INSTITUTION: University of Southern Indiana
COLLEGE: Liberal Arts
DEPARTMENT: Communications
DEGREE PROGRAM TITLE: Master of Arts in Communication

FORM OF RECOGNITION TO BE AWARDED/DEGREE CODE: Master of Arts
SUGGESTED CIP CODE: 09.0199
LOCATION OF PROGRAM/CAMPUS CODE: Evansville
PROJECTED DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION: Fall Semester, 2010

DATE PROPOSAL WAS APPROVED BY INSTITUTIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES: May 9, 2009

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZING INSTITUTIONAL OFFICER

DATE

DATE RECEIVED BY COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

COMMISSION ACTION DATE
ABSTRACT
Master of Arts in Communication
To be offered on-campus and via hybrid and distance education
by the University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, Indiana

Objectives:
The purposes of the proposed Master of Arts in Communication are: 1) to offer a program full-time students can complete in two years of study; 2) to offer a program part-time students can complete in three to four years of study; 3) to develop and deliver a program flexible enough to serve practitioners and aspiring academics alike; 4) to produce graduates who are skilled and logical problem solvers who can apply those skills to real situations; and 5) to equip students with analytical and practical tools that foster the ability to lead.

The program will provide students with an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving in the field of communication. Our students can expect to examine a variety of problems through the lens of communication in areas as diverse as technological change, international relations, conflict and negotiation, organizational functioning, personal relationships, regional economic development, corporate responsibility, community outreach, and consensus and coalition building. The Department of Communications deliberately adopted pedagogical techniques, such as a case study approach, that develop our students’ problem solving abilities and critical thinking skills. Our hands-on capstone experience will connect our students’ learning experience with real-life problems and will be a service to the community. For students who want to pursue advanced graduate studies, a thesis option will be offered allowing them to gain additional experience in conducting academic research.

Students who complete the Master of Arts in Communication will be able to apply their increased knowledge of communication processes, contexts, theories, and research methodologies to further their career and educational goals.

Clientele to be Served:
The Master of Arts in Communication program will appeal to students who wish to further their education beyond the Master of Arts and to students who are seeking the Master of Arts as a terminal degree to achieve organizational advancement. Students who wish to pursue a doctorate following the completion of the program will be equipped with theoretical and methodological knowledge expected of a rigorous Master of Arts in Communication program. Students who will pursue the Master of Arts in Communication for organizational advancement will receive a valuable education about conducting research ethically and applying data in order to solve practical organizational problems.

Curriculum:
A Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited institution will be required for all applicants applying to the Master of Arts in Communication program. Although applicants do not need to hold an undergraduate degree in an area of communication, preference will be given to applicants with an educational background in communication or other social sciences disciplines.

The proposed Master of Arts in Communication program is comprised of 36 semester hours: 9 required hours in theory/methodology; 21 elective hours in content courses; and 6 hours of directed research with thesis and capstone project options. Based on the projected course rotation, full-time students will complete the program in two years.

The proposed program, by taking an integrative approach, will provide students with a more well-rounded education in that students will learn not only about human communication within organizations and relationships, but also mass communications processes such as journalistic writing and advertising strategies.

Employment Possibilities:
Individuals earning a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Southern Indiana can pursue careers in any number of fields, including but not limited to: advertising/public relations management; communications directing in healthcare and business organizations; human resources; media management; nonprofit organization directing; communication training and development; and communication consulting.
Program Description

1. Proposed Program and Its Objectives

The purposes of the proposed Master of Arts in Communication are: 1) to offer a program that full-time students can complete in two years of study; 2) to offer a program part-time students can complete in three to four years of study; 3) to develop and deliver a program flexible enough to serve practitioners and aspiring academics alike; 4) to produce graduates who are skilled and logical problem solvers who can apply those skills to real situations; and 5) to equip students with analytical and practical tools that foster the ability to lead.

Programmatic objectives of the Master of Arts in Communication are: 1) to develop an academically rigorous graduate program; 2) to develop and deliver an integrated communication program incorporating all the academic and professional areas of the department; 3) to produce graduates who appreciate a needs-based approach to research and community involvement; 4) to develop and deliver a program that allows students to individualize their program; 5) to create an attractive program that will draw students from the region and beyond; and 6) to offer a program that is fully operational from its onset.

The proposed Master of Arts in Communication program at the University of Southern Indiana is a comprehensive and integrated curriculum that bridges communication studies and mass communication areas and focuses on a strategic and critical approach to the discipline. Exposure to the broad spectrum of communication and mass media studies prepares students, who are primarily working professionals, for advancement in a variety of communication and media professions and services.

The proposed program provides students with an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving in the field of communication. Students can expect to examine a variety of problems through the lens of communication in areas as diverse as technological change, international relations, conflict and negotiation, organizational functioning, personal relationships, regional economic development, corporate responsibility, community outreach, and consensus and coalition building. The Department of Communications deliberately adopted pedagogical techniques, such as a case study approach, that develop students’ problem solving abilities and critical thinking skills. The hands-on capstone experience will connect students’ learning experience with real-life problems and will be a service to the community. For students who want to pursue advanced graduate studies, a thesis option will allow them to gain experience in academic research.

Students who complete the Master of Arts in Communication will be able to apply their increased knowledge of communication processes, contexts, theories, and research methodologies to further their career and educational goals.

2. Admission Requirements, Anticipated Student Clientele, and Student Financial Support

a. Admission Requirements. Unconditional admission into the Master of Arts in Communication program will be contingent on the following factors:
1. A GAP score of 3,000 or higher. The GAP score reflects an individual’s undergraduate grade point average multiplied by the quantitative and verbal components of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). For instance, if an individual holds a 3.0 undergraduate GPA and scores a combined 1,000 on his/her verbal and quantitative components of the GRE, he/she would satisfy the GAP criteria for unconditional admittance.

2. A well-written letter of intent. The letter of intent will serve as the student’s application letter and writing sample. In this writing sample, the admissions committee will evaluate the student’s potential and ability for graduate-level writing.

3. Three positive professional letters of recommendation.

Applicants not meeting the criteria for unconditional admittance may be conditionally admitted if space is available. These applicants will receive preference on the basis of grade point average and the quality of the letter of intent.

Conditionally admitted individuals can achieve unconditional status following twelve hours of coursework if they hold a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. All students admitted to the program failing to attain a graduate 3.0 GPA after twelve credit hours will be academically dismissed from the program.

Students will be admitted to the Master of Arts in Communication program for both fall and spring semesters. The application deadline for fall admission will be April 15 of every year; and the application deadline for spring admission will be November 1 of every year.

b. Prerequisite Coursework or Degrees. The Master of Arts in Communication requires that applicants hold a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree from an accredited institution. Although applicants do not need to hold an undergraduate degree in an area of communication, preference will be given to applicants with an educational background in communication or other social sciences disciplines.

c. Student Clientele. Student enrollment impacts are affected by three factors: need, regional competition, and student goals.

Based on the work conducted by the University’s 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development, it is clear that a need exists for a Master of Arts in Communication program to be delivered by the Department of Communications. In the Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development, the polled regional employers indicated that a masters degree in communication was the second highest need for the University of Southern Indiana in terms of graduate education. Similarly, needs assessment measures administered by the Department of Communications in 1990-1991 and 2005-2006 reinforced the need for a comprehensive Master of Arts in Communication program.
Graduate programs in communication studies and/or mass communication exist at the following institutions: Indiana State University, Ball State University, Indiana University, Purdue University, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and -Edwardsville campuses, Western Kentucky University, Murray State University, University of Louisville, Northern Kentucky University, Austin Peay State University, and Illinois State University. These institutions, however, are more than two hours away from Evansville and will not impact student enrollment in the proposed program because of the geographic distance from Evansville, the population of the greater Evansville area, and the predicted draw of an integrated and comprehensive graduate program at the University of Southern Indiana. Thus, regional competition from other Master of Arts/Ph.D. programs will not inhibit the overall success of the program.

Because of the distinctive blend of theoretical/methodological training and practical application of evidence and knowledge of the proposed program, it will appeal to students seeking the Master of Arts in Communication for career advancement as well as to those using the Master of Arts in Communication as a “stepping stone” to further their education beyond a masters degree. Students pursuing the Master of Arts in Communication for organizational advancement will receive a valuable education about conducting research ethically and applying data in order to solve practical organizational problems; whereas, students who wish to pursue a doctorate degree after completing the program will be equipped with theoretical and methodological knowledge expected of a rigorous Master of Arts in Communication program.

d. **Enrollment Restrictions.** The Master of Arts in Communication will cap annual enrollment at 30. This enrollment cap, based on the current faculty resources available and the University’s commitment to a high-level of quality graduate education, will allow for more teacher-student collaboration as needed in graduate education. Moreover, because this proposed program has a graduate capstone/thesis requirement, faculty will serve on and chair student committees.

e. **Student Financial Support.** Students will be eligible to apply for the five annual Jennings and Josephine Carter graduate scholarships funded by the University of Southern Indiana Foundation or for any of the various graduate assistantships offered across the University.

3. **Proposed Curriculum**

a. **Requirements.** The proposed Master of Arts in Communication will be a 36-hour program, six hours of which will be composed of an advised thesis or capstone option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Graduate Communication Courses</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective Graduate Communication Courses</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/Capstone Option</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5
The descriptions for these courses are presented below. Courses in italics are newly developed courses for the Master of Arts in Communication program.

**COMM 502: Gender, Communication, and Culture, 3 hours**
(Currently offered as CMST 502)
Provides cognitive and experiential approaches to gender and communication. Students will read and discuss a number of theoretical principles, then explore how those principles “transfer” to real world contexts. This class does not only approach gender from a narrow perspective that entails gender differences, but also examines gender identity and the relationship gender has to our institutions—media, business & industry, government agencies, and healthcare and educational organizations.

**COMM 581: Public Affairs Reporting, 3 hours**
(Currently offered as JRN 581)
Focuses on advanced-level reporting of local and state government, judicial, and legislative processes. Students will be expected to apply ethical journalistic principles in covering a wide range of governmental affairs.

**COMM 601: Foundations of Communication Theory, 3 hours**
Intensive study of the theoretical paradigms and contemporary theories of current communication studies and mass communication research.

**COMM 602: Qualitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours**
Theories and applications of interpretive and critical research methods for communication, including interview, focus group, diary, ethnographic, and rhetorical methodologies.

**COMM 603: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours**
Theories and applications of statistical research methods in communication, including survey design, basic statistical procedures, sampling, and reporting of data.

**COMM 611: Communication and Personal Relationships, 3 hours**
Current theories and contexts of communication in close personal and family relationships. Topics explored in this course are: how communication varies across different types of relationships; interpersonal and family communication processes (e.g., communication and family planning; stepfamily communication; communication and dating); and sites for relational conflict and resolution (e.g., issues of marital satisfaction; infidelity; partner abuse).

**COMM 612: Health Communication, 3 hours**
Integration of numerous theoretical and methodological perspectives on health communication in order to give students a broader scope of how health messages and health communication processes are enacted, mediated, conceptualized, and studied. Students will read and analyze how individuals and institutions communicate health messages interpersonally, organizationally, rhetorically, and through the mass media.
COMM 613: Political Communication, 3 hours
Incorporation of the creation, distribution, control, use, and effects of information as a political resource. Students will explore such topics as the role of journalists and news organizations in the political system, the development and effectiveness of communication strategies in political campaigns, communication patterns and issues in international relations, and the function of communication in the politics of modern societies. Special attention will be given to the relationship between political communication and civic discourse.

COMM 614: Interpersonal Communication in Organizations, 3 hours
(Currently offered as IM/PA 614)
Review of the research and applied approaches to organizational communication including an examination of organizational structures, human resources, and conflict and alleviation of typical interpersonal problems within organizations through communication. Specific topics explored in this course are: emotional labor, supervisor/employee relationships, workplace bullying, workplace cliques, and organizational consulting.

COMM 615: Communication and Culture, 3 hours
Examination of the role culture plays in interpersonal, social, organizational and media contexts. Students will learn how culture is constituted and reproduced through communication. Moreover, students will examine how communication can be a mechanism for cultural struggle, transformation, and unity.

COMM 616: Performance in Social Contexts, 3 hours
Investigation of the intersection of performance and community including the ways performance appears in our daily lives and the community, as well as the theoretical underpinnings of performance and community. One aspect of the course will investigate the role of performance in how communities define themselves, negotiate conflict, and present the community to others.

COMM 620: Special Topics: Organizational Communication, 3 hours
Practical and theoretical communication processes within the contemporary organization. Topics will rotate per offering. Anticipated topics that will be covered in this course are: organizational leadership; communication and workplace relationships; institutional advancement; and communication training and development; communication and organizational culture; multinational business communication; international communications; and nonprofit organizational communication.

COMM 621: Advanced Public Relations, 3 hours
Capstone seminar involving case studies and problems regarding the principles and application of effective two-way communications in a variety of situations affecting the practice of public relations. Emphasis on how contemporary organizations use public relations in everyday functioning and how public relations firms or departments deal with potential or actual crises within organizations.
COMM 622: Emerging Issues in Computer-mediated Communication, 3 hours
Case-based approach in which students learn to solve problems of media-related organizations as they adapt to changes in technologies and production. Topics deal with social-networking technologies, technological power structures inherent in organizations, blogging, electronic reporting, and technology as a mechanism for international organizational functioning.

COMM 630: Advanced Mass Communication Seminar, 3 hours
Study of a specialized topic within mass communication. Topics will vary on the basis of the instructor’s area of expertise and student demand.

COMM 690: Graduate Capstone Project in Communication, 6 hours
Requires students to collect data on an applied organizational and/or community-based issue. Students will collect and analyze their data in the same manner as they would if they were conducting thesis research; but, instead of composing an academically-oriented manuscript, the student will compose a document laying out the issue at hand, the evidence, the analysis of data, and the proposed data-based solution or outcome.

COMM 699: Masters Thesis in Communication, 6 hours
Students will conduct academically-oriented research in a chosen area of communication. This thesis option will enable students to grasp important theoretical, methodological, and content principles and concepts and to author a manuscript of convention and/or journal publication quality.
Master of Arts in Communication Check Sheet – 36 total hours

Required Coursework: 15 total hours

Methodology & Inquiry Requirement, 6 hours:
_____ COMM 602: Qualitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours
_____ COMM 603: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours

Theory Requirement, 3 hours:
_____ COMM 601: Foundations of Communication Theory, 3 hours

Thesis/Capstone Requirement (6 hours): Select only one.
_____ COMM 690: Graduate Capstone Project in Communication, 6 hours
_____ COMM 699: Masters Thesis in Communication, 6 hours

Elective Coursework: 21 total hours
_____ COMM 502: Gender, Communication, and Culture, 3 hours
_____ COMM 581: Public Affairs Reporting, 3 hours
_____ COMM 611: Communication and Personal Relationships, 3 hours
_____ COMM 612: Health Communication, 3 hours
_____ COMM 613: Political Communication, 3 hours
_____ COMM 614: Interpersonal Communication in Organizations, 3 hours
_____ COMM 615: Communication and Culture, 3 hours
_____ COMM 616: Performance in Social Contexts, 3 hours
_____ COMM 620: Special Topics: Organizational Communication, 3 hours
_____ COMM 621: Advanced Public Relations, 3 hours
_____ COMM 622: Emerging Issues in Computer-mediated Communication, 3 hours
_____ COMM 630: Advanced Mass Communication Seminar, 3 hours
b. Sample Curriculum.

Sample Course Program for a Full-Time Student totaling 36 hours:

First Year
Fall Semester
COMM 602: Qualitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours
COMM 613: Political Communication, 3 hours
COMM 614: Interpersonal Communications in Organizations, 3 hours

Total – 9 hours

Spring Semester
COMM 603: Quantitative Research Methods in Communications, 3 hours
COMM 611: Communication and Personal Relationships, 3 hours
COMM 622: Emerging Issues in Computer-mediated Communication, 3 hours

Total – 9 hours

Second Year
Fall Semester
COMM 601: Foundations of Communication Theory, 3 hours
COMM 620: Special Topics: Organizational Communication, 3 hours
COMM 630: Advanced Mass Communication Seminar, 3 hours

Total – 9 hours

Spring Semester
COMM 612: Health Communication, 3 hours
COMM 690: Graduate Capstone Project in Communication or
COMM 699: Masters Thesis in Communication, 6 hours

Total – 9 hours

Note: This sample course program is reflective of the anticipated course offerings of the fall 2010-spring 2012 academic semesters excluding summer sessions. Students holding full-time status, 9 credit hours per semester, will be able to complete the Master of Arts in Communication program in four academic semesters. Beginning in the summer of 2011, the Master of Arts in Communication program will deliver two courses annually during the summer session.

c. Existing Courses. The Department of Communications currently has three graduate-level courses in the University course catalog which serve three established graduate programs. These courses are: CMST 502: Gender, Communication, and Culture; JRN 581: Public Affairs Reporting; and IM/PA 614: Interpersonal Communication in Organizations. CMST 502 and JRN 581 are both undergraduate/graduate split courses that serve the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program. IM/PA 614 is solely a graduate
level course that serves both the Master of Public Administration and the Master in Industrial Management programs. These three courses are delivered by faculty within the Department of Communications and taught based on the need of the aforementioned programs and the availability of the faculty members.

Although the prefixes of the courses mentioned above will change to COMM with the start of the Master of Arts in Communication program, the courses will continue to serve the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program, Master of Public Administration program, and the Master in Industrial Management program in addition to being elective courses for the Master of Arts in Communication program.

*Undergraduate/Graduate Courses:*
Both CMST 402/502: Gender, Communication, and Culture and JRN 481/581: Public Affairs Reporting are split-level courses that allow for undergraduate and graduate students to enroll in the same course section.

d. **New Courses.**

- COMM 601: Foundations of Communication Theory, 3 hours
- COMM 602: Qualitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 603: Quantitative Research Methods in Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 611: Communication and Personal Relationships, 3 hours
- COMM 612: Health Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 613: Political Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 615: Communication and Culture, 3 hours
- COMM 616: Performance in Social Contexts, 3 hours
- COMM 620: Special Topics: Organizational Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 621: Advanced Public Relations, 3 hours
- COMM 622: Emerging Issues in Computer-mediated Communication, 3 hours
- COMM 630: Advanced Mass Communication Seminar, 3 hours
- COMM 690: Graduate Capstone Project in Communication, 6 hours
- COMM 699: Masters Thesis in Communication, 6 hours

e. **Courses Delivered by Other Institutions.** All Master of Arts in Communication courses will be delivered by the University of Southern Indiana.

4. **Form of Recognition**

a. **Type of Degree.** Students who complete the program will be awarded the Master of Arts in Communication. There will be no distinctions in the name or prestige of the degree between those who select a graduate capstone project option and those who select a masters thesis option.

b. **Suggested CIP Code.** The suggested CIP code for the Master of Arts in Communication program at the University of Southern Indiana is 09.0199.
The diploma for all graduates of the Master of Arts in Communication should state: Master of Arts in Communication; University of Southern Indiana; Evansville, Indiana.

5. Program Faculty and Administrators

a. Existing Faculty and Administration. The table below lists the name, rank, area of specialization, appointment, and degree for the administrator and faculty directly involved in the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Area of Specialization</th>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. David Glassman</td>
<td>Professor Dean, College of Liberal Arts</td>
<td>Forensic Anthropology</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Anthropology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Wayne Rinks</td>
<td>Associate Professor Chair, Department of Communications</td>
<td>Radio/Television Management; Mass Communication Law Ethics</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Mass Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. David Black</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Radio/Television Production</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Mass Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Karen Bonnell</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Mass Media Management and History</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gael Cooper</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Public Relations; Political and Crisis Communication</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Wes Durham</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Interpersonal/Health Communication; Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>Full-time Tenure-track</td>
<td>Ph.D. Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Yoon-Joo Lee</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Advertising; Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>Full-time Tenure-track</td>
<td>Ph.D. Mass Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Leigh Anne Howard</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Performance; Gender/Political Communication; Qualitative Methods</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Chad Tew</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Emerging Issues in Computer-mediated Communication; Communication &amp; Culture; Theory and Methods</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bob West</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Communication Theory; Mass Communication Seminar</td>
<td>Full-time Tenured</td>
<td>Ph.D. Speech Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Zachary Henning</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Organizational Communication; Research Methods</td>
<td>Full-time Tenure-track</td>
<td>Ph.D. Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stephanie Young</td>
<td>Contract Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Gender Communication; Communication and Culture; Communication Theory</td>
<td>Full-time Three-year renewable</td>
<td>Ph.D. Communication Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All Department of Communications faculty holding the terminal degree will be expected to join the graduate faculty and teach within the Master of Arts in Communication program on a regular basis. While some individuals will be expected to teach one graduate course per academic year, all graduate faculty are expected to teach courses in the program. All graduate-level communication courses will be delivered by graduate faculty in the Department of Communications.

b. New Faculty Requirements. No new faculty positions are required to offer the program.

6. Learning Resources

a. Available Learning Resources. The learning resources available in the David L. Rice Library are currently sufficient for the Master of Arts in Communication program. Through the Communication and Mass Media Complete search engine, the program will have access to most full-text international, national, and regional peer-reviewed journals in communication studies and mass communication.

The laboratories in the Liberal Arts Center Room 1009 and the Scripps Howard Center for Media Studies possess adequate equipment and technology for students and faculty to engage in graduate-level learning.

b. Additional Needed Learning Resources. No additional learning resources are required at this time.

7. Other Program Strengths

a. Special Features. The many strengths of the proposed Master of Arts in Communication program define the program and its unique qualities:

1. A program offering a cohesive and integrated approach to the study of communication distinctive from other public universities in our geographic region. Unlike many of our comparison institutions, this proposed program blends areas of communication studies and mass communication into a cohesive program of study focusing on how communication concepts and theories can be practically applied to “real life.” As evidenced by the proposed curriculum, the courses comprising this program will allow students to learn readily transferable skills they can apply to their careers and/or educational pursuits beyond the Master of Arts in Communication. The proposed program’s integrative approach provides students with a more well-rounded education -- students will learn not only about human communication, but also mass communications processes.

2. A program allowing students to apply theory and research methodology to solving both academic and practical problems.

3. A program built on the foundations of four strong undergraduate programs within the department – communication studies, public relations and advertising, journalism, and radio and television.
4. A program able to serve both traditional and nontraditional graduate learners.

b. Collaborative Arrangements. No collaborative arrangements exist for the proposed program; however, community partnerships may be made for the COMM 698: Graduate Capstone Project in Communication course. All coursework will be available on the campus of the University of Southern Indiana or through hybrid and distance education formats.

Program Rationale

1. Institutional Factors

a. Compatibility with Institutional Mission. The first paragraphs of the University Mission are listed below:

American education assumes a link between the truth of an idea and the good it promotes for individuals and society. An educated person can be expected not only to be knowledgeable and more financially secure, but also a better citizen, among whose virtues are tolerance, judgment, and belief in freedom for self and others. These values develop in an atmosphere of open inquiry and pursuit of truth. Therefore, as the University of Southern Indiana seeks to support education, social and economic growth, and civic and cultural awareness in southwestern Indiana, it will be devoted primarily to preparing students to live wisely.

The University of Southern Indiana is a broad-based institution offering instruction, research, and service. A liberal arts and science curriculum serves as the foundation of knowledge for all programs and complements undergraduate programs leading to careers in professional and technical studies. As a public institution, the University of Southern Indiana counsels and assists business and industry and social, educational, governmental, and health agencies to higher levels of efficiency and improved services.

As the paragraphs above state, the University of Southern Indiana is committed to the social and economic development of the region in addition to preparing students to live wisely. The Master of Arts in Communication program fulfills this mission by training and fostering communication leaders. The Economic Development and Business Trends Subcommittee report found in the Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development identified communications as an area in which employers have requested the development of a graduate program. The proposed program, while helping graduate students conduct both basic and applied research, will meet the needs identified in the task force report and fulfill the needs based approach cited in the mission of the University.

b. Planning Process. The Department of Communications has been actively conceptualizing and planning for a graduate program since 1991. In 1991, Dr. Karen
Bonnell chaired a departmental committee focusing on the development of a graduate program in communication. During the 1991-1992 academic year, the committee conducted a needs assessment sampling current University of Southern Indiana undergraduates and selected Tri-state businesses to determine if a sufficient need existed in the region for a graduate program in communication. This initial needs assessment proved there was a regional need for a graduate program in communication focusing on applied communication studies, organizational communication, and public relations.

After receiving full Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications accreditation in 2004, the department viewed the development of a graduate program in communication as a necessary and logical next step. Dr. Tamara Wandel chaired the department’s Master of Arts in Communication Task Force from 2004-2006. During this time, the task force conducted a second needs assessment to determine the demand for a Master of Arts in Communication program. This study determined that a graduate program in communication was still needed in the region. The strongest interest was in graduate coursework in applied communication studies, organizational communication, and public relations.

In August 2007, the Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development was released. This report indicated a Master of Arts in Communication was the second most highly needed graduate degree in the University of Southern Indiana service region. Thus, department and administration support for the graduate program increased and program development began in earnest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>Master of Arts Task Force formed and initial needs assessment conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Second needs assessment conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2007</td>
<td>Graduate program in communication listed as second highest priority from regional employers in the Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2007</td>
<td>Implementation scheduled for fall, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2007 - April 2008</td>
<td>Development of curriculum, admission standards, and operational parameters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Initial approval from Academic Planning Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2008</td>
<td>Implementation rescheduled for fall, 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2009</td>
<td>Approval from Graduate Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2009</td>
<td>Final approval from Academic Planning Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
May 2009 Approval from Board of Trustees
October 2009 Proposal submitted to Commission for Higher Education
August 2010 First students admitted to the program

c. **Impact of the Proposed Program.** First, unlike many other terminal Master of Arts in Communication programs, the University of Southern Indiana’s proposed program will be an integrated, hybrid program incorporating both communication studies and mass communication courses. After much research, the Master of Arts in Communication Planning Task Force discovered that few publicly funded universities in the country have a graduate program that incorporates communication studies, public relations and advertising, journalism, and radio and television into a cohesive graduate program. The important element of this program is the problem-centered, strategic nature of the curriculum. In the proposed graduate program, students will learn about important intra-organizational human communication processes such as interpersonal and organizational communication and inter-organizational skills such as public relations and advertising campaigns that will enable students to succeed and progress in their work life.

Second, students who enroll in the proposed Master of Arts in Communication program will experience an education that instills rigorous theoretical and methodological training and practical applications of those skills to solve real world problems. Unlike other graduate programs that emphasize theory over application or vice versa, the proposed program will treat these educational endeavors as being inextricably linked. Consequently, the proposed program has been designed to educate our students on the most contemporary theories and research methods of the discipline and to have students use those intellectual tools as practical resources for interpreting, understanding, and predicting communication phenomena in any number of contexts.

Third, the Master of Arts in Communication program will draw students directly from the undergraduate programs within the Department of Communications. Currently the Department has 515 undergraduate majors in four programs of study which include communication studies, public relations and advertising, journalism, and radio and television. In addition, the Department of Communications has the largest number of undergraduate majors in the College of Liberal Arts.

Fourth, as evidenced by the *Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development*, there are also ample opportunities for the program to draw nontraditional graduate students from the greater Evansville area workforce. Because the proposed Master of Arts in Communication program is unique in respect to the department’s strategic and integrative approach to communication, it will market to a broader clientele and may recruit from around the country.

Finally, the proposed Master of Arts in Communication program will positively impact the Master of Public Administration program as at least two courses will be cross-listed with the Master of Public Administration program.
d. **Impact on Utilization of Existing Resources.** Adequate resources currently exist to service the Master of Arts in Communication program.

2. **Student Demand**

   a. **Derivation of Enrollment Projections.** Enrollment in the Master of Arts in Communication program is projected to come from two primary sources. The Department of Communications has 515 undergraduate majors many of which are expected to immediately enroll in the Master of Arts in Communication program. In addition, the program will be successful in enrolling traditional graduate students recently completing their bachelor degrees in social sciences areas due to the lack of graduate-level education within the social sciences major. Also, based on the *Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development*, a substantial number of students from the greater Evansville workforce will enroll in the program. The majority of these students will be adult learners pursuing the additional degree for organizational advancement in their chosen careers. It is expected that the program will draw rather evenly from recent graduates enrolling immediately in the program and adult learners already in the workforce.

   The Master of Arts in Communication program will cap annual enrollment at 30 students. The admissions standards for the program stated in this proposal for unconditional admittance are a 3,000 GAP score, a well written letter of intent, and three positive letters of recommendation. In the event that spaces are available in an academic year after the unconditional admits have been accepted, the graduate admission committee will evaluate the remaining applicants and may allow applicants to be admitted to the program conditionally.

   b. **Enrollment and Completion Data.** Projected enrollment and completion data based on the information and assumptions described in the preceding sections may be found in Table 1.

3. **Transferability**

   The proposed Master of Arts in Communication program will abide by the University’s policy of accepting up to 12 hours of graduate credit from other universities or within other programs at the University of Southern Indiana at the discretion of the program director.

4. **Access to Graduate and Professional Programs**

   The Master of Arts in Communication graduates will be competitive with graduates from other Master of Arts in Communication terminal programs when applying for admittance into doctoral programs. One of the positive features of the proposed program is that our graduates will have the opportunity to apply to doctoral programs in either communication studies or mass communication due to the integrative, strategic nature of the proposed Master of Arts in Communications program. Consequently, these students will have an advantage when applying to doctoral granting institutions because many terminal Master of Arts in Communication programs do not require nine hours of study in these areas.
5. Demand and Employment Factors

a. Geographic Region to be Served. The Master of Arts in Communication program will serve greater Evansville and the southwest Indiana, northwest Kentucky, and southeast Illinois Tri-state area. The 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development was established to determine what areas of programmatic development were needed at the University of Southern Indiana in order to better serve the economic, business, industrial, healthcare, and non-profit sectors of the University’s geographic service area. The charge of this task force was to gather, compile, and analyze data from regional employers as an instrument for guiding and catalyzing programmatic development and growth within the University and the region. Within the Report on the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development, the Subcommittee on Economic Development and Business Trends identified a graduate program in communication as the second most reported graduate education need of regional employers. According to the subcommittee’s report, 51 of the 204 employers contacted indicated that a graduate program in communication was needed. Moreover, these employers reported the most critical skills they sought in employees were:

1) written/verbal communication skills (91 percent);
2) teamwork/collaboration skills (83 percent);
3) analytical problem solving skills (83 percent);
4) critical thinking skills (74 percent);
5) organizational skills (73 percent); and
6) leadership skills (68 percent).

These desired skills reported by the regional employers point to a clear need for development of this graduate program in communication. The skills and abilities indicated in the subcommittee’s report represent the foundation for the Master of Arts in Communication program proposed in this document.

b. Review of Literature. The findings of the 2007 President’s Task Force on Workforce and Economic Development underscore the need for Region 13 to have access to graduate education within the communication field. These trends are not unique to the service area of the University of Southern Indiana, as employers nationwide are beginning to see the value of individuals with graduate degrees in the field of communication. According to the National Communication Association website, in 1970-71, 1,856 individuals graduated with masters degrees in communication. In 1999-2000, this number grew to 5,605 masters in communication graduates. In 1999-2000, this number grew to 5,605 masters in communication graduates. In 1999-2000, this number grew to 5,605 masters in communication graduates. In 1999-2000, this number grew to 5,605 masters in communication graduates.

Individuals possessing a graduate degree in communication can also expect to earn significantly higher incomes. The 2007 Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Graduates states individuals holding a masters degree in the field earned on average $38,000 per year nationally compared to $30,000 for those holding only a bachelor’s degree. Individuals with a masters degree can expect to earn on average twenty-one percent (21%) higher salaries than their counterparts holding only a bachelor’s degree.
c. **Potential Employers.** Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the communication field in general is its overall flexibility in terms of career opportunities. Individuals earning a Master of Arts in Communication program from the University of Southern Indiana can pursue careers in any number of fields, including but not limited to:

1) advertising/public relations management;
2) communications directing in healthcare and business organizations;
3) human resources;
4) media management;
5) nonprofit organization directing;
6) communication training and development; and
7) communication consulting.

Regional employers for the Master of Arts in Communication graduates include, but are not limited to: Deaconess Healthcare System; St. Mary’s Healthcare System; Vectren Energy Corporation; Berry Plastics; Old National Bank; Fifth Third Bank; Mead-Johnson Pharmaceuticals; Toyota; WFIE, local NBC affiliate; Evansville Courier and Press; WEHT, local ABC affiliate; WNIN, local Public Broadcast System affiliate; the South Central Radio Group; and Alcoa.

Attached to this proposal are several letters of support from regional employers including the South Central Radio Group, Vectren Corporation, WNIN, and Keller Crescent Advertising (Attachment 1).

d. **Independent Needs Analysis.** Not applicable.

e. **Program Experience.** The Department of Communications at the University of Southern Indiana has successfully operated four undergraduate programs during the past twenty years. In the University’s 2008 census, the department had 515 majors within four academic programs which include communication studies, public relations and advertising, journalism, and radio and television and had the most academic majors within the College of Liberal Arts. In addition, the Department of Communications is fully accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.

The Department of Communications is dedicated to excellent instruction and high academic standards in all of the undergraduate majors and will provide the same high quality, rigor, and ethical standards in the Master of Arts in Communication graduate program.

6. **Regional, State, and National Factors**

a. **Comparable Programs in the Region and State.** The following Indiana and regional institutions offer graduate programs in communication. All of the institutions below have Master of Arts in Communication programs. Indiana University, Purdue University, and Southern Illinois University-Carbondale have Ph.D. programs also.
Two significant differences exist between the terminal Master of Arts in Communication programs at other institutions and the University of Southern Indiana’s proposed Master of Arts in Communication program. The University of Southern Indiana’s proposed program will be an integrated, hybrid program incorporating both communication studies and mass communication courses in all areas. After much research, the Master of Arts in Communication Planning Task Force discovered that few publicly funded universities in the country have a graduate program that incorporates communication studies, public relations and advertising, journalism, and radio and television into a cohesive graduate program. The important element of this program is the problem-centered, strategic nature of the curriculum. In the proposed graduate program, students will learn about important intra-organizational human communication processes such as interpersonal and organizational communication and inter-organizational skills such as public relations and advertising campaigns that will enable students to succeed and progress in their work life.

In addition, students who enroll in the proposed Master of Arts in Communication program will experience an education that instills rigorous theoretical and methodological training and practical applications of those skills to solve real world problems. Unlike other graduate programs that emphasize theory over application or vice versa, the proposed program will treat these educational endeavors as being inextricably linked. Consequently, the proposed program has been designed to educate our students on the most contemporary theories and research methods of the discipline and to have students use those intellectual tools as practical resources for interpreting, understanding, and predicting communication phenomena in any number of contexts.

b. **External Agencies.** Although the Department of Communications is fully accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications in the mass communication undergraduate majors, it is not the intention of the department to seek accreditation for the Master of Arts in Communication program. The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications accredits only programs in mass communication and not those in communication studies. If Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications accreditation were sought at the graduate-level, the communication studies faculty would have a greatly diminished role
in the delivery of the program. One of the major strengths of the proposed program is the integrated nature of the curriculum including areas of both mass communication and communication studies. In order to preserve that strength, accreditation for the graduate program will not be sought.

**Program Implementation and Evaluation**

The Master of Arts in Communication program will be implemented in fall, 2010. Initially, the department intends to offer three graduate-level courses per academic semester and beginning in the summer of 2011 will offer two courses annually during the summer session. The proposed program will be offered through a number of different delivery methods. First, classes will be offered in the evening during regular academic semesters allowing working individuals to take classes after regular business hours. Second, classes will be offered on Saturdays in a weekend bi-term delivery method. This particular delivery method will allow students to enroll in intensive hybrid courses that will run eight weeks with five Saturday meetings. Third, the proposed program will offer courses via distance education. In this delivery method, faculty will teach graduate-level courses online or via CD-ROM. The plan for the distance education delivery method is to offer courses via distance education only after the course has been taught at least once in one of the other two delivery methods.

The Master of Arts in Communication program will be evaluated using the same assessment cycle as all other graduate and undergraduate programs at the University of Southern Indiana. The methods for programmatic assessment will include job/dental placement of graduates, student GRE scores, and a survey to area businesses and organizations that will assess our graduates.

**Tabular Information**

1. **Table 1: Enrollment and Completion Data**
   Table 1, program enrollments and completions, is attached.

2. **Table 2A and 2B: Cost and Revenue Data**
   Table 2A, total direct program costs and sources of program revenues, is attached.

   Table 2B, detail on incremental or out-of-pocket program costs, is attached. Table 2B includes $2,000 in out-of-pocket program expenses for recruiting expenses – program brochures, flyers, etc. These expenses, however, will be funded through existing resources of the College of Liberal Arts. No additional funding is requested.

3. **Table 3: New Program Proposal Summary**
   Table 3, new academic program proposal summary, is attached.
Master of Arts in Communication Program Proposal

Reference List


