

**REVIEW COMMITTEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND JOURNALISM
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

April 7, 2008

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT

Following the decision of the Rector and the Standing Committee of Hebrew University, a Review Committee was called to review the Department of Communications and Journalism, assess its strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations for its future direction. The members of the Review Committee were: Professor Michael X. Delli Carpini, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Chair of the Committee; Professor Susan Douglas, Chair, Department of Communication Studies, The University of Michigan; Professor Mordechai Kremnitzer, the Law School, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Professor Peter Lunt, Deputy Head of the School of Social Sciences, Brunel University. The Committee convened for three intensive days (March 10-12), read and discussed material prepared by the Department, and interviewed the Vice Rector, Heads of the Academic Review for the Sciences and Humanities, Social Sciences and Law, the Department Chair, the Academic Appointment Committee, the Communication faculty, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, several “external faculty,” one adjunct professor, a professor from a cognate department, the Director of the radio studio, an Emeritus faculty member, several Communication B.A., MA. and Ph.D. candidates, Department advisors to undergraduate and graduate students, and the Rector and President of the University.

First and foremost, the Committee members were unanimous in their conclusion that the Department of Communication and Journalism has been and continues to be the preeminent research and teaching program of its kind in Israel. Equally or more importantly, it compares favorably with the leading Communication programs internationally. This conclusion is based upon a number of considerations, including its position as the first and for many years only Communication program in the country, the legacy of its founding faculty, who rank among the most prominent in the field, the continuation of this legacy by its current senior faculty, and our sense that given the opportunity the current generation of junior faculty may be poised to continue and build on this impressive tradition. In addition, the Department has excelled in achieving gender equity as nearly half of its faculty is female. The Committee also heard very positive evaluations of the Department's administrative staff and the crucial role it plays in supporting the needs and interests of the students and faculty.

Over the past decades the Department has made consistent and significant contributions to the development of media and communication as an international field of study. These contributions can be found in a number of important areas within the field, including the study of the effects of the media, political communication, the analysis of non-fiction broadcasting, language and communication, film and cultural theory. In addition to a sustained record of high quality scholarship the Department is notable for continuing efforts to reach out to the international research community through a variety of activities. These include the maintenance of research collaborations with internationally renowned scholars, active membership of international bodies such as the International Communications Association, and the regular convening of workshops and seminars at which international scholars have been able to discuss and debate key issues in the field. In all of this the department has managed to balance its

significant contributions to the burgeoning academic field of media and communications with equally impressive contributions to Israeli public life through such things as formal and informal educational initiatives, involvement in the development and refinement of Israeli media and media policy, and ongoing research and commentary relevant to a number of contemporary political, social and cultural issues in Israel. This impact is all the more remarkable given the Department's small size and limited resources.

Our overall positive assessment of the Department is also based on the quality of its educational programs. It consistently attracts the very best Hebrew University students to into its B.A. program and, perhaps somewhat less consistently, attracts very good students into its M.A., and Ph.D. programs. For the most part it provides these students with a high quality education suitable for entering academic and professional fields related to media and communication. We were also generally impressed with the collegiality among faculty and between faculty and students, the quality of and commitment to teaching and mentoring of students at all levels, and the quality and professionalism of the Department's staff. The value of its educational programs is attested to by the number of graduates who have gone on to play central roles in media and communications professions and in the development of media and communications as an academic field within Israel.

In spite of this generally positive assessment, the Department faces a number of important challenges, many of which have structural causes beyond their control, but many of which we believe can be addressed through some specific actions on the part of both the Department and the University administration. We also see major misunderstandings and miscommunications between the Department and both the Social Science Faculty and the University Administration about the future direction, achievements and status of the Department.

In particular, the research focus and profile of the department, and the relationship between that focus and the department's pedagogical mission and duties remains unclear to the University Administration and the other social science departments. Some of this may be based in part on a lack of knowledge by those outside the field about the intellectual history and scholarly scope of Communications, given that it remains a relatively new academic area. To address this issue we provide a brief overview of our field in the next section of this report. We then turn to a discussion of what we see as the contextual constraints under which the Department – and in some cases higher education in Israel more generally – operate. This is followed by a candid discussion of areas where we see need for improvement, along with recommendations for how these issues might be addressed. However these specific concerns and recommendations should be read in light of our overall positive assessment of the Department's past record, present research, teaching and service, and future potential.

THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS

The media and communication technologies are increasingly understood to be an integral part of modern society, playing a constitutive role in economics, politics, social formation and culture. Economically the media both represent an important sector in their own right and are also central to the national, regional and increasingly global flows of information upon which economic transactions, developments and policies are based. The mediation of politics – among citizens, between citizens and their representatives, and across national borders – is an accomplished fact, and the vital role of communications in governance is now taken for granted. Media and communications technologies are critical to the formation, maintenance and reconstitution of societal institutions and communities at the local, national and global level. The mediation of

culture raises important challenges to traditional accounts of identity and the media increasingly provide the context and resources for everyday life in the modern world. In all of these areas there has been a growing realization that the relationship between media and society has shifted from one in which media technologies “simply” provide a channel for communication to one where mediation is central to the very meaning of contemporary society.

The growing importance of media and communications in all aspects of modern life, most apparent with the advent of “mass media” in the early to mid 20th Century, but increasingly obvious with the rapid development of new information technologies in the last two decades, led to the development and parallel growth in university-based media and communications programs globally, with the US taking the lead in the late 1950s.¹ The motivation for such programs, departments and schools was driven in part by the desire to educate future generations to the new realities of work, community and citizenship. This motivation has only increased over time – it is now difficult to think of a professional practice or social action that does not depend upon skill and familiarity with media, both as a consumer and increasingly, as a producer of information. Communication has become arguably a core skill of contemporary life and consequently media and communications as a teaching practice has grown in direct proportion to the acknowledgement of the centrality of communication for modern society.

The development of Communication programs was and continues to be driven by more than a desire to train future workers and educate future citizens, however. The growing size of the media sector and its integration into all aspects of contemporary life has also impacted debates about media studies as a distinct discipline. Simplifying somewhat, the central debate in

¹ Professional Schools of Journalism were first established in the 1920s, but broader, more academically-oriented Communication programs did not develop until another thirty years.

both the formation of Communication programs and in their evolutionary trajectory has been the extent to which media studies is or should be a free-standing discipline with its own theories, research, methods, professional and scholarly degrees and associations, and so forth, on the one hand, or should instead be seen as a cross-disciplinary field that is integrated into other, more traditional social sciences and humanities disciplines, and studied by researchers educated in these other social science and humanities disciplines. Driven in part by the usual processes of professional institutionalization and in part by the growing awareness of communication as a distinct phenomenon worthy of independent study, media studies has matured into a kind of hybrid, containing a core disciplinary character that distinguishes it from other humanities and social sciences, while remaining open to cross-fertilization and boundary crossing with the numerous other disciplines from which it learns and to which it has much to contribute. This hybridity, once viewed as a potential weakness, is now often (though by no means universally) seen as a strength, as universities increasingly realize that the cutting edge issues of modern life can only be understood through interdisciplinary lenses. Some misunderstandings about the field also have stemmed from questions about whether studying media fare, which is often evanescent and sometimes banal, is appropriately serious scholarship. But research over the past thirty years in particular has documented the deeply consequential impact that the news, media violence, political reporting and advertising, and representations of gender, ethnicity, race and class in entertainment programming have had on public perceptions, values, political behavior and on public policy. Because the media are now such pervasive institutions, they play a constitutive role in individual and societal formations, and in global flows of information, understandings and misunderstandings, and thus require serious and rigorous academic study. The department at Hebrew University has pioneered in such work.

CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE DEPARTMENT:

The historical trajectory of the Department of Communications and Journalism at the Hebrew University mirrors the broader development of the field summarized above. Starting from the view that media was an important channel of communication for political, social and cultural life and central to institution building in modern societies, the Department's focus was originally on combining educating early generations of journalists and on critical reflection on media institutions and regulation. The Department played a full and active role in establishing the importance of Communications in this sense. The subsequent development of a pluralist approach to research integrating old and new media, media as communication and as culture, and an interdisciplinary approach to research is reflected in the current diversity of research interests in the Department. But like all programs in this area, these changes occurred (and continue to occur) slowly and too often without reflection or planning. We believe that for a number of reasons, the time is right for such reflection and planning, and that if done correctly and with the support of the University's administration, the Department could maintain its central role in the field, both within Israel and internationally.

Doing so will not be easy however due in part to what we see as a number of important contextual constraints. Among these are the following:

- A political environment in which government support for higher education has declined, resulting in an estimated 20 percent decline in faculty positions in Israeli universities over the past decade
- A misunderstanding and under-appreciation within the University of the strong reputation held by the Department among peer faculty and programs from around the world
- A student-to-faculty ratio, driven by the combination of increased enrollments and stable faculty size, that ranks among the highest in the social sciences at Hebrew University,

and that compares even more unfavorably to many of the elite Communication programs around the world with which the Department competes

- A transitional period in the faculty, arising in part from retirements, that raises important strategic questions regarding the appropriate areas of emphasis in the department's future research, curricular, and hiring decisions
- Emerging competition from newly developed undergraduate and graduate Communication programs at other colleges and universities in Israel
- Evolving University standards for the hiring of new faculty, especially the increased scrutiny and high threshold for hiring faculty whose Ph.D. was granted by the Department itself, coupled with limitations on the availability of faculty candidates educated outside of Hebrew University
- A person-specific faculty line allocation process that creates competition for limited positions across the social sciences and that works against strategic planning in hiring, particularly in cutting-edge areas
- A budget allocation process that rewards increased enrollments with little attention to the pedagogical implications of these increases
- Financial implications for Communication students at the undergraduate and graduate level taking courses outside the Communication program
- Tensions between the sometimes competing desires of students interested in developing practical skills necessary to excel in communication and media related professions, those interested in an education that prepares them for research and teaching positions, and the larger liberal arts goals of the University
- An implicit devaluing of the Communication major by requiring a second major for undergraduates, unlike the other social sciences
- A graduate student body that receives limited financial support and that must meet their educational responsibilities while simultaneously holding full-time jobs and having significant family responsibilities
- Union rules regarding minimum salary for Ph.D. candidates who teach, ironically resulting in less teaching opportunities for "Stage Two" Ph.D. candidates

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT:

In turn, these structural and contextual issues (along with other, more proximate causes) have generated a series of specific problems within the Department, central among them:

- Intellectual Vision and Identity
 - Absence of a strategic plan with a concrete vision for the future direction of the department regarding the most beneficial areas of future growth and the extent to which such growth is possible
 - Difficulty hiring new faculty that simultaneously meet University criteria and fill the specific needs of the Department
 - An unacceptably high student-to-faculty ratio that imposes excessive demands on faculty time for teaching and mentorship at the expense of research
- Undergraduate Education
 - An overdependence, driven by the large student-to-faculty ratio, on “external faculty” for the teaching of undergraduate courses
 - Pedagogical issues regarding the appropriate balance between “theory-driven,” “research-oriented,” and “applied” courses
 - A less than optimal and perhaps less rigorous than possible undergraduate curriculum
- Masters Level Education
 - Pedagogical issues regarding the appropriate balance and structure between research and professional oriented Masters’ programs, and between humanistic and social scientific approaches to Communication research.
- Ph.D. Level Education
 - A sense among Ph.D. candidates that their program is too “unstructured” and provides little opportunity for building a sense of community or for professional socialization
 - Difficulties for Ph.D. candidates to balance their work, personal and academic lives in a way that maximizes their educational experience and minimizes the time to completion of their thesis

NEED FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

While the structural constraints mentioned above make addressing these specific issues difficult, we believe that they are not intractable. What is required, however, is action on the part of both the Department and the Central Administration. It is crucial that the Department appreciate the importance of developing a realistic long-range strategic plan and vision for its future growth and

profile. It is equally crucial that if such a plan is developed and approved that the Administration do all it can to facilitate its successful implementation and realization. With the failure to gain approval for a recent proposed hire, some in the Department have become fatalistic, and concerned that they will not be able to make the hires they need to address the unit's very serious workload issues. Some also noted that it is extremely difficult to plan for the future with the current person-specific method of position allocations, in which units are pitted against each other and compelled to identify the "safest," most published person with a degree outside of Hebrew University rather than an outstanding candidate who might help build in new areas or satisfy pressing curricular needs. The Committee agrees that the present method of allocating positions is counterproductive to the University's quest for excellence, especially in hiring cutting-edge scholars in the social sciences. We strongly urge that the Social Science faculty revise the way that such recruitment is done, moving to a process that allocates positions to units and then allows them to find the best candidates to fulfill their intellectual and pedagogical requirements. Having said this, the Committee's understanding from the Administration is that with the articulation of a coherent and persuasive vision for the future, the Department could succeed in making several appointments in the near future.

The tenured and tenure track faculty in the Department need to organize a series of meetings or retreats to discuss and come to an agreement about where they want the Department to be, intellectually and pedagogically, in the next five to ten years. What is the research focus of the Department? What should it be five years from now? How should that research profile be related to the graduate and undergraduate curricula? Addressing such questions always requires small units to wrestle with the trade-offs between breadth and depth. And it requires developing

and then acting upon a coherent vision of the unit that can be clearly and persuasively conveyed to others as the Department's new vision and mission.

The Department has two main areas of strength, political communication and culture and communication, and a smaller area in cinema studies and visual culture. Some of the Department's past strengths lay in the areas of sociolinguistics, rhetorical analysis of media texts and the broader terrain of discourse analysis. Some faculty with whom we spoke bemoaned the attenuation of this area within the Department, especially due to retirements, while others cited new media, television studies, audience and reception studies and media effects as more fruitful areas of growth. The Committee strongly urges the faculty to be forward looking, analyze where the field is going, and identify areas for hire that can be linked to or build on existing strengths while staking out new areas of research. In particular, the Department should consider the following areas: new media and new communications technologies; analysis of media institutions; audience and reception studies; international and comparative media studies and media and globalization. In the United States in particular, many departments have become quite sensitive to the "Americo-centric" nature of their curricula and scholarship, which is becoming increasingly outdated with the diffusion of new media and the global flows of information, news and entertainment. Thus, while we deeply respect the areas that helped found the Department and earned it such respect, it is time for the Department to identify areas that will keep it on the cutting edge of research in the field. The Department, with support from the University, could solicit input or reaction to its long-range plan from eminent scholars at other premiere international institutions, should it want to compare notes about new or future directions in the field. Members of the Administration assured the Committee at various times during our visit that if the department articulated such a vision and plan and made a compelling case for hiring

that would fulfill this vision, that the Department would be in a much better position to have its proposed candidates approved for hire. We suggest that the Department identify three core areas in which it would like to recruit over the next five years, with the goal of adding three or more positions during this period.

B.A. PROGRAM

Based on our review of the material provided us, along with conversations with faculty, staff, administrators and students, it is clear that the undergraduate program has a number of strengths. Given its popularity as a subject of study, the department has the ability to be selective in who it accepts into the major, meaning that it draws from among the best students at Hebrew University. It also provides students with a wide range of course offerings that range from theory courses to more applied workshops. The students we spoke to also praised a number of faculty for their accessibility and mentoring.

That said we do see a number of areas where improvement is possible. The large number of majors coupled with the small size of the core faculty has meant that a large number of courses are taught by external or part-time faculty (indeed, during the recent strike 70 percent of undergraduate Communication courses continued to be offered because they were taught by non-tenure or tenure track faculty!). If done strategically, the use of external or part-time faculty with skills and training that complement strengths of the core faculty can be very beneficial. But the large number of courses currently offered by external or part-time faculty and driven by necessity rather than pedagogy is problematic and needs to be addressed, ideally by increasing the size of the regular faculty, but also by considering streamlining the undergraduate

curriculum, and if need be, decreasing the number of students admitted into the program (though we realize the potential financial implications if this last solution is chosen).

Several students also suggested that the rigor of at least some of the courses and the logic of the curriculum's structure left something to be desired: students felt that they were not challenged enough in classes, and that the ordering of courses (when they were offered and how various sequences of courses were designed) was opaque at best and illogical at worst. Students also felt that while "new media" was mentioned in a number of classes, these mentions were repetitive across classes, not well integrated into classes or the curriculum more broadly, and overly superficial and lacking depth. They also felt that the more applied workshops they were offered were not always on the most cutting edge issues such as video production, blogging, or digital media, and that these workshops felt "added on" as opposed to integrated into the program. Finally, some students felt that more opportunities to hear lectures, etc., from outside speakers – especially those with practical experience – would be valuable.

We of course realize that students themselves are not always the best judge of what is best for them, and we understand and support the notion that the Communication B.A. is meant to be a liberal arts and not a professional or applied degree. Nonetheless our own sense based not only on our conversations with students but also with faculty, staff and administrators (as well as the written documentation we reviewed) suggests that a number of refinements are in order and could improve the quality of the undergraduate program. Among these changes should be an assessment of the logic of course offerings and requirements, streamlining of offerings with an eye to repetition and overlap, the addition of courses (and modules within courses) that give greater weight to new media technologies, an assessment of the workshop offerings with an eye to both updating these offerings to reflect the realities of the new media environment (e.g.,

workshops in on-line writing and/or in digital video and internet broadcasting), and to integrating these “applied” courses into the curriculum more thoughtfully. We do not mean by this that the major should become more “applied.” To the contrary we believe that done right, the workshops could enhance the theoretical understanding of students by grounding theory and research in practice. Finally, we suggest that the Department do a thorough review of the amount, quality, relevance and ultimately the necessity of its large number of externally-taught courses.

M.A. PROGRAM

In our review of the M.A. programs within the Department we reviewed the written documentation provided to us, interviewed several students in the programs, and spoke with the M.A. advisors. We also talked about the M.A. programs in our meetings with the faculty, adjunct/external teachers, and University administrators. While there was much to be applauded (for example, feedback from students concerning teaching quality and mentoring was positive), and overall the M.A. programs seem sound, a few concerns emerged that struck us as worth addressing.

Until 2006 the department offered a generic masters program with a considerable choice of options within it, and two tracks; research (including a dissertation) and non-research. Our discussions with students indicated that there was a clear understanding that the role of the non-research track was for training individuals who either already work in the media industries or in public service, or who intend to pursue this path. Given the limited number of opportunities to pursue a Ph.D. in Communication (in Israel at least) and the declining number of academic positions for Ph.D.s in Israel, it is perhaps not surprising that 80 percent of the M.A. students were on the non-research track. Despite this, however, members of the faculty seem to see the

research track (and preparing students for further graduate study and academic careers) as the more prestigious and important of the two. This disconnect should be addressed (discussions regarding the balance and purpose of the two tracks has already begun within the Department). So too should the apparent decline in the overall numbers of students registered in the M.A. programs. This decline – if a trend rather than an aberration – is of concern for financial as well as programmatic reasons, and should be monitored. Finally, at least as compared to the B.A. program, the quality of students in the M.A. program does not appear to be as consistently good as one might hope.

One response to the imbalance in the number of students in the research versus non-research tracks, the declining enrollments overall, and the quality of students in the program has been the introduction of a two new masters programs, one in Political Communication and one in Communication as Culture. Communication as culture is specifically targeted at the research track (the non-research track is not available in this program). While the faculty advisors to M.A. students provided us with a well-developed rationale for the existing programs and possible future developments at the M.A. level, care should be taken to assure that the new tracks do not create or exacerbate differences across cultural/qualitative and political/quantitative approaches to studying Communication. Should this become a concern one possible solution might be the establishment of a “core program” that would be taken by all M.A. students regardless of which track they were on. Finally, more effort could be made in placing M.A. students (especially those in the non-research track) in jobs, monitoring their future trajectory, and staying in regular contact with alumni.

Ph.D. PROGRAM

The Ph.D. program is generally a strong one, but a number of issues emerged during our visit that are worth being addressed systematically by the Department. Like many Ph.D. programs in the British or European tradition (and unlike U.S. Ph.D. programs), the Ph.D. program centers around the dissertation thesis, with few if any formal classes. The problem with this approach is that it can become unstructured and lead to a loss of any sense of community or professional training. Our sense is that students in the program feel this. In addition, funding for students, relative to both peer Communication Ph.D. programs elsewhere in the world and other discipline's programs at the Hebrew University is low. Both the financial support and the lack of formal professional training issues are exemplified by the relative lack of teaching opportunities available to Ph.D. students, driven by the combination of the high cost of using such students (relative to adjuncts) and the limited resources available to the Department. Finally, the program could do a better job identifying job opportunities for its newly minted Ph.D.s and tracking the careers of its graduates.

One possible way of providing greater opportunities for its students might be to form partnerships with other, international programs. Such partnerships could include student and faculty exchanges and post doctoral fellowships, and even sending B.A. and M.A. students to study abroad with the goal of their returning to teach in Israel and, if appropriate, at the Hebrew University.

DEPARTMENTAL LEADERSHIP

The Department leadership—and this includes not only the chair, but also the tenured faculty—needs to recognize the changed external and internal environment in which it now operates, in which the field is moving in exciting new directions and where the University is insisting on intellectual cross-pollination by hiring faculty trained outside the University. The recent deep disappointment over a failed recruit should not lead to a fatalism that paralyzes the faculty: there are ways to learn from this and to move forward. This means working hard to shake off this recent setback and developing a proactive stance toward growth and change. The Department's leadership needs to think creatively about ways to reduce the student-to-faculty ratio and to plan strategically for the number and type of new hires the Department needs. The Department's leaders must also understand the legitimate concerns raised by the administration and their colleagues in other departments when putting forward candidates for faculty positions who are graduates of the Department's Ph.D. program and who have little or no relevant teaching and research experience beyond this. To address this latter issue the Department should consider partnering with other universities in Israel and abroad, perhaps sending some of their top undergraduate or Master's students to obtain their Ph.D.s in these programs with the idea that some of them would return to teach at Hebrew University. The Department could also send their recent Ph.D.s for post-docs at these partnering universities. At a minimum, the Department needs to understand that the threshold for internal hires has no doubt become higher than in the past, and strong, external support from eminent colleagues at other institutions is now essential to make the case for such a recruit.

The Department's leadership also needs to better educate the administration and their colleagues in other departments about the truly impressive national and international reputation of the Communication Department, its legacy within Israel and the Communication field more broadly, and the influential nature of the scholarship produced by the faculty. In addition, it needs to help its Social Science colleagues appreciate the importance of the more humanistic aspects of communication research. Members of the Committee have encountered in their own institutions misunderstandings about the intellectual, epistemological, and methodological foundations of the field, as well as its importance to and impact on public debates about the role of the mass media in society. Thus we appreciate the kind of diplomacy and patience such ambassadorial work requires. Yet such work must be done, especially given the relative newness and interdisciplinarity of the field. Finally, the Department's leadership needs to take more advantage of the energy and ideas of its less senior faculty by bringing them into more of the Department's strategic decision making, but doing so in a way that is not exploitative and that does not interfere with their primary responsibilities of research and teaching.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The various recommendations below cannot be taken separately but must be integrated into the overall Strategic Vision and Plan. **Specifically we recommend the following for the Department:**

- Development of a Strategic Vision and Plan coupled with Structural Changes in How Faculty Lines are Allocated
 - We recommend that the Communication faculty engage in one or more planning retreats in which they develop a strategic plan for their B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. programs with a concrete vision for the future direction of the department, as well as for their future hiring needs. This retreat and resulting plan should address the research profile and pedagogical needs of the Department. In particular, there

should be an emphasis on moving beyond existing and past strengths to developing a strategy that seizes new opportunities and directions in the field. The Development and vision for this plan must include involvement of the entire faculty, especially the newer faculty

- The central issue of the too high student-to-faculty ratio must be addressed.
 - In its strategic plan for future hiring needs, the Department should justify its specific recommendations in terms of the needs of students as well as the central research questions within the Communication field. This approach can take into consideration the current strengths of the faculty, the particular competitive advantages presented by the University's location and history, past areas of strength, and the like, but should not be imprisoned by this past and be open-minded to moving in new directions. In addition, the Department needs to be realistic about existing constraints and if necessary consider ways to supplement a strategy based on more faculty positions with alternative solutions, including streamlining the various curricula, and taking more advantage of faculty in other Departments with expertise of relevance to Communication
 - The department may want to explore enrollment management or reduction strategies as another way to reduce the current student-to-faculty ratio, especially at the undergraduate level
- Undergraduate Education
 - As part of its strategic planning the Department should reassess the undergraduate program, with particular attention to: reducing the number and making more strategic use of “outside faculty;” integrating the more practical “workshops” into the pedagogical rationale of the curriculum; rethinking the logic, overlap, academic standards and sequencing of required and elective courses in the major; uncovering key gaps in the substantive topics covered by the curriculum; including more courses taught by faculty in other departments in the major requirements; exploring the pros and cons of allowing students to major exclusively in Communication; providing more opportunities for students to hear and learn from leading scholars and practitioners in the field; and reducing the number of majors accepted into the program
 - Masters Program
 - While this program appears sound, the Department should monitor the recently implemented system of tracking students, with an eye towards avoiding “balkanization” across the “Political Communication” and “Communication as Culture” tracks and the “research” versus “applied” options within the Political Communication track. The Department should also articulate appropriate targets for the number of Masters Students admitted overall and within the various tracks and research versus applied options. Finally, the Department should work to improve the quality of applicants and accepted students in the program, provide extracurricular learning and community building opportunities for its students, and keep track of the job placements of its alumni

- Ph.D. Program
 - The Department should reassess the structure of its Ph.D. Program with specific attention to the current lack of structure, a sense of community, and professional socialization that leaves students feeling somewhat at sea; the limited funding that prevents students from concentrating on their thesis and completing the degree in a timely fashion; and the “Catch 22” that has limited the availability of teaching opportunities for “Stage Two” Ph.D. students because of the cost of hiring them relative to “Outside Faculty.” As part of this the Department should rethink its use of funds provided through the Smart Institute, perhaps bundling available dollars to provide fellowships and/or teaching opportunities for top students, as well as more aggressively seeking outside grants that can facilitate both faculty research and educational and funding opportunities for students

- Department Leadership and Reputation
 - The Department leadership—and this includes not only the chair, but also the tenured faculty—needs to recognize the changed external and internal environment in which it now operates, in which the field is moving in exciting new directions and where the University is insisting on intellectual cross-pollination by hiring faculty trained outside the University. It needs to work proactively to develop new strategies for growth and change, to educate its colleagues about the prestige of the Department and the importance of the field to the Social Sciences and to a solid liberal arts education

In turn, we recommend the following for the Social Science faculty and the Central Administration:

- The Central Administration must recognize the extremely high quality of the Department, its national and international reputation, and its exceptional past and current contributions to the educational mission and reputation of the University. It too should work to help educate faculty in the social sciences and across the university to the value-added by the Communication Department

- The Central Administration should show its support the Department’s planning process by providing resources to conduct the retreat(s)

- The Central Administration needs to take the Department’s recommendations seriously, including providing more faculty lines, rethinking the way in which these future faculty lines are allocated (i.e., provide a specified number of lines to the Department), and if necessary revising the formulas for budget allocation that “punish” departments for reasonable reductions in student-to-faculty ratios or for allowing students to take courses in other departments

- The Central Administration should recognize the structural factors that have limited the Department’s ability to hire, particularly the person-specific process by which faculty lines are allocated, which has forced the Department to depend excessively on “outside

faculty.” Specifically, we strongly recommend that the person-specific mode of hiring be abandoned and replaced by an allocation system that gives lines to departments based on pedagogical demands and research needs of the units

- The Central Administration should support the Department in its effort to publicize, monitor and if necessary fine-tune its Masters Program
- The Central Administration should provide increased resources to the Department wherever possible, including increasing the amount of funds generated by the Smart Institute endowment that are invested in the Department. and provide staffing support and expertise in assisting the Department in identifying and obtaining external grants and other fundraising opportunities.

The bottom line is that both the Department and the Administration need to think creatively and work collaboratively to solve this important issue with an eye towards maintaining and strengthening the Department’s reputation for intellectual and pedagogical excellence.