

Summary  
Comprehensive Program Review  
BFA in Speech Communication  
Valdosta State University

Comprehensive Program Review in the University System of Georgia requires that programs be evaluated under the following three categories: (1) Viability; (2) Productivity, and (3) Quality.

**VIABILITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—the use of such considerations as available resources, student interest, career opportunities, and contributions to the goals and mission of the institution, University System, and state to determine whether a program should be continued as is or modified (expanded, curtailed, or eliminated). Viability considerations are independent of quality measurements; i.e. high quality program could lack viability, or a program in need of considerable improvement could have a high viability.**

According to its program review, the BFA in Speech Communication prepares students for entry into professional positions in the private, non-profit, and public sectors as well as for possible graduate work. The program contributes to the goals and mission of the University system by providing general education courses and courses to nearly 200 majors. It provides service to the community and region through service learning components in course work. Career opportunities in the fields typically followed by its graduates continue to flourish. The faculty members contribute to the university's mission by providing a quality education, growth in faculty development, and the needs of students.

**PRODUCTIVITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—the number and contributions of graduates of an academic program and/or the number of students served through service courses in the context of the resources committed to its operation. (Additional measures of productivity might include counts of students who meet their educational goals through the program's offerings, including minors, certificates, or job enhancement, if such goals are part of the program's mission.)**

According to its program review, the BFA in Speech Communication has had a minor fluctuation in numbers due primarily to the institution of a minimum GPA of 2.25, which cut out approximately 20 percent of its potential student market. This increase in selectivity, however, is expected to increase the number of majors in a short period of time as the program's reputation is enhanced by the higher admission standard to the program. The program continues to graduate nearly 70 students a year. The program has generated over 7000 credit hours a year over the last three years. The faculty members advise an average of 26 advisees, slightly over the average number of advisees institution-wide. The faculty each generates over 640 credit hours FTE, again slightly over the average number in the institution. Speech Communication students serve in a variety of internship experiences and participate in numerous service learning projects.

**QUALITY (Academic Affairs Handbook, Section 2.03.05)—measure of excellence. Quality indicators may include, but are not limited to, attainment of student outcomes, a comparison of program elements relative to internal and external benchmarks, resources, certification results, placement in graduate schools, job placement, and awards and honors received by the program), and other standards.**

According to its report, faculty in speech communication have been involved in numerous papers and articles (14 faculty participants in 9 papers or articles) and served as editors and reviewers. Students have begun to present research at the state and regional level. Each course in the program stresses one or more of the three program learning outcomes. Students have successfully developed résumés and portfolio packages. The Public Relations emphasis of the program has been certified for Public Relations (CEPR) by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Some additions were made to the curriculum as a result of feedback from the PRSA team.

## **AREAS of CONCERN**

1. The faculty is underrepresented in terms of ethnic diversity. Hiring and African American faculty member would ease that considerably (perhaps in association with a new hire for the Intercultural Communication emphasis).
2. There is a concern for faculty development-related budget matters.
3. The program needs to improve its base with its stakeholders—alumni and persons who hire its graduates.
4. The program needs to nail down its viability by working on attracting more freshmen as majors.
5. The institution has emphasized its need for graduate programs.
6. Other departments in the College of the Arts have all programs nationally accredited.

## **ACTION PLAN**

1. Work on improving the pool for the next several faculty hires in the hope of generating qualified African American candidates for those positions.
2. Continue to ask for increases in the travel budget.
3. Develop an alumni/stakeholder advisory board for the area.
4. Work with other units of the College of the Arts to develop relationships with high school counselors to better inform them about our programs and sway them to recommend those programs to their students.
5. Develop a graduate program in Communication.
6. Seek national accreditation from the National Communication Association.