This revised plan provides the additional detail requested by the reviewers. It has also been modified to be consistent with the approved plan submitted by the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products.

Contact Persons

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Written, Spoken and Visual Communication Requirement:
Curriculum Overview and Assessment Plan

MISSION

The Department of Management provides a top-level undergraduate education for students seeking entry-level management positions in small, medium and large corporations as well as individuals pursuing opportunities as entrepreneurs. We offer a single degree in Management with only two options: Human Resources Management (HR) or Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology Management (EIT). Upon graduation, our students will possess a solid understanding of both the conceptual and practical aspects of business management.

WRITTEN, SPOKEN, VISUAL COMMUNICATION PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

- **Develop learning objectives and assess outcomes for the curriculum—not specific courses.** We will deliver the outcome—a student who is prepared to communicate effectively in the profession of management by (a) maintaining the flexibility within the curriculum to engage in those activities in a manner best suited to the capabilities and resources available to the department, (b) making every faculty member responsible for achieving these outcomes—rather assigning specific responsibilities to one or two courses, and (c) engaging the student as an actively involved participant who is aware of the developmental expectations and equally responsible for their own advancement toward these outcomes.

- **Emphasize the appropriate and effective application of communication skills.** Our mission is not to teach the fundamentals of written or spoken communication; these skills must be developed prior to entry into the College of Business. Our responsibility is to help our students learn how to apply those skills effectively in our profession. Basic proficiency in written or spoken language is an expectation for all students entering the Management curriculum in their junior years. Remaining deficiencies in basic writing and speaking skills (as specified in 1000 and 2000 level communications requirements) will be identified and students will be expected to seek out resources to remediate any basic skill deficiencies.

- **Maximize Flexibility** Given the uncertainty of funding, the changes in technology and diverse work environments that are students will face after graduation, and the different needs of our students, our objective is to maximize the flexibility of our faculty to match specific course activities and exercises to accomplish our learning objectives. Our emphasis is on introducing new content and practice expectations for written, spoken and visual communication early in the curriculum (ideally in courses taken in the first semester of the junior year) and to employ a variety of exercises throughout the remainder of the curriculum, as deemed appropriate by faculty to maximize skill building.

- **Develop outcome assessments matched to the communication objectives and conduct curriculum level assessments.** Assessment should address the overall development of the individual and their preparation to be an effective communicator in the profession—not necessarily whether they have completed a specific set of activities; that is, we will focus on how students use these skills (outcome-based) rather than activity based approaches to assessments. These assessments will incorporate data from three sources: (a) graduating seniors, (b) alumni, and (c) employers of recent graduates.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Management, graduates will be able to:

Written Communication Objectives:
- Recognize when and how to effectively use a wide variety of written instruments including memos, executive summaries, position papers, project plans, policy documents, and/or research reports
- Effectively use electronic communications media as an analogue for and in support of the above written formats.

Spoken Communication Objectives:
- Efficaciously present to business audiences
- Facilitate small group meetings and discussions
- Listen effectively in business settings

Visual Communication Objectives
- Efficiently present numeric data in tables, charts and figures for business audiences.
- Prepare visual aids for business audiences
- Apply visualization techniques to organizational issues

INTEGRATION OF COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENT INTO CURRICULA

The spoken, visual and written communication requirements will be met through an “across-the-major” approach. Given the types of job opportunities that exist in management, we expect our students to be able to function effectively within a variety of organizational settings. Thus, our students should communicate effectively in dyads, small groups and to larger groups. In addition, students must be able to conduct analyses of organizational systems, processes and outcomes, summarize their analysis, make coherent presentations of the data, and communicate the implications and importance of their analysis to superiors and clients. Developing competence in these areas is part of a sequence of overall learning throughout a management major’s years at Virginia Tech.

University Core Requirements and Current WI Approach

Students in our program take either the ENGL 1105-1106 course sequence or the COMM 1015-1016 sequence for AREA I of the University Core Curriculum. Students that follow the ENGL course sequence also pick up COMM 2004 Public Speaking. These courses are designed to help students develop basic skills in written and spoken communication applicable to all disciplines. The courses are general in nature and have little direct tie to any specific major or area of subsequent study.

Currently, the department offers one writing intensive (WI) course, MGT 4344 Business Policy and Strategy. This course is a capstone course that requires students to use the tools developed in a number of courses over the finance career. MGT 4344 is taken in the senior year and utilizes individual and group writing assignments as the primary teaching tool. A perceived weakness in this approach is that by assigning writing intensive status to one course, less emphasis on writing is
placed at other points in this curriculum. By moving away from specific course level requirements
we will provide more opportunities for skill development by incorporating throughout the entire
management curriculum various skill-building efforts. It also provides a greater opportunity to
develop higher levels of skill proficiency than could be accomplished in a single course. Under the
writing-intensive-course model, if students do not develop adequate skills in that course, there is no
second opportunity. Further, an “across-the-major” approach incorporates the resources and
expertise of all faculty members in the skill development effort, not just those involved in teaching
writing intensive courses.

Revised Curriculum

Our revised plan eliminates the specifically designated writing intensive (WI) course from the
Management curriculum. In its place, the department is revising its existing curriculum to (1)
specifically introduce written, spoken, and visual communications skill expectations early in the
curriculum through modifications to three courses:

- MGT 3304 Management Theory and Leadership Practice
- MGT 3324 Organizational Behavior
- MGT 3334 Introduction to Human Resources Management

We will introduce the written, spoken, and visual communication requirements expected of
Management students within these courses. The objective is for students to understand the
communications expectations and a set of skills for demonstrating competence in each skill area by
the time they have completed this sequence of three courses.

Skill-building in the three major areas of written, spoken and visual communication also will occur
throughout the remaining courses in the curriculum. Students will write, speak and communicate
visually in nearly every one of classes in the major. A wide variety of assignments will ensure that
students have several opportunities to receive feedback and develop expertise in each of the
communications areas.

The classes specifically targeted for communication skill building include:

Courses in the common Management curriculum:
- MGT 4334 Ethical Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility
- MGT 4344 Productivity and Quality Leadership
- MGT 4394 Business Policy and Strategy

Courses in the EIT Option:
- MGT 3604 E-Management
- MGT 4064 ITE Leadership
- MGT 4074 Applied Small Business Consulting

Courses in the Human Resource Management Option:
- MGT 3344 Labor-Management and Employee Relations
- MGT 3424 Human Resources Staffing and Development
- MGT 4414 Compensation and Performance Management

The choice about the mix of activities to accomplish our objectives will reside with the faculty in
order to meet the specific needs of the curriculum, the pedagogical realities of the classroom (i.e.,
facilities, class size, etc.) and the developmental level of our students.
Sample activities that might be utilized to accomplish these objectives and example resource materials would include the following:

**Written Communication Objectives:**
*Example activities that might be used in courses to encourage skill building:*
- Prepare meeting agenda
- Develop memos that communicate ideas, plans, progress or ask for assistance
- Employing discussion lists and discussion threads
- Preparing midterm or mid-project progress reports
- Preparing written analyses of business cases
- Producing annotated bibliographies
- Writing executive summaries
- Developing business plans

*Examples of supporting texts/resources:*
- **Flynn, N. (1998)** Writing Effective E-mail: Improving your electronic communication. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Publications
- **Flynn, N. & Kahn, R. (2003).** E-mail rules: A business guide to managing policies, security and legal issues, for e-mail and digital communications. New York: American Management Association

**Spoken Communication Objectives:**
*Examples of activities that might be employed in courses to encourage skill building:*
- Present individual research, analysis, or summary of ideas
- Introduce a speaker
- Lead a group discussion
- Employ effective group process techniques to reduce tension or improve communication and member interaction in a project group
- Conducting a training session for a class or small group
- Present group research, analyses, proposals, or summaries of ideas
- Conducting group meetings
- Conduct mock union or salary negotiations
- Provide performance feedback to other group members

*Examples of supporting texts/resources:*
- **National Communication Association (1998).** College competencies: Speaking and listening competencies for college students [available on-line at http://www.natcom.org/Instruction/Competencies/college_competencies.htm]

**Visual Communication Objectives:**
*Example activities that might be employed in courses to encourage skill building:*
- Construct charts, tables or graphs to present the results of research or analysis
- Construct poster presentations
- Use Powerpoint presentations that incorporate advanced animation
- Prepare handouts to support presentations
Develop web pages that employ effective visual layout and design principles
Develop process diagrams and process flow charts
Develop organizational charts
Prepare Gantt and Pert charts to manage projects

Examples of supporting texts/resources:

ASSESSMENT

This section of the report provides the approach to be used to assess the learning outcomes of the Communication requirement, including Spoken, Visual, and Written Components. We will assess the extent to which students have achieved the stated objectives in the three major components of communication skills by the time they complete their degree program.

The department maintains an annual review and assessment program. That program currently incorporates the written and spoken communications objectives, but is being revised to incorporate the spoken and visual requirements outlined above. The initial assessments of graduating seniors for the spoken and visual communications requirements will be conducted this upcoming year as a part of our scheduled five-year review and evaluation. Since this year’s graduating seniors did not benefit from these new objectives, these data will be used to form a baseline against which to assess the effectiveness of the revised curriculum can be assessed.

The Department of Management will assess learning outcomes as a part of our normal five-year department review. Our assessments will include data from four different types of assessments for each of the areas of written, spoken and visual communications:

We will gather…

1. …from graduating seniors their assessments of how well the communications objective were met. (This is part of the senior survey and supplemental departmental surveys.)
2. …from faculty their objective assessments of how well communication objective were achieved as a part of ongoing course grading activities. (This will occur throughout the curriculum with an emphasis on senior level courses.)
3. …from alumni their perceptions of how well communications objectives were accomplished. (We will use surveys, focus groups and interviews)
4. …from employers their views of how well our communications objectives were met. (We will use surveys, focus groups and interviews as well as through their participation in the classroom as outside evaluators of student projects.)