles and Practice*), a three-credit course delivered to approximately 50% of the campus undergraduate students. The course is one of the pioneering "hybrid" basic courses[9] in the country, providing students with a theoretical foundation and skills development in intrapersonal communication, listening, interviewing, group discussion, and public speaking. One of the major "users" of the course is the Robert Smith School of Business which requires it of all of their undergraduate students. Directed by Andrew Wolvin, COMM 107 has been featured in research studies which periodically have assessed student learning outcomes.[10] Currently, the entire course has been restructured to a learning outcomes assessment format.

In order to enable the department to manage growing student enrollment and increasing course size, the Department of Communication proposed a limited enrollment program (LEP) beginning Fall 2001. (See Appendix III.C.—Limited Enrollment Program Agreement, 2001.) The Limited Enrollment Program became fully effective for all students who designate Communication as their academic major in the beginning of Fall 2003. The LEP set student enrollment at 600 majors. A count of registered communication majors from October 2007 indicated approximately 700 students.

In 2005 the department established a B.A. degree program at the Universities at Shady Grove. This program is a two-year program for junior and senior communication majors (see below, page 19).

A.   *Content, Structure, and Specialties of the Undergraduate Program*

The undergraduate program offers its majors the opportunity to select one of the following areas of concentration (tracks): Communication Studies (general courses in communication), Public Relations (news writing and reporting for public relations; news editing for public relations;

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[9] The hybrid approach is in contrast to a basic course that is focused solely on public speaking. The rationale for a hybrid approach is that students need to be introduced to several communication skills to have communication competency in their personal and professional lives.

[10] Ford, W.S.Z., & Wolvin, A.D. (1992). Evaluation of a basic course in speech communication. *Basic Communication Course Annual*, 4, 35-47; Ford, W.S.Z., & Wolvin, A.D. (1993). The differential impact of a basic communication course on perceived communication competencies in class, work, and social contexts. *Communication Education*, 42, 215-223; Ford, W.S.Z., Wolvin, A.D., & Chung, S. (2000). Students' self-perceived listening competencies in the basic speech communication course. *International Journal of Listening*, 14, 1-13.

public relations campaigns and techniques), Rhetoric & Political Culture (social movements; political and social leadership; strategic discourse), and Social Influence (political campaigns; organizational communication; negotiation; conflict management; intercultural communication; media effects)..

The department provides the philosophical, theoretical and methodological underpinnings for its focus of study in all areas of concentration. COMM 250 (*Introduction to Communication Inquiry*) is a prerequisite for all upper level required courses and is also a required gateway course for admission to the major; COMM 400 (*Research Methods in Communication*), and COMM 401 (*Interpreting Strategic Discourse*) are required for all students. Each of the four undergraduate tracks has a theory course requirement specifically geared for that track: COMM 402 (*Communication Theory and Process*), for the Social Influence and Communication Studies tracks; COMM 350 (*Public Relations Theory*) for the Public Relations track; and COMM 450 (*Classical and Medieval Rhetorical Theory*) for the Rhetoric and Political Culture track.

The program requires that students complete 51-52 credit hours as follows: 1) 3 credit hours in a performance course; 2) 12 credit hours in Communication theory and research; 3) 21 credit hours in track-specific courses; 4) 6-7 credit hours in intellectual skills (e.g., statistics, analysis of language, analysis of discourse, economics); 5) 9 credit hours in a cognate set of courses.

The required theory and research methods courses provide students with analytical knowledge about communication theory and process, and equip students with the necessary research skills to be informed users of social research as well as to prepare them for graduate level scholarship. These courses also develop students' ability to analyze the content and quality of communication in a variety of social contexts.

Another component of the Communication major is the course offerings that impart intellectual skills and equip students with the tools necessary to study communication. These courses include statistical analysis, critical analysis of discourse, and structural analysis of language.

The undergraduate program provides vital knowledge for career preparation as well as for pursuit of graduate education. As a result, our majors move rapidly into a broad range of careers. Over the years, communication has also served as an exceptional pre-professional major. Those who go on to engage in the practice of law, the helping professions, or government service have found the communication major critical to their latter success.

The curriculum, thus, fits well the philosophy and purpose of the undergraduate program. It offers opportunities to engage in the study of communication at the general level through courses in performance, track related theory and a wide menu of research tools; it also introduces students to special topic courses such negotiation, crisis communication, risk communication, conflict management, political rhetoric, and persuasion).

In the last several years we have incorporated new courses in response to new developments in the study of Communication. We responded to new advances in the strategic use of technology in communication and introduced courses in Visual Communication. Moreover, growing concerns about national security and preparedness exigencies has prompted the offering of a course in Crisis Communication and facilitated the establishment of a Center for Risk Communication Research that engages undergraduate students in research. In the area of Mediated Communication, the department hired a new faculty member with special interest and expertise in Middle Eastern media and in Fall 2008 will offer a new course in Mediated Communication with focus on Middle Eastern media.

B.   *Sequencing and Sufficiency of Course Offerings*

There is specific sequencing of courses within the sub-disciplinary tracks for the COMM majors. Course offerings are generally sufficient to meet demand from COMM majors, general education, and other programs for which the unit provides service, but high student/faculty ratios and persistent demand limits student options in course selection and availability.

The department's undergraduate offerings separate into the following categories: 1) COMM107 (*Oral Communication*), serving HLTH, BMGT, and other pre-programs (Fall 2007: 907 seats; Spring 2008: 898 seats; total for AY 07-08: 1,805 seats); 2) CORE courses, offering general communication and diversity courses to all students (944 seats in CORE courses for AY07-08; 3) COMM 250 (*Introduction to Communication Inquiry*), serving as a prerequisite for admission to the COMM major and to all upper level COMM courses (approximately 500 seats are offered annually); 4) Advanced theory and research courses every semester serving COMM majors; and 5) Elective courses, serving students on the specialized tracks.

C.   *Honors, Awards, and Seminar Programs*

Honors Program
The revised departmental Honors Program provides a flexible, individualized, and challenging curriculum for outstanding students, giving them the opportunity for intensive study of Communication at an advanced level.

The structure of the departmental Honors Program, and its admissions criteria, follow the guidelines of the University Honors Program. Students interested in the Honors Program apply during the second semester of the sophomore year or the first semester of the junior year. Applicants are expected to present the following qualifications: 1) An overall GPA of 3.3 or above; 2) Completion of nine semester hours in Communication, including COMM 250; and 3) GPA of 3.5 or above in Communication.

The department offers two plans of study for honors students, a thesis option and a non-thesis option. For those students who pursue the thesis option, the program consists of 12 credit hours divided as follows: 6 credit hours of Honors coursework and 6 credit hours of research. For non-thesis students, the program consists of 12 hours of Honors coursework. Since May 2001, six students have graduated from the department's Honors Program. Three of these students were also recipients of the College of Arts & Humanities Dean's Senior Scholars Award.

Awards & Scholarship Programs
The department has two scholarships available to undergraduate students: the June Dowler Buteau Scholarship and the Richard Levick Crisis Communication Scholarship. The Buteau Scholarship was established in 2003 and is currently a $500 award to one freshman who is a Communication major. The scholarship is awarded for four years to the same student who will receive $500 each year until he/she graduates, provided the student remains a COMM major. The Richard Levick Scholarship is a $2,500 award was established in AY 2007-08 and will be given to a Communication major with 30 or more credits who has an interest in crisis communication.

In addition to the departmental scholarship programs, faculty members nominate undergraduates for campus awards as they become available and outstanding Honors undergraduates are invited to participate as Undergraduate Research and Teaching Assistants.

Seminar & Capstone Programs

1.   Communication Colloquium Series. The Communication Colloquium Series provides a forum for the active exchange of scholarly study in human communication. The colloquium features Communication faculty and graduate students and noted communication scholars from around the country. Students may receive undergraduate credit for attendance and critical assessment of colloquia through COMM 478.

2.   Independent Study. COMM 489 and COMM 398 provide seminar options where seniors may engage in an in-depth study of a variety of communication issues.

3.   COMM 483 (*Seminar in Public Relations*) is the only course that is designated as a capstone seminar for students on the Public Relations track. Twenty students, or fewer, enroll in COMM 483 where they are challenged and are required to solve a public relations issue.

Experiential & Service Learning Programs
The department offers special independent study projects for one semester or longer including the following:

1.   The Internship Program awards academic credit to students for projects that relate a particular employment opportunity to coursework in communication. It is designed to aid Communication majors in choosing careers and in gaining professional experience. Internship participation requires advanced planning, including the development of a specific project, the preparation of a proposal explaining the relationship of the employment to the academic work and the activity to be evaluated, and approval by both the proposed employer and the department's Outreach Coordinator. Students can earn up to 6 credit hours of internship credit but only 3 credits can be used towards the Communication major. See Appendix III.F. for a description of the Internship Program.
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2.   The Bateman competition, sponsored by the Public Relations Society of America, is a one year long team based research and campaign design and implementation in public relations. Students are organized into teams of four to five members to design a public relations campaign. The 2005 team won third place and a $1,500 cash award.

3.   The undergraduate student newsletter, *The Communicator*, allows students to manage all stages of the production and produce up to 10 issues a year for both paper distribution and publication on the department Web site.

4.   The *Communication and Advocacy* learning community where first semester freshmen engage in advocacy activities. In the past, students followed a "train-the-trainer" model and instructed middle school student government leaders in the principles of public speaking and campaign design. This year's students competed in and won a $500 United Nations Foundation grant awarded to nationally selected top ten advocacy campaign proposals for climate change.

5   The Center for Risk Communication Research and the Center for Political Communication & Civic Leadership provide research opportunities for undergraduate students.

D.   *Minor in Rhetoric*

The Minor in Rhetoric is an interdisciplinary program offered through the cooperation of the Department of English and Department of Communication. The minor has been designed for

students who want to know the principles and skills of practical persuasion in its varied contexts. The program is of value for all students wishing to improve their writing and speaking skills and especially useful for those students who plan careers in business, management, government, law, and education.

Fifteen hours of coursework, offered by the English and Communication departments, are required to complete the Minor in Rhetoric. The minor currently has eighty students in thirty-one majors.

E.   *Student Learning and Departmental Intellectual Environment*

To prepare students to be communication scholars and practitioners, the department provides a multi-faceted approach to a quality college experience. This approach includes high quality instruction, general and specialized topic courses, as well as participation in the day-to-day activities. Students are invited to participate in departmental governance, run student organization, plan events, and conduct research and special projects. These activities create a collaborative learning community.

The Undergraduate Communication Association (UCA)
The Undergraduate Communication Association is a departmentally-supported self-governing student organization. It was created to enhance the interaction between Communication students, departmental faculty, and communication professionals. The organization is affiliated with the National Communication Association Student Club Division, operating under a charter issued by the National Communication Association.

Lambda Pi Eta
Lambda Pi Eta is the national Communication honor society and operates in association with the UCA. The UM chapter is recognized by the National Communication Association. To be admitted to the society, a student must be full-time, with at least sixty hours of undergraduate credit hours earned, a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and at least twelve hours of Communication coursework with a grade point average of 3.25 or higher.

The UM chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America(PRSSA)
An affiliate of the Public Relations Society of America, the leading international public relations professional organization, this student-governed chapter introduces interested students to a range of activities and opportunities in the Greater Washington area.

F.   *Student Diversity*

The department's undergraduate student majors are very diverse. As of Fall 2007, 8% of our majors were Asian, 66.6% Caucasian, 13.4% African-American, 4.6% Hispanic, and 6% Unknown (See Appendix III.H. for a three-year diversity profile of undergraduate majors). Females constitute 76% of the department's majors.

Most departmental efforts to enhance diversity are curricular. The department offers at least four sections each semester of COMM 324 (*Gender and Communication*), two sections of COMM 360 (*The Rhetoric of Black America*), and one section of COMM 482 (*Intercultural Communication*). These courses can be used to fulfill CORE diversity requirement; they can also be used to fulfill COMM requirements. The department's seat offerings in diversity courses have increased approximately 25% in four years, from 590 in AY 2004-2005 to 742 in AY 2007-2008.

E.   *Monitoring Student Progress & Recruiting New Students*

Each semester the academic files of each COMM major are reviewed and updated to gauge the student's progress towards degree completion. Underperforming students are asked to meet with a COMM advisor twice during the semester to discuss their progress and identify steps the student should take to improve academic standing. Students may be directed to campus support units such as the Writing Center, the Counseling Center, the Office of Student Disabilities, the ARHU Office of Student Affairs, and/or the Office of Financial Aid.

The department's success in monitoring the academic standing and progress of students has resulted in a significant increase in student grade point averages. Using Brio (an academic data management program), the Fall 2006 departmental grade point average was 3.157, a significant improvement from the Fall 2003 figure of 2.9.

The department's recruitment efforts have been very successful. The incoming freshmen class in Fall 2007 numbered 66 and the number of COMM majors is approximately 700. The department retained 93% of Fall 2004 incoming freshmen; of the 2003 class, 84% graduated. Of the 2004 cohort of transfer students from other institutions, 95% were retained or graduated.

Numerous activities and outreach programs seek to identify and recruit promising students to the major, including contact with prospective students, open houses for parents and students visiting the UM campus, identifying promising students interested in Communication in UM Honors and other learning communities, and explaining the major to students in Letters & Sciences.

H.   *Undergraduate Advising & Mentoring*

The main objective of the department's advising system is to assist students in understanding, planning and successfully completing the Communication major graduation requirements. To that end, we have established an advising program for our undergraduate majors; appointed a full-time Director of Undergraduate Studies, hired an Assistant to the Director of Undergraduate Studies to manage advising and assist in the administration of the undergraduate program; and appointed two graduate assistants for the undergraduate program. All engage in curricular advising. In addition, there is an Outreach Coordinator who supervises the internship program and engages in career advising.

The advising process works towards implementing the Provost's Student Success Plan. This plan requires that students create a four year plan of studies which is monitored by department and college advisors. As part of the limited enrollment program, the advising office provides students each semester with a checklist of their progress to complete the fundamental courses required for advanced courses. The department's Web site, e-mail, open hours, and workshops in Letters & Sciences are all used to distribute information about the major, admissions requirement, career opportunities, information about internships and special projects. Advising is open to majors and non-majors and the open door policy facilitates interaction with students.

All faculty members in the department are involved in the undergraduate curriculum and teach our undergraduate students. Faculty member have a strong interest in creating an undergraduate program of excellence, and are continually involved in the assessment of the program to ensure its quality. Students are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from faculty members and other instructional staff as well as through the formal advising process.

Information about courses, internship opportunities, deadlines, and important opportunities is available in the Advising Office and on the departmental Web site. Information is also frequently posted on bulletin boards outside the advising office.

Information about COMM and COMM related items are sent to majors through departmental listserv. Please note that only COMM information is sent through the listserv. Information on programs outside the department is posted on the bulletin boards.

ARHU advises and provides students with current information on general education requirements.

 I. *Instructional Development, Technology Enhancement, & Instructional Assessment*

The department dedicates resources toward improving instruction and is committed to excellence in instruction at the undergraduate level.

1. Training teaching assistants. To attain high quality of teaching, we train our teaching assistants in the art of teaching. Graduate assistant are required to take COMM 686 (*Teaching Communication*), a one-credit course in pedagogy, during their first semester as graduate teaching assistants.

2. Course supervisors. Lower level courses and courses taught by teaching assistants are assigned faculty members as course supervisors. The supervisors monitor the course content, teaching, assignments and grading.

3. Use of technology. The department is committed to incorporating technology into its instructional program. For example, technology has expanded both the teaching possibilities in COMM 107 (*Oral Communication: Principles and Practice*) and the forms of presentation that students can employ. For example, teachers and students have the option of using Blackboard, the Internet, PowerPoint, video, television, audio, and film in their presentations, in addition to the "old technologies" such as overhead transparencies.

Technology-equipped classrooms are also employed across the curriculum. These facilities enable the instructors to provide information in new and creative ways, as well as allowing students to learn from each other in new ways. In addition to COMM 107, several of our courses utilize teaching theaters and the Internet for in-class instruction. These courses include our public relations writing courses and our upper-level research methods course.

Through a grant from the Student Technology Fee program, the department has built a Media Center equipped with state-of-the-art video capabilities. The Center provides a facility for students to rehearse their presentations (i.e., COMM 107 informative briefings, persuasive speeches) before video cameras prior to classroom delivery. Staffed by departmental graduate and undergraduate students, the Center offers a speech tutorial program whereby students can review the videos of the practice runs with peer coaches. The Media Center also provides support to students and faculty PowerPoint presentations, high-end video editing, and Web design. And the studio offers a research site for conducting and recording focus groups, interviews, etc.

4. Instructional enhancement. Faculty and teaching assistants attend workshops conducted by the Center for Teaching Excellence to stay current on ideas about teaching and teaching methods. Outstanding teaching assistants are recognized by the department and are nominated for appropriate awards for teaching excellence. Our teaching assistants and faculty have received

awards for the Pan-Hellenic Association, the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Instructional and Developmental Communication Division of the International Communication Association, among others. Faculty members were selected as Lilly fellows and others are currently members of the Academy for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

5.   End of semester evaluations. All faculty and teaching assistants are evaluated by their students to understand the students' perspective on the course content, the value of the assignments, and the quality of course teaching. These evaluations are now conducted online. In the fall of 2007, the department opted to implement the all-University system of teaching evaluation. Peer evaluations of teaching for faculty at all ranks are a part of the promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review processes of the department.

J.   *Post-Graduation Placement of COMM Majors*

According to exit surveys and interviews with graduating seniors majoring in Communication, our graduates enter the following careers: advertising, business administration, public administration and public advocacy, public relations, news media production, finance, human resources, political consulting and campaigns, sports broadcasting, and new information technology, among others. Majors will also pursue graduate and professional studies in law, business, Communication, Higher Education, and other disciplines.

K. *The COMM Program at the Universities at Shady Grove*

The Communication major at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) is in its third year and students follow course selection designated for the Communication Studies track. The program currently offers twelve upper level courses per year to 53 Communication majors. The USG program strives for a student cohort of 80+ students. See Appendix III.D. for the Fall 2007 schedule of courses.

The department has sought to facilitate student transition from Montgomery College to the Communication program at USG by supporting Montgomery College in its efforts to create a community college-level Communication major. The department has also established an articulation agreement with local community colleges, introducing relevant courses and training instructors to teach them, and meeting with community college counselors to familiarize them with the necessary path to a B.A. degree at USG.

Alongside the traditional coursework in Communication that emphasizes critical thinking and understanding of communication theory and research, the department has developed unique courses at USG, including COMM 398P (*New Technology & Communication*), COMM 398V (*Visual Communication*), and COMM 398P (*Public Relations Event Planning*). Such courses seek to prepare students not only for specialized study in Communication or future graduate education, but also for possible career opportunities. In addition, the department is working with local companies and organizations to create additional courses in areas such as advanced visual communication and media production. Students are also encouraged to enroll in other courses from other programs at USG to support their work in Communication.

Students in the Communication program at USG find a sufficient number of courses available to them. They may apply for financial assistance, grants, and scholarships, and student success is recognized with the annual Student Achievement and Leadership Awards Breakfast and the Graduation Celebration at the end of each semester. Moreover, students receive adequate and

current information about courses and programs through several avenues including meetings, e-mails, publications and flyers, classroom announcements, and weekly e-Newsletters.

One staff member is responsible for all advising of all students at USG. That individual is also responsible for student recruitment, general program administration, and student organization support. The Communication office at USG, thus, is understaffed.

L.   *Undergraduate Student Survey Conclusions*

Two hundred seventy students responded to questionnaires distributed to undergraduate students in Communication courses. Two hundred twenty-six questionnaires were distributed to students enrolled in Communication courses at College Park and forty-four were distributed to students in communication courses at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG). One hundred forty-eight of those surveyed at College Park were Communication majors and forty-four at USG. The questionnaires included both closed-and open-ended questions.

Strengths
1.   *Interaction with faculty*: Communication majors found the interaction with faculty very exciting. The students surveyed indicate that they feel motivated by faculty and find them knowledgeable and willing to share time. Approximately 90% of the students surveyed were highly to moderately satisfied with instruction and find the instructors supportive.

2.   *Academic climate*: Students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the academic climate and with their own intellectual growth. Approximately 80% of the students surveyed were satisfied with the academic climate.

3.   *Program of study*: Approximately 85% of the students surveyed expressed satisfaction with the program requirements, its relevance to their career, and with course content.

4.   *Diversity*: Students commented that the department's cultural climate is pleasant and welcoming to all students. Students surveyed also found the department flexible in addressing students' needs. They indicated that both faculty and staff treat students fairly and with respect.

Suggestions for improvement:
1.   *Course offering*: Students request more applied courses; smaller upper level class size to allow for more interaction; a wider selection of courses; incorporating more technology such as Blackboard by all instructors; additional tutoring by peers and faculty.

2.   *Advising*: Students seek more frequent advising that is more readily available and more personal. Students request that all advising be conducted in the department (i.e. eliminate dual advising process that currently exists); provide longer advising hours; add advisors; provide more career advising; offer more personal advising by assigning students to advisors; enlarge the space allotted to the advising office.

3.   *Space*: Students requested a space to aggregate, such as a lounge. It would, they said, facilitate their interaction and ability to promote activities that contribute to establishing a learning community.

III.   **Graduate Program**

      A.   *Areas of Specialization, Curricular Matters, Faculty Teaching, and Advising*

The Communication Graduate Program research areas include the following: Intercultural Communication, Persuasion & Social Influence, Public Relations, and Rhetoric & Political Culture. See Appendix IV.D. for a distribution of current graduate students by degree sought and research specialty.

Based on the 2002 strategic plan and responding to emergent trends and developments in the Communication discipline, the department consolidated its areas of interest into four research specializations. Such consolidation efforts concentrated departmental resources, accentuated faculty interest and inquiry recognized in the Communication discipline, and took advantage of the university's location. Conflict and negotiation, thus, was folded into Persuasion & Social Influence and Intercultural Communication; rhetoric and political communication were combined into a focus on Rhetoric & Political Culture. Three methodological specializations are also featured within the areas of interest: historical-critical, qualitative, and quantitative. For a breakdown of classes according to the different areas and specialties, see Appendices IV.F. & IV.G.

Areas of sub-specialization exist as well that transcend and bridge the individual areas of the department, including argumentation, feminism (courses offered in specialized seminars), health and risk communication, and media communication. Within the area of Intercultural Communication, the sub-specialties include negotiation, conflict, and intercultural processes of social cognition; emotion, cognition, compliance-gaining, and decision making represent the sub-specialties of Persuasion & Social Influence. The Rhetoric & Political Culture area typically features the focus on political communication, rhetoric and social change, rhetorical theory, and U.S. public address.

The areas of specialization reflect the departmental mission: "*dedicated to the strategic use of discourse in the public sphere*." Correspondingly, such areas take advantage of the university's location and the available resources in the surrounding community. The Center for Risk Communication Research attracts funding from government agencies concerned with health and terrorism risks (e.g., Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, START, U.S. Food and Drug Administration), which is dependent on faculty research from Intercultural Communication, Persuasion & Social Influence, and Public Relations in particular. Such resources fund graduate assistantships and promote graduate student involvement in faculty research. The Department also contributes courses to the graduate certificate in Risk, which is sponsored by the Office of Professional Studies in conjunction with the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences. The Center for Political Communication and Civic Leadership through its *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, utilizes the rich archival and political resources available in the Washington, D.C. area. This NEH funded project likewise supports graduate student research and assistantships in Rhetoric & Political Culture; graduate students are involved in authoring essays for the forthcoming on-line journal, *Voices of Democracy*. The area of Intercultural Communication accentuates the international diversity of students who attend the University of Maryland as well as the cultural diversity of the Washington, D.C. metro area. The department attracts international students to the program from around the world, which furthers the university's mission of achieving diversity in its faculty, staff, and students (see Appendix IV.D.4. of applicants' former institutions).

All tenured and tenure-track faculty members participate in graduate education, advise graduate students, and serve on graduate student committees based on their individual areas of expertise, which parallel the departmental areas and sub-specializations. New faculty hires are clearly linked to the four research areas in the department. New faculty members are often encouraged to create new classes that accentuate their areas of expertise. Several new courses have been added to the curriculum since the 2002 strategic plan, which reflect the sub-areas of concentration in the department and faculty expertise: COMM 604 (*Argumentation*); COMM 661 (*Communication Social Change*); COMM 738 (*Seminar in Media Communication*); COMM 748 (*The Rhetoric of the Presidency*); and COMM 762 (*The Rhetoric of Political Institutions*). Some of these courses were offered first as specialized seminars that were then added to the standing curriculum.

Course offerings at the graduate level are based on a three-year cycle that each research area revised in 2002. One curricular issue regards student perceptions of discrepancies across the four areas regarding the time required to complete Ph.D. coursework. This difference is a concern raised by the graduate students in the graduate student survey and in informational meetings. To address this concern, each area will review their curricula in 2007-2008, their rotation of courses, and the decisions about who teaches these courses, to assess the discrepancies and to offer updates to the three-year cycle of courses. If such differences concerning the completion of coursework persist, the differences will be clearly expressed in promotional materials so that prospective students are fully informed of the coursework expectations before entering the department.

A second curricular concern is COMM 700 and its overall status as the gateway course to the department's graduate program. Some graduate students express frustration that the content does not equally represent the different areas of the department; concern is expressed by others that the information is repetitive for those who complete a similar course during M.A. programs at other institutions. The Graduate Committee is going to review the course content in 2007-2008 and recommend potential revisions to address such concerns.

A third curricular concern is that some students would like to see COMM 686 help new teaching assistants more with day-to-day issues where they can share ideas and express concerns. Some students report that they also would like to have additional teaching training beyond the COMM 686 course. The Graduate Committee will explore such opportunities for additional teacher training.

A fourth curricular concern raised by several graduate students in the survey is the diversity of courses offered in the department; the graduate students would like to see more courses offered. While the faculty perceive that the course offerings provide an appropriate balance based on the curricular revisions derived from the 2002 strategic plan, this concern will be assessed in the process of reviewing the three-year cycle of courses. A competing issue, of course, is ensuring that sufficient numbers are enrolled in graduate student classes to warrant the expansion of the curriculum. Some of this need can continue to be met by providing specialized seminars, which allow for variations in seminar topics (e.g., COMM 668a (*Food Safety Risk Communication*); COMM 738 (*Seminar in Mediated Communication: Women and Media*); COMM 768 (*Seminar in Public Address: Rhetoric and U.S. Feminism*); COMM 768 (*Seminar in Public Address: Textual Criticism*)).

B. *The Admission Process and Student Progress Toward Degree*

Since 2002, the department has received an average of 200 applications per year for its graduate program (see Appendix IV.D.). The department advertises its graduate program in disciplinary

venues such as the program for the National Communication Association (NCA) convention and the membership directory for the International Communication Association (ICA). The department also disseminates brochures and other informational materials. The primary means of advertising our graduate program is through a newly revised Web site that includes descriptive program information, graduate course descriptions, faculty biographies, areas of study, as well as technical information and frequently asked questions regarding the regulations and procedures followed in the program. (See advertising materials in Appendix IV.C.)

Each applicant is evaluated on the following measures: GRE scores, TOEFL scores (for international students), undergraduate and graduate GPAs, letters of recommendation, a writing sample, and a statement of goals. In addition, issues of diversity in relation to the department's graduate program represent another consideration during the Admission process. There have been three cases since 2003 where students have been admitted with a GPA lower than the required 3.0. In two of the three cases, the department admitted students from under-represented racial/ethnic groups to the Ph.D. program; one such student has finished coursework and is working as a lecturer at another institution while drafting the dissertation prospectus while the other student is successfully completing coursework. In the third case, the student is a member of the armed forces and is on schedule to graduate with an M.A. degree in the fall of 2007.

A priority for the department is to increase the number of students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the United States. The department typically admits a representative number of international students to the program, which promotes an important degree of diversity. However, the numbers of domestic students from underrepresented groups continues to be low. In addition, significantly more women than men enter the program, which suggests a need to be mindful of such discrepancies in terms of sex as well. (See Appendix IV.D.3. for the demographic breakdown of entering students.)

Graduate students' progress toward degree is assessed each year; this process and the processes for graduate student advising are explained in Appendix IV.H. Currently, the Graduate Committee is preparing to post the department's Statement of Academic Progress on the departmental Web site for M.A. and Ph.D. students. The committee also is discussing the implementation of a formal annual evaluation for graduate students to ensure satisfactory progress toward degree based on the Statement of Academic Progress. And the department has in the past two years, streamlined and simplified the qualifying examination process and will continue to scrutinize the examination procedures for both the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

These measures are designed to ensure satisfactory progress toward degree, and to promote graduate student retention by identifying those students who may be struggling academically. Addressing issues of retention is a priority in the department because the department lost five Ph.D. students in the last two years (for family reasons and because several left to pursue careers in politics and public relations). Whenever there is evidence that a student's performance does not constitute satisfactory progress toward the M.A. or Ph.D. degree, the student's committee may be asked by the Director of Graduate Studies to meet for a special review. This review may lead to remedial action or even dismissal of the student. Such actions are quite rare given the quality of graduate students admitted to our program. In the cases of those who have left the program, there also are self-reports that they have struggled with their fit in the program; the Ph.D. students that left the program all received their M.A. degrees at other institutions. The issue of gender and race/ethnicity does not appear to impede graduation rates. Of the Ph.D. students who left the program in the past two years, three were Caucasian women and two were Caucasian men.

In a graduate program with both M.A. and Ph.D. programs, it is fairly frequent that students who

have undertaken an M.A. in the department desire to pursue the Ph.D. degree. In such cases, these students apply to the program and are evaluated competitively using the Graduate Program's standard criteria for admission. Since 2000, the time to completion of the Ph.D. has dropped from 7.2 years to 6.1 years (see Appendix IV.N.) and 70 percent have finished in 6 years and under. The department is pleased with such progress yet will continue to facilitate graduate student progress toward degree with the Statement of Academic Progress, the re-evaluation of the numbers of semesters required to complete coursework, and by addressing the enforcement of the department policy that students are guaranteed (pending adequate state funding) eight consecutive semesters of funding with an option for a fifth year of funding.

C.   *Graduate Student Academic Success and Job Placement*

The criteria for accepting students is producing satisfactory results based on the average GRE and GPA scores (see Appendix IV.D.2.) as well as the markers of academic success in the department, which are reflected in the graduate student accomplishments. Since 2002, three students have received awards for their dissertations and one for their M.A. thesis from the flagship organizations in the field of Communication. Five students have also published their dissertations as books upon graduation; graduate students also have published 26 journal articles as students in the department from 2002-2007 in addition to eleven book chapters and thirty book reviews. During this same time period, graduate students have presented over 330 convention papers at regional, national, and international conferences, receiving seventeen top paper or top student paper designations and appearing on twelve top paper panels. Seven students have also received teaching awards in the department and the university. (See Appendix IV.O.)

The placement of Ph.D. students reflects another marker of departmental success. All of the graduate students who have completed their Ph.D. within the department have secured employment with the exception of one student who is opting not to be employed. Increasingly, more of the Ph.D. students are entering positions at quality liberal arts institutions, flagship state universities, and Carnegie RU/VH: Research Universities including many that offer M.A. and/or Ph.D. degrees in Communication. Another priority is to ensure that these placement trends continue so that more of the department's graduates are entering research positions. Accordingly, faculty members work closely with students to guide them through the publication process and to evaluate application materials. Informal discussions provide further guidance on the application and interview processes. (See graduate student placements in Appendix IV.N.)

D.   *Graduate Student Funding*

Since 2002, the salaries for a Level II Graduate Assistant in the department have increased from $12,265 to $15,200. The Interim Associate Dean at the University of Tennessee conducted an informal study of graduate education and discovered that of the sixteen doctoral programs surveyed, the average graduate stipend was $16,150. The low stipend among the programs was $15,069 and the high was $20,067.[11] According to these admittedly limited findings, UM is still underfunding our graduate assistants.

The department also offers Graduate School fellowships to incoming students as distributed by the College of Arts & Humanities, which awards a reduction in teaching to the recipients. Such fellowships are determined during the admission process and are awarded to those students who are considered among the upper echelon of graduate applicants to our program in a given year. An additional stipend is offered to graduate students when they advance to candidacy. A

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[11] Sally J. McMillan, "Memo: Report on Doctoral Programs," November 29, 2006.

percentage of students are also offered opportunities to receive overload pay beyond the full-time Graduate Assistant stipend for teaching an additional class or for serving in a half-time position as a graduate assistant (see Appendix IV.L.). Teaching and graduate student assignments are dependent on recommendations from the faculty who supervise the undergraduate courses or the service and research activities that students complete.

Based on the graduate student survey, a key concern for some graduate students is the amount of funding that they receive. While the department has made significant strides toward increasing graduate student stipends over the past five years, the issue of graduate student funding continues to be a departmental priority to aid with recruitment, retention, and satisfaction given the high cost of living in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Consequently, the department will work with students to seek internal and external fellowships and will strive to make additional gains in increasing the graduate student stipends. Simultaneously, the mission of the department is to continue to work toward limiting the amount of overloads for students to help maintain satisfactory progress toward degree.

E.   *Intellectual Climate and Faculty Accessibility*

The general intellectual environment of the department seems very favorable to graduate study for several reasons. First, the department annually sponsors the Department of Communication Colloquium Series. Until the spring of 2006, this series featured the department's faculty and graduate students, faculty from other departments at Maryland, and nearly forty noted Communication scholars from across the country since 2000. During the fall semester of 2007, the departmental colloquium series featured the research of five graduate students who have won awards, published essays or books chapters, and/or are entering the job market. The opportunities for graduate student colloquia will continue into the spring semester and beyond so that such presentations become ritualized components of the intellectual climate in the department. The same opportunity will be provided for other faculty members and graduate students during the spring semester—a trend projected to continue beyond this academic year. Prior to the NCA convention for the past several years, graduate students presenting research for the first time at a conference are given an opportunity to practice their convention presentation as part of the colloquium series. Graduate students also actively work on research teams and use their 10th credit in the department to prepare convention presentations, essays for publication, and book reviews. Graduate students also serve as research assistants or offer research support for the following journals currently edited in the department: *Argumentation & Advocacy*; *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*; *Journal of Public Relations Research*; and the *Voices of Democracy*. Graduate students also serve as research assistants for both departmental centers. Graduate students and faculty members from across the four areas have been involved in research and convention presentations connected to the department Centers and faculty research teams.

Information concerning courses, deadlines, research opportunities, special events, scholarship competitions, lecturers, and job openings are disseminated primarily through departmental e-mail, using the email reflector—commgrad-mail@umd.edu. A bulletin board is also available that likewise advertises important dates for submitting graduate student forms to the department and to the Graduate School. For news outside of the department, the university and college feature an FYI e-mail system that advertises on-campus and college-specific programming. Finally, fliers are posted within the department for the colloquium series and other special programming.

F.   *Departmental Climate Issues, Information Dissemination, and Student Surveys*

There are many ways in which the department works to provide a positive climate in the

department for graduate students: students are encouraged to pursue their personal research interests; students are permitted by graduate program policy to select and change advisors and committee members at almost any point in their degree process; students receive cutting edge and state of the art teaching training through COMM 686, which is a model graduate student teaching program featured by the Center for Teaching Excellence; students are eligible for departmental awards for academic and teaching accomplishments; faculty members, who have both national and international reputations among other scholars and graduate programs, work closely with students on advising issues; graduate students are members of every departmental committee that entertains business related to the graduate program; the department provides space and money to facilitate activities of the departmental Communication Graduate Student Association (COMMGrads); the department provides a computer lab and office space for all graduate students; the department seeks graduate student input on major decisions that impact graduate students, including hiring of permanent faculty, assignment of departmental space, and policies governing the use of departmental facilities; graduate student academic achievements are featured in periodic e-mail announcements, on the departmental Web site, and in the departmental newsletter; graduate students are encouraged by faculty members to submit papers and books for publication and to participate in the Communication discipline through presentations at conferences and service in organizational roles; graduate students are frequently invited to participate as speakers in the Communication Colloquium Series; graduate students are provided with significant funds to support travel associated professional conference presentations; graduate students are provided with opportunities for financial support in graduate teaching assistantships beyond four years. In addition, the university is equipped to provide additional support services that graduate students can access (affordable and quality health insurance, on-campus health clinic targeting physical and mental wellbeing), OMBUDs officer for graduate students, Center for Teaching Excellence, International Education Services, affordable recreation facilities). Faculty members frequently refer graduate students to such support services as part of their advising responsibilities.

In spite of such concerted efforts to foster a positive graduate student climate, the graduate student survey results reveal concerns with graduate student morale. Students recognize and applaud the departmental commitment to excellence and several emphasize that the climate overall is very positive in the department. Nevertheless, several students report that the department's commitment to excellence may overwhelm the need for a supportive climate that allows for positive exchanges among the students and faculty members across the areas and a clear understanding of the struggles and obstacles that students face as they manage coursework, teaching, and their personal lives.

To address such concerns, COMMGrads, the graduate student association in the department, has solicited suggestions for future graduate programming, established a mentoring system, and is sponsoring a peer-to-peer session to proactively address student concerns and morale issues. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will work with the student leaders to create action steps based on the results of the peer-to-peer session. The DGS met with M.A. students and Ph.D. students to review the degree programs in the Fall of 2007; the DGS also is meeting with COMMGrads to address any student concerns and is working with international students to create an informational session to address any additional issues that they uniquely face. While the survey results reveal that the departmental climate is supportive of international students, some sense of early information dissemination is also needed for this group of students.

To help foster a more positive community, graduate students have become more frequently featured presenters in the departmental colloquium series, which represents a time for faculty and students to come together to create a supportive environment for graduate student research. The

DGS also is working with students leaders to promote informal panel discussions that address graduate student professional development (e.g., applying and interviewing for academic jobs), which involve faculty from across the research areas, offering advice and a time for graduate students to ask questions. Additional programming will be planned in the Spring 2008 semester targeting M.A. job placements.

Another significant issue reported in the graduate student surveys and in discussions among graduate students is that many feel overburdened with work, which contributes to the morale issue and retention matters. While the graduate student experience typically involves a tremendous amount of work in any program, the department will engage in an assessment of ways to help alleviate some of the burdens. One avenue that the Graduate Studies Committee is reviewing pertains to the departmental requirement that students are required to complete ten credits per semester to maintain good academic standing. The college also is requesting that the departmental policy be aligned with the university policy, because it currently exceeds that of the Graduate School. If approved by the faculty, reducing the required credit hours may help alleviate some concerns over graduate student workload.[12] This reduction, however, has to be balanced with the students' progress toward degree; M.A. students are guaranteed two years of funding while Ph.D. students are guaranteed four years of funding with an option for a fifth year. Additional issues pertain to reducing the amount of overload teaching in the department. While the number of overloads has decreased significantly in the past three years, the goal would be to reduce overloads further while increasing the salaries for graduate assistants.

A final area of concern yet to be addressed pertains to the graduate students' complaints regarding facilities and supplies. Students report that their offices are overcrowded and they lack sufficient access to computers. While the computer lab houses eight computers, students report that it is sometimes difficult to obtain access. They ask that they also be given computer access in their offices. Such space and facility issues represent an on-going problem in the department which will continue to be addressed.

IV.   **General Departmental Organization**

   A.   *Organization & Support*

The department has a Plan of Organization. The Plan was amended in 2007 to establish the position of Associate Chair and to streamline and enhance the committee structure and administrative positions in the department. The Department has other policy documents in addition to the Plan of Organization related to Appointment, Promotion and Tenure procedures as well as general departmental operation (see http://www.comm.umd.edu/policydocuments.html).

The Organization Chart (Appendix V.A.) for the department indicates the level of staff support. While the department experienced considerable growth from 1999 through 2007, the levels of faculty and staff increased less rapidly.

   B.   *Workload & Resource Allocation*

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[12] At its December 2, 2007 meeting, the Departmental Assembly ratified a recommendation to the Chair from the Graduate Studies Committee for the removal of the "10th credit" requirement for academic good standing. The department chair accepted this recommendation, effective Fall 2008.

The average permanent faculty member has a load of four regular (i.e., non-individual instruction) courses and is involved in graduate advising activity at least equivalent to one and one-half courses, thus fulfilling the UM mandated workload requirement of 5.5. Of these non-individual instruction courses, typically 2-3 are undergraduate courses, and 1-2 are graduate courses. The typical permanent faculty member teaches an average of one undergraduate required course per year, although this varies from year to year. Faculty members' workload also includes extensive independent studies with graduate students, advising for qualifying exams, theses and dissertations.

The regular undergraduate courses taught by the permanent faculty have between 15 and 120 students, with a median class size of 35 (as represented by Fall 2007 enrollments). The regular graduate courses have between 7 and 12 students, with a median class size of 9 students (as represented by Fall 2007 enrollments). In addition to regular courses, the permanent faculty members also supervise independent studies, graduate internships, and thesis and doctoral dissertation preparation. The department strives for balance in faculty advising of graduate students where possible, though imbalance persists.

The teaching load for Communication graduate teaching assistants is typically four autonomous sections of a basic course per academic year (two sections each semester). Normal class size in sections of the basic course is 23-25. Some teaching assistants lead discussion sections in large lecture classes.

The department strives to allocate its limited resources in a balanced manner to support general education demands placed on the department, demands from a stable but large undergraduate major, and the demands of a nationally recognized graduate program. Of course, such resource allocation decisions are influenced by student demand, teaching loads, space concerns, curricular expectations, and our commitment to pedagogical excellence. As such, the department has worked to keep class sizes small, to schedule courses in classrooms that offer technological support, to meet student demand for courses, and to balance the teaching and research expectations on faculty members—especially junior faculty. The department continually assesses its resource allocation procedures and practices and plans to discuss such matters (especially as concerns graduate research specialties) in an upcoming strategic planning process.

       C.   *Public Service*

Department faculty members and staff are heavily involved in public service in a variety of venues. The faculty *CV*s submitted in the Appendix section of this report demonstrate the level of public service performed by department faculty. They include, but are not limited to, involvement in social service programs, religious and faith-based activities, public commentary and political expertise, and consulting. Though not a major component of departmental activity, faculty members and staff maintain an active profile of public service.

The department also is involved in collaborative relationships with other area institutions. Faculty members have participated in or received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Agriculture, as well as from more specialized sources like the Public Relations Society of America and the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. Collaborative efforts with faculty members from George Mason University, The Pennsylvania State University, Baylor University, and George Washington University are also central to departmental activity. In addition, a number of our graduate students use and are employed by the National Archives II in College Park and the department has sponsored programs and fostered relationships with the Archives staff.

V.   **Facilities**

Since 1991, the Department of Communication has been located on the second floor of the Skinner Building. This building was renovated just prior to the department move into the building.

In 2004, the department took over the entire second floor of Skinner Building, making renovations for additional office space. Additional renovations were completed in 2007 and new furniture purchased for the graduate student offices. All renovations come from the department budget.

The second floor includes seventeen regular faculty offices; a chair's office; a reception and work area; an administrative assistant office; a kitchen; a computer lab; a media center/classroom and office; a seminar room; a business office; a large room for lecturers; a large room for graduate students; offices for the director of undergraduate studies, assistant, and outreach coordinator; and an advising office. The basement floor of the Skinner Building houses two additional graduate student shared offices and the department library. The Center for Risk Communication Research is housed in the basement of Woods Hall. These facilities include an office, and three rooms for conducting focus groups, experiments, and subject interviews.

Space Needs
The department continues to need additional space for graduate students and visiting or non-tenured/tenure-track instructional faculty. Almost all of the graduate students are instructors of record for two courses each semester. However, they do not have spaces to meet privately with their undergraduate students. Non-tenured/tenure-track faculty members who share offices attempt to schedule office hours that permit more one-on-one discussions with their students. Although by university policy, office space is provided to emeritus faculty, the department does not have sufficient space for this purpose. Thus, the emeritus and research faculty share an office.

The department does not have classrooms under its control other than one seminar room. Faculty members teach in several different buildings across the campus because of needs for computer labs and high tech rooms. This makes providing specialized software, scanners, or advanced equipment extremely difficult. The department has worked with other units to purchase and insure maintenance and security of its software and hardware. In addition, the department requires an additional space for graduate student computer lab usage.

The department does not have space for its student organizations. While attempting to foster several undergraduate enrichment activities such as an honors program, an undergraduate student association, and the Public Relations Student Society of America, this is difficult with no meeting spaces or storage space for these student organizations. In addition, the department has very limited time and access to computers for undergraduate majors, clubs, research projects, and independent studies.

VI.   **Points of Discussion**

Based on this self-study of the Department of Communication's faculty, undergraduate programs, graduate programs, general departmental organization, and facilities, the internal self-study committee would like to focus on the following issues, problems, and opportunities for further reflection and discussion.

1.   Although the department's faculty members think of themselves as four discrete subgroups with distinct bodies of knowledge and methods, some students and faculty are expressing an interest in transcending these areas in their research, course offerings, projects and partnerships. The department structure may currently be too constrained by its focus on tracts instead of creating the flexibility to bridge the areas. Bridging between the research areas happens in the department's standing committees (such as the Faculty Advisory Committee, the Salary Advisory Committee, the Graduate and Undergraduate Committees), and on graduate examination and dissertation committees. However, it may be that there will need to be more development of policies and guidelines that take advantages of opportunities for research and teaching across the traditional research areas.

2.   The department takes seriously the morale issues expressed by graduate students. We believe that we are addressing their concerns. Fortunately, we attract many of the brightest and future stars of the discipline. We hope by making our programs and opportunities transparent from the beginning that we will enrich our departmental culture as a welcoming place for students to study and learn.

3.   The department continues to feel the limitations on its programmatic efforts due to space.

4.   The department's undergraduate program is attempting to enhance its Honors program so that the program will be encouraging and enriching to the best of our undergraduate students. The department delivers Honors courses to the UM campus even as it lacks the resources for an internal structure through course offerings, advising, and space to make the Honors dimension to the undergraduate degree inviting and realistic. We have had discussions at the College level to make more flexible the Honors quota of courses that the department is asked to deliver so that we are able to reserve seats for COMM majors and deliver these courses at the junior level.

5.   Three years ago, the department agreed to deliver a Communication major at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) and we received incentives from the campus to offer this program. There is an opportunity to receive additional monies for attracting students beyond the 80 majors included in the original agreement. This may require that the department broaden its attention to how to advance its major at USG rather than leave it to one or two individual administrators. Because of the department's reliance on soft money to augment its state appropriations, the additional monies for the USG major could help with graduate student stipends, faculty travel, and facilities upgrades. We have developed a steering committee of faculty and staff to develop our messages more clearly about the USG experience to prospective junior college students.

6.   University allocations to support the department are inadequate to meet payroll and operations. The Department of Communication relies on "soft money" obtained through summer and winter term tuition, ACCESS funds (provided for teaching specific CORE courses), and DRIF monies. There are few resources available to enhance department goals, such as increasing faculty travel, elevating graduate student stipends, and hiring a Media Center director as well as other initiatives to enhance the achievement of the department's mission. The department is committed to finding additional resources from non-University sources. Two initiatives are the creation of a Board of Advisors for the department and the establishment of a Professional

Master's Degree program. Further discussion and advice from external reviewers is sought concerning the typicality of the department's budget situation and how it can increase revenues, particularly in light of college and university policies that may prohibit or limit fund-raising initiatives.

7.   As the department seeks to recruit the highest quality graduate students to the University of Maryland, as well as bringing to UM the best scholars of Communication, we continually confront two difficult factors—a metropolitan area that is one of the most expensive in the nation and graduate stipend, graduate fellowship, and faculty salary levels that are often below those of our peer and aspirational peer institutions. The department hopes for further discussion and advice to confront the inherent environmental and budgetary tensions that may impede the continued growth and development of the department.

8.   Library resources at the university are currently of concern to the department. The budget for library acquisitions is centrally administered, with certain budgets (primarily serials and monographs) administered in consultation with the department. The exorbitant inflation in the cost of library purchases, subscriptions and licenses, coupled with restrictions on the university's budget, have now eroded that budget to critical levels. The library can no longer purchase all the major journals in our disciplines. Obviously, under such conditions, more specialized materials (ethics of communication, listening, etc.) are in jeopardy or already eliminated from our collections. Furthermore, the linkages of our discipline with other disciplines (rhetoric with the English journals, persuasion and social influence with the psychology literature, public relations with journalism, for example) means that the research value of our library is being eroded by cuts in titles over which we do not have control. At a time when new electronic databases are coming online that can enhance our work, these are not being added to UM's library. Although this problem is beyond departmental control, its importance to the fulfillment of our mission in research and teaching motivates our comment in hopes the university will realize the scope of the problem.

9.   The department is experiencing stresses that often accompany rapid growth, a diversity of academic inquiries, an intergenerational faculty, and changes in leadership. Our sense of community is always challenged by our location in an urban area with its distractions and geographic separation. The level of trust among faculty members has been severely strained. We hope and believe that we are on the mend in these regards, and have taken specific steps to attempt to build community. The real test of whether we have succeeded will come with the reexamination of our strategic plan that will follow this Academic Program Review. We would welcome advice from the committee on strategies to address this stage in our departmental history and to solidify our sense of common intellectual community and our decision-making processes.

10.   Even as the department's faculty is diverse in terms of sex and national origin, we recognize that the faculty lacks a significant presence of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups from the United States. Attracting faculty members from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to UM and our department is a central priority. Strategies to achieve that goal have been implemented in the past with limited success. Creative proposals, new initiatives, or ideas to reimagine and rearticulate our identity in order to attract faculty members from the United States who are members of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to our department would be helpful.