Reviewer Comments – Cat I MA/MS Communications

Cass Dykeman and I have reviewed the Category I proposal for the MA/MS in Communications and believe that additional information about the proposal is needed to inform the deliberations and decision by the council.

- We were not able to find the responses to CLA Liaison.

- We were confused by a statement at the bottom of page two of the English Liaison document. The liaison letter indicates that when graduate students name Speech Communication as both their first and second areas, they complete their masters’ work using only 9 credits outside the department. Yet page 12 of the proposal states that these students earn 36 of their 48 credits from the Communications department. Please explain the disparity, and how this meets the MAIS requirement of 15 credits from each of the three areas.

- We were not able to find a clear distinction between the MA and the MS degree requirements within the proposal.

- The Category 1 lists Fall 2011 as the implementation date. (pg 4, item 1c)

- We are concerned with the extensive use of slash courses in the proposal. If the thesis credits are removed from the equation, at least 41% of the course work is slash courses. Since the proposal is for building an MA/MS degree with a projection of 20 students, why not develop the proposal with more stand-alone graduate coursework? What is driving the choice of using slash courses in the curriculum?

- Related to the point above, we note that the research methods courses are slash courses. We believe it may be more appropriate to use stand-alone graduate coursework for research methods.

- Given the large percentage of slash courses, would this degree program really be an option for OSU Communication undergraduates?

- Pg 9, item 3d – Learning outcomes. The third learning outcome suggests the thesis will integrate the minor area. However, the curriculum proposed does not specify the requirement for a minor area. Please explain.

- The proposal cites that the GRE will be required for admission, but does not specify minimum scores. How will the results of the GRE be used in the selection decisions? (pg 10)

- On page 11 (item 6aiii), the proposal seems to justify the need for this degree program because GTAs are needed to teach lower-division Communication classes. From the university perspective, and giving consideration to the lost revenue associated with tuition remission, it would seem that the use of professional faculty to deliver classes would be more cost effective. The GTA positions should be used to attract highly qualified candidates for the degree program.
• Is data available on the current enrollments in the UO and PSU Master in Communication degree programs?

• Pg 12, item 6b – Needs for employment:
  
  o What are the specific labor market projections (Oregon and US) for master's graduates from CIP # 09.0101?
  
  o To the point that many of the MA/MS students will come from the MAIS program:
    
    ▪ Can placement results from past MAIS-dual-communication-area graduates be provided? The proposal makes very general statements regarding demand for graduates from this degree program. It would seem that the placement results of past graduates could be used to demonstrate demand and the types of career opportunities available.
    
    ▪ Is there any data to suggest the number of students who are currently pursuing the MAIS with a concentration in Communication that would opt to switch to a Communication master's degree?
    
    ▪ Is there data on the number of alumni from the MAIS with a dual concentration in Communication that would have instead opted for a Master in Communication?

• Pg 14, Item 8. Assessment. The proposal indicates that assessment will be based on individual courses and the evaluation of the thesis. If so, then the learning outcomes need to be mapped to the specific courses in which they are evaluated and assessed. Given the current emphasis within the university on assessment, a more thoughtful program for assessment should be included in the program.

• The proposed budget does not seem to reflect the diversion of faculty time for teaching additional stand-alone graduate classes and guiding up to 32 thesis projects. If it is budget neutral with no additional faculty resources, then what impact would this degree program have on the quality of the current undergraduate program?