

2022-23 Program Review Template

<i>Program Information & Executive Summary</i>		
Prompt	Guidance	Program Response
<p>Describe the successes and challenges your unit has faced since the last comprehensive review.</p>		<p>Like most departments, Communication Studies encountered a greater-than-usual number of barriers in the years since last completing a comprehensive program review.</p> <p>Pandemic</p> <p>The pandemic closed our campus on March 13th, 2020, forcing our faculty to completely re-build their pedagogical skillset from the ground up and convert our classes into an online modality. This posed a unique challenge for the Communication Studies Department because the majority of our classes are dependent upon access to face-to-face communication. Indeed, our department did not offer any courses in any DE modality prior to the pandemic. The IGETC Standards (2022) assert that courses fulfilling the Oral Communication requirement (1C) “must include faculty-supervised, faculty-evaluated oral presentations in the presence of others.” This meant our faculty needed to make dramatic adaptations to our coursework in order to offer courses in an online modality while still respecting IGETC</p> <p>Our department met the challenge in several ways. First, we immediately scheduled an inter-campus meeting with the Communication Studies departments at our sister campuses. We discussed best practices for teaching online and offered support for one another, ensuring we would be able to continue instruction after the initial one-week break that followed our March 13th campus closure. Second, several members of our department completed both the SDCCD “Canvas Online Training Certification Program” and</p>

the “Mesa Buddies Distance Education Training.” To date, over 90% of the faculty in our department are DE-certified.

Our outcome data validates the efficacy of this response. During the Spring 2020 semester, we were able to maintain a 76% success rate, compared to the campus-wide success rate of 72%. Likewise, our retention rate was 83%, compared to the campus-wide retention rate of 80%. The data show that we repeated this success during the Fall 2020 semester, when we maintained a success rate of 76%, compared to the lower campus-wide success rate of 73%. Our retention rates followed the same trend that semester as we maintained a persistence rate of 88%. Collectively, our department showed that we are adaptable, innovative, and dedicated to meeting the needs of our students.

However, we are aware that challenges still persist in this area. Now that we are phasing back to the in-person modality, we are seeing a growing disparity between the success/retention rates of our in-person courses compared to our online offerings. For example, in Spring 2022, our success rate was 78% for in-person classes, while our DE courses (e.g., asynchronous and remote) had a success rate of 72%. In that same semester, our face-to-face retention rate was 86%, while our DE courses had a retention rate of 88%. This means students are more drawn to our classes in the online modality, but are less likely to succeed in them.

AB-928

While most departments were settling into a post-COVID educational landscape, Communication Studies departments across the state were met with another existential crisis—the end of our discipline.

The Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act of 2021 (AB-928) mandated that CSUs, UCs, and CCs utilize a single transfer pathway for all students. The text of the bill necessitated a pathway of 34

		<p>units, which was a reduction from the 39 units required under the CSU-Breadth. Since the UC system is chartered and cannot be legislated, they had the upper hand in deciding which requirements should be cut from the IGETC/CSU-Breadth pathways. The UC system has never required Oral Communication for GE transfer; therefore, the most glaring and vulnerable discipline in the negotiation process was our own.</p> <p>The potential elimination of the Oral Communication GE requirement for transfer had the potential to wipe out our department and the Communication Studies discipline as a whole. During a typical semester, COMS 103 Oral Communication and COMS 135 Interpersonal Communication (i.e., the two courses most commonly used to satisfy the GE requirement) account for over 90% of our total enrollment. Furthermore, most students do not enter college aspiring to major in COMS. It is not until they take their first COMS course (Oral Communication or Interpersonal Communication) that students express an interest in the field. This means the number of COMS AA/AD-T graduates from Mesa and, in turn, our transfer institutions, would have seen a dramatic reduction if students were not required to take an oral communication class. This also would have resulted in a serious threat to the stability of our award-winning Speech & Debate Team as most students are recruited from our GE classes.</p> <p>In response to this legislation, several of our faculty members attended a series of Zoom meetings, which included Communication Studies faculty from across the state, representing community colleges, the CSUs, and UCs. A plan was devised to present the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) with white papers to argue for the retention of the oral communication requirement in the new CalGETC unified pathway. In total, six papers were presented to ICAS: (1) Oral Communication & Employment, (2) Accreditation Standards, (3) Civic Engagement & Social Advocacy, (4) Oral Communication & Equity/Completion, (5) Impacts of AB 928 – Legislative Crosswalk, and (6) Alumni/Student Narratives.</p>
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		<p>Dr. Kim Perigo played an active role by representing the community colleges when making oral arguments for ICAS. She also worked with the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) to raise awareness of legislative changes across our discipline and the importance of the faculty voice in all legislative matters. All faculty were encouraged to submit feedback to ICAS regarding the proposed CalGETC pathway. Collectively, our response to AB 928 protected our department, as the oral communication requirement was included in the new GE proposal.</p> <p>Our next challenge will be on curriculum revisions to preserve the academic rigor that is being demanded by the UC system. We will be working with our colleagues across the state to make necessary adjustments that meet the requests of the UC while preserving the practical foundations of our performance-based classes. Additionally, the inclusion of oral communication in the new CalGETC pathway means we will likely see an increase in enrollment now that we will be serving UC-bound students who previously were not required to take an oral communication course.</p> <p>Full-time Faculty Shortage</p> <p>We began the Spring 2020 semester with 8 full-time faculty members. Since then, one of our full-time faculty members retired and another has declared their intent to retire. When compared to our Spring 2020 staffing, we can expect to see a 25% reduction to our full-time faculty within the next year or so.</p> <p>Assembly Bill 1725 and implementing regulations (e.g., California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 5, Sections 51025 and 53300 et. seq.) set a goal for percentage of hours taught/worked by full-time faculty at 75%.</p> <p>However, we are currently operating below the 75% ratio of full-time faculty FTEF, our faculty headcount also reveals our over-reliance on adjuncts to meet the needs of our students. As of Spring 2023, our full-time faculty headcount is 7 (35% of total COMS faculty), while our</p>
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		<p>adjunct faculty headcount is 13 (65% of total COMS faculty). Indeed, over the past four years, adjunct faculty represented 45% of our FTEF.</p> <p>The impact of this has already impact our ability to recruit students into our discipline—we have observed a 44% decline in the number of Communication Studies degrees conferred, from 92 awards during the 18-19 academic year, to just 52 in 21-22. Furthermore, operating within a deficit of full-time faculty members poses the following challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less representation on campus committees. • Reduced number of office hours during which students can obtain valuable one-on-one time and mentorship with instructors. • Fewer faculty members involved with the maintenance and modernization of curriculum. • Mental and physical exhaustion of the faculty in COMS to cover all areas in need of representation.
<p>If applicable, describe any major curricular or service changes your unit has engaged in and the impact of those changes since the last comprehensive review.</p>	<p>Optional</p>	<p>During the pandemic, our department moved to update all course outlines to be eligible for “fully online” designation. Prior to this movement, our courses were designated for “DE-emergencies only”. Thus, changing all course outlines for fully online DE designation was in response to the potential removal of emergency status. Since then, we have been working to bring more of our classes back on campus; however, with the popularity of the online modality among students juxtaposed with the benefits of in-person instruction for our discipline, this has proven to be a challenge.</p> <p>Overall, the impact we have seen as an increase in enrollment for online sections, but lower success and retention rates compared to our in-person classes.</p>
<p>If applicable, describe the impact of any new resources (human, fiscal, etc.) on the unit and/or action plan</p>	<p>Optional</p>	

implementation.		
Please confirm that the department has reviewed the Course Learning Outcomes listed in CurricuNet for each course and verify accuracy.	Select One	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reviewed and accurate <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed not accurate, update in progress <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed not accurate, need support
Data Reflection		
Prompt	Guidance	Program Response
Describe the trends you see in your program/service area's data.	Instructional Data you may consider: enrollment trends, course & program learning outcomes, Institutional Learning Outcomes, course success and retention rates, degree completion, transfer, employment, labor market analysis, other data relevant to your unit's work	<p>An analysis of data from the 18-19 academic year through 22-23 reveals several noteworthy trends.</p> <p>Foremost, we observed a decline in the number of Communication Studies degrees conferred, from 92 awards during the 18-19 academic year, to just 52 in 21-22. This represents a 44% decline in awards over a 4-year period.</p> <p>Similarly, we noticed a 7% decline in total enrollment from 3,931 in 19-20 to 3,675 in 22-23. A few of our courses felt the weight of these shifts more than others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMS 111 = 66% decrease in enrollment • COMS 104 = 62% decrease in enrollment • COMS 160 = 43% decrease in enrollment • COMS 170 = 63% decrease in enrollment • COMS 180 = 62% decrease in enrollment <p>During this same period, the School of Humanities saw a 15% decrease in enrollment while Mesa College saw a 16% decline in enrollment.</p>
Describe any equity gaps you see in these data. Are there	Equity gaps refer to disparities in educational outcomes and student success metrics across	At the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, our equity gaps for student success were primarily reflected among Black/African

<p>differences and/or patterns observed by demographics (e.g. race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.)?</p>	<p>race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and other demographic traits and intersectionalities.</p>	<p>American students (-9.2%), Filipino students (-7.7%), Latinx students (-8.0%). Factors other than ethnicity also revealed equity gaps: military (-4.3%) and men (-9.0%). Still, our overall program success rate (76.3%) was higher than that of the School of Humanities overall (69%) and Mesa college (71.7%).</p> <p>For Spring 2020, general observations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Latinx</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities. • <i>DSPS</i> equity gap was closed in the Communication Studies Department this semester, while the School of Humanities and Mesa College <i>DSPS</i> equity gaps remained. • <i>Women</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than Mesa College in the School of Humanities. • Overall, success was greater in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College. <p>During Fall 2020 semester, the country was still in full pandemic mode, which meant Communication Studies was operating in the DE format for all courses. Our equity gaps were still present, though we did notice some changes: Black/African American (-7.5%), LatinX (-8.5%), military (-1.3%), and men (-2.7%). Our overall program success rate (75.8%) was still slightly higher than the SOH (71.2%) and Mesa College (73.4%).</p> <p>For Fall 2020, general observations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>African American</i> equity gap in Communication Studies Department shrunk when compared to the previous semester. • <i>Filipino</i> equity gap in Communication Studies Department shrunk when compared to the previous semester. • <i>Latinx</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa
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		<p>College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>African American</i> equity gap was smaller in the Communication Studies Department than Mesa College. <p>Spring 2021 saw the continuation of distance education due to the extension of the pandemic. Our equity gaps continue to see improvement: Black/African American students (-6.4%) and Latinx (-9.2%). Equity gaps from the previous semesters were reduced, but also moved into the surplus realm: military (7.1%) and men (2.9%). Once again, our program success rate (75%) was higher than that of the SOH (70.9%) and nearly equal to the college (74.5%).</p> <p>For Spring 2020, general observations were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>African American</i> equity gap in Communication Studies Department shrunk for the third consecutive semester.• <i>Latinx</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College.• <i>DSPS</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College.• <i>Military</i> equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College.• <i>DSPS</i> equity gap was closed in the Communication Studies Department this semester. <p>Pandemic conditions continued into the Fall 2021 semester with all Communication Studies courses being offered in either a remote-synchronous format or a WEB-asynchronous format. Again, we saw changes in our equity gaps: Black/African American students (-3.6%), Latinx (-13.1%), and men (-2.3%). Our overall program success rate (71.3%) was still higher than the School of Humanities</p>
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(68.5%), though dipped slightly below the college success rate for the first time (71.5%).

For Fall 2021, general observations were:

- *African American* equity gap in Communication Studies Department shrunk for the fourth consecutive semester.
- *African American* equity gap is smaller in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College.
- *Filipino* equity gap was closed in the Communication Studies Department this semester.
- *Filipino* Students succeeded at higher rates in the Communication Studies Department than the School of Humanities and Mesa College.

Our first phase-in of on-campus classes occurred in Spring 2022. In total, 12.8% of our courses were offered in-person, which may have affected our outcomes as a program. The Communication Studies program had an overall success rate of 72.5%, which was higher than that of the School of Humanities (67.7%) and Mesa College (71.4%).

For Spring 2022, general observations were:

- In the Communication studies Department, the equity gap for *African American* students (-12.2%) was generally on par with the School of Humanities (-12.4%) and Mesa college (-12.2%).
- *Filipino* students in the Communication Studies Department had a positive equity gap (5.3%), compared to that of the School of Humanities (-1.0%).
- The equity gap for men in the Communication Studies Department (-2.3%) is on par with the School of Humanities (-2.3%) and Mesa College (-2.2%).

Describe the discussion(s) that took place about the unit's learning outcomes assessment data.	Department Outcomes Coordinators (DOCs) facilitate a department wide discussion on learning outcomes data each year during "Outcomes Across Campus". DOC's may helpful in supporting this section.	Over the past six years, our department has regularly discussed our outcomes data at formal department meetings and during informal hallways conversations. Our discussions generally conclude that our courses are performing better than the campus-wide outcomes; however, our equity gaps still persist. We brainstorm potential ways to close equity gaps, such as attending professional development opportunities, collaborating with other departments, and emphasizing more performance-based oral communication within our courses.
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Practice Reflection

Prompt	Guidance	Program Response
Describe current practices your unit has engaged in that you believe impact the above data trends and equity gaps.	Items to consider: new actions specifically focused on issues of equity, major curricular changes, professional learning, policy or process changes, data-informed unit dialogue, community outreach.	The reduction in several of our equity gaps may have been due to the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department Chair invites guest speakers to department meetings who discuss issues related to equity and student success. • We continue partnerships with other departments to offer modified course sections that cater to specialized groups (e.g., COMS 103 through Black Studies, COMS 103 for student athletes during the summer session, etc.)
What other factors (internal or external) might also impact the above data trends and equity gaps?	Items to consider: legislative changes, fiscal changes, staffing changes, recruitment, hiring, and retention practices.	The above data trends and equity gaps may have been influenced by the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pandemic had a disproportionate impact on minoritized groups. • The switch to online teaching had a disproportionate impact on minoritized groups. • Losing a full-time faculty member reduced the number of faculty members that we have who are more knowledgeable about campus equity services, and therefore reduced the number of faculty who can successfully connect minoritized students to the appropriate services.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online classes result in less time spent on campus, which equates to less student engagement, visibility, student validation, and sense of belonging.
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Unit Goals and Action Plans

Prompt	Guidance	Program Response
Unit Goals	Goals should connect to Data and Practice Reflections. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.	<p>Goal 1: Meet state-recommended standard for FT to PT faculty of 75%/25% by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Goal 2: Decrease all existing equity gaps each year.</p> <p>Goal 3: Increase enrollment in COMS 111, 104, 160, 170, & 180, by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Goal 4: Add more COMS courses into the IGETC and CSU-breadth by Fall 2025.</p> <p>Goal 5: Increase recruitment to the COMS major by 40% by Fall 2026.</p> <p>Goal 6: Approve at least one OER text for each COMS course by Fall 2025.</p>
Mesa2030 Roadmap Strategic Objective (SO) Alignment	Review Mesa2030 and the Roadmap to Mesa2030 , only link to SO's that your goal clearly and intentionally is meant to contribute to, each goal should link to 1 or more SOs	<p>Goal 1: Meet state-recommended standard for FT to PT faculty of 75%/25% by Fall 2024.</p> <p>SO: #3 – Design and promote programs and services that intentionally target a reduction in equity gaps in completion outcomes.</p> <p>SO: #4 – Support students’ access to resources to mitigate the impact caused by technological and basic needs insecurity.</p>

Strategic Objectives

- Develop pathways that provide students with clarity about degree, certificate, and transfer requirements.
- Develop cross-functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling.
- Design and promote programs and services that intentionally target a reduction in equity gaps in completion outcomes.
- Support students' access to resources to mitigate the impact caused by technological and basic needs insecurity.

Goal 2: Decrease all existing equity gaps each year.

SO: #3 – Design and promote programs and services that intentionally target a reduction in equity gaps in completion outcomes.

Goal 3: Increase enrollment in COMS 111, 104, 160, 170, & 180, by Fall 2024.

SO: #1 - Develop pathways that provide students with clarity about degree, certificate, and transfer requirements.

Goal 4: Add more COMS courses into the IGETC and CSU-breadth by Fall 2025.

SO: #1 - Develop pathways that provide students with clarity about degree, certificate, and transfer requirements.

SO: #2 – Develop cross-functional teams that support student success and include integrated career and transfer counseling.

Goal 5: Increase recruitment to the COMS major by 40% by Fall 2026.

SO: #1 - Develop pathways that provide students with clarity about degree, certificate, and transfer requirements.

Goal 6: Approve at least one OER text for each COMS course by Fall 2025.

SO: #3 – Design and promote programs and services that intentionally target a reduction in equity gaps in completion outcomes.

<p>Identify specific actions your program/service area will engage in to accomplish this goal.</p>	<p>Examples may include: policy or practice changes; unit initiatives, curricular changes, etc.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Meet state-recommended standard for FT to PT faculty of 75%/25% by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Actions: The department will continue to submit FHP requests annually until we hire enough full-time faculty to maintain and/or improve the efficiency of our program.</p> <p>Goal 2: Decrease all existing equity gaps each year.</p> <p>Actions: Hire new full-time faculty to bring new ideas to the department and hold office hours that support student engagement. Invite guest speakers to department meetings to discuss equity initiatives. Review equity gaps consistently at department meetings and disaggregate by ethnicity and modality.</p> <p>Goal 3: Increase enrollment in COMS 111, 104, 160, 170, & 180, by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Actions: Work with Counseling on the best ways to promote these classes. Develop department handouts (print and digital) that provide course descriptions and recommended sequencing.</p> <p>Goal 4: Add more COMS courses into the IGETC and CSU-breadth by Fall 2025.</p> <p>Actions: Collaborate with our Articulation Officer and curriculum liaisons to apply for IGETC and CSU-breadth inclusion. Specifically, for IGETC: add COMS 160 (Argumentation) to Area 1B (Critical Thinking); add COMS 111 (Oral Interpretation) and 104 (Advanced Oral Communication) to Area 3 (Arts and Humanities); add COMS 170 (Small Group) and 180 (Intercultural) to Area 4 (Social and Behavioral Sciences).</p> <p>Goal 5: Increase recruitment to the COMS major by 40% by Fall 2026.</p> <p>Actions: Increase efforts to inform students about the COMS major. Update classroom signage and marketing</p>
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		<p>materials in the COMS-designated classrooms. Hire a full-time faculty member to help with continuous recruitment to the major. Plan a recurring alumni panel event for students to learn and ask questions about the COMS major from COMS graduates.</p> <p>Goal 6: Approve at least one OER text for each COMS course by Fall 2025.</p> <p>Actions: Collaborate with our COMS librarian, Dr. Alison Gurganus and our OER librarian, Lisa Burgert, to review potential materials for OER adoption. Present potential OERs to the department for review. Once approved, add approved OERs to our course outlines.</p>
Does this Action Plan require resources	if yes, complete resource request form	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Resource Requests		
Prompt	Guidance	Program Response
General Directions	Each response should include accurate and relevant data, meaningful analysis of those data, and a clear connection of those data to the program/unit goals. Relevant data may include data beyond what is provided by IE. Writers should include any and all data they deem relevant to the request. Responses should include considerations around impact to campus practice, proportion of students/employees impacted, impact on equity, and specialized expertise needed to support programming.	
Unit Goal Alignment	Which Unit Goal(s) will this resource request support?	<p>Goal 1: Meet state-recommended standard for FT to PT faculty of 75%/25% by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Goal 2: Decrease all existing equity gaps each year.</p>

		<p>Goal 3: Increase enrollment in COMS 111, 104, 160, 170, & 180, by Fall 2024.</p> <p>Goal 4: Add more COMS courses into the IGETC and CSU-breadth by Fall 2025.</p> <p>Goal 5: Increase recruitment to the COMS major by 40% by Fall 2026.</p> <p>Goal 6: Approve at least one OER text for each COMS course by Fall 2025.</p>
Type of Request	Select one	<input type="checkbox"/> Classified Professional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment/Supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Budget Augmentation <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities
Title of Request		
Using accurate and relevant data*, explain the Need for the request beyond what currently exists in the unit.	<p>Some data will be provided but writers should include any additional data they deem relevant to the demonstration of need. Classroom requests must minimally include the FTES/FTEF, amount of Adjunct FTEF on the schedule, and current Headcount of Full-time faculty in the department.</p> <p>Other data could include student utilization, faculty/employee utilization, growth/demand, time on task, efficacy of services, etc.</p> <p>Request may include discussion of how it will support a new policy, practice or requirement (internal or external). The requirement should be clearly articulated with relevant details describing how this request supports the requirement.</p>	<p>The expected benefit of full-time faculty is evidenced by the commitment and efficiency of our current department members. Three of our contract faculty are responsible for the forensics team, all of whom are serving in multiple capacities within the department, at the college, and with statewide legislative processes. For example, Dr. Bryan Malinis is the current department chair, Professor Dave Odasso is the current chair of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Kim Perigo is an active sub-committee member of the Faculty Association for California Community Colleges (FACCC) which influences statewide education legislation. They manage these roles on top of the demands of their traditional classes and their forensics travel schedule.</p> <p>Communication Studies full-time faculty also play an active role in the Academic Senate. Professor Sakeenah Gallardo is finishing her term as Vice President. Dr. Veronica Gerace has served as our department senator, was elected Senator-at-Large, and has just recently been elected as the new incoming Vice President. In years prior, Dr. Kim Perigo and Professor Terry Kohlenberg served terms as Senate President. Indeed, over the past six years, Senate</p>

Executive leadership has consistently had representation from Communication Studies, showcasing the department's active involvement in instructional governance.

The need for another full-time faculty member in Communication Studies is also necessitated by statewide changes to the transfer pathways and mandated restructuring of our curriculum. For example, AB 928 (Berman) mandated the creation of a single GE transfer pathway, now referred to as CalGETC. The statewide adoption of these changes requires consistent advocacy for the inclusion of oral communication as a core competency for transfer—a feat that Dr. Kim Perigo has played an active role in since the legislation passed in 2021. Furthermore, the Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC), produced by the California Community Colleges and California State University systems, has put forth a new version of our ADT: "Communication Studies 2.0". The new TMC changed the required core classes for our ADT, which then had a domino effect on the structure of electives for degree attainment. Collectively, these changes require a continuous, in-depth examination and/or alteration of our course offerings to ensure their inclusion in as many transfer categories as possible, thereby establishing clearer transfer pathways for our students while simultaneously growing enrollment in our elective classes. These efforts also directly link to Unit Goal #3 (Increase enrollment in COMS 111, 104, 160, 170, & 180, by Fall 2024.) and Unit Goal #4 (Add more COMS courses into the IGETC and CSU-breadth by Fall 2025.).

Even with the high involvement of our full-time faculty, our department's course offerings have averaged a fill rate of 87.1% over the past four years, which is consistently higher than the overall college fill rate of 80.5% over that same time frame. This is despite an overall FTES decline of 18.7% across the college (compared to the lower Communication Studies FTES decline of approximately 5.7%). It should be noted that productivity is not the most ideal measure for the efficacy of our department because most of the courses in our department are performance-based, which means we operate with lower class caps of 28-32 students per section. This is due to the need for ample time for speech presentations by each student (e.g., each of the 32 students in COMS 103 must perform

four speeches, each approximately 6 minutes in length). Having lower class caps means we are unable to capture the same FTES per course as other departments on campus. Therefore, course fill rates are a more accurate barometer of our enrollment trends.

In addition to operating below the 75% ratio of full-time faculty FTEF, our faculty headcount also reveals our over-reliance on adjuncts to meet the needs of our students. As of Spring 2023, our full-time faculty headcount is 7 (35% of total COMS faculty), while our adjunct faculty headcount is 13 (65% of total COMS faculty). Indeed, over the past four years, adjunct faculty represented 45% of our FTEF. The implication is that our department remains highly efficient in serving as many students as possible despite the non-classroom obligations of our contract faculty members. We are strategic with our scheduling, as well as our dedication to collaborating closely with our adjuncts to meet the needs of our students.

Collectively, the efficacy of our department is evidenced by our involvement throughout the organization and beyond, as well as our enrollment data. Even still, one of our most experienced full-time faculty members has retired and another has expressed plans to retire within the next year, which will have a profound impact on the departmental workloads across the contract faculty. Therefore, it is prudent to hire at least one new generalist in order to provide for a smoother transition within the faculty ranks while maintaining the efficiency of our department, which actively serves our students, the college, the district, and various statewide initiatives.

Explain how your request contributes to improvements in **Equity** for Disproportionately Impacted groups.

Scoring considerations: Request will intentionally support practices that have demonstrated success or are research supported in producing parity in outcomes across racial/ethnic student groups or other historically minoritized groups. Examples may include:

- Student-facing practices, policies, programs
- Policies, practices, programs that foster a culture of equity-mindedness
- Policies, practices, programs that improve our ability to pursue equity through principles of inquiry and development of equity-minded systems.

Hiring a new Communication Studies generalist can significantly contribute to diversity and equity within our academic institution. As a multidisciplinary field that encompasses various areas, such as intercultural communication, media studies, and organizational communication, subject matter experts in Communication Studies bring an informed pedagogy regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other underrepresented identities. While we cannot predict the demographic traits of our future hires, their knowledge and willingness to include newer, culturally relevant research in their teachings will help create a more inclusive learning environment. Such learning spaces are where students from diverse backgrounds are validated and affirmed, thereby increasing success and persistence among disproportionately impacted groups. This will undoubtedly lead to a reduction in our equity gaps, which is Unit Goal #2 of our program.

Additionally, increasing our ratio of full-time to part-time faculty members will enable us to provide more of our most valuable, student-facing equity practices: office hours. One of the primary functions of office hours is to provide constructive, empathetic, one-on-one support disproportionately impacted students. Similarly, the purpose of *equity* (in contrast to *equality*) is to provide additional resources and attention to the people who need it most. Therefore, office hours are one of our greatest student-facing equity practices, because they enable us to provide tailored, one-on-one support for students who would benefit the most.

This benefit is not hypothetical—it is guaranteed by the collective bargaining agreement. Full-time faculty members are contractually obligated to hold 5 office hours per week. Additionally, full-time faculty members are obligated to spend at least 10 hours per week on campus (outside of their regular responsibilities) during which students can schedule meetings outside of office hours. Furthermore, full-time faculty members are typically more familiar with campus resources (which helps them connect disenfranchised students to the appropriate assistance), department curriculum, and the specific demographics and needs of Mesa College's unique

		<p>student body.</p> <p>In contrast, part-time faculty members are not required to hold office hours. Or, if they do elect to hold office hours, they typically hold significantly fewer office hours than their full-time counterparts. Furthermore, part-time faculty are not required to spend additional time on campus, which further reduces the amount of time during which they can meet with students outside of class to offer face-to-face, one-on-one support. Continued reliance on our part-time instructors to staff our courses simultaneously reduces both the effectiveness and availability of faculty-student interpersonal connections. Therefore, we must add an additional full-time faculty member to our department, to increase both the number of office hours offered, and the efficacy of the individualized relationships we cultivate with our students in need.</p> <p>Furthermore, COMS full-time faculty members have a track record of creating, supporting, and promoting equity initiatives on campus. For instance, Dr. Bryan Malinis is an active member of the LGBTQ+ Safe Zone Task Force, which recently collaborated on the successful opening of the Mesa College Pride Center—one of only a handful of professionally-staffed community college Pride Centers in California. He was also invited to serve as a NASPA panelist to provide an instructional perspective on trauma-informed teaching practices. Dr. Veronica Gerace is continuing her work with the Black Student Success Initiative. Professor Dave Odasso has helped the Speech & Debate Team produce pieces that specifically target equity issues, such as neurodiversity in the workplace, systemic racism through redlining practices, and living with generational trauma. Our full-time faculty have demonstrated their commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in the spirit of equity. Therefore, having more full-time faculty in COMS will positively correlate with more support of campus equity initiatives.</p> <p>Overall, hiring a new Communication Studies generalist who promotes diversity and equity can have a positive and lasting impact on our institution, its students, and the broader academic community. The inclusion and affirmation of diverse perspectives in our</p>
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		<p>discipline, which serves every student at Mesa, can help promote understanding, empathy, and social change in today's diverse and complex world.</p>
<p>Explain how your request addresses <u>Excellence.</u></p>	<p>Scoring considerations: Request will intentionally support excellence and completion. Demonstration of excellence may include discussion of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● high-quality, culturally relevant teaching/learning experiences ● supporting students toward timely completion of educational goals ● eliminating barriers and providing support for students entering Mesa College, through to completion, and beyond to transfer and employment ● partnerships within Mesa's internal and external communities to enhance access and completion efforts ● New policies, practices, or structures that intentionally focus on institutional improvement and effectiveness 	<p>Our department needs more personnel to do the necessary work in guiding students toward timely completion of education and career goals. It has become increasingly difficult to perform all accountability expectations that promote student success, such as student learning outcomes (SLOs), curriculum development, curriculum maintenance, faculty evaluations, program review, and community networking. Full-time faculty are also more likely to attend department and school meetings where critical information about contemporary pedagogy is discussed. The addition of a COMS generalist is essential to preserving the efficacy and excellence of our department.</p> <p>A recurring theme throughout this request is the need for more faculty to take part in the implementation of curriculum changes mandated by recent legislation. With the recent pushes toward more explicit progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within graduate-level pedagogy, a new COMS generalist would bring fresh ideas for culturally relevant teaching/learning experiences, which would help our department brainstorm different ways to close equity gaps and improve student success/retention.</p> <p>Furthermore, while enrollment is relatively stable in COMS, majors have gone down as evidenced by the Awards Dashboard. Since our department's peak of 92 awards in 18-19, COMS has seen a 43.4% drop in awards. This is in comparison to the college's peak of 2,017 awards in 17-18, which has since dropped 8% overall. This means</p>

		<p>that although we are serving every transfer student by fulfilling their oral communication requirement, fewer students are pursuing the COMS major, which also impacts discipline recruitment at our transfer institutions.</p> <p>Most students are recruited to the major through personal, one-on-one conversations with faculty during office hours. Since contract faculty are more likely to hold office hours, they are also more likely to recruit students to the major once they complete their transfer-required oral communication course. It is no surprise that our department saw a decrease in ADT/AA attainment in conjunction with the retirement of one of our full-time faculty members. Additionally, with the increase in campus-wide involvement of our contract faculty, students are less likely to be able to interact with us individually, which may also explain the loss in COMS degree attainment. We are continuing to network with COMS representatives at our sister colleges, as well as COMS stakeholders at SDSU, CSUSM, UCSD, and PLNU to preserve and grow the majors in our discipline, as noted in Unit Goal #5 of our program.</p> <p>Overall, the hiring of a new COMS generalist would enable us to provide students with more faculty-student interactions, increase recruitment to the major and COMS ADT/AA attainment, and maintain healthy partnerships with internal and external communities. It would also help us prevent a loss in efficacy regarding assessment, evaluations, and curriculum development. These impacts reinforce the academic and collegial excellence of our organization.</p>
<p>Explain how your request fosters <u>Innovation</u></p>	<p>Scoring Considerations: Request introduces something new and/or makes changes to something established. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Innovation in curriculum, pedagogy, student success efforts ● New/more efficient or effective campus processes or infrastructure support ● Ideas around scaling up an effective practice utilizing a new approach 	<p>Hiring a new COMS generalist will promote innovation with curriculum, pedagogy, and student success efforts. Our discipline curriculum is always evolving and continues to encompass a wide array of subjects, such as environmental communication, mediated communication, culture, identity and intersectionality, conflict management, law, social movements, health communication, oral interpretation, and organizational leadership. Collectively, it is no surprise that our department has no shortage of ideas for equity-</p>

boosting initiatives.

Full-time faculty in our department have shown interest in developing a valuable, transferable curriculum. For example, Dr. Veronica Gerace has developed a specialized section of COMS 135 (Interpersonal Communication) with a health focus, which has been incorporated into Allied Health programs, such as the Health and Wellness Coaching program. She also just recently developed a new course—COMS 401 (Advanced Communication Skills for Healthcare Professionals)—which has been adopted by the Health Information Management program as an upper division course for their Bachelor of Science degree. Professor Scott Plambek is interested in developing an Environment Communication course that could potentially be offered in conjunction with sustainability programs. Dr. Kim Perigo and Dr. Bryan Malinis are networking with DeAnza College to start an advocacy internship program, which would train students on how to analyze pending legislation and meet with lawmakers to present their analyses. Our department would continue to promote the presentation of innovative curriculum ideas from a new full-time hire.

COMS full-time faculty also take great pride in the assessment, alteration, and evolution of their pedagogy. Professor Odasso is researching COMS OER and exploring the possibility of writing custom OER materials for our department, which would support equity and increase accessibility for low-income students. These efforts also support Unit Goal #6 (Approve at least one OER text for each COMS course by Fall 2025.). Professor Sakeenah Gallardo works closely with the English and Black Studies programs on social justice initiatives, such as Voices from the Left and specially-tailored oral communication courses. Professor Scott Plambek identified a process for identifying and address student use of A.I. in its early phases, which he shared with the department and has now been asked to share with the campus through various panel discussions. Full-time faculty within our department are encouraged to explore innovative pedagogy on an ongoing basis. There is no doubt a new COMS generalist would be supported in their explorative endeavors.

The benefits of awarding a full-time position to COMS are not hypothetical. We have a history of being a prolific department and producing highly productive full-time faculty. We have a plan in place,

		<p>we have a collection of excellent ideas ready to implement, we will hit the ground running if we are given the opportunity to do so. By bringing in new talent with diverse skills and expertise, we can foster a culture of innovation and creativity.</p>
<p>Explain how your request promotes <u>Sustainability</u></p>	<p>Scoring considerations: Request clearly demonstrates a commitment to sustainability of resources (physical, fiscal, and human). Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commitment to and prioritization of policies or practices that improve environmental justice and sustainability ● Responsible stewardship of resources (physical, fiscal, and human) ● climate action education ● Policies, practices, programs committed to reducing Mesa College’s carbon footprint ● replacement/maintenance of current resources ● cross-functional/interdisciplinary request that improves efficiency of resources, practices, and programming 	<p>Sustainability has become a critical aspect of modern organizational practices. Academia is no exception. Hiring a new full-time faculty member in Communication Studies (COMS) can have several positive impacts on sustainability, including reducing adjunct turnover and fostering a culture of sustainability across the college.</p> <p>Hiring a new COMS generalist will contribute to sustainability by reducing turnover. Due to the demand for our classes, we are continually onboarding new adjunct instructors. This is also due to part-time faculty departures as they find full-time work elsewhere. Indeed, over the past 6 years, COMS has seen the departure of 6 adjuncts, as well as the on-boarding of 6 new adjuncts in that same time frame. High turnover rates are detrimental to our organization’s sustainability efforts as it leads to increased costs associated with recruitment, training, and lost productivity. By hiring the right person for a contract position in COMS, we can continue to serve more students while reducing turnover through a more stable employment contract. The onboarding of a contract hire would cultivate stability of human resources and move our full-time faculty ratio closer to the state-recommended 75%, which is Unit Goal #1 for our program.</p> <p>A new COMS generalist can also help foster a culture of sustainability at our college through the inclusion of newer ideas. San Diego State continues to grow their Health Communication degree, CSU Channel Islands offers a specialty in Environmental Communication, and CSU Long Beach offers a COMS degree with emphases in Culture and Public Affairs. COMS graduates are exposed to a variety of concepts from conflict resolution, mass media theory, and political advocacy to environmental communication, organizational structures, and community storytelling. Therefore, a COMS generalist would bring a breadth of fresh perspectives, ideas, and energy, which would help inspire and engage existing faculty members throughout our department, college, and district. Indeed, exposure to new ideas fosters stability as a human resource.</p>

Is this request necessary for the Program's Accreditation status?	Select one	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
One-time cost or ongoing?	Equipment/Supplies and Facilities Requests Only	<input type="checkbox"/> One-time <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Estimated Cost of ownership	Equipment/Supplies and Facilities Requests Only	\$
Is maintenance required	Equipment/Supplies and Facilities Requests Only	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No