

February 23, 2010

To: Senate Steering

From: Senate Planning and Review Committee
Frances Jackson, Chair

Re: MA in Communication

The Senate Planning & Review Committee (SPRC) received the proposal to initiate a M.A. in Communication from Senate Steering. This is Senate Planning's report.

Summary

The Department of Communication and Journalism is proposing a new M.A. degree in Communication. This degree will have three areas of concentration: Critical Cultural Communication Studies; Interpersonal Communication; and Media Studies. This degree requires 36 graduate credits for completion. All students will take two core courses, COM 500 and COM 503, which will provide an introduction to the field of communication as well as a philosophical grounding in the discipline. Students will also be required to select a research methods course (quantitative or qualitative research methods) and in addition to the courses required in the area of concentration, two electives, one each from the non-selected concentration area are required. Students have three terminal options: comprehensive examination; creative project; or a Thesis.

Strengths

The program narrative identifies the congruence of this proposal with the goals and mission of Oakland University. It is anticipated that this program will attract a substantial number of students as the undergraduate program in Communication is one of the largest majors in the College of Arts and Sciences. This program promotes graduate education and scholarship, with graduates having the foundation for doctoral study.

Another strength of this program is the unique concentration in Critical Cultural Communication Studies. No other Communication program in the state of Michigan provides this cultural focus. The proposal lists five other Communication programs at Michigan universities. The thirty-six credit hours required by this program are fairly consistent with the credits required by other universities for this degree. The program narrative also cites a strength related to the philosophy of scholarship that will be offered with this program as a unique central organizing principle not duplicated by any other institutions in Michigan.

The program anticipates having 25 students in the initial class, eventually growing to 55 students by 2015. It is projected that half of the students will attend full-time and half will attend part-time. One additional faculty member is requested in year two and a second faculty member is requested for year four. The proposal has carefully considered the overall workload impact of adding this new degree and discusses how this will be handled in the proposal. Some overload pay is requested as well as additional compensation for the Program Director.

Weaknesses/Concerns

None noted

Discussion

In its deliberations, SPRC believed this is a strong proposal, that it meets an unmet programmatic need and that the proposal is well written. There is strong support for this degree.