The Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas offers three degree programs: (1) B.A. or B.G.S. degree, (2) M.A. degree (Lawrence and Edwards campuses), and (3) Ph.D. The Department of Communication Studies also hosts the KU Debate program.

- The Communication Studies graduate program has been ranked by the National Communication Association as 12th in Rhetorical Studies, 13th in Interpersonal Communication, 14th in Organizational Communication, 15th in Political Communication, and 20th in Intercultural Communication.

- KU’s debate program, hosted by Communication Studies, is typically ranked among the top 5 teams in the country. In 2011 KU qualified three teams to the National Debate Tournament, two of which were ranked in the top 16 teams in the country. KU Debate finished the season as the third ranked squad in the country in the final Debate Coaches Poll and ranked fifth in the country in the National Debate Tournament Varsity point standings going into the national tournaments.

- Current Communication Studies faculty have won numerous teaching awards—including 8 Kemper Fellowships for Teaching Excellence, the National Communication Association Ecroyd Award for Outstanding Teaching in Higher Education, and KU’s inaugural Gene A. Budig Teaching Professorship in the Social and Behavioral Sciences—and since 2005 have authored or edited 6 scholarly books and published more than 100 scholarly journal articles, as well as numerous book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and more.

- The Communication Studies Research Colloquium attracts researchers from other units at KU, including English and Psychology, as well as from other Communication departments including Pennsylvania State University, Northwestern University, Purdue University, University of Arizona, University of Colorado, University of Missouri, University of Texas at Austin, University of Minnesota, and more.

- Communication Studies faculty have been awarded large grants and received prestigious research awards and recognition including grants from the National Institute of Aging and the U.S. State Department; the National Communication Association Kohrs-Campbell Prize in Rhetorical Criticism; the Western Communication Association B. Aubrey Fisher Outstanding Journal Article Award; and an invitation to speak at the Reagan Centennial Celebration at the University of Southern California.
Communication Studies Program Statement—Fall 2008

When the Greeks invented the study of the liberal arts, they began with rhetoric, what we now would call communication studies. They began with communication because they recognized that when people exist in a community, the two most fundamental skills they need to make the community function effectively—the ability to act as an informed advocate for a position and the ability to listen to the advocacy of another person and respond in a sensible way—are both tied to communication. With the rise of new communication technologies, such as e-mail and the internet, communication is, if anything, even more important than it was for the Greeks.

The goal of the liberal arts is to develop a citizenry that is broadly informed, capable of critical thinking, and able to act effectively as citizens. The mission statement of the department expresses clearly how the department helps achieve that goal:

Communication Studies is central to the Liberal Arts because effective and ethical communication is at the core of family, of human organizations of all types, and of democratic decision making.

The department mission is to both teach and do research related to effective and ethical communication in the many different societal contexts in which that communication occurs. In particular, the department has chosen to focus on public communication, including political communication, argumentation, contemporary rhetorical practice, and the study of public address, organizational communication, interpersonal and small group communication, and intercultural communication. The department also focuses on the ways that new communication media influence the communicative practice in the four main areas of department teaching and research.

Department Structure

The culture of the department is inclusive and participative and most decisions are made by consensus. Faculty in the department believe that it is very important to protect and maintain this culture. Consequently, policy decisions for the department are made by the faculty as a whole. Day-to-day management of departmental resources is carried out by the department chair, who is appointed by the Dean based on recommendations from the faculty. Robert Rowland has served as chair for the last nine years. The chair represents the department with the College and upper administration and is in charge of all department outreach. Rowland will complete his third and, by department by-laws, final term on June 30, 2009. The chair is one of three members of an elected departmental advisory committee. This committee is responsible for carrying out annual merit evaluations, review of promotion and tenure candidates, review of sabbatical leave proposals, and nominations for faculty teaching and other awards. The chair also consults with the other members of the advisory committee on issues facing the department.
There has been preliminary discussion within the department of splitting the duties of the chair between a chair and an associate chair. This discussion reflects the feeling of some that the job of the chair has grown over the years and that faculty would be more willing to take on the responsibilities of the chair if the duties were split between two individuals. A more extended discussion of this issue will occur this fall and winter, followed by a discussion with the College about any change in department structure.

Issues related to the graduate program, including graduate admission decisions, are considered by the department graduate affairs committee. The committee includes the graduate director, who is appointed by the chair for the term of office of the chair, and four other members. This committee handles the graduate admission process. Although the department chair sometimes consults with the graduate affairs committee, the chair is not involved directly in admission decisions, except on an ad hoc basis. Similarly, admission decisions related to the undergraduate major are made by the undergraduate affairs committee, which consists of an undergraduate coordinator appointed by the chair for the term of office of the chair and either two or four additional members. Policy decisions related to the undergraduate and graduate programs of the department are made by the faculty as a whole, after the issue has been considered by the relevant committee.

The department has a number of other committees (awards, library, Edwards Campus, and so forth) to deal with particular issues that routinely confront the program.

**Faculty**

The size of the faculty has remained relatively static over the last decade. Since Fall 2001, the department has had between 18 and 20 faculty members, several of whom are not full-time in the department. The FTE of the department has varied between 14.5 and 16.7. The current faculty of the department includes five Professors (Asuncion-Lande, Carlin, Hummert, Parson, and Rowland) eight Associate Professors (Banwart, Baym, Beisecker, Friedman, Kunkel, Manolescu, Penningon, and Russo), and six Assistant Professors (Bruss, Childers, Hall, Hanzal, Tell and Zhang). Dr. Scott Harris has the rank of Assistant Specialist, but is treated by the department as an Assistant Professor. Two faculty members are currently on phased retirement (Friedman and Asuncion-Lande). Dr. Hummert currently serves as Vice Provost for Faculty Development and is only .2 in the department. Dr. Pennington has a joint appointment in African and African-American Studies and is only .5 in Communication Studies.

The department has lost three faculty positions over the last several years that it has not yet filled. Two of those positions are in organizational communication. Last year the department interviewed to replace Professor Joann Keyton, who left the program at the end of the 2006-2007 academic year, but the search failed. Dr. Amy Schmisseur resigned her faculty position in May 2008. We have been given permission to search for one organizational position in the 2008-2009 academic year at the assistant professor level. After this position is filled, we still will be short one faculty member in organizational communication. Organizational communication is an area of historic strength for the
program and the shortage of faculty and absence of senior faculty make it difficult to maintain the quality of the program. In addition, the department has not been given permission to search for the position in new communication technology that previously was filled by Dr. John Monberg.

In nearly all cases, faculty members are evaluated 40% for teaching, 40% for research, and 20% for service. The 40% for teaching translates into two classes per term, usually one undergraduate class and either one graduate class or a bridge class which includes juniors, seniors and MA students. The department chair receives one class release per semester, although Dr. Rowland has taught a three-hour overload class on five occasions and a one-hour overload several other times. The director of graduate studies receives one course release during the year. Because of her administrative assignment as director of the Edwards Campus, Dr. Tracy Russo is evaluated 40% for teaching, 30% for research and 30% for service.

Faculty Teaching and Service
Faculty members in the department have been recognized with a number of teaching and research awards. For example, twelve different COMS faculty members have won the Kemper teaching fellowship. Only English, a program with more than double the FTE of COMS, has won as many Kemper awards. COMS faculty have won any number of other College or University-wide teaching or advising awards, as well as significant service and research awards. A listing of awards won by department faculty members is attached. The department as a whole was honored with the University Departmental Teaching Award in 2005 and with the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Departmental Advising Award in 2006.

COMS faculty members also have been very active in providing service to the College, University, discipline and community. COMS faculty members have been particularly active at the College level, where most of the standing committees generally have had a representative from the department. COMS faculty members also have been active at the University level, both in serving on committees and in governance and also on special taskforces. The work of both Dr. Mary Lee Hummert and Dr. Diana Carlin in upper administration is also notable. COMS faculty members also have been very active in the discipline, with numerous members of the faculty serving on editorial review boards and in leadership positions within the committee structure of the National Communication Association and the Central States Communication Association, as well as other organizations, such as the Association of Internet Researchers. COMS faculty members also have been active in the community. For example, both Dr. Diana Carlin and Dr. Dorthy Pennington have received the Steeples Award for service to Kansas, and Dr. Robert Rowland received a service award from the Kansas Bar Association.

Faculty Research
COMS faculty members have been productive scholars in a variety of research areas in peer-reviewed journals in the discipline including rhetorical criticism, argumentation, political communication, interpersonal communication, communication and aging,
organizational communication, intercultural communication, and new communication technologies.

Over the last three years, faculty have published 2 textbooks, 2 edited books, 67 peer reviewed journal articles, 14 non-reviewed journal articles, 27 book chapters, and made 153 presentations. These publications and presentations have occurred in important and prestigious places, including *Quarterly Journal of Speech, Communication Monographs, Rhetoric and Public Affairs, Human Communication Research*, and a host of regional and specialized journals.

There are many highlights of faculty research. Dr. Mary Lee Hummert has received two large National Institute of Aging grants and has been recognized as a leading scholar in the area of communication and aging. Dr. Diana Carlin has published widely on political debates and is so widely recognized in the area that she has consulted with foreign nations about how to organize debates. Dr. Donn Parson has been honored by both the American Forensics Association and the National Debate Tournament for his work with argumentation and debate. Dr. Nobleza Asuncion-Lande has been recognized as a major figure in the creation of intercultural communication as a field. Dr. Robert Rowland and his co-author, Dr. David Frank, received the Kohrs-Campbell award for their book on Israeli-Palestinian symbol use. Dr. Tracy Russo has focused her research on how new communication technology influences organizational communication in different contexts. Dr. Tom Beisecker has been a leading figure in the study of trial communication and was a board member for many years for the American Society of Trial Consultants. Dr. Beth Manolescu is a well-regarded scholar in both argumentation studies and the study of 18th-century rhetorical theory. Dr. Nancy Baym has been recognized as a leading scholar in new communication technology since the publication of her book, *Tune In, Log On*, and has served as President of the Association of Internet Researchers. Dr. Adrianne Kunkel has published widely on social-support. Dr. Dorthy Pennington is a highly regarded scholar focusing on African-American communication. Dr. Mary Banwart is one of the authors of a well-regarded book on campaign communication and is developing a research program focused on gender in political communication. Dr. Yan Bing Zhang, although not yet tenured, has published widely on inter-group communication.

Faculty members who have been at KU fewer than three years are also demonstrating the potential of their research efforts. For example, Dr. Dave Tell won awards from both the National Communication Association and the Rhetoric Society of America for his dissertation and already has published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. And Dr. Jeff Hall, Dr. Kris Bruss, Dr. Jay Childers, and Dr. Alesia Hanzal among them have a number of publications.

While the research strength of the department is evident, it is important to recognize a limitation. Among faculty members with developed research programs, only Dr. Carlin, Dr. Hummert, and Dr. Rowland are senior faculty who are still at mid-career. Of course, Dr. Hummert’s primary appointment is in the Provost’s Office. Dr. Carlin’s research efforts were for many years constrained by her administrative appointments first in the
Provost’s Office and then as Dean of the Graduate School. As a consequence, the department is quite short of senior scholars, especially in social science, to serve a mentoring role for younger faculty members.

One recent development should help mid-career and junior social science faculty to develop their research programs. With strong support from the College, the department has renovated and is in the process of outfitting research space for both dyadic interpersonal studies and larger group research in interpersonal, organizational, or political communication. The new lab space should be fully operational at some point in Fall 2008 and should make it easier for social science faculty to conduct studies and seek external grant support.

Faculty Areas of Specialization

The major areas and sub-specialties of faculty members in COMS are as follows:

Public Communication

**Rhetorical Theory**
- Kris Bruss
- Beth Manolescu
- Donn Parson
- Dave Tell

**Rhetorical Criticism**
- Scott Harris
- Beth Manolescu
- Robert Rowland
- Dave Tell

**Political Communication**
- Mary Banwart
- Diana Carlin
- Jay Childers
- Scott Harris
- Robert Rowland

**Public Address**
- Scott Harris
- Beth Manolescu
- Robert Rowland
Contemporary Rhetoric and Social Movements
    Jay Childers
    Scott Harris
    Dorthy Pennington
    Robert Rowland

Argumentation
    Beth Manolescu
    Donn Parson
    Robert Rowland

Rhetorical Education, Leadership and Communication Pedagogy
    Mary Banwart
    Kris Bruss
    Robert Rowland

Social Scientific Approaches to Communication

Social Scientific Theories
    Tom Beisecker
    Mary Lee Hummert
    Tracy Russo
    Yan Bing Zhang

Social Scientific Methods
    Nancy Baym
    Tom Beisecker
    Alesia Hanzal
    Jeff Hall
    Mary Lee Hummert
    Adrianne Kunkel
    Yan Bing Zhang

Interpersonal Communication
    Nancy Baym
    Jeff Hall
    Alesia Hanzal
    Mary Lee Hummert
    Adrianne Kunkel
    Yan Bing Zhang

Family, Health and Social Support
    Jeff Hall
    Alesia Hanzal
    Mary Lee Hummert
    Adrianne Kunkel
Relational Communication
   Nancy Baym
   Jeff Hall
   Alesia Hanzal
   Adrianne Kunkel
   Yan Bing Zhang

Intergroup Communication
   Mary Lee Hummert
   Yan Bing Zhang

Organizational Communication
   Robert Rowland in the limited sub-discipline of organizational rhetoric
   Tracy Russo

Intercultural Communication
   Nobleza Asuncion-Lande
   Dorthy Pennington
   Yan Bing Zhang

New Communication Technology
   Nancy Baym
   Tracy Russo

Persuasion, Conflict Resolution and Legal Communication
   Tom Beisecker

The listing of areas of departmental specialization is revealing. The department has very
good coverage of major areas and even sub-specialties in public communication and
interpersonal communication. Intercultural communication has a critical mass of faculty
who teach and do research in the area. However, the department currently does not have
that critical mass in organizational communication or new communication technology.

Department Staff

Communication Studies has three office staff members, an office manager who also
serves as the graduate secretary, a staff member primarily assigned to handle all financial
arrangements for the department, and a receptionist, who also works with the
undergraduate program. While COMS has a proportionately smaller staff compared to
several other departments in the College that generate fewer credit hours and have fewer
majors, the department is quite satisfied with the staffing situation, in part due to the
superb work done by the office manager and financial staff member over years. In
addition, the department has a full-time advising specialist, who has done an outstanding job coordinating advising and other undergraduate issues. Also, the College has assigned a computer support staff member to work with COMS and Sociology. This arrangement has worked out beautifully. In addition, the College is now providing web support, although the department is still in charge of generating content. Overall, the department is pleased with the staff situation.

**Departmental Outreach**

The department manages outreach to two active alumni organizations and two undergraduate student organizations. The undergraduate student organizations are the Students in Communication Studies (SCS), which represents all undergraduates in the department, and the honor society Lambda Pi Eta. SCS presents sessions to help undergraduates on issues such as resume development and the job search and also provides peer advising support. Lambda Pi Eta presents sessions on issues such as applying for graduate school.

The department also actively works to stay in touch with alumni from the department, especially the graduate program. In addition to an annual newsletter (see attached from Fall 2007), the department uses an email contact list and the department website to keep alumni aware of department news. The department also hosts a reception every year at the National Communication Association Annual Convention, which is usually attended by more than 100 alumni. One problem related to outreach is that the department has sought support from alumni for the unrestricted endowment fund with only limited success.

In relation to the website, the department is in the process of a major upgrade, which will provide a narrative about the mission of the department, a slide-show depicting both events and people in the department, a section on frequently asked questions to help current and prospective students understand department procedures, and more news about the department.

The other area of alumni outreach managed by the department is debate alumni development. The official coordinating board for debate alumni is the KU Debate Alumni Advisory Board. However, since both Donn Parson and Robert Rowland are board members, they have coordinated the outreach effort. Debate alumni are contacted via an email contact list, the debate website, which is linked to the department website, and a summer newsletter. Alumni also have come back to campus for three debate reunions over the last eight years. These efforts have been quite successful both in maintaining a connection to debate alumni and also in raising endowment resources. The total of all endowment funds supporting debate has increased dramatically in the last seven years and recently crossed the $1 million mark.
Basic Course

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and several other schools in the University of Kansas require students to take an introductory course in public speaking or a course in logic. More than two-thirds of students fulfill this requirement with a Communication Studies course (public speaking, honors public speaking, or introduction to debate). Previously, this requirement was named the Oral Communication requirement, but it now is labeled Argument and Reason. The requirement was renamed after an extensive review by the undergraduate affairs committee (CUSA) of the College. In reaffirming and renaming the requirement, CUSA recognized the importance of training students to be informed advocates and critical thinkers.

The department works very hard to maintain the quality and rigor of the basic course. Dr. Kris Bruss serves as the department basic course director. Along with two GTAs who serve as assistant and associate basic course director respectively as half of their GTA assignment, she is responsible for managing all aspects of the program, including training new instructors and dealing with any issues that arise. Half of Dr. Bruss’s teaching commitment (two classes per year) is tied to her work as basic course director.

The department has an extensive program for training and mentoring new GTAs. In addition to a 9-day retreat prior to the beginning of the school year, new GTAs are expected to enroll in a 2-hour basic course class focusing on pedagogical challenges facing instructors teaching the basic course. Currently, the University of Kansas is attempting to improve the quality of training for GTAs. Communication Studies has been recognized as a leader in those efforts. Three COMS faculty members recently spoke at a training session on new GTA preparation. In addition, the department has been exempted from participation in a university-wide training program because the department program was far more extensive than the university-wide program.

The basic course requires a major commitment of department resources. COMS routinely teaches between 35 and 45 sections of the basic course in both the Fall and Spring semesters. The department typically offers five or six additional sections in the summer. COMS has worked very closely with the College to manage enrollment in these sections. At times when enrollment demand peaks, the department has increased class sizes in these classes from 22 to as many as 25 in order to handle the demand. In addition to the commitment of GTA resources to the Basic Course, the department usually has two to three sections taught by a lecturer. As noted above, half of Dr. Bruss’s faculty position is allocated for teaching and management in the Basic Course. The department commitment also involves half of the GTA positions of the assistant and associate basic course directors.
Undergraduate Program

The chair of the undergraduate committee is Dr. Yan Bing Zhang. As undergraduate
coordinator, Dr. Zhang manages the admission process and coordinates review of the
undergraduate curriculum. The department is fortunate to have a full-time advising
specialist, Amber Blackmore, who assists Dr. Zhang in dealing with issues involving
undergraduate majors and coordinates advising. As an advising specialist, Ms.
Blackmore keeps faculty informed of new procedures and rules and deals with technical
aspects of advising in order to maximize student contact with faculty for advising on
substantive and career issues.

Demand for the Major
Communication Studies is one of the largest majors in the College. In FY 1999-2000,
COMS generated total undergraduate credit hours of 16,719. By FY 2001-2002, that
number had jumped to 18,856. Since then, department efforts to manage enrollment
growth have kept total credit hour generation relatively static. In FY 2007-2008, the total
was 18,651. The number of declared majors was 500 in Fall 1998. It reached 552 by
Fall 2000 before rising significantly to 697 in Fall 2001 and 815 and 817 in Fall 2002 and
Fall 2003. Since Fall 2003, the department has more aggressively managed the major
and the total number of majors fell to 558 in Fall 2006 and 523 in Fall 2007. At the same
time, as of Fall 2007, another 300 students had indicated that they would like to become
majors.

Another sign of the demand for department classes and the success of the efforts in
managing the major application process can be found in the number of undergraduate
degrees awarded over the last decade. The figures are as follows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Degrees Awarded</th>
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<tr>
<td>98-99</td>
<td>175</td>
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<tr>
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<td>06-07</td>
<td>217</td>
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</table>

Demand for the major clearly began to peak beginning in 2002. The number of graduates
in the following three years—288, 301, and 255—reflected an unsustainable major
population. On the other hand, the 190 graduates in 05-06 arguably represented an
overcorrection on the part of the department. If so, that problem had been addressed by
06-07, when the department had returned to a larger but we think sustainable major
population.

While the current level is sustainable, it is important to recognize that demand for the
major remains quite high. The College of Liberal Arts calculated a ratio of declared
majors plus declared minors to faculty (FTE) for Fall 2007. The ratio for COMS was
18.19 declared majors and declared minors per faculty member. Among other
departments, only Economics (18.35), Environmental Studies (29.35) and Psychology
(21.27) had higher ratios. Even these figures are somewhat misleading because
Economics and Environmental Studies do not have an admission process. Any student
can declare a major in those areas at any time. In Fall 2007, 308 students had stated that
they intended to be COMS majors, but had not yet been admitted to the major. If those figures were added in, the ratio would have been 38.12 majors and minors per faculty member. Only Psychology at 33.82 has similar demand of declared and undeclared majors plus minors.

While faculty in Communication Studies are clearly dealing with more majors and producing more graduates per faculty member than in other programs, the major admission process has allowed the department to find a sustainable enrollment level. The department believes that it is important to continue to use the major admission process to manage enrollment. The major admission process is described below.

**Major Admission Process**
In order to deal with demand for classes, Communication Studies uses a major application process similar to that of professional schools. In order to be admitted, students must have completed at least six hours in COMS. Three of those hours must have been in one of several gateway classes. COMS went to this system over a decade ago, with the approval of the College, to deal with the enormous demand for the major. The minimum standard for admission to the major is a 2.5 GPA in classes in the major and a 2.0 overall. However, the admission process is competitive and the department sets GPA standards in order to manage enrollment pressures and keep the size of the major relatively static. In the 2007-2008 academic year, the department admitted 234 students to the major and rejected 55. The average COMS GPA of admitted students was slightly over 3.2 and the overall GPA was roughly 2.9. The minimum GPA needed to be admitted was roughly 2.75 both in the major and overall. It is important to recognize that the application process is not totally driven by GPA and that students are allowed to make a case for admission based on special circumstances. The department also recognizes that some students come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds and deserve special consideration.

**Major and Minor Requirements**
The major consists of 30 hours. Two classes are required: COMS 235—Introduction to Rhetoric and Social Influence and COMS 356—Introduction to Behavioral Research Methods in Communication. The departmental decision to require methods courses in both rhetoric and social science reflects both the inclusive culture of the department and the commitment of the department to exposing students to both humanistic and social scientific research methods. Students also must take at least two communication theory courses and two communication skill courses. The remaining twelve hours of the major are electives. Students with a 3.25 overall and 3.5 COMS GPA are eligible for the department honors program, which is usually completed with a six-hour honors thesis. Students also have the opportunity of completing a three-hour course related to an approved internship. A copy of the catalog listing for the undergraduate program is attached.

In addition to the major, students may complete a minor in Communication Studies by completing the COMS basic course and 18 additional hours in the department, 12 of which must be at the junior-senior level. The department is also the host for the
interdisciplinary leadership minor. The minor grew out of recommendations from a university taskforce on leadership training that was co-chaired by Professor Diana Carlin. The leadership minor has been ably led first by Dr. Paul Friedman and for the last several years by Dr. Mary Banwart. Dr. Banwart routinely teaches one class a year that is limited to students in the leadership minor.

The Debate Program
The debate program is also located in the department. The KU Debate program has been one of the top programs in the United States since the rise of intercollegiate tournament competition following the end of the Second World War. KU routinely has ranked among the very top programs and finished the 2007-2008 academic year as the top-rated varsity program in the United States. Over the last sixty years, KU has won four national championships and appeared in the Final Four of debate on numerous occasions. KU is considered to be one of the top five programs in the modern history of debate, along with four prestigious private schools: Harvard, Dartmouth, Northwestern, and the University of Southern California.

Major Assessment
Departmental assessment suggests that students are very satisfied with the quality of the major. The most recent assessment was completed in Spring 2005. It surveyed both current students and recent alumni. This assessment found that on a 5-point scale, participants reported high satisfaction with outside of classroom communication with instructors, clarity of degree requirements, quality of instruction in the department, and their overall experience in the department. Class availability received the lowest satisfaction scores (Alumni class availability $M = 3.22$; graduating senior class availability $M = 2.65$). As enrollment pressures rise, this element is most likely to be evaluated negatively by students. Interestingly, graduating seniors currently report that they are satisfied and alumni recall that they were satisfied with the variety of course offerings, size of classes (despite high enrollments in several required courses), and with their interactions with instructors outside of class and the quality of instruction as described earlier.

![Satisfaction with Communication Studies Major](image_url)
While the quality of the major and the commitment of faculty to high quality teaching is evident, enrollment stresses continue to pose a significant challenge. Results for Communication from the Senior Survey conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP) in 2000 and 2005 are consistent with departmental assessment.
The results indicate that seniors in the department are extremely satisfied with the department and related to overall instruction are more satisfied than KU undergraduates.
in other programs. They are less satisfied on issues related to course and faculty availability, findings reflecting the very high major-to-faculty ratio in the department.

Graduate Program

Communication Studies offers both an MA and a Ph.D. in Communication Studies. In addition, the department offers an MA on the Edwards Campus, the satellite campus in the Kansas City metro area. The Edwards Campus MA has the same degree requirements as the MA offered in Lawrence, but is focused primarily in organizational communication and most students are professionals seeking a terminal advanced degree. The chair of the graduate committee and graduate coordinator is Dr. Beth Manolescu. Dr. Manolescu is on sabbatical in Fall 2008 and the position of graduate director will be filled on an interim basis by Dr. Donn W. Parson, who served as graduate director for nineteen years prior to the appointment of Dr. Manolescu to the position.

Graduate Population

In Fall 1998, the department had 50 MA students and 44 Ph.D. students. These figures have remained relatively static in the following years and in Fall 2007 the department had 32 MA and 48 Ph.D. students. Since 1998, the department has averaged completing roughly 15 MA degrees per year and 8.5 Ph.D. degrees. Total degrees conferred in this period are:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>98-99</th>
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<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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</table>

The department has established the following requirements for admission to the graduate program:

- 1,150 combined verbal and quantitative GRE score
- 5.0 minimum analytic GRE score
- Two GRE scores in the 60th percentile
- 3.0 GPA requirement for incoming MA students
- 3.2 undergraduate GPA requirement for entering Ph.D. students and 3.6 GPA for MA coursework

Scores for students admitted to the program over the last four years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2004</th>
<th>Fall 2005</th>
<th>Fall 2006</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Mean Verbal GRE</td>
<td>529.3</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>548.9</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Quantitative GRE</td>
<td>596.7</td>
<td>613.9</td>
<td>612.9</td>
<td>588.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Essay GRE</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the 2008-2009 academic year, 99 students applied for admission. Thirty-nine were admitted. We don’t know as of yet the total for how many of those admitted will attend
KU. The average scores of those admitted were 542 Mean Verbal GRE, which is in the 72nd percentile, 647 Mean Quantitative GRE, which is the 59th percentile, and 5.0 Mean Analytical GRE, which is in the 66th percentile. The average scores of the twelve new GTAs for Fall 2008 were 583 Mean Verbal GRE, which is in the 79th percentile, 648 Mean Quantitative GRE, which is in the 60th percentile, and 5.0 Mean Analytical GRE, which is in the 79th percentile. (Note, the percentiles of the analytical scores of the new GTAs and of all those accepted are different because the two groups reflect test results on a variety of different dates).

Graduate Student Funding
The vast majority of the non-Edwards Campus graduate students in the program receive funding as Graduate Teaching Assistants. The norm is for a .5 GTA appointment, which requires the GTA to teach two stand-alone classes or assist a faculty member, often as a discussion leader, in a class. Over the last six years, the department has had the following numbers of GTAs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>03-04</th>
<th>04-05</th>
<th>05-06</th>
<th>06-07</th>
<th>07-08</th>
<th>08-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variation in the number of GTAs has not been tied primarily to funding levels, but rather to when the department has received supplemental funding and the available GTA pool at that time. For the last several years, the department has received an initial GTA budget and then a supplemental budget sometime in the mid to late spring. In some cases, the supplemental funding has been received at a time when the GTA pool has been depleted because candidates who wanted to come to KU had accepted offers elsewhere. In those cases, the department hired lecturers to cover additional classes. Unfortunately, lecturers are both more expensive than GTAs and also do not generate credit hours in the graduate program. The department currently has no GRA support, except in cases where faculty fund a GRA out of grant resources. Dr. Hummert has done this on several occasions.

Graduate Requirements
The MA requires thirty hours of course work. Fifteen hours are required, including an introduction to graduate study in Communication Studies, two research classes, and six hours of Master’s Thesis. Examinations and additional coursework may substitute for the thesis requirement. In general, the department advises students who intend to move on to the Ph.D. to complete a thesis. Other students are advised into the non-thesis option. The other 15 hours are electives, although a minimum of six hours each must be in two areas of communication that are approved by the student’s graduate program committee.

The Ph.D. requires nine hours in three required theory courses, 15 hours of courses in research methodology, 27 hours in two areas of emphasis, 18 elective hours, and 18 hours of dissertation research. Students who complete their MA elsewhere are allowed to transfer in the eighteen elective hours. Students who complete their MA at KU are allowed to transfer in all of their hours. A total of 87 hours is required for the Ph.D. In addition to these requirements, students must pass 14 hours of written comprehensive
exams, an oral comprehensive exam, and an oral examination on the dissertation. A copy of the catalog listing for the graduate program is attached.

Areas of Emphasis
Communication Studies emphasizes four primary areas in graduate education. One focus is on public communication, including rhetorical criticism, argumentation, public address, and political communication. Other historical areas of strength are interpersonal and small-group communication, organizational communication, and intercultural communication, including a focus on aging. Faculty in the department, notably Dr. Nancy Baym, also study and teach about new communication technologies. Currently, the department approaches new communication technologies as a place where communication occurs in the four primary areas of departmental focus. As noted above, the department has not been able to fill a position in this area and currently lacks the resources for expanded teaching or research. There is considerable student demand in the area and the absence of faculty resources has constrained the department in addressing that need.

Graduate Assessment

A departmental assessment survey of graduate student attitudes toward the program indicates high levels of satisfaction. The survey was conducted in May 2004. Sixteen M.A. students (11 from the Edwards Campus and 5 from the Lawrence campus) and 11 Ph.D. students responded. Relevant questions are noted:

The teaching experience available through my program is adequate preparation for an academic/teaching career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards – Question Not Applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
<td>25% (4)</td>
<td>56% (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The graduate curriculum helps students to achieve high scholarly standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55% (6)</td>
<td>45% (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6% (1)</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
<td>50% (8)</td>
<td>25% (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate students in my program are treated with respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>73% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6% (1)</td>
<td>50% (8)</td>
<td>44% (7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty advisors make themselves available to help graduate students plan and monitor their programs of study.
Overall, students seem satisfied with the graduate program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>27% (3)</td>
<td>73% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50% (8)</td>
<td>50% (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, I would recommend this program to prospective students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edwards</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>64% (7)</td>
<td>36% (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6% (1)</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
<td>56% (9)</td>
<td>19% (3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the most notable finding is that roughly 90% of students on both the Edwards Campus and Lawrence campus would recommend the program to prospective students.
Data from surveys conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning also indicates the quality of the program.

The OIRP survey indicates that overwhelmingly students evaluate overall program quality to be quite high. A higher percentage of students rate the program as excellent and quality of graduate teaching by faculty as excellent than in other programs in the university.
The 2001-2002 Survey of Earned Doctorates, which was conducted by OIRP, includes similar data. Relevant data relating to COMS is included in the appendix. OIRP surveyed 9 M.A. and 12 Ph.D. students. Their satisfaction with the program was extremely high as reflected in the following tables:

### Academic standards in my program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2_1</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Integration of current developments in my field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2_2</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>81.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.64</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overall program quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2_4</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40.91</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>90.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>95.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The intellectual quality of the faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S2_5</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77.27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>77.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Graduate Student Survey data from OIRP is quite consistent with the departmental assessment data.
The results of departmental and OIRP assessment of graduate student attitudes are also supported by the 2000 National Doctoral Program Survey. This survey of a variety of aspects of graduate student satisfaction placed KU in the top quartile of programs in the nation. The department was rated as significantly above the national average in terms of a variety of variables. Scores are listed below:

- Information for prospective students—67 dept; 59 national average (NA)
- Preparation for a broad range of careers—70 dept; 61 NA
- Teaching and TA preparation—80 dept; 62 NA
- Professional development—56 dept; 53 NA
- Career guidance and placement—67 dept; 50 NA
- Mentoring—85 dept; 75 NA
- Program climate—69 dept; 62 NA
- Overall satisfaction—72 dept; 67 NA

Overall, all of the assessment information consistently indicates that students receive very high quality instruction in the program.

Graduate Issues
Over the last five years, COMS has focused on three issues related to graduate education. First, the department has struggled to make sure that there were adequate graduate course offerings in all of the main areas of teaching/research. The combination of phased retirements, faculty leaving for other programs, and faculty moving into administrative positions has created major problems in course coverage, primarily in interpersonal and organizational communication. The department has responded to those difficulties by shifting faculty teaching away from the undergraduate program and bringing in lecturers (primarily professionals in the Kansas City area who have completed their doctorates in the department). With the hiring of Dr. Alesia Hanzal for Fall 2008 and Dr. Jeff Hall joining the faculty in Spring 2008, the coverage problem largely has been solved for interpersonal communication. With both the Keyton and Schmisseur lines unfilled in Fall 2008, the department continues to deal with the problem in organizational communication.

Second, the department has systematized the graduate advising process. Former graduate director Dr. Donn Parson and current Graduate Director Dr. Beth Manolescu have worked on this process by creating both procedures and forms to track the progress of graduate students at every stage of the degree process. These efforts have been made not in response to a perceived problem in advising, but in order to systematize the process.

The third initiative has focused on increasing the research productivity of Ph.D. students. Several efforts have occurred in this area. Faculty members in both social science and rhetoric have made presentations and run sessions on developing a research program. Many faculty members focus class assignments on producing publishable research. In addition, for the last several years, under the leadership of Dr. Manolescu and Dr. Rowland, rhetoric faculty have conducted an ongoing “Rhetoric Workshop,” which provides an opportunity for graduate students to present and receive feedback on papers
that they are working on for publication. The “Rhetoric Workshop” generally meets about ten times a year and faculty in rhetorical studies are exploring ways of increasing graduate student participation. In addition, the department has provided the opportunity for students to take a three-hour research completion tutorial in which they work intensively with a faculty member to revise a research project for publication. This class has been taught twice in rhetorical studies (once by Rowland and once by Manolescu) as an overload. A similar social science class was taught by Dr. Paul Friedman as part of his teaching load in Spring 2008.

The effort at increasing graduate student research productivity has had some significant successes, and several current doctoral students have had publications in national and regional journals. Many more have had competitive papers accepted at regional and national conventions. With this said, faculty believe that still more effort is needed. Dr. Manolescu is leading an effort to consider whether students should be required to participate in a research colloquium of some kind. Plans are being made to pilot-test this effort beginning in Fall 2008. As soon as a new class is created, students will be advised to take a 0-hour research colloquium in which students and faculty will present papers. Discussion is still underway concerning whether all Lawrence campus graduate students should be required to attend the colloquium or only doctoral students and about whether students should be required to attend all colloquium meetings or only those in the area of rhetoric or social science, depending upon their emphasis. If this effort is successful, it will be formalized and department graduate requirements changed. This will require review of the College graduate affairs committee and the College Academic Council.

**Graduate Placement**

Students completing a terminal MA degree in the department generally move into positions in business, government, political campaigns, legal consulting, or another Ph.D. program. The department has no formal placement process for these students.

Students in the Ph.D. program overwhelmingly have moved into teaching positions in higher education, although a few students have moved into trial consulting firms or positions in the corporate world. To assist students in searching for academic positions, the department offers a series of seminars on the job search process and provides coaching on interviewing and the presentation of job talks. To date, the department has a 100% placement rate of Ph.D. graduates. In recent years, COMS Ph.D. graduates have been placed at a mixture of academic institutions, including other doctoral programs, M.A. programs, regional universities and liberal arts colleges. For example, the six doctoral students who graduated in Spring 2008 or will graduate in Summer 2008 have accepted positions at other universities. Two of these positions are at Ph.D. institutions (the University of Oklahoma and North Dakota State University), two are at regional universities (James Madison and Eastern New Mexico), and two are at liberal arts colleges (William Jewell College and Bates College). A similar placement pattern has been in place for many years.

Many of the department’s best students have moved on to distinguished careers at research universities, including Bill Balthrop at UNC, Jesse Delia and David Swanson at
Illinois, Tom Goodnight and Randy Lake at USC, Kevin Barge and Charlie Conrad at Texas A & M., and Mary Tonn at Maryland. Any number of other examples could be cited. Others have spent their careers at regional universities or liberal arts colleges.

**Challenges**

Communication Studies is a strong program in all areas. Faculty in the department have won more significant teaching awards than any other department or program in the university. Faculty also have excelled at service and the research productivity of the department has been strong and is improving. With that said, the department faces several challenges.

*Excessive Demand for Classes*

The most important challenge is simply the demand for classes. As noted above, the department has one of the highest ratios of majors plus minors to faculty FTE in the College. When students who have expressed an interest in the major but not yet been admitted are considered, the department has the highest ratio in the College. Since these students are taking our classes, it seems appropriate to include them in any calculation. Of course, the department also has a large graduate program. In that regard, some faculty members do a disproportionate amount of graduate advising.

The net effect is that the department has significantly fewer faculty members compared to student demand than other programs in the university. Data on credit hour generation, total departmental budget and faculty FTE strongly indicates that COMS is carrying a much heavier teaching burden relative to budget expenditures than almost any other department in the College and faces a greater shortage of faculty than any department in the Social Sciences. To make this case, the chart that is included below lists the percentage of total credit hours in the College generated by all of the departments in the Social Sciences, except for Speech-Language-Hearing and Public Administration, in Fall 2008. Because these two departments have different missions than the other departments, it did not seem fair to include them in the comparison. Also included in the chart are the percentages of the total College budget for each department and the total faculty FTE for each department, both as of Fall 2008. This information allows for the calculation of two ratios. The first is the ratio of credit hours generated to the percentage of the College’s total budget. A ratio over 1.0 indicates that the department is teaching more credit hours than the percentage of the College budget it receives. The second ratio calculates the percentage of College credit hours generated per each faculty member in a given department. For example, the figure for COMS is .2403, which means that .2403% of total credit hours generated in the College is generated by COMS for each COMS faculty member.
### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept.</th>
<th>%CR</th>
<th>%BU</th>
<th>CR/BURatio</th>
<th>%CR</th>
<th>FTE</th>
<th>CR/FTERatio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANTH</td>
<td>2.909</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>2.909</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>.1740</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>1.657</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>1.657</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>.1447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMS</td>
<td>3.953</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>3.953</td>
<td>16.45</td>
<td>.2403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECON</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>.1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LING</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>.773</td>
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<td>.1073</td>
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<td>1.25</td>
<td>2.898</td>
<td>22.95</td>
<td>.1259</td>
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<td>1.63</td>
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<td>29.95</td>
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<td>2.01</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>2.973</td>
<td>20.15</td>
<td>.1475</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in the chart is immensely revealing. While it might be expected that an average department would have a slightly positive credit hour to budget ratio because the College office itself consumes some percentage of the budget, the ratios across the Social Sciences are all quite high, above 1.23. Three departments in the Social Sciences have ratios over 1.6—COMS, Anthropology and Psychology. The ratios for Economics and Sociology are also quite high at 1.38 and 1.48. This information indicates that the Social Sciences are generating a significantly higher percentage of the credit hours in the College than their budgets reflect and that COMS, Anthropology, and Psychology are both particularly efficient and hardworking. A consideration of the same material from the Natural Sciences and Humanities reveals that only a couple departments in the entire College have a higher credit hour to budget ratio.

The second ratio is still more revealing. The higher the number in that ratio the more students in the department for whom an individual faculty member is responsible. The ratios in the chart suggest that at least in the Social Sciences, Psychology and COMS have far fewer faculty than other departments per student and that COMS is roughly 11% behind Psychology. This ratio does not calculate the number of students taught by each faculty member directly, but the number of students taking classes in the department relative to the number of faculty. In relation to COMS, it clearly indicates a substantial shortage of faculty members compared to other departments and that COMS students receive relatively fewer classes taught by faculty than do students in any other program in the Social Sciences. A review of the same information for the rest of the College indicates that only four other departments have a ratio over .2.

This information suggests the importance of adding faculty to COMS in order to provide something approaching as many faculty taught classes as occurs in other programs in the College. Simply getting to a ratio approximating that of Psychology would require the addition of 3 new faculty members. Obviously, to get to the ratio of other departments in the Social Sciences that clearly are working very hard would require the addition of 5, 6, or even 7 new lines. If COMS had 7 additional faculty lines, the credit hour to FTE ratio would be .1686, roughly the same as Anthropology currently.
Two conclusions can be drawn from the data summarized above:

- **COMS has done an exceptionally effective job of managing budgetary resources and taking care of students, even given a severe shortage of faculty.**
- **COMS faces a shortage of faculty that is much worse than any other program in the Social Sciences.**

The demand for COMS classes and for graduate advising has the potential to degrade the learning experience for both undergraduate and graduate students. It also creates pressures that may influence the capacity of faculty members to develop their research programs. The potentially negative impacts on untenured faculty members are particularly worrisome.

A potential development could exacerbate the problem. The School of Journalism is in the process of exploring the creation of a Ph.D. program and has expressed interest in having Ph.D. students in that program take theory and methods classes in COMS. These students also might ask COMS faculty to participate on their graduate committees. While there is certainly potential for a new doctoral program in the School of Journalism to enrich the opportunities available for COMS students by providing access to courses related to the mass media, there is also the potential that the new program might expand the advising burden of COMS faculty.

**Standing in the Discipline**

A second challenge relates to the standing of the department within the discipline. In the most recent reputational ranking conducted by the National Communication Association, five areas of the department were ranked among the top twenty programs in the country:

- Intercultural communication—20th
- Political Communication—15th
- Organizational Communication—14th
- Interpersonal Communication—13th
- Rhetorical Studies—12th

While these rankings are quite good, the department obviously would like to improve them. In part, the rankings reflect the commitment of the department to be a broad-based program where multiple areas of communication practice are studied. Only a few other Ph.D. programs take such a broad-based approach. Although NCA did not do an overall ranking of program quality, it is possible to do so based on an analysis of the raw data in the reputational study. When a composite ranking is done of programs that were ranked in at least four areas, KU comes out 7th in the nation. With this said, the department clearly faces a challenge within the discipline in making clear the overall quality of the program. The good news is that one important step for overcoming that challenge is simply for the fine young faculty members to get older. Other more difficult steps relate
to the constraints on research posed by the demand for courses and advising that already have been discussed.

**Faculty Demographics**

A third challenge relates to the demographics of the faculty. The department is quite short of senior Associate Professors or recently promoted Professors to serve in leadership positions in the department and to serve mentoring roles to help younger faculty and also graduate students develop research efforts. The shortage of faculty members in this demographic led Dr. Rowland to serve a third term as chair. A leadership change will occur in the 2009-2010 academic year with the completion of that third term. As noted earlier, the demographic challenge is particularly serious in the social sciences, where Dr. Hummert is the only remaining senior scholar.

**Organizational Communication**

The fourth challenge applies to a particular part of the department that has been an area of historical strength—organizational communication—and to an area where the department has a chance to make a national or international reputation—new communication technology. Historically, organizational communication has been a particular strength of the department. Emeritus faculty member Dr Cal Downs was one of the leaders in the creation of the sub-discipline more than thirty years ago. Dr. Beverly Davenport Sypher was a significant figure in the area during her more than a decade at KU. Other former faculty members, including Dr. Kathy Miller and Dr. Joann Keyton, were also recognized scholars in the area. Currently, the department has only one faculty member whose primary research and teaching focus is in organizational communication, Dr. Tracy Russo. Dr. Russo is a highly-regarded member of the faculty, who has won numerous awards for her teaching, but she is only one person. In addition, as the director of the Edwards Campus program, she has responsibilities other than teaching. The department desperately needs to replace the positions in organizational that were filled by Keyton and Schmisseur in order to return the organizational communication program to its historically strong level.

The department faces a similar problem in new communication technology. Dr. Nancy Baym is a significant figure in this area, a point that is evident in the many guest lectures that she has been asked to present at universities all over the world. While Dr. Baym is a major figure and Dr. Russo also does some work in the area, they each have other responsibilities. In fact, most of Dr. Baym’s teaching is done in areas of interpersonal communication largely unrelated to new communication technology. Absent greater support, this area of potential strength will probably wither.

**Endowment Resources**

A final challenge relates to departmental endowment resources. The unrestricted endowment account of the department is quite small (approximately $15,000). This account is tapped every year to pay for social events and other costs associated with
departmental recruiting and supporting guest lecturers and other aspects of the research mission of the department. For example, the department brings in a distinguished alumnus of the Ph.D. program every year to present the Wil Linkugel lecture. The lecture honors Dr. Linkugel, an emeritus faculty member whose association with the program goes back more than half a century. The department uses the lecture as a way of demonstrating to current doctoral students what they can do with a KU Ph.D. Recent lecturers include Dr. Mary Tonn, Dr. Tom Goodnight, Dr. Randy Lake, Dr. Susan Huxman, Dr. Bill Balthrop, and Dr. Kevin Barge. However, events such as the Linkugel lecture cannot occur absent departmental endowment support. The current chair has initiated a fundraising campaign to address this issue. He also has partially funded department events out of endowment funds he has received for training he has provided to the Self Graduate Fellowship. Clearly, more work needs to be done in developing alumni support for the program. Dr. Rowland has volunteered to continue working on this task when his term as chair is complete. He believes that this fundraising will be easier when he no longer is chair because alumni will not perceive his efforts as self-serving.

**Future Plans**

The above discussion of challenges facing the department is quite revealing. It suggests that the primary problem confronting the department is a lack of faculty resources. The department is in very good shape in other forms of state support and is addressing the endowment shortfall. The College initiative providing an advising specialist to the department has made an enormous difference in undergraduate advising. Similarly, College support for renovation of office and lab space has improved the teaching and research environment for the department. And despite the heavy burden placed on the faculty by student demand, the major application system has allowed the department to manage the major at a sustainable level. There has been some discussion at the level of the College of returning to a College-wide system of major declaration in which departments would not be allowed to use a major admission process to manage demand. Such a move would be a major problem for COMs and, absent a quite large infusion of resources, substantially would degrade the teaching and research mission of the department.

The primary problems facing the department relate to not having enough faculty and not having enough relatively senior faculty in key areas, especially in social science. The problems in the organizational communication program could be addressed directly by filling the Schmisseur and Keyton positions. It would be especially helpful if one of those positions could be filled at the Associate or full Professor level. Since Keyton was full Professor, filling what was her position at the Associate or Full Professor level would seem justified.

The other two needs of the program are to fill a position in new communication technology and to create a position at the Associate level in order to hire a relatively senior social scientist. The position should include a focus on social science methods, but the particular subject area for research could be in interpersonal and small-group,
organizational, or even new communication technology. The key is not the subject area of the position, but to find someone to serve as a senior mentor for young social science faculty and also for graduate students. A number of years ago, the department lost two superb mid-career social scientists (Chris Segrin and Jake Harwood, who both left for Arizona primarily because of the weather and cultural opportunities there). Since their departure, the department has hired a number of strong young social scientists, but we definitely need the leadership that would have been provided by Segrin or Harwood.

The self-study conclusion that the department needs three additional lines in addition to current faculty positions and the organizational communication position for which the department is searching in Fall 2008 is a very conservative judgment. Two of these lines simply replace faculty lines that the department lost within the last three years. The other faculty line is needed to provide senior mentoring in social science. The addition of these three lines would mean that COMS had roughly the same ratio of faculty members to total student demand as Psychology. In other words, the department would be tied with Psychology for the highest ratio in the Social Sciences and one of the highest ratios in the College.

**Conclusion**

Communication Studies is a very strong program. Faculty have excelled at teaching and research and strongly supported the service needs of the university and discipline. The department has achieved these goals while at the same time serving a great many students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The strong culture of the department, a culture based on faculty supporting all areas of the program, is one key to the strength of the program. At the same time, there is a danger that the very successes of the program will be held against the department. If the squeaky wheel gets the grease, the department has not been very squeaky. Instead, we have cleaned up our own messes and solved problems related to student demand for classes as effectively as possible. This situation presents an opportunity to the College. COMS is a very strong program currently, but a program that could be much stronger with the addition of one new faculty line (a senior social scientist) and three replacement lines (two in organizational communication and one in new communication technology). With the one new line, along with the replacement lines, the program would have the resources to achieve recognition as a top-ten or even top-five program in the nation.
Appendices

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Executive Summary: Department of Communication Studies

Mission

Our mission is to prepare students to be critical thinkers and ethical, effective communicators—a core competency of citizenship in relationships, and communities. This preparation involves fostering skills in researching, critical thinking, and communicating in a range of media and contexts. Our goals for undergraduate education are: (1) enhance the skills and knowledge needed to research, organize, evaluate, and apply new information; (2) enhance communication by clear, effective use of language; and (3) practice a communication ethic of self-discipline, social responsibility, and citizenship. We offer three degree programs: (1) BA or BGS, (2) MA (Lawrence and Edwards campuses), and (3) PhD. The Department of Communication Studies also hosts the KU Debate program.

Faculty

We have eighteen faculty members who teach and research in two main areas: (1) Rhetoric and Political Communication and (2) Communication and Relationships. Our faculty’s research productivity is outstanding. Since 2005 faculty members have authored or edited 6 scholarly books and published more than 100 scholarly journal articles, as well as numerous book chapters, encyclopedia entries, and more. Our research productivity continues to increase and we expect that trend to continue; one-third of our faculty is in the early stages of their careers, and our external review praised these hires. Our department plays a significant role in serving non-majors. In 2002 we generated about the same number of credit hours for majors as for non-majors; since then we have generated significantly more non-major credit hours than major credit hours. Our number of total student credit hours generated has remained steady for the past two years.

Bachelor’s Degrees (BA, BGS)

Communication Studies is one of the largest majors in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. We offer courses on both the Lawrence and Edwards campuses. The average of total undergraduate student credit hours generated between 2002 and 2009 is more than 18,000, and the average percentage taken by undergraduate majors during that same time period is about 37 percent. All of our majors, in addition to many students in the College as well as several other schools, enroll in COMS 130 Speaker-Audience Communication to fulfill a College general education requirement: Argument and Reason. The department typically awards more than 200 B.A. and B.G.S. degrees each year, and our median and mean years-to-degree are typically less than 5.

Master’s Degrees (MA)

Communication Studies offers MA degrees at both the Lawrence and Edwards campuses. The degree requirements are the same for each program. Course offerings at Edwards often focus on communication in the context of organizations since most MA students at Edwards are working professionals in the Kansas City area seeking a terminal MA degree. Since 2002 more than 100 students have earned MA degrees in Communication Studies. Our mean and median times-to-degree have decreased since 2002; in 2009-2010 the median was 1.7 years and mean was 2.3
years. Students completing a terminal MA degree in the department generally move into positions in business, government, political campaigns, legal consulting, or another Ph.D. program.

**Doctoral Degrees (PhD)**
Communication Studies offers a PhD degree on the Lawrence campus. The Communication Studies graduate program has been ranked by the National Communication Association as 12th in Rhetorical Studies, 13th in Interpersonal Communication, 14th in Organizational Communication, 15th in Political Communication, and 20th in Intercultural Communication. Since 2002 more than 65 students have earned PhD degrees in Communication Studies. Between 2002 and 2010, our median times-to-degree have ranged from 4.5 to 6.7. Our mean times-to-degree have ranged from 4.6 to 7.4. Students in the Ph.D. program overwhelmingly have moved into teaching positions in higher education, although a few students have moved into trial consulting firms or positions in the corporate world. To assist students in searching for academic positions, the department offers a series of seminars on the job search process and provides coaching on interviewing and the presentation of job talks.

**Changes as a Result of the Review Process**
In response to the external review process, the department took several actions. The following are examples. First, we decided to focus on two core areas—(1) Rhetoric and Political Communication and (2) Communication and Relationships—rather than trying to represent the breadth of the discipline. Second, we continue to make special efforts to enhance our visibility in the discipline. For example, our department successfully applied to co-host (with English) the 2012 Rhetoric Society of America Research Symposium. This also is one of the ways we are working to foster and encourage interdisciplinary connections. We also continue to work on updating and improving our department website and have created a department Facebook site. Third, we more tightly focused the graduate program to emphasize depth more so than breadth with a curricular change—replacing one required introduction to research methods course requirement with a requirement to instead take a specialized research methods course. Fourth, the department has attempted to streamline our resources by increasing some undergraduate class sizes and reinvesting the “surplus” in graduate education. We will continue to monitor the quality of applicants to the graduate program, time-to-degree, and placement to see whether these actions are improving our program.

**Overall Evaluation**
The external review praised the department’s commitment to teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as the cultural of research and collegiality that we cultivate among faculty and graduate students. We equip undergraduate and graduate students to serve as effective citizen-advocates in a range of contexts: political, organizational, intercultural, interpersonal, academic, legal, and more. A sign of the wide recognition of the importance of effective, ethical communication skills is the number of undergraduate and graduate students the department serves—both our own majors as well as other students throughout the College and KU.