

**Texas Tech University
College of Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Programs
(ASCAP)**

**Minutes
Meeting of November 14, 2005**

A scheduled meeting of the Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Programs convened at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, November 14, 2005 in Holden Hall 129. Committee members present were Borst, Curzer, Hubbard, Stoll, Von Ende, and Stewart (Chair). The committee met in closed session because there were no usual course or program proposals on the agenda. This session afforded the committee an opportunity to conduct its first review of degree program learning outcomes and assessments. The approach taken by ASCAP in reviewing these plans was to ascertain that:

1. The unit submitted learning outcomes and assessment plans for each of its degree programs.
2. Each plan states the purpose of the degree program.
3. Each plan states several expected learning outcomes for the degree program that appear consistent with the stated purpose of the program.
4. Each plan provides a method of assessment for each of the expected learning outcomes; and that:
 - Each assessment method is program focused (not course or student focused).
 - The assessment plan entails multiple assessment methods.
 - Some of the assessment methods can be currently implemented to provide initial data for the upcoming SPAR reports.

Accordingly, ASCAP acknowledged receipt of and reviewed the following degree program learning outcomes and assessment plans:

Department of Political Science
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Master of Arts in Political Science
Master of Public Administration
Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

Department of Communication Studies
Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies
Master of Arts in Communication Studies

Each of these plans provides the degree program statement of purpose, a set of expected learning outcomes that appear commensurate with the stated purpose, and statements of assessment methods for each learning outcome. The committee's review of these six plans warrants the following general recommendations for possible revisions to these plans and for consideration by other units currently writing their plans.

Recommendations

1. Degree titles should be stated *sans* acronyms, e.g., "Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies" instead of "Communication Studies, B.A."
2. Statements of expected learning outcomes should present observable (e.g., measurable) abilities, qualities, or traits acquired by students as a result of the program. Student "values," "philosophies," "commitments," and the like are less concrete and observable.
3. A variety of assessment methods should be presented as means to determine achievement of program outcomes. Tests are one method of assessment if they reflect data about the program rather than specific courses. Besides tests, assessment of any program should include other kinds of indicators, such as portfolios, theses or other

comprehensive papers, comprehensive presentations, and the like. Assessments drawn from individual assignments within specific courses should utilize aggregate data about the assignment. All statements of assessment methods should speak directly to the expected learning outcome they are associated with. For example, an assessment method stated simply as “course exams” or “senior thesis” is insufficiently descriptive; the statement should include what the method will demonstrate relative to the learning outcome and to what standard; e.g., “80% of doctoral students will pass their Ph.D. qualifying examinations before the end of their fourth year of graduate study.” Assessment standards based on letter grades alone should be avoided, especially if the grade standard is actually a graduation requirement.

ASCAP will continue to accept and review unit plans for degree program learning outcomes and assessments through December 15, the final due date for submission of plans to the college.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of ASCAP is Monday, November 28 at 3:00 p.m. in Holden Hall 129, for proposals that reach committee by November 21.