It is recommended program assessment results be used to **celebrate achievements of student learning** as well as to **identify potential areas for future curriculum improvement**.

Please email this completed form as an attachment to **thatcherk@slu.edu**

**CAS PROGRAMS:** Please email this completed form by July 1 to Donna LaVoie **lavoiedj@slu.edu**

1. **Degree Program(s) included in this report:** MA program
2. **Department:** Communication
3. **School/Center/College:** CAS
4. **Name(s):** April Trees
5. **Email:** atrees@slu.edu
6. **Phone:** 977-3144

**Instructions:** Please answer the following **five** questions to the best of your ability for each degree program offered within your department.

1. Summarize your **assessment activities** during the past year for each degree program and how this work relates to the established assessment plan (*e.g. what program outcomes were assessed, faculty discussions, new survey design, data collection, revised assessment plans or learning outcomes, etc.*). Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

   In the **Fall 2015** semester, our department developed a robust assessment plan for our MA program that includes 6 program learning outcomes (PLOs), curriculum mapping, and both direct and indirect assessment measures. Students who graduated in May 2016 completed an exit survey that asked them about their perceptions of their learning along all 6 PLOs; this exit survey is our indirect assessment measure. Additionally, this year we also assessed PLO 1 (Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences) and PLO 4 (Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence) using direct measures. As a direct measure of learning, students’ committee members evaluated students’ culminating projects and oral defenses using rubrics measuring those two PLOs.

2. Describe specific **assessment findings** related to the **learning outcomes** assessed for each degree program, including any pertinent context surrounding the findings. Please include the **learning outcomes themselves**. (*e.g. Our goal was that 75% of students performed at the “proficient” level of competency in problem solving, using a new scoring rubric. 81% of students performed at the “proficient” level in problem solving, exceeding our expectations.*) Do not include student-level data. Data included in this report should be in aggregate. Please include how Madrid courses/program were involved.

   Our scoring rubrics measure performance on a scale from 1 to 4. The rubrics consider category 1 to be “benchmark.” Categories 2 (**intermediate level of achievement**) and 3 (**advanced**).
intermediate level of achievement] are considered “milestones,” and category 4 is considered our “capstone.” With one exception, all three committee members completed rubrics for each graduating student after his or her oral defense.

For PLO1 (Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences), scores among faculty members were reconciled to create a single score for each student (7 total). Six of the seven students reached the capstone (3) or advanced-intermediate (3) levels on this outcome. One student reached the intermediate milestone. Table one contains these data. The mean score from completed faculty rubrics was 3.1, putting students squarely within the second “milestone” category of our rubric.

For PLO4 (Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence), scores among faculty members were discrepant for all but two students, suggesting an issue in the method for assessing this learning outcome. The two students with a thesis or applied project focused on cultural or intercultural communication received a 4 on this rubric. For students whose project was not specifically focused on intercultural communication, however, the rubric did not work well for assessment. Some faculty indicated that they could not apply the rubric to the artifacts being assessed, whereas others drew on information outside of the project to assess students’ competency in this area. The mean score from completed faculty rubrics was 2.6, putting students above the first “milestone” category of our rubric. It should be noted that two committee members chose not to complete the rubric for this PLO because they felt a student’s project was not designed to demonstrate intercultural communication competence. Two other committee members chose the benchmark category (i.e., 1) for this rubric, and they commented that they did so because a student’s project did not substantively involve intercultural communication. This faculty feedback will encourage us to discuss the effectiveness of the rubrics when faculty return from summer break and the Fall 2016 semester begins.

The exit survey asked students 25 Likert-scale questions to measure their perceptions of their learning in the program. 5 was “strongly agree” and 1 was “strongly disagree.” The mean was above a 4 for each item (the lowest score was 4.14; the highest score for an item was 4.86). Table two contains the averages for each specific item.

*Please attach any tables, graphics, or charts to the end of this report.*

3. Describe how assessment feedback has been provided to students, faculty, and staff. (e.g. report for faculty, executive summary for the dean, web page for students, alumni newsletter, discussion with students in class or club event, etc.)

This feedback was gathered in May, as students were defending their projects and preparing to graduate – but also as the spring semester was ending and faculty were breaking for the summer. Therefore, this feedback/data will be shared with faculty during the fall semester.

4. In what ways have you used assessment findings to celebrate student achievements and/or to improve the curriculum this past year? (e.g. prizes to students, hosting student parties, changes to curriculum, student projects, learning goals, assessment strategies, etc.)

Faculty will discuss the Spring 2016 assessment data in the Fall 2016 semester. Based on those discussions, we will make decisions about what to celebrate about our program, how to improve...
our curriculum in the graduate program, and/or what adjustments need to be made to our assessment methods.

Based upon past assessment data, we learned that our students would benefit from a more rigorous focus on data analysis in our program. In response to that, our graduate committee generated proposals during the 2015/2016 school year that would reshape our curriculum to enhance our teaching of methods and data analysis. The faculty as a whole will discuss these proposals in the Fall 2016 semester as well.

5. Describe any changes to your assessment plans, or any challenges or educational experiences with the assessment process this past year that you would like to share.

Since this spring semester was the first time we had used rubrics to evaluate students’ culminating projects and oral defenses, we anticipated that we’d have some wrinkles to iron out. As mentioned above, some faculty felt the rubric for PLO4 was largely inapplicable to their student’s project. This faculty feedback will encourage us to discuss the effectiveness of the rubrics and our assessment plan in general.

*Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.*
Table One: Direct Measures (PLO 11 & PLO-4)

Students will communicate effective messages for scholarly and public audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Achievement</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students will demonstrate intercultural communication competence.

Table Two: Indirect Measures (all PLOs)

PLO 1
4.57 The program encouraged me to develop my written communication skills.
4.57 I have writing skills that will allow me to communicate effectively and independently in a variety of situations.
4.14 The program encouraged me to develop my oral communication and presentation skills.
4.43 I have oral communication skills that will allow me to communicate effectively and independently in a variety of situations.

PLO 2
4.71 The program encouraged me to develop my research skills.
4.57 I am able to gather information from multiple sources and make critical judgments about the value of that information.
4.57 The program helped me understand the relationship between research paradigm and methodological choices.
4.43 The program taught me the appropriate criteria for evaluating communication research.

PLO 3
4.57 The program consistently emphasized the importance of communication theory.
4.57 I am able to apply communication theory to explain and analyze everyday situations.

PLO 4
4.71 The program consistently emphasized the importance of culture and diversity.
4.71 I have an understanding of cultures other than my own.

PLO 5
4.57 The program consistently emphasized the importance of social justice.
4.57 I recognize the various ways communicative practices contribute to and detract from justice in society.
4.57 I understand my civic responsibilities as a local and global citizen.

PLO 6
4.71 The program consistently emphasized the importance of ethics.
4.86 I am able to make ethical judgments and take action based on broad knowledge.