

Annual Program Report 2024-2025

The report(s) should be inclusive of all levels, degrees (i.e. certificates, bachelor’s and master’s), modalities and locations.

Department: **Communications Media**

Graduate Chair: **Kyle Moody**

Department Assessment Committee Contact: **Randy Howe**

This document is to be kept in the department and an electronic file is due to the AVP of Institutional Research and Planning by June 1, 2025.

Section I: Program Assessment (please complete this section for each program in your department)

Program: **Social Media Concentration, Applied Communication, MS**

A. Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) (Educational Objectives)

I. List of PLOs and the timeline for assessment

PLO #	PLO – Stated in assessable terms	Where are the learning outcomes for this level/program published? (Please specify) Include URLs where appropriate.	Timing of assessment (annual, semester, bi-annual, etc.)	When was the last assessment of the PLO completed?
PLO-1	Critically conceptualize social media within historical and social contexts.	The four program learning outcomes (PLOs) are listed on the university catalog website under Social Media Concentration, Applied Communication, MS (online) , which is linked to this URL, https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academic/s/pr ograms/social-media-concentration-applied-communication-ms-online	Formative assessments for each PLO occur in individual courses. A summative assessment occurs as in students’ final course: COMM 9970 Capstone.	Spring 2022
PLO-2	Identify and assess the ethical implications of social media uses.			
PLO-3	Collect and analyze research data, and contextualize research findings.			
PLO-4	Design, plan, monitor, manage, evaluate and revise social media content and campaigns.			

This is a graduate program. Faculty in the program are encouraged to post relevant PLOs, and SLOs, once established, to their syllabi.

The graduate program has undergone considerable changes in recent years, establishing a social media concentration that has been attracting students. Its focus has not been on assessment specifically, but it now intends to in AY26. Beyond social media, there are no other active concentrations in the program.

II. PLO Assessment (Please report on the PLOs assessed and/or reviewed this year. Programs should be assessing at least one each year.) Using the table below, list and briefly describe the **direct method(s)** used to collect information assessing whether students are learning the core sets of knowledge (K), skills (S) and attitudes (A) identified as essential.

PLO # (from above)	Assessment description (exam, observation, national standardized exam, oral presentation with rubric, etc.)	When assessment was administered in student program (internship, 4 th year, 1 st year, etc.)	To which students were assessments administered (all, only a sample, etc.)	What is the target set for the PLO? (criteria for success)	Reflection on the results: How was the "loop closed"?
1-4	Capstone project, paper, and presentation	Final course: COMM 9970 Capstone	All	Passing grade of 2.0 or higher	Feedback is provided by the Capstone instructor to students. The Graduate Curriculum Committee conducts a postmortem meeting at the end of every semester to discuss capstone results, curriculum, course learning outcomes, and the general progress of students in the program. The Graduate Curriculum Committee revisits the capstone every year to determine any new additions or changes necessary to the process.

You may use this comment box to provide any additional information, if applicable:

The social media concentration is relatively new and is now ready to look at assessment, which it plans to do in AY26. In AY23, we administered a graduate survey. We plan to interpret the results in AY26 to assess our PLOs, and determine whether additional interventions are needed.

Summary of Findings: Briefly summarize the results of the PLO assessments reported in Section II above combined with other relevant evidence gathered and show how these are being reviewed/discussed. How are you “closing the loop”?

Reflection Prompt	Narrative Response
<p>Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated outcomes for the degree? (e.g., capstone course, portfolio review, licensure examination)</p>	<p>Students are required to develop a Capstone project and write a paper that connects their project with the previously completed coursework. Students are asked to submit a Capstone proposal in advance for a review. Students devote 7 weeks to developing the Capstone project, writing a Capstone paper (30 pages) and creating a presentation. At the conclusion of the term, students schedule an oral defense of their Capstone project. The schedule for the Capstone presentations is announced via FSU email and social media sites in advance; the presentations are attended by the graduate faculty, and are open to the public.</p>
<p>Who interprets the evidence? What is the process? (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee)</p>	<p>Annually by the Capstone instructor.</p>
<p>What changes have been made as a result of using the data/evidence? (close the loop)</p>	<p>Feedback from Capstone presentations provided by the Capstone instructor, along with an exit survey completed by students, provides data that is used to adjust the curriculum.</p>

B. Assessment Plan for Program/Department

- I. Insert the program or department Assessment Plan (This is an independent plan from what is reported in this document).
- II. Explain any changes in the assessment plan including new or revised PLOs, new assessments that the program/department plans to implement and new targets or goals set for student success.
- III. If you do not have a plan, would you like help in developing one? X Yes

C. Program Review Action Plan or External action Letter/Report

Annual Reflection/Follow-up on Action Plan from last Program Review or external accreditation (only complete the table that is appropriate for your program)

I. Programs that fall under Program Review:

- i. Date of most recent Review: **Spring 2019**
- ii. Insert the Action Plan table from your last Program Review and give any progress towards completing the tasks or achieving targets set forth in the plan.

The Action Plan from the most recent Program Review is attached here. Please note the most recent program review was completed in 2019, when the Applied Communication graduate program was undergoing significant revision. The Action Plan focuses on the undergraduate program.

Specific area where improvement is needed	Evidence to support the recommended change	Person(s) responsible for implementing the change	Timeline for implementation	Resources needed	Assessment Plan	Progress Made this Year
Create an Action Plan for AY 24- 25	A shift in enrollment for new students to the program.	Graduate Committee	AY 24-25	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marketing and outreach	Responses to limited marketing have been positive, so our goal is to expand the reach of our program.	Graduate Committee and Chair	AY24-25	Electronic marketing materials, lists of employers willing to reimburse student tuition for Graduate Studies	N/A	Modest. The Graduate Chair and the SGOCE have met repeatedly to discuss the next phases in developing and implementing marketing materials, including changes in to in-person and online graduate fairs.

- iii. If you do not have an action plan, would you like help in developing one based on your last program review and needs of the program? Yes

Applied Communications MS program does not have an Action Plan separate from the Communications Media Department's Action Plan.

Section II - Departmental Outcomes

A. Departmental Strategic Initiatives

<p align="center">Accomplished Initiatives AY24-25 Add more rows as needed</p>	<p align="center">Corresponding Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</p>	<p align="center">Indicate (X) if a DEI Goal</p>
<p>The establishment of a department Assessment Committee consisting of members from each program of study found in the department, including the Graduate Program in Applied Communication.</p>	<p>Goal Five: Adding this committee helps us to assert our distinctive value proposition and institutional learning outcomes boldly and widely.</p> <p>5.2 Assert Fitchburg State's approach to integrating high-quality professional programs with strong liberal arts and sciences studies as a key University differentiator that also differentiates our graduates.</p>	
<p>Ongoing curriculum review and work towards realigning learning outcomes for each course in the program.</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>1.5 Expand upon the University's history as a center for professional graduate education and applied post-baccalaureate training opportunities.</p>	

<p>Virtual capstone presentations open to the public in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.</p>	<p>Goal Three. This board assists us to be an engine of social, economic, civic, and cultural development in our city and region.</p> <p>3.6 Continue to provide educational opportunities and cultural programming that attract and engage members of the local community, including alumni.</p>	
<p>Faculty participation in Virtual Open House in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, and two promotional videos for the FSU website, and multiple social media posts on Facebook and LinkedIn to promote the program.</p>	<p>Goal 5, Strategy 5.3</p>	

<p>A new course was added to the curriculum, <i>AI in Communication Strategy</i>, “This course examines how artificial intelligence is impacting human communication and collaboration. After learning the basics of how AI works, you'll get hands-on practice using AI tools as a way of understanding how it can be applied across various industries, with an emphasis on social media. Explore its potential for enhanced creativity, productivity, and decision-making, as well as the ethical and social ramifications of AI in collaboration and communication, including challenges such as privacy, security, and potential biases.”</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>1.2 Establish a learning environment in which academic and co-curricular programs work in synergy to offer applied learning experiences that prepare students for purposeful personal and professional lives.</p>	
<p>A Certificate program in <i>AI & Data-Based Communication Strategy</i> was established. “The certificate is a 12-credit program designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics concepts, technologies, and their applications in the field of communication. It equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively integrate AI into communication strategies, evaluate AI systems, and navigate the societal and ethical impacts of AI advancements.”</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>1.2 Establish a learning environment in which academic and co-curricular programs work in synergy to offer applied learning experiences that prepare students for purposeful personal and professional lives.</p>	

<p>A Certificate program in <i>Data-Driven Social Media Strategy</i> was added. “Looking to enhance your social media strategy with data-driven insights? Our Master's level Certificate in Data-Driven Social Media Strategy is designed for marketing professionals, entrepreneurs, and communication specialists seeking to master the latest techniques and tools for successful social media campaigns. This certificate program is comprised of two essential courses: Social Media Marketing and Data & Analytics. Upon completion of this certificate program, you'll be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to develop and execute data-driven social media strategies that deliver measurable results. Whether you're looking to advance your career, start a new business venture, or enhance your organization's social media presence, this certificate program is an excellent choice for anyone looking to take their social media skills to the next level.”</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition forges innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p> <p>1.2 Establish a learning environment in which academic and co-curricular programs work in synergy to offer applied learning experiences that prepare students for purposeful personal and professional lives.</p>	
<p>The Graduate Chair worked with the Director of Digital Learning to create a course in Coursera as a lead generation class. The course will run on the site and generate interest across platforms to bring students from the site to the program. This is in conjunction with an Academic Innovation Fund grant for AY 23-24.</p>		

<p>Planned Initiatives for AY 25-26 Add more rows as needed</p>	<p>Associated Strategic Plan Goal & Strategy Goal # followed by Strategy # ex: 1.3</p>	<p>Indicate (X) if a DEI Goal</p>
<p>Through the newly formed Department Assessment Committee, establish an Assessment Plan that is accepted by the Department.</p>	<p>Goal One. This addition should help us to forge innovative paths to knowledge acquisition, career readiness, social mobility, and lifelong learning.</p>	
<p>Continue curriculum review and work towards realigning learning outcomes for each course in the program, started in AY23 and AY24.</p>	<p>Goal 1, Strategy 1.5</p>	

Work with student learning outcomes (SLOs) and curriculum map, revising curriculum as needed.		
Faculty participation in Admissions recruitment events and marketing, along with a potential 4+1 program.	Goal 5, Strategy 5.3	

B. Departmental Accomplishments and Reflection:

Take this section to reflect on--

1. *24-25 Accomplishments not captured above*
2. *Initiatives that you may be considering for 25-26 academic year that you did not already capture above*
3. *Any other thoughts or information that you would like to share*

The graduate faculty are considering a mix of in-person and synchronous virtual gatherings with current students and/or alumni in AY26 to strengthen connections and further expand the reputation of the program. Additionally, the graduate faculty are approaching the programmatic possibility of a 4+1 program.

In addition, they continue to explore additional concentrations, such as social justice, a full AI program, and health communication.