

# University of Louisiana at Lafayette

## Detailed Assessment Report 2015-2016 Communication MS

As of: 11/07/2016 10:18 AM CENTRAL

(Includes those Action Plans with Budget Amounts marked *One-Time, Recurring, No Request.*)

### Other Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Associations and Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

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#### **O/O 1: Students can conduct research**

Master's candidates can design and conduct research using methods appropriate to their concentration

#### Related Measures

##### **M 1: Proposal evaluation**

As a result of experiences accumulated in the previous measurement cycles, this measure was changed slightly in 2014-2015. Specifically, the evaluation form was simplified and the entries on the form were more clearly formatted to fit the four objectives measured, as follows:

For O2 (Students can conduct research) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the method section included with each thesis proposal

For O3 (Students can use statistics) three questions were used to evaluate the soundness of the results section for each thesis.

For O4 (Students can apply theories) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the theory section for each proposal.

For O5 (Students can critically evaluate research) three questions were used to evaluate the quality of the literature review for each proposal.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

#### **Target:**

Goal is achieved if at least 75% of the theses meet or exceed writing (including reviewing relevant literature), and methodological expectations.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

Proposals for five theses completed in the Spring 2016 semester were evaluated were included in the evaluation this cycle. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) one of the students was rated as a 2 (disagree), while three of the students were rated as 5 (agree), and one was rated as 6 (strongly agree). The average score for the five students was  $m = 4.6$ , which corresponds to a 76.6%, which is not satisfactory. However, when only the top 75% of the students were rated, the average became  $m = 5.2$ , corresponding to 86.67%, or a medium-range B. In addition, although our measure does not capture qualitative data, we must mention that two of the theses (one of which obtained the low score of 2) resulting from the proposals have already been accepted in a regional conference, while two others are

under review for a national conference. In conclusion, we can consider this objective met.

#### Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

##### **Refine proposal evaluation form**

Refine proposal evaluation form

**Established in Cycle:** 2009-2010

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** Low

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can conduct research

**Implementation Description:** The GPC will consult with faculty teaching research courses to further refine the proposal evaluation form

**Projected Completion Date:** 08/2010

**Responsible Person/Group:** Graduate Coordinator

**Additional Resources:** TBA

##### **Raise standards in research class**

The standards in the research classes will be raised starting with the fall semester in order to improve the methodological competency of the graduate students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can conduct research

##### **Continue to use and further develop current measurement**

This is the first cycle to use an improved version of the evaluation form. We will continue to use this form in the next evaluation cycle. In addition, one change we will make to the evaluation procedures will be to include the evaluation form in the documents required for each master's candidate. In other words, it will be the candidate's responsibility to make sure the evaluation form is filled out by his committee after the proposal and thesis defenses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can conduct research

##### **Improve assessment measure and procedures**

Faculty will meet to develop assessment measures and procedures that are more streamlined.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can conduct research

## **O/O 2: Students can use statistics**

Master's candidates can apply basic numerical and statistical concepts in their research

### Related Measures

#### **M 1: Proposal evaluation**

As a result of experiences accumulated in the previous measurement cycles, this measure was changed slightly in 2014-2015. Specifically, the evaluation form was simplified and the entries on the form were more clearly formatted to fit the four objectives measured, as follows:

For O2 (Students can conduct research) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the method section included with each thesis proposal

For O3 (Students can use statistics) three questions were used to evaluate the soundness of the results section for each thesis.

For O4 (Students can apply theories) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the theory section for each proposal.

For O5 (Students can critically evaluate research) three questions were used to evaluate the quality of the literature review for each proposal.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

#### **Target:**

Goal is achieved if at least 75% of the theses meet or exceed expectations in the use of statistics evaluation.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

Proposals for four theses completed in the Spring 2016 semester were evaluated were included in the evaluation this cycle. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) two of the students was rated as a 5 (agree), while two of the students were rated as 6 (strongly agree). The average score for the four students was  $m = 5.5$ , which corresponds to a 91.66%, or a low-range A. In conclusion, we can consider this objective met.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Raise standards in statistics class**

Even though the objective was technically met, the standards in the statistics classe will be raised starting with the fall semester in order to improve the competency of the graduate students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

##### **Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can use statistics

##### **Continue to use and further develop current measurement plan**

This is the first cycle to use an improved version of the evaluation form. We will continue to use this form in the next evaluation cycle. In addition, one change we will make to the evaluation procedures will be to include the evaluation form in the documents required for each master's candidate. In other words, the it will be the candidate's responsibility to

make sure the evaluation form is filled out by his committee after the proposal and thesis defenses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can use statistics

### **Improve assessment measure and procedures**

Faculty will meet to develop assessment measures and procedures that are more streamlined.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can use statistics

### **O/O 3: Students apply theories**

**Master's candidates understand and apply theories and theoretical concepts in their research**

#### Related Measures

##### **M 1: Proposal evaluation**

As a result of experiences accumulated in the previous measurement cycles, this measure was changed slightly in 2014-2015. Specifically, the evaluation form was simplified and the entries on the form were more clearly formatted to fit the four objectives measured, as follows:

For O2 (Students can conduct research) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the method section included with each thesis proposal

For O3 (Students can use statistics) three questions were used to evaluate the soundness of the results section for each thesis.

For O4 (Students can apply theories) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the theory section for each proposal.

For O5 (Students can critically evaluate research) three questions were used to evaluate the quality of the literature review for each proposal.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

#### **Target:**

Goal is achieved if at least 75% of the thesis meet or exceed theoretical expectations.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

Proposals for five theses completed in the Spring 2016 semester were included in the evaluation this cycle. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) all the students' proposals were rated as a 6 (strongly agree), corresponding to a perfect A. In addition, although our measure does not capture qualitative data, we must mention that two of the theses (one of which

obtained the low score of 2) resulting from the proposals have already been accepted in a regional conference, while two others are under review for a national conference. In conclusion, we can consider this objective met.

#### Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):

##### **Raise standards in theory class**

This objective was barely met this evaluation cycle. Therefore, the standards in the theory class will be have to be raised starting with the fall semester in order to improve the theoretical competency of the graduate students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students apply theories

##### **Continue to use and further develop current measurement plan**

This is the first cycle to use an improved version of the evaluation form. We will continue to use this form in the next evaluation cycle. In addition, one change we will make to the evaluation procedures will be to include the evaluation form in the documents required for each master's candidate. In other words, the it will be the candidate's responsibility to make sure the evaluation form is filled out by his committee after the proposal and thesis defenses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students apply theories

##### **Improve assessment measure and procedures**

Faculty will meet to develop assessment measures and procedures that are more streamlined.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students apply theories

#### **O/O 4: Students can evaluate critically**

**Master's students can critically evaluate their work and the work of others in their concentration for accuracy, fairness, clarity, appropriate style, and grammatical correctness**

#### Related Measures

##### **M 1: Proposal evaluation**

As a result of experiences accumulated in the previous measurement cycles, this measure was changed slightly in 2014-2015. Specifically, the evaluation form was

simplified and the entries on the form were more clearly formatted to fit the four objectives measured, as follows:

For O2 (Students can conduct research) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the method section included with each thesis proposal

For O3 (Students can use statistics) three questions were used to evaluate the soundness of the results section for each thesis.

For O4 (Students can apply theories) two questions were used to evaluate the quality of the theory section for each proposal.

For O5 (Students can critically evaluate research) three questions were used to evaluate the quality of the literature review for each proposal.

Source of Evidence: Senior thesis or culminating major project

#### **Target:**

Goal is achieved if at least 75% of the theses meet or exceed critical evaluation expectations.

#### **Finding (2015-2016) - Target: Met**

Proposals for five theses completed in the Spring 2016 semester were included in the evaluation this cycle. On a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) all the students' proposals were rated as a 6 (strongly agree), corresponding to a perfect A for critical evaluation of existing research. In conclusion, we can consider this objective met.

#### **Related Action Plans (by Established cycle, then alpha):**

##### **Raise standards in research and theory classes**

Critical evaluation of the previous academic works is taught and practiced in a range of classes, but in particular in the research and theory classes. For that reason, the standards in the research and theory classes will be raised starting with the fall semester in order to improve the critical thinking abilities of the graduate students.

**Established in Cycle:** 2013-2014

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can evaluate critically

##### **Continue to use and further develop current measurement plan**

This is the first cycle to use an improved version of the evaluation form. We will continue to use this form in the next evaluation cycle. In addition, one change we will make to the evaluation procedures will be to include the evaluation form in the documents required for each master's candidate. In other words, the it will be the candidate's responsibility to make sure the evaluation form is filled out by his committee after the proposal and thesis defenses.

**Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can evaluate critically

##### **Improve assessment measure and procedures**

Faculty will meet to develop assessment measures and procedures that are more streamlined.

**Established in Cycle:** 2015-2016

**Implementation Status:** Planned

**Priority:** High

**Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):**

**Measure:** Proposal evaluation | **Outcome/Objective:**  
Students can evaluate critically

## Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

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### How were assessment results shared and evaluated within the unit?

By email to the program coordinator for sharing with faculty within each program.

### Identify which action plans [created in prior cycle(s)] were implemented in this current cycle. For each of these implemented plans, were there any measurable or perceivable effects? How, if at all, did the findings appear to be affected by the implemented action plan?

We continually raised the quality standards for MS theses. This has resulted in an increased rate of submission and rate of acceptance for student-authored or student/faculty co-authored papers based on theses. We have also been able to place our MS graduates in prestigious PhD programs across the country, from U of Florida to Colorado State U. University of Alabama, which hosts one of the top Communication programs among the public schools, has consistently accepted our MS graduates for the past three years. We still need to work on refining our measurement procedures, so that they are more streamlined with the daily activity of the faculty.

### What has the unit learned from the current assessment cycle? What is working well, and what is working less well in achieving desired outcomes?

1. A major learning was that perhaps our measurement goals and procedures for the university-wide SACS accreditation need to be more aligned with measurement goals and procedures for ACEJMC accreditation.
2. Related to this learning is the realization that many insights for the development of the program in general – meaning across the five undergraduate programs and the one graduate program – came from quantitative and qualitative data collected more traditionally, outside of this measurement process. Such data include student feedback, as well as input from portfolio reviewers, other professionals in the field, as well as the professional and academic development of individual faculty members. The suggestion here is that perhaps our concept of data should be refined to include qualitative and indirect measures.
3. Another learning was that faculty buy-in needs to be improved.

Putting together learning 2. and 3. we conducted a faculty retreat where all the full-time faculty participated. The general result of the retreat is that two of our undergraduate programs are now merged (advertising and public relations), and the other three will undergo considerable updates and upgrades which should bring them into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For example, digital media in general and social media in particular will place more prominently in the skills courses, and a new minor in social media will be offered to non-majors.