**Annual Assessment Report for 2021-2022 AY**

Reports completed on assessment activities carried out during the 2021-2022 AY will be due September 30th 2022 and must be e-mailed to the Director of Assessment, Dr. Douglas Fraleigh (douglasf@csufresno.edu).

Provide detailed responses for each of the following questions within this word document. Please do NOT insert an index or add formatting. For purposes of this report, you should only report on two or three student learning outcomes (department’s choice) even if your external accreditor requires you to evaluate four or more outcomes each year. Also be sure to explain or omit specialized or discipline-specific terms.

Department/Program: Communication Degree: BA

Assessment Coordinator: Dr. Douglas Fraleigh

1. Please list the learning outcomes you assessed this year.

The department is going through the process of developing new learning outcomes in the aftermath of program review. The faculty discussed numerous topics to be included in the revised curriculum. A survey of faculty members ranked social justice and critical thinking as the top two areas for our students. Consequently, this assessment report focuses on student proficiency in the relationship of Communication principles to social justice issues and the use of critical thinking to analyze Communication phenomena. The following learning outcomes were assessed:

1. Students will be able to analyze the relationship between Communication principles and social justice issues.

2. Students will be able to use critical thinking to analyze Communication phenomena.

1. What assignment or survey did you use to assess the outcomes and what method (criteria or rubric) did you use to evaluate the assignment? **Please describe the assignment and the criteria or rubric used to evaluate the assignment in detail and, if possible, include copies of the assignment and criteria/rubric at the end of this report.**

**A. Social Justice**

For social justice, an exam question in Communication 149 was the measure. The question was:

Provide one example of how freedom of speech has been used to advance social justice. It can come from any case that was discussed in the textbook or in class. There is no single definition of social justice, but one workable definition is that “all people have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights and a fair allocation of societal resources.” [Lee, C.C. (2007). Social justice: A moral imperative for counselors (ACAPCD-07). Alexandria VA: American Counseling Association.] Answer the following questions:

A. What is the social justice issue?

B. How did Freedom of Speech cases we studied help or limit the ability of advocates to get out their message?

C. How could Freedom of Speech law be changed to increase the ability of advocates to get their message out to the public and/or political leaders?

The student work was evaluated based on three criteria related to the nexus between Freedom of Speech and social justice (the rubric is included in an appendix):

A. Identification of a social justice issue that relates to Freedom of Speech.

B. Application of Freedom of Speech cases to determine their effect on social justice advocacy.

C. Analysis of how Freedom of Speech case law could be changed to facilitate social justice advocacy.

**B. Critical Thinking**

For critical thinking, an exam question in Communication 149 was the measure. The question was based on the *Black Lives Matter v. Trump* case which had been studied in class. The issue concerned the law enforcement agencies’ use of force against Black Lives Matter protesters on July 1, 2020 at Lafayette Square in Washington D.C.

Students were assigned a three-part question:

A. Discuss arguments the protesters could use to make the case that their Freedom of Speech was violated and arguments the government could make to defend their use of force.

B. Create a rule that could be used to decide Freedom of Speech cases when excessive force is claimed and explain the rationale for the rule.

C. Apply the rule to resolve the *Black Lives Matter v. Trump* case.

The student work was evaluated based on four dimensions of critical thinking (the rubric is included in the appendix):

A. Identify multiple perspectives on an issue.

B. Develop well-reasoned criteria to resolve an issue.

C. Apply the criteria to resolve the issue.

D. Identify the elements of an argument.

1. What did you learn from your analysis of the data? Please include sample size (how many students were evaluated) and indicate how many students (number or percentage instead of a median or mean) were designated as proficient. Also indicate your benchmark (e.g. 80% of students will be designated as proficient or higher) and indicate the number of students who met that benchmark.

The benchmark is that at least 80% of the students will earn a rating of proficient or higher. On the social justice assessment, nine of eleven students earned a rating of proficient or higher (81.8%). On the critical thinking assessment, twenty-two of twenty-seven students earned a rating of proficient or higher (81.5%). Therefore, the benchmark was met.

**Social Justice Assessment**

For the social justice assessment, students received a rating of 3 (advanced), 2 (proficient) or 1 (developing) on each of the areas of evaluation. Students also received an aggregate rating based on their average score across the three areas of evaluation.

For the overall rating, students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 3
* Proficient 6
* Developing 2

The first area of evaluation was identifying a social justice issue that was related to Freedom of Speech. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 5
* Proficient 6

Students did very well in this area of evaluation. They identified a number of important social justice issues related to freedom of speech. Many were contemporary issues such as the #metoo movement, Black Lives Matter, climate justice, and academic freedom. Other students identified historical issues, including Stonewall, antiwar protest, and suppression of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The second area of evaluation was analyzing Freedom of Speech judicial opinions to determine their effect on social justice advocacy. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 4
* Proficient 5
* Developing 2

The papers rated advanced and proficient identified relevant Freedom of Speech cases and precedents and explained how they facilitated or inhibited freedom of expression on the issue. Papers that were not rated proficient did not identify any cases that related to the social justice issue selected.

The third area of evaluation was analyzing how Freedom of Speech case law could be changed to facilitate social justice advocacy. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 5
* Proficient 6

Students did very well on this evaluation. They offered a number of relevant changes, including expanding access to elected officials, only regulating speech when harm is demonstrated (rather than allowing regulation based on hypothetical situations), encouraging social media sites to control false information, and allowing the teaching of topics such as Critical Race Theory and age-appropriate information with respect to LGBTQ+ persons.

**Critical Thinking Assessment**

For the critical thinking assessment, students received a score of 4 (advanced), 3 (proficient), 2 (developing), or 1 (beginning). Students also received an aggregate rating based on their average score across the four areas of evaluation.

For the overall rating, students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 13
* Proficient 9
* Developing 5

The first area of evaluation was identifying arguments on both the communicators and the government’s side of the issue. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 14
* Proficient 8
* Developing 5

Most of the students were able to present plausible arguments that supported the communicators and the government’s side of the issue. Papers rated developing focused more on repeating the prompt or describing the protest scenario, rather than presenting arguments. If arguments were presented, they were very brief or incomplete.

The second area of evaluation was developing and justifying a Freedom of Speech rule that could be used to resolve the case. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 11
* Proficient 10
* Developing 6

Papers rated advanced included both a viable rule for resolving the issue and supporting analysis of why the rule was warranted. Students brought in a number of sound rationales for their rules, including proportionality, ethics, principles underlying Freedom of Speech, or analysis from other cases that had been studied. Papers rated proficient, typically presented a viable rule but needed to expand on the rationale for their rule. Papers rated developing needed to explain their rule more precisely or provide additional analysis about how their rule would work. In some cases, the rule was implicit in the answer, but not clearly articulated.

The third area of evaluation was applying the rule to the *Black Lives Matter v Trump* scenario. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 19
* Proficient 6
* Developing 2

Students did very well in this area of evaluation. Advanced responses were able to use their rule to render a decision in the case. Their decisions were warranted by the rule they established and they did an excellent job applying the rule they had crafted to the facts of the case. Proficient papers were able to apply their rule to reach a plausible decision, but could have provided a more extended analysis of their reasoning. The developing papers presented a conclusion without explaining how they were using their rule to decide the case.

The fourth area of evaluation was recognizing elements of an argument and advancing complete arguments. Students achieved the following results:

* Advanced 14
* Proficient 10
* Developing 3

Students who earned a rating of advanced were able to present clearly articulated claims and offer sound reasoning and evidence to support the claims. Proficient papers generally expressed claims clearly, but provided fewer facts or lines of analysis to support the claims. Papers rated developing tended not to make explicit claims and supporting reasons a central part of their analysis. They listed a number of ideas without building them into an argument.

1. What changes, if any, do you recommend based on the assessment data?

Generally, students did well on both of the measures used in this assessment. As the department moves forward to finalize its revised learning outcomes and curriculum, this assessment report provides some ideas for faculty to consider.

Although social justice is represented in the course content of a significant number of department classes, it has not been an explicit learning outcome. Although most students had a sound intuitive understanding of the definition of social justice issues, it will be important for faculty who are incorporating this learning outcome to provide students with their definition of social justice and offer examples. It will also be important for faculty to explain the connection of their course content with social justice and incorporate this connection into classroom teaching and coursework.

Critical thinking is a priority of the department faculty and an important skill for students to practice, reinforce, and master. This assessment indicated that a significant number of students in this class were able to apply critical thinking skills to analyze issues. However, a smaller percentage of students found this to be more of a challenge. One factor to consider is that many students take their Critical Thinking GE course early in their academic career and may not get a chance to practice or improve on these skills in subsequent coursework. In courses where critical thinking is indicated on the curriculum map, it could be useful to review these concepts early in the semester and give students a chance to practice their skills on low stakes assignments before they are asked to implement them on major assignments.

1. If you recommended any changes in your response to Question 4 in your 2020-21 assessment report, what progress have you made in implementing these changes? If you did not recommend making any changes in last year’s report please write N/A as your answer to this question.

In AY 2020-21, the department assessed Communication Criticism. The benchmark was met for that assessment. The report noted that there are multiple methods for criticism taught in different sections of this class and recommended that the next assessment of this concept include sections where other methods of criticism are taught. This is a good point and it should be employed the next time criticism comes up in the assessment rotation.

1. What assessment activities will you be conducting during AY 2022-23?

When the department completes its curriculum revisions and accompanying revised SOAP, there will be some revised learning outcomes and a new rotation of assessment activities. The activities selected for AY 2022-23 will be assessed.

NOTE: For the AY 2021-22 Report, due September 30, 2022, there is no Question 7 pertaining to program review. For future Department/Program Annual Assessment Reports, there will be a question about how your Department/Program has planned to incorporate Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion into your assessment practices. We will discuss JEDI at assessment workshops in fall 2022 and resources will be available in the Department Coordinators Google Drive.

**APPENDIX**



