

*Advancing Excellence:  
Toward a Second Century of Achievement*

**The Strategic Plan of the Department of Communication  
University of Maryland**

**Endorsed by the Department of Communication Chair and Departmental  
Assembly**

**May 3, 2002**

**(Minor revisions approved October 4, 2002)**

Review of the Strategic Plan  
October 1, 2004

This report reflects the review of the department's strategic plan, which primarily took place over the 2003-2004 academic year. The plan was reviewed by each relevant departmental committee and departmental teaching and research area. This report was endorsed by the Department of Communication Chair and Departmental Assembly on October 1, 2004.

*The Department's Teaching and Research Foci*

**Intercultural Communication**

Critical priorities for this area of research are the development of a full-fledged curriculum at the graduate and undergraduate levels and the acquisition of additional faculty members. To promote the area, showcase events need to be created highlighting the quality of its faculty and bringing attention to the special aspects of the Maryland intercultural program, such as its emphasis on theory and quantitative methods. Such attention will attract others to our program, both as students and as faculty members.

The revised benchmark programs for this area are:

- ▶ Arizona State University
- ▶ Michigan State University
- ▶ Pennsylvania State University
- ▶ University of New Mexico.

### **Persuasion and Social Influence**

This area of research has had recent success in attracting a significant number of graduate applicants. In addition, there have been changes in the graduate program in this area, expanding the area's course offerings. The most dramatic change, however, has been a loss of three junior faculty. Despite an excellent junior faculty hire in the area, the area needs additional graduate faculty members to serve as mentors and increase the area's visibility.

The area's revised benchmark programs are:

- ▶ Arizona State University
- ▶ Michigan State University
- ▶ Pennsylvania State University
- ▶ Purdue University
- ▶ University of Oklahoma
- ▶ University of Pennsylvania
- ▶ University of Texas at Austin.

### **Public Relations**

The public relations program continues to enjoy recognition as the top-ranked public relations program in the field. There will be a loss of two senior faculty members in 2005, in part compensated for by the hiring of an outstanding senior scholar. To continue to maintain its reputation, it is recommended that the department strengthen its Public Relations Student Society of America chapter and hire additional faculty in this area. One junior faculty member was lost in 2003.

The revised benchmark programs in this area are:

- ▶ Syracuse University
- ▶ University of Florida
- ▶ University of Georgia.

### **Rhetoric and Political Culture**

The department has been successful in organizing and hosting the Ninth Biennial Public Address Conference. In addition, there has been an expansion and refinement of courses in this area, and the department has acquired and supported the annual *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*. The department reaffirms the critical need to hire a faculty member with a specialty in underrepresented voices in rhetoric and political culture. The hiring of an established, recognized, distinguished scholar in the area would clearly move this area to the top ten, and is recommended. To continue to enhance the national reputation of this area and to increase the possibility of hiring one or more minority faculty members, it is recommended that a visiting scholar program for this area be created.

The revised benchmark programs in this area are:

- ▶ Northwestern University
- ▶ Pennsylvania State University
- ▶ University of Georgia
- ▶ University of Minnesota
- ▶ University of Wisconsin.

### *The Department's Centers*

#### **Center for Political Communication and Civic Leadership**

From its inception the Center for Political Communication and Civic Leadership has created important events benefitting both the on-campus and off-campus communities, and these activities have not gone unnoticed: Last academic year the Center received a Special Recognition Award for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching from the campus's Center for Teaching Excellence. The department supports the center director's continuing efforts to seek external grant funding, a necessary activity as university budgets become tighter and the Center takes on more outreach and research activities.

#### **Center for Risk Communication Research**

The Center for Risk Communication Research was established at a time when this area of research had become critical to meeting national needs. In its first year the Center attracted national attention through its reception at the Society for Risk Analysis. It has attracted on-campus attention with its first colloquium speaker. Greater faculty involvement in the Center and in its research activities is necessary to continue its success in receiving internal and external grant funding. New faculty hires are likely to supplement the Center's work in the health communication and/or risk communication areas.

### *The Department's Graduate Program*

The department has had success on a number of graduate program objectives, which is indicative of the increasing overall success of the graduate program.

The department reaffirms its objective of increasing the admission of historically under-represented groups. The department directs the Graduate Studies Committee to consider ways to meet this objective.

Improving the placement of graduate students, especially in research extensive doctoral institutions, remains a top priority. To better achieve this goal, the Graduate Studies Committee is directed to consider the strategies and tactics that would meet this objective, such as increasing the rate of submission of manuscripts and conference papers and the rate of publication by our graduate students. The Committee should recommend, where appropriate, departmental action to implement those strategies and tactics deemed likely to be effective toward meeting this objective.

### *The Department's Undergraduate Program*

The undergraduate program has improved substantially with the implementation of the limited enrollment program: The number of undergraduate majors has been reduced, and their academic quality has improved. To continue the development of a premier undergraduate program, it is recommended that class enrollment in 300- and 400-level courses be reduced from its current modal level of 40 to 35. The department is aware that implementing this recommendation may conflict with other departmental constraints currently in effect.

Because strategies to manage the number of students in our major have been implemented and have been effective, the department should be able to focus more on the quality of the undergraduate experience. In particular, the department needs to engage students more fully in the intellectual life of the department and discipline. The Undergraduate Studies Committee is directed to create policies, procedures and activities to meet this objective, such as (a) expanding the departmental honors program, (b) increasing the number of undergraduate majors who participate in undergraduate honors conferences and the campus's Undergraduate Research Day, (c) increasing the number of undergraduate majors nominated for scholarships and awards, and (d) developing career placement services for our students.

The plan in progress to establish a state-of-the-art, fully equipped departmental media center should greatly enhance the undergraduate experience.

### ***The Department's General Health and Administration***

In the last year the department has acquired additional space: three rooms in Woods Hall and one room in the Skinner Building. However, in the absence of a new building, the department requires many more offices and public spaces for its faculty, staff and students. It is noted that the draft of the expected-to-be-approved agreement establishing a Communication program at the Universities at Shady Grove states:

The Office of Academic Affairs will work with the Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and the Chair of the Department of Communication in a good faith effort to improve the current space allocation for the Department of Communication at the College Park campus. In particular the Department of Communication will receive special consideration for any space that might become available within the Skinner Building.

It is hoped that the above statement, when implemented, will help ameliorate the department's space problems.

As recommended in the strategic plan, the Chair, with the concurrence of the Faculty Advisory Committee, will be recommending a policy that encourages grant applications by tenured faculty analogous to the policy that currently exists for the untenured tenure-track faculty.

The service burdens on untenured tenure-track faculty have been somewhat reduced, as recommended in the strategic plan.

Expanding the diversity of the faculty and graduate students is central to the department's mission, and requires a change of strategy if the department is to be successful in this regard. The Faculty Advisory Committee is directed to consider strategies, such as targeted faculty searches and greater consideration and cultivation of our own undergraduate students for our graduate program, to help achieve this goal.