To: Vice Chancellor William McKinney
       Marcia Dixson, Chair Department of Communication
From: Carl Drummond, Dean College of Arts and Sciences
Date: January 6, 2010
Re: Department of Communication Program Review

I have completed my analysis of the Department of Communication Program Review Documents as well as the letters supplied by the internal and external review committees.

The summary of my analysis is attached.

This completes this phase of the program review process. The Department should consider the recommendations of the review committees as well as my thoughts, develop a set of planning goals and objectives, and go forward with improving the department. I stand ready to meet with the department or a committee of the department to review my comments and recommendations.

Dean's Review of the Department of Communication Program Review Document

Mission

The department's mission statement has been revised and demonstrates a clear connection to the college and campus mission.

The document does not explicitly address processes for program review and planning. However, the department has been an active participant in the program review and assessment processes.

Curriculum

The department has two undergraduate majors (Interpersonal and Organizational Communication, Media and Public Communication), two minors (Communication Studies, Media Production), an interdisciplinary minor in Film and Media Studies, the hosted Journalism program offers minors in Journalism and Public Relations. The department also offers the Master of Arts and the Master of Science in Professional Communication.

Learning goals and program requirements are described for both undergraduate majors (Interpersonal and Organizational, Media and Public) as well as for the graduate program. The document does not define learning goals for any of the minors.

Enrollment trends in the undergraduate program show steady to increasing numbers of majors, particularly in the area of Media and Public Communication. The department has one of the lowest ratios of number of majors per degree conferred in the College of Arts and Sciences (4.94) indicating that it does a good job in retaining and graduating students who enter the communication program. Graduate enrollments have declined over the past several years and this is an area of concern for the department. It is my expectation that the new hires in the department will spark a growth in the graduate program.

The document provides a detailed analysis of the IPFW curriculum relative to those of peer institutions. Given the significant changes in departmental personnel occurring this year, the Department is encouraged to revisit the structure of its curriculum in 2012 with the possibility of making changes in its curricular structure. Data presented comparing the graduate curriculum to peer institutions lacks meaningful analysis.

The department has made significant changes in its assessment of learning in the undergraduate program. The use of electronic portfolios provides both a better longitudinal record of student learning but also a richer understanding of the effectiveness of the curriculum. The assessment of student learning in the graduate program is not as well developed as at the undergraduate level. I encourage the department to apply lessons learned from the implementation of portfolio assessment to the graduate program. No assessment of student learning in COM 114 is presented. Given the significance of this course to the general education program and the IPFW Baccalaureate Framework an assessment of student learning in the basic course is essential.

The department's central role in the university's efforts to meet the goals of the Baccalaureate Framework cannot be understated. The document adequately addresses how students of communication meet the goals of the Framework but it does not fully discuss how the department's curriculum moves students in other disciplines towards achieving those goals. That is not to say, of course, that the department in any way fails to help students achieve foundational knowledge of communication; rather, the document does not explicitly address the connection between the service functions of the department and the Baccalaureate Framework.

I concur with the internal review team's suggestion that the department construct a curriculum map to more fully understand and document how the programmatic goals fit within the broader goals of the Baccalaureate Framework. I also concur with the external team's suggestions regarding streamlining curricular offerings as well as directing efforts towards convergent journalism/media production. However, as outlined above, significant changes in the curriculum must await the arrival of the new hires in the department.

Delivery

The document reports, in table format, the pedagogical techniques used in the department as reported by a sample of students and a small sample of faculty. While little analysis of those techniques is provided, it is clear the department's teaching is dominated by a traditional mix of lecture, class assignments, presentations and group work. Faculty tended to report higher levels of use of these techniques than did students.

The department has a tradition of being a source of innovation in the development and delivery of online instruction at IPFW. I encourage the department to continue to expand online delivery of upper division courses and to find ways to have more full time faculty teach in online or distributed formats.

Given that most online courses in the department are taught by LTLs I strongly encourage the department to conduct an evaluation of student learning and student success in online and face-to-face courses. University analysis of these issues suggests that students are less successful online, the department should work to evaluate if this is true in communication, and if so how much is due to the format (online vs. f-2-f) and how much is due to the instructor type (LTL vs Full time Faculty).
The document provides a limited analysis student satisfaction with course scheduling and availability. Beyond the unmet demand for more online courses, the department does a nice job in providing courses across the spectrum of times and days that students want.

I strongly concur with the department's recommendation that undergraduate course rotations be posted online.

Faculty

The qualifications of tenured and probationary faculty appropriate.

The document fails to address the qualification level of CLs, LTLs, and GTAs.

Beyond the use of online resources that are associated with underrepresented groups, the document presents no definitive strategies for attracting and retaining a diverse faculty. It is a matter of some debate as to how a department could construct a meaningful strategy. As such, I believe it is appropriate for Academic Affairs to work collaboratively with the AA/EEO office to ensure that departments have a well constructed strategy.

I strongly concur with the conclusions of the internal and external committee regarding the decline in scholarly productivity in the department. While the cause and effect relationships are tangled, it is clear that declining productivity and the absence of faculty at the rank of Professor are related challenges for the faculty. I strongly encourage the department to take aggressive steps to enhance its scholarly productivity while maintaining the level of excellence in teaching it has achieved.

Within the department faculty workload is assigned in the traditional way. The document does not, however provide information on the amount of administrative release given to faculty, nor does it discuss how many faculty currently receive research releases.

The document fails to present a comparison of departmental P&T criteria relative to those used by similar departments at other universities.

The department has an extensive governance structure with appropriate participation by the faculty.

The document describes conference participation in the section titled faculty development. There is no discussion of faculty participation in pedagogical professional development.

The document does not describe any engagement activities with the community. I am confident such activities occur. It is unfortunate, given the importance of community engagement to the mission of the university, that the document does not address this important issue.

I concur with the departmental recommendation that a plan for faculty retention be developed and implemented. Likewise, I concur with the internal review team's recommendation that the department undertake a meaningful analysis of student evaluation data towards the purpose of developing a standard set of evaluation questions.

Students

The document fails to provide a profile of students in the department. I understand this portion of the program review process to be directed at developing an understanding of student academic characteristics: high school preparation, SAT scores, high school GPA, etc. Summary statistics of current enrollment, while important for some purposes, does not define the student profile.

Likewise, the document describes changes in number of majors and number of graduates but fails to provide information on changes or trends in the characteristics of students majoring in communication.

Additionally, it is not clear what types of students choose to enter the graduate program or why.

While I applaud the degree to which the department ensures that it provides instruction using pedagogical materials and techniques that highlight the diverse and multicultural world, there is no evidence that the department is advancing a coherent strategy to recruit students from under-represented groups. Expanded utilization of existing university support services should be a goal for the department.

Student advising in the department is conducted by all full-time faculty in coordination with a lead advisor and the chair of the department. I applaud this dedication to student success through high-quality advising.

The department has launched a chapter of Lambda Pi Eta. With the coming change in the organization of the *Communicator*, I encourage the department to identify ways to build links between the communication students and the journalism students through extracurricular organizations and activities.

I support the department's desire to establish a peer mentoring program.

The department can make significant improvements in how it interacts with alumni. The current weakness is evidenced in the lack of information regarding student accomplishments. I would note, however, that this category should include the accomplishments of students while they are at IPFW (e.g. awards, honors, etc.)

The document reports an increase in the graduation rate of Media and Public Communication majors. As noted above the department has a ratio of majors to degrees granted of about 5, one of the lowest in the

College of Arts and Sciences. I strongly encourage the department to continue to find ways to support student success through retention and graduation.

As noted above the department's connection with its alumni is weak and should be a point of emphasis for the future.

Other Programs/Services

I concur with the department's recommendations for further improvement in this section. Of particular interest is the concept of a Oral Communication Center. I strongly believe such a center could be readily connected with and collaborate with the Library Learning Commons project. Additionally, I believe there is ample room for a greater degree of collaboration in the design, development, and delivery of COM 114 and W131. I am also interested in seeing the department develop greater participation in service learning.

Facilities and Resources

The department has four administrative staff members: Chair, Director of Graduate Studies, Basic Course Director, and Director of the Journalism Program.

The clerical and support staff are adequate to meet the department's needs.

The department does not have adequate office space to meet its current and future needs. Additional office space for new faculty is a high priority in the reapportionment for Neff Hall. It is unclear if additional space can be identified for LTLs and GTAs. There are no immediate plans for the location of either a research space (the document does not make a compelling case for this) or a Oral Communication Center (the document does make a compelling case for this).

The majority of on-campus sections are not scheduled within dedicated classrooms. While this might be somewhat inconvenient, it is not clear that there exists a compelling need for more dedicated classrooms.

Library resources are described but are not evaluated by the document.

The department has access to the newly constructed Mac Lab and I support the desire to have some dedicated class periods assigned to the department.

Analysis and Recommendations

After reviewing the program review document, the department's recommendations, as well as the comments and recommendations of the internal and external review teams, I have established the following prioritized recommendations for the department's consideration.

1) Review the administration, organization, curriculum, and delivery of the basic course (COM114) with specific attention to issues of consistency and quality of instruction, assessment of student learning, and collaboration/integration with the other linguistic/rhetorical general education foundation course English W131.
2) Conduct a comprehensive review and revision of the undergraduate curriculum within the next three years. This time line will allow new faculty hired in 2010 to develop an understanding of the current program. Specific goals of the revision process should include evaluating and updating the curriculum relative to peer institutions and the development of a convergent journalism program as a degree option within the department
3) Explore the possibility of the creation of an Oral Communication Center. Find ways to link this concept with the Library Learning Commons project.
4) Grow graduate program by 100% in five years.
5) Establish meaningful collaborations and engagements with the region in the areas of research, service learning, and professional service.
6) Improve communication with and connection to alumni.
7) Develop and implement a faculty retention plan.
8) Advance at least 3 faculty members to the rank of Professor in the next five year.
9) Begin to explore the concept of an oral communications across the curriculum program. I do not, as yet, have a clear understanding of the goals of such a program, how it would work, or how its impact would be assessed.