



Fullerton College

Self-study for Communications Studies Program

2025

Section 1: Introduction

1. Briefly describe your program, make sure to include how your program helps the College achieve its mission.

The Communication Studies program embodies the mission and values of Fullerton College by advancing student learning, leadership, and community engagement through the study and practice of human communication. Our courses develop students' ability to think critically, speak effectively, and collaborate across diverse perspectives—skills essential for success in education, careers, and civic life. Grounded in the college's commitments to equity, diversity, and belonging, Communication Studies fosters inclusive dialogue and prepares students to contribute meaningfully to a multicultural society. By equipping learners to communicate with clarity, empathy, and purpose, the program helps transform lives and inspires positive change, aligning directly with Fullerton College's vision to serve as a catalyst for student achievement and social responsibility.

Over the past five years, Communication Studies has maintained an overall course success rate averaging 75 percent, which is well above the college's institution-set standard of 62 percent and consistently within reach of the stretch goal of 80 percent. Individual course performance varies slightly, with the largest courses—COMM 100 (Public Speaking) and COMM 135 (Argumentation

and Debate)—averaging between 71 and 76 percent success, while COMM 124 (Small Group Communication) and COMM 120 (Interpersonal Communication) demonstrate higher achievement rates, averaging 82 to 85 percent. The steady improvement in success from 72 percent in 2022–23 to 76 percent in 2024–25 reflects effective course design, instructor development, and alignment with student learning needs. Overall, the department’s performance exceeds institutional standards and indicates stable, strong student achievement across all core offerings.

Across the four academic years shown, the overall college maintained a relatively strong transfer performance, with the percentage of associate degree earners who transferred to a four-year institution ranging from 61 percent in 2020–2021 to 49 percent in 2023–2024. In contrast, Communication Studies students consistently exceeded the collegewide transfer rate during the first three years, achieving 71 percent in both 2020–2021 and 2021–2022, and peaking at 79 percent in 2022–2023 before dropping to 59 percent in 2023–2024. While the most recent year shows a modest decline, the department’s transfer outcomes remain comparatively strong and demonstrate that most Communication Studies graduates continue their educational pathways after earning their associate degrees.

Over the past five years, Communication Studies has consistently awarded a high number of AA-T degrees, reflecting the program’s strong alignment with transfer pathways and student demand. Degree completions peaked at 97 in 2020–2021, followed by a gradual decline through 2023–2024, when 58 degrees were awarded. However, the most recent year, 2024–2025, shows a rebound to 73 completions, indicating renewed growth after several pandemic-affected cycles. Nearly all degrees conferred during this period were AA-T in Communication Studies, underscoring the program’s central role as a transfer pipeline. Completion rate data by cohort further demonstrate that the majority of students complete their degrees within three years, with 2-year completion rates improving from 10 percent in the 2018 cohort to 16 percent in 2022, and 3-year completion rates remaining strong at roughly 25–33 percent. This upward trend in recent cohorts suggests that students are increasingly on pace to complete their AA-T degrees in a timely manner, aligning with institutional goals for improved transfer efficiency and student success.

The Communication Studies program serves a student population that is notably more Hispanic and less White and Asian than the general population of Orange County. Over the past five years, Latina/o/x/e students have consistently represented about 62 to 63 percent of enrollments, which is nearly double their 34 percent share of the county’s population. White students account for roughly 13 to 16 percent of enrollments, far below their 38 percent share locally, while Asian students make up about 9 to 12 percent of program enrollment, compared to 22 percent countywide. Black student enrollment has remained steady at about 3 percent, which is slightly higher than the 1.5 percent representation in Orange County. Students identifying as two or more races have grown gradually from 7 percent to 10 percent, outpacing county demographics. Overall, the Communication Studies program reflects Fullerton College’s equity-centered mission by serving a student population that closely aligns with regional diversity while providing particularly strong

access for Hispanic and first-generation students—the largest and historically underrepresented group in higher education within Orange County.

Communication Studies provides students with the “human connection advantage” essential in an AI-driven economy. As artificial intelligence transforms the workforce, it is simultaneously amplifying the value of human-centered skills such as trust-building, persuasion, collaboration, and ethical communication (Hernholm, 2025). While machines excel at processing information, they cannot replicate empathy, leadership, or the ability to create meaning from complexity—core outcomes of a Communication Studies education. Graduates are prepared to navigate ambiguity, lead teams, and communicate across cultural and professional boundaries, making them indispensable in sectors increasingly reliant on both digital fluency and human insight.

The Wall Street Journal (Hagerty, 2024) explicitly identifies Communication Studies as one of six valuable majors in the AI-driven economy because its graduates excel in areas employers now prize most: emotional intelligence, teamwork, and interpersonal communication. As hiring shifts toward skills-based evaluation rather than GPA, these communication competencies have become defining indicators of career readiness (NACE, 2025). Communication Studies graduates are not competing with AI but collaborating alongside it—bridging technology and humanity to advance ethical, adaptive, and people-centered leadership across industries.

Communication Studies directly supports the goals outlined in Vision 2030 by advancing equity in access, success, and support through communication-centered education that prepares students for transfer, workforce mobility, and civic engagement. Vision 2030 emphasizes “meeting learners where they are” and equipping Californians with skills for a rapidly changing, tech-enhanced world. Communication Studies aligns with this mission by cultivating the interpersonal, intercultural, and digital communication competencies essential for economic and social mobility. As California community colleges expand equitable baccalaureate attainment, workforce partnerships, and AI literacy initiatives, Communication Studies plays a pivotal role in preparing students to lead collaboratively, think critically, and engage ethically—helping realize Vision 2030’s commitment to inclusive, human-centered education for all Californians.

Communication Studies courses play a vital role in supporting Fullerton College’s transfer mission and student success. COMM 100 Public Speaking fulfills the CalGETC Area 1C Oral Communication requirement and is essential for transfer to the CSU and UC systems, while COMM 120 Intercultural Communication and COMM 105 Interpersonal Communication meet Area 4 Social and Behavioral Science requirements, ensuring students gain both communication proficiency and general education breadth. Beyond the classroom, COMM 138 Forensics—Fullerton College’s competitive speech and debate program—exemplifies high-impact learning in action. During the current program review period, the team has produced eight Students of Distinction awardees, one commencement speaker, two national championship titles, and numerous first-place tournament trophies. Together, these achievements demonstrate how Communication Studies cultivates academic excellence, leadership, and transfer readiness while reflecting the college’s commitment

to empowering students to succeed at the next level.

Section 2: Students

2.1 Student Demographics and Enrollment Trends

1. Using the data provided by the OIE, describe the student population your department serves. Which demographic groups have the most enrollments in your program? Which student groups are underrepresented in your program? Has the demographic profile of your program changed over the last four years?

Over the past five years, Communication Studies has maintained stable and diverse enrollment with relative year-to-year consistency. Latina/o/x/e students represent the clear majority of enrollment at approximately 62–63 percent each year, followed by White students at 13–15 percent, Asian students at 9–11 percent, and Black or African American students at about 3 percent. Students identifying as two or more races have grown from 7 percent to 10 percent. Across gender, female students make up about 53 percent of enrollments, male students 41–43 percent, and students identifying outside the traditional binary 5–6 percent. These trends indicate that Communication Studies serves a broad cross-section of the student population with strong participation among Latina/o/x/e and female students.

When compared with overall college demographics, Communication Studies closely reflects the broader student body but demonstrates even stronger enrollment among Latina/o/x/e students. Across the college, Latina/o/x/e students account for approximately 58–61 percent of total enrollments, while in Communication Studies, they represent about 62–63 percent. White and Asian students are slightly underrepresented in the department compared to the college's 14–15 percent White and 11–13 percent Asian averages, while Black or African American students are enrolled at similar rates in both contexts (around 3 percent). Gender representation is also consistent, though the department maintains a slightly higher percentage of female students and a growing share of students identifying outside the traditional gender binary.

The Communication Studies department is effectively serving Fullerton College's diverse student body by providing access and success pathways for the groups most represented on campus. The program's particularly strong participation among Latina/o/x/e and first-generation students reflects progress toward Fullerton College's equity goals in access and success. High female enrollment and a steady rise in students identifying outside the traditional gender binary indicate a welcoming and inclusive environment. The consistency of enrollment over time also suggests that Communication Studies courses meet general education, transfer, and skill development needs that resonate with students across majors.

2. Briefly describe course-level enrollment trends in your program over the past five years. Have the enrollment trends in your program changed over the last five years? To what do you attribute any changes or lack of changes?

- **Stable Courses:** COMM 100, 105, and 120. No statistically significant changes; consistent enrollment and strong transfer relevance. All three have steady enrollment, likely reflecting sustained interest in these communication skills and their broad appeal for both general education and transfer students. As the only class fulfilling the CalGETC Area 1C Oral Communication requirement, COMM 1000, the artist formerly known as COMM 100, Public Speaking continues to anchor departmental enrollment.
- **Growth Area:** COMM 124. This course shows a statistically significant upward trend over the four-year review period, best attributed to removing COMM 105 as an oral communication general education course which left only COMM 100 and COMM 124 to satisfy the CSU transfer pattern. Unfortunately, as of Fall 2025, this course has been rejected from Area 1C.
- **Variable Course:** COMM 135. Enrollment in COMM 135 has shown moderate year-to-year fluctuation with dips in some years, particularly around the 2022–2023 academic cycle but stabilizing afterward.
- **Stable Specialized Course:** COMM 138. The number of sections and enrollments have not changed meaningfully across the review period, which reflects both the intensive commitment required for competition and the course’s limited but focused student base.

3. How do you monitor and modify course offerings, including time and modality, to ensure that students’ needs are being met?

The Communication Studies department continuously monitors and adjusts course offerings to ensure student access, retention, and success. Using five-term enrollment, fill rate, and success data, the department evaluates demand patterns by time block and modality to optimize scheduling. Student survey feedback and section-level success reports guide decisions about which courses to expand, consolidate, or redesign. To promote equitable access, the department will follow the ASCCC-recommended practices by maintaining a balance of morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend courses, as well as fully online and hybrid sections, particularly in high-demand transfer courses like COMM 100, 105, and 120. Regular enrollment reviews at 8, 4, and 2 weeks before the start of each term, along with two final checks during the second week and tenth week, allow the department to right-size or add sections when needed, preventing bottlenecks in core classes. This responsive scheduling model ensures that Communication Studies offerings align with student needs, transfer pathways, and the college’s commitment to equity and access.

2.2 Student Achievement

1. Using data provided by the OIE, describe overall student achievement counts, rates, and trends in your program over the past five years, these include: course success rates, degrees/certificates completion counts, transfer counts, licensing, job placement, wage improvements (not all of these measures apply to every program).

Course success rates in Communication Studies have remained consistently strong throughout the review period, averaging between 71% and 76%, with the most recent year showing continued stability. These rates remain well above the college's institution-set standard, indicating reliable and sustained student achievement across the department's core courses.

Degree completion counts demonstrate a clear pattern: AA-T Communication Studies awards were highest in 2020–2021 (97 completions), followed by a gradual decline through 2023–2024 (58 completions) and then a notable rebound to 73 completions in 2024–2025. Across the full five-year period, 100% of degrees awarded were AA-T, underscoring the department's strong role as a direct transfer pathway.

Time-to-degree trends for Communication Studies majors show that most students complete within three years. Two-year completion rates ranged from 10% to 29%, depending on the cohort, while three-year completion rates remained steadily higher at 18% to 33%. Only a minority of students required more than three years, typically 9% to 25% depending on the cohort.

Achievement by student groups is generally positive, though differences exist. Combined cohort data show that Asian (24%), Black (25%), White (21%), and two or more races (35%) students exhibit relatively strong two-year completion rates. Hispanic/Latino students complete at a lower two-year rate (15%) but close the gap by three years (25%). By gender, female students complete at higher two-year rates (21%) compared to male students (11%), although three-year completion rates are similar (25% female, 24% male).

Transfer outcomes remain a department strength. Across four years, between 55% and 79% of Communication Studies degree earners transferred to a four-year university within the reporting period. Peak transfer occurred in 2022–2023 (79%), with a slight decline in 2023–2024 (59%), though still above national community college transfer norms.

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2. Are there student groups whose success rates are below the institution-set standard or whose success rates are below other student groups? What factors can explain this?

Communication Studies generally performs comparably with, and in several areas slightly stronger than, the college as a whole. Course success rates in the department consistently fall in the 68–72 percent range over the five-year period, aligning closely with the college's overall success rate trends. Degree and transfer momentum remain healthy: the majority of COMM degree earners

transfer within one year of completing the AA-T, similar to the college-wide pattern where 49–57 percent of associate degree earners transfer shortly after graduation. Completion timelines also show that COMM students typically finish within three to five years, which mirrors the college’s overall pattern where most students complete within the same timeframe. In short, the department’s overall achievement indicators remain in step with institutional benchmarks for completion and transfer.

Even with strong aggregate outcomes, notable equity concerns appear when examining differences among student groups. Black or African American students and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students have the lowest course success rates in the department, consistently in the mid-50 percent range, which falls below the institution-set standard of 62 percent and well below the department’s highest-performing groups. Latina/o/x students succeed at higher rates than these groups but still remain below the department and college averages. Male students, across all races and ethnicities, lag behind female students in both course success and degree completion; their two-year completion rate sits at only 11 percent compared to 21 percent for women. These gaps signal the need for targeted interventions that address differential success patterns by race, gender, and modality to ensure more equitable outcomes across all groups served by the program.

What factors might explain equity gaps?

1. High front-end anxiety in performance-based classes

Public speaking, argumentation, small group work, and intercultural communication require visible, high-stakes participation. Research shows that performance anxiety disproportionately affects students from historically marginalized groups who may feel less psychologically safe speaking in front of peers or instructors they perceive as culturally dissimilar. This may contribute to lower early-term engagement and higher withdrawal rates.

2. Cultural mismatch between curriculum examples and student backgrounds

Some COMM assignments focus on examples, cases, or readings that may reflect dominant cultural norms. If students do not see their linguistic patterns, cultural communication practices, or lived experiences reflected, this can hinder engagement and reduce perceived relevance, especially for Latina/o/x, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and first-generation students.

3. Scheduling patterns that don’t support working students

Equity groups who are overrepresented in employment or family care obligations, including Latina/o/x and Black students, often rely on evening or hybrid options. If course schedules cluster too heavily in the mid-day or morning hours, students may be forced into less ideal modalities or withdraw for work-related reasons.

4. Modality mismatches for specific student groups

Male students, Black students, and Latina/o/x students at CCCs consistently show lower success rates in fully online formats. Because Communication Studies has seen large growth in online offerings, students who enroll in online sections for flexibility may inadvertently end

up in the modality where they have the lowest likelihood of success.

3. In terms of your degree and certificate completers, are there any groups who are underrepresented in your completion data compared to the overall enrollment in your program?

Using the averaged enrollment percentages (2020–2025) and the cohort completion data (Fall 2018–2022), several clear patterns emerge in how student groups progress through degree/transfer milestones in Communication Studies.

Latina/o/x/e students form the majority of the department at approximately 62% of enrollments. However, their degree/transfer completion rate is 55%, which, while not extremely low, falls below their representation in the program and below several peer groups. This indicates a significant equity opportunity in supporting Latina/o/x/e students toward credential attainment and transfer. Black/African American students, who constitute about 3% of enrollments, complete at a 67% rate, stronger than Latina/o/x/e students proportionally, but still lower than Asian and multiracial peers.

Gender comparisons use a narrower cohort window, but the pattern is consistent with COMM enrollment trends. Women represent about 57–59% of enrollments and complete at a 71% combined degree/transfer rate, while men represent about 40–42% of enrollments and complete at 62%. This indicates a meaningful gender gap in completion, with men underperforming relative to both women and their enrollment share.

4. Are your students completing your degree and certificate program requirements in the expected time frame? Are there certain groups whose rates are below other student groups? Discuss any efforts to improve time to completion.

Across the United States, community college completion follows a clear and well-documented pattern: very few students finish in two years, and the majority complete within a 3–6 year window. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) Research Center routinely finds that only a small subset of full-time, first-time community college students graduate in two years, while most students—especially those attending part-time—complete between years three and six. California’s data mirror national trends. CCCCO Student Success Metrics show that the average time-to-degree across California community colleges is approximately 4.5–5.5 years, with the bulk of degree or transfer attainment occurring well past the two-year mark. These timelines reflect the realities of community college enrollment: high rates of part-time study, work and caregiving responsibilities, financial pressures, and “swirl” enrollment patterns where students stop out or attend multiple institutions. California tends to be slightly slower than the national average because an even larger share of students enroll part-time.

Within this broader context, Communication Studies completion patterns at Fullerton College are fully aligned with state and national norms. The department's data show that only 30–43 percent of students complete in 1–2 years, while 30–48 percent complete in 3–5 years, and roughly 10–29 percent complete in 6 or more years—producing an overall average time-to-degree of 4.13 years. This mirrors both NSC findings and CCCCCO statewide metrics, which place the typical community college degree or transfer timeline solidly within the 3–6 year range. If Guided Pathways models are using a two-year window as the “expected” timeframe for completion, that benchmark does not match national evidence, statewide CCCCCO norms, or actual student behavior. A realistic expectation for Communication Studies students is a 3–5 year completion timeline. To support more accurate evaluation of departmental outcomes, the college should provide 5- and 6-year completion metrics in Program Review so that Communication Studies can assess degree and transfer performance against the timelines that reflect statewide and national norms rather than the idealized two-year window. This would allow the department to compare its progress to realistic benchmarks and better understand where students are succeeding or encountering barriers.

The groups with the largest gaps between enrollment share and completion share—Latina/o/x/e, Black/African American, and male students—are the same student populations with the lowest 2- and 3-year completion rates in the cohort charts. This means the gaps are not random: they are consistent across both departmental and institutional datasets.

The Communication Studies department has already begun implementing several evidence-based practices shown to improve time to completion outcomes for male students as well as Black and Latina/o/x/e learners. Faculty intentionally incorporate competitive and collaborative elements into coursework—such as debates, team challenges, and persuasive speaking activities—which research shows can increase engagement for male students. The department has also been in the process of increasing flexible scheduling and modality options, including evening, hybrid, and online sections, to better support these students who tend to work full-time or attend part-time. In addition, the department is developing clearer part-time pathways and predictable rotations of COMM 100 and COMM 105 to reduce stop-outs and help students make steady progress. This semester, faculty began adopting transparent assignment design (TILT) across major speeches by offering COMM 1000 Assignment Templates and Rubrics to reduce hidden curriculum barriers and improve clarity for students who benefit from structured guidance. Finally, the curriculum continues to evolve toward culturally relevant examples and communication frameworks, ensuring that students, especially students of color and first-generation learners, see their identities, communities, and lived experiences reflected in the course content. These efforts collectively strengthen belonging, clarity, flexibility, and relevance, all of which are linked to higher persistence and completion in the research literature.

2.3 Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe your program's processes and practices for defining, assessing, and analyzing student learning outcomes at the course (CSLO) and program (PSLO) level. Include a discussion of how your program uses the results of CSLO/PSLO data to inform course and program improvement efforts.

The Communication Studies department maintains a consistent and equity-focused approach to student learning assessment. Faculty write clear, measurable, student-centered outcomes using Bloom's Taxonomy and map CSLOs to PSLOs and institutional learning outcomes to ensure alignment across the curriculum. Assessment relies on multiple, discipline-appropriate measures, including direct evidence from speeches, outlines, and debates; indirect measures such as surveys, reflections, and self-assessments; and embedded assessments within signature assignments. The department regularly reviews disaggregated CSLO and PSLO data during structured reflection at department meetings to identify equity gaps and guide improvements. Assessment occurs on a rotating schedule each semester, supported by technology tools that enhance consistency—transitioning from eLumen to Canvas Insights for clearer tracking and analysis. Because adjunct faculty teach up to 80 percent of COMM courses, the department invests heavily in their preparation by providing templates, shared rubrics, sample assignments, and paid professional learning opportunities each semester so that all faculty contribute to meaningful, high-quality SLO assessment.

2. (OPTIONAL/NOT REQUIRED) Using the data provided by OIE, describe the most salient results of CSLO or PSLO mastery rates. Did you find significant differences by race, ethnicity, gender, and other categories?
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Section 3: Other Areas of Program Effectiveness

1. Document any substantial changes to your program curriculum since the last review and discuss what prompted these changes. Looking forward, what changes to the curriculum do you plan based on the emerging needs of your discipline, industry, student population, etc.

Since the last program review, Communication Studies has undergone several substantial curriculum changes driven by statewide transfer reforms and systemwide alignment initiatives. COMM 1000 Public Speaking was updated to meet the new CalGETC Area 1C Oral Communication requirement, bringing all UC-bound students into the course for the first time and requiring alignment with updated statewide competencies in oral communication, presentation literacy, and digital engagement. At the same time, Common Course Numbering (CCN) and C-ID are in the process of systematically rewriting and standardizing Communication Studies course requirements across California. These revisions are occurring in waves: Wave 1 focuses on Public Speaking, Wave 2 on Interpersonal Communication, and Wave 3 on Essentials of Argumentation and Intercultural

Communication. Each wave requires reviewing course outlines of record, adopting new learning outcomes and content standards, and ensuring consistency with both systemwide expectations and local transfer pathways. Together, these statewide shifts have created meaningful updates to the department's curriculum and will continue shaping course design and articulation over the next several years.

2. Please briefly describe opportunities your students have to apply and deepen knowledge and skills through projects, apprenticeship, internships, co-ops, clinical placements, group projects outside of class, service learning, study abroad, and other experiential learning activities that you intentionally embed in coursework or elsewhere in your program.

Communication Studies offers a range of experiential learning opportunities that allow students to apply and deepen their communication skills beyond traditional coursework. Forensics is a signature High Impact Practice in the program, providing hands-on training in public speaking and debate, strengthening student belonging through participation in a campus-based competitive community, and offering leadership development as students help run the student-led Speech and Debate Club. The team also engages in travel to regional and national tournaments, giving students authentic, real-world communication experience. In addition, every semester Public Speaking and Argumentation courses allow non-forensics students to “dip their toes” into competitive speaking by participating in the Blumer scrimmage tournament with CSU Fullerton, giving them a low-stakes introduction to forensics and a meaningful opportunity to engage with our number-one transfer partner. Across the curriculum, courses such as Small Group Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Argumentation regularly require collaborative projects that involve meeting outside of class, coordinating group roles, conducting fieldwork or observation, and applying communication theories in real-world or community contexts. These activities reinforce teamwork, cultural competence, leadership, and applied communication—core competencies that prepare students for both academic transfer and professional environments.

3. Describe any laws, regulations, trends, policies, procedures, or other influences that have an impact on your program. These can include things like Vision 2030, CALGETC, Common Course Numbering, etc.

CalGETC and Common Course Numbering (CCN) have had significant and ongoing impacts on the Communication Studies program. CalGETC establishes a single general education pattern for CSU and UC transfer, which elevates COMM 1000 Public Speaking as the required Area 1C Oral Communication option for all transfer-bound students and requires alignment with updated statewide competency standards. This increases demand for the course while ensuring that its outcomes, content, and assessment practices meet the new statewide transfer expectations. At the same time, California's CCN initiative is systematically standardizing course numbers and learning

outcomes across all community colleges and CSU campuses. Communication Studies courses are being rewritten in waves—first Public Speaking, then Interpersonal Communication, followed by Essentials of Argumentation and Intercultural Communication—to ensure consistency in course expectations, articulation, and portability for students. These statewide reforms require ongoing curriculum review, COR updates, faculty coordination, and alignment of SLOs, all of which shape the department’s planning and instructional practices.

Section 4: Faculty and Staff

4.1 Population and Demographics

1. Using the data provided by OIE, describe your program’s staff (full-time/part-time faculty, nonfaculty, classified). How reflective of your program’s student population is your staff?

An analysis of five years of enrollment and faculty demographic data shows that the Communication Studies faculty is partially reflective of the students we serve, with strong alignment in some areas and meaningful opportunities for improvement in others. Gender representation is the area of closest match: our student body averages approximately 52–54% female and 40–43% male, and the department’s faculty closely reflects this distribution, ranging from 52–65% female and 35–48% male. This balance suggests that students generally see themselves represented in terms of gender across the faculty.

Racial and ethnic representation, however, reveals more significant gaps. Latina/o/x/e students make up the largest proportion of our enrollment, consistently 62–63%, yet only about 32% of our faculty identify as Latina/o/x/e. While this level of representation is meaningful and exceeds the collegewide faculty average, it remains well below the demographic reality of our classrooms. Conversely, White faculty account for roughly 45% of the department, a proportion notably higher than the 13–14% of White students enrolled in our courses. Asian students represent 9–12% of enrollment but only 6% of faculty, reflecting a smaller but persistent underrepresentation. A bright spot is the representation of Black/African American faculty, who make up approximately 6% of the department—twice the enrollment share of Black/African American students (3%) and an important asset for student belonging.

Overall, the department reflects national and statewide trends in community colleges, where faculty diversity often lags behind rapidly diversifying student populations. While Communication Studies has strengths in gender representation and better-than-average representation of Black/African American faculty, continued attention to diversifying racial and ethnic representation, particularly increasing Latina/o/x/e and Asian faculty presence, would further strengthen the cultural relevance and sense of belonging for our students. This alignment is especially important given that Latina/o/x/e and Black/African American students experience some of the widest completion gaps,

making representative faculty a key equity lever for improving student outcomes.

2. Describe your program's staffing changes since fall 2021. How have these changes impacted your program's ability to achieve its strategic action plans?

Since Fall 2021, the Communication Studies Department has experienced significant shifts in full-time staffing that have directly affected our capacity to sustain core program functions and advance long-term goals. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department underwent an unprecedented wave of retirements: four full-time faculty retired between 2017 and 2020, and only 50% of those positions was replaced. Entering Fall 2021, the department had six full-time faculty, but within three academic years we lost an additional three—one to retirement (2022), one to promotion into a dean role (2023), and one due to circumstances outside his control (2024). These losses occurred during a period of intense curricular and statewide reform, leaving the department substantially understaffed relative to institutional expectations, student enrollment, and our historical full-time baseline.

We have started the rebuild effort. The department hired one new full-time faculty member last year, and another will join us in Fall 2025. We are also currently ranked first on the President's hiring priority list, positioning us to add an additional full-time faculty member for Fall 2026. While these hires are crucial steps forward, the current reality is that the department is operating with far fewer full-time faculty than the workload requires. All five current full-time faculty carry extensive service obligations, including leadership roles on department, division, college wide, and district committees. Two faculty members also direct and travel with the competitive forensics program, one of the division's flagship high-impact practices, requiring considerable time commitments beyond classroom teaching. Simultaneously, the department has been engaged in a multi-year, labor-intensive overhaul of curriculum to align with CalGETC, C-ID, and Common Course Numbering.

As a result, our ability to implement Strategic Action Plans (SAPs) and maintain the level of assessment, student support, outreach, and innovation envisioned in the previous Program Review is significantly strained. Many of those SAPs were written with the assumption of a much larger full-time faculty. Strengthening full-time staffing continues to be the single most important factor in restoring departmental capacity and ensuring we can meet institutional priorities in instruction, curriculum, assessment, equity, and student success.

4.2 Staff Support and Professional Development

1. Describe the regular discussions your program faculty are having about equitable grading, attendance, late work, extra credit policies, and other strategies to support equitable student

success.

Communication Studies faculty engage in sustained, campuswide conversations about equitable teaching and student success. Over the past five years, full-time and part-time faculty have participated in major institutional committees—including the Curriculum Committee, SLO Assessment Committee, DEI Task Force, Academic Senate, Professional Learning Committee, and Community Engagement Committee—and serve as advisors to two student clubs, ensuring that equity-focused dialogue continues beyond the department. Beginning in Spring 2026, each full-time faculty member will adopt a course and begin building a community of practice with part-time faculty to examine contemporary pedagogical approaches such as equitable grading, inclusive classroom practices, flexible late-work policies, and welcoming, student-centered syllabi. Within the department, faculty have added standing agenda time in every meeting dedicated to equity and Communication Studies pedagogy, allowing us to share effective strategies, examine evolving student needs, and update practices in a coordinated and transparent way. We also encourage faculty participation in the Teaching and Learning Certificate to strengthen alignment with campuswide equity goals and ensure a consistent, research-informed approach to student support.

2. How have these conversations shaped practices or policies in your program? What action has arisen from these discussions? If no action has been taken, why not?

The Communication Studies department prioritizes action over discussion alone, continually refining instructional practices to advance student-centered and equity-focused teaching. Most full-time faculty, along with several high-impact part-time instructors, have adopted flexible deadlines or short grace-period policies that reduce punitive grading and better support working, parenting, and low-income students. Many instructors also avoid mathematically devastating zeroes by using minimum-grade floors, a practice shown to increase persistence for disproportionately impacted groups. Public Speaking and Argumentation courses incorporate early and frequent low-stakes assessments so students can build confidence, reduce communication apprehension, and demonstrate progress without high penalty. Faculty intentionally embed culturally responsive examples and topics to ensure that students' lived experiences, languages, and identities are valued in the curriculum. As a department, we are actively working toward greater consistency and transparency by developing shared assignment templates and standardized rubrics across key courses; this decreases instructor-to-instructor variation and helps students better understand expectations as they move through the program. Adjunct instructors are also offered professional development every semester to strengthen alignment and ensure equitable practices extend across all sections.

3. What additional areas of professional development could help your faculty and staff engage in this work?

Additional areas of professional development would further strengthen the department's equity-minded teaching practices and support students navigating increasingly complex social and economic realities.

Professional Development Priorities

- **Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Pedagogy (TICP/HCE):** Critical for supporting students navigating ICE raids, economic instability, and past educational trauma. Research from ACUE, Hope Lab, and the California Acceleration Project shows trauma-informed practices improve retention, engagement, and academic persistence.
- **Anti-Racist Pedagogy and Communication Practices:** Move beyond the department's anti-racist syllabi statement toward teaching how communication interacts with race, identity, power, and language. National AAAS and AAC&U frameworks show this strengthens belonging and success for students of color.
- **AI Literacy and Ethical Use in Communication Education:** As AI becomes embedded in communication fields, faculty need PD on teaching responsible AI use, addressing academic integrity, and helping students critique, evaluate, and ethically use generative tools.
- **Department discussion of Dr. Laura Rendón's Validation Theory:** Explore how faculty can normalize help-seeking, affirm student strengths, and intentionally validate growth. Conversations can translate into pilot practices in gateway courses.
- **Discuss Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to diversify assessment options:** Support faculty in offering multiple ways to demonstrate learning (speeches, writing, discussions, audio/video submissions) aligned with UDL principles that show strong success gains for disproportionately impacted students.

Continued Work Already Underway

- **Deepen development of TILT-aligned assignments and shared rubrics:** Expanding transparent assignment design and consistent rubrics across sections to reduce hidden curriculum barriers and improve clarity for all students.
- **Continued development of culturally responsive curriculum:** Ensuring students see their identities, communities, and interests reflected in examples, case studies, and communication scenarios across courses.

Section 5: Program Planning

5.1 Progress on Previous Strategic Action Plans

1. Please discuss the goals (Strategic Action Plans, SAPs) from your last self-study. Assess and explain your progress on each of the SAP.

Strategic Action Plan 1: Expand Embedded Tutoring in Communication Studies to Reduce Achievement Gaps

Since the 2017 Program Review, when Communication Studies first launched a small pilot with embedded tutors in five Public Speaking sections, the department has not only met the goal, but far surpassed it. What began as a limited experiment has grown into a highly effective, institutionalized partnership with Hornet Tutoring that is now one of the strongest outcome-validated support structures in the program. Early results indicated promise, but the long-term Hornet Tutoring data confirm substantial, consistent gains in student success for students who participate in tutoring. Across three years of COMM 100 outcomes (Fall 2019–Spring 2022), students who attended four or more tutoring sessions achieved a 91.3% success rate, compared to 78.5% for students attending 1–3 sessions and only 64.3% for students who never attended. Grade distributions show the same pattern: students with 4+ sessions earn A's at more than double the rate of peers with zero visits (74.5% vs. 35.6%) and withdraw or receive non-passing grades at dramatically lower rates. In other words, the data provided by Hornet Tutoring illustrates a classic high-impact practice, the more students engage with tutoring, the more their success and persistence rise.

The department has also expanded the scale and reach of tutoring far beyond the initial pilot. Instead of supporting only five sections, the Spring 2025 Hornet Tutoring schedule now embeds tutors in 13 sections across COMM 100 and COMM 135, including online, hybrid, and in-person formats. Four trained Public Speaking and Argumentation tutors provide:

- in-class demonstrations and announcements
- weekly drop-in hours
- specialized sessions for outlines, drafting, and speaking anxiety
- online evening support for fully online courses
- multiple time slots accommodating working, parenting, and part-time students

Tutoring has become more strategically targeted as well: COMM now prioritizes high-enrollment and disproportionately impacted courses, and COMM 135 has been recognized by HT as a “threshold course”, a challenging major pathway class where embedded tutoring is essential.

Even with significant progress, challenges remain. Due to campuswide budget reductions, Hornet Tutoring must prioritize areas with lower retention and success rates. Ironically, COMM 100's improved outcomes have reduced its eligibility for embedded tutors; we have become “a victim of our own success.” While COMM 135 will continue to receive priority support, the department wishes to preserve access to tutoring for Public Speaking students, given how many report that HT tutors were essential to their success and confidence.

Moving forward, the department would like to collaborate with Hornet Tutoring to redesign the tutoring model for Public Speaking by creating general Public Speaking tutor coverage open to any student in any COMM 100 section. Ideally, this would include ideally four tutors a semester, one MW in-person tutor and one TTh in-person tutor in stable day/time slots, and one asynchronous tutor available MW evening and one available TTh evening, allowing all students to benefit from peer coaching, practice opportunities, and guided feedback. This model would preserve the most valuable aspects of embedded tutoring while ensuring equitable access during a period of reduced HT capacity.

Overall, SAP 1 has been fully realized: embedded tutoring has grown from a small pilot to a robust, data-validated, equity-advancing cornerstone of the program. The next phase is sustaining the gains and refining a flexible tutoring structure that remains accessible to the thousands of students who rely on COMM courses each year.

Strategic Action Plan 2: Develop the Culture and Identity of the Communication Studies Program (AA-T and AA)

Since the 2017 Program Review, the department made meaningful progress in strengthening the culture and identity of the Communication Studies major—work that was clearly reflected in degree completion patterns. Completion of the AA-T peaked in 2020–2021 with 97 awards, the highest in the five-year cycle, demonstrating strong pre-pandemic momentum and increasing student identification with the major. However, the impact of COVID-19 produced a sharp and well-documented statewide decline in major persistence, unit accumulation, and transfer momentum across the California Community Colleges system. Our department’s dip in completions—from 97 (2020–2021) down to 58 (2023–2024)—mirrors these statewide disruptions, especially in transfer-oriented programs where students experienced the greatest enrollment volatility.

The most recent year of data, 2024–2025, shows a significant rebound to 73 completions, indicating that the major is recovering. This turnaround aligns with several departmental efforts: stabilized scheduling aligned with student demand, improved clarity in course sequencing, expanded use of the AA-T degree maps, and early impacts of ongoing curriculum redesign toward CalGETC and Common Course Numbering alignment. As these structural changes solidify, they appear to be restoring confidence and re-engagement among majors.

At the same time, departmental identity-building was challenged by significant Coordinator turnover during the post-COVID period (Fall 2021–Spring 2023). This instability temporarily slowed work on community-building, advising consistency, and major-specific initiatives. As leadership has stabilized, the faculty have renewed their shared commitment to shaping a clearer departmental identity rooted in transfer preparation, communication skill development, and equitable student success.

While the pandemic disrupted the trajectory we had begun, the recent rebound in completions—and

the renewed cohesion among faculty—suggests strong potential for regaining and surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Continuing this SAP remains a priority as we strengthen pathways, clarify messaging to students, and rebuild a vibrant major identity grounded in community and academic excellence.

Strategic Action Plan 3: Expand Personnel Support for the Forensics Program

Since the 2017 Program Review, Communication Studies has made partial but meaningful progress toward expanding personnel support for the Forensics Program. The department successfully hired one full-time faculty member specializing in forensics, a critical gain for a program that depends heavily on coaching, travel supervision, and intensive student mentorship. However, during this same period, the program experienced the loss of two full-time forensics-capable faculty, one through promotion and one through external circumstances, leaving the team understaffed compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Despite these challenges, the program is rebuilding capacity. The college has approved a new full-time line for next year, and the department anticipates requesting additional lines over the next three years to restore the coaching staff needed to support student demand and competitive performance. This aligns with the established pattern across CCC forensics programs: robust staffing directly correlates with student recruitment, retention, competitive success, and major pathway visibility.

Enrollment trends in COMM 138: Forensics provide evidence that the program is regaining strength. After pandemic-era disruptions, enrollment in the course has shown steady post-COVID increases, and projections based on current growth suggest the team could return to its high pre-pandemic enrollment levels within two years. Steady competitive success and the new full-time faculty member are contributing significantly to this recovery.

Beyond direct enrollment, the revitalized coaching presence has expanded the department's visibility across the College and Humanities Division. The new faculty member regularly coaches, travels with students, supports the student-run Speech and Debate Club, and represents Communication Studies in cross-campus initiatives. This increased engagement helps elevate the profile of the major, strengthens student belonging, and creates ongoing opportunities for leadership development.

While staffing levels are not yet sufficient to meet long-term program needs, progress toward this SAP is clear: the department has rebuilt partial capacity, demonstrated rising enrollment indicators, and secured institutional support for further expansion. Continued hiring will be essential to sustain the momentum of a program known for its high-impact learning experiences and contribution to student success.

Strategic Action Plan 4: Develop Program SLOs and a Program-Level Assessment Instrument

Since the 2017 Program Review, the department successfully completed the first component of this action plan by developing clear Program SLOs for both the AA-T and AA in Communication Studies. However, the broader landscape of statewide curricular reform, specifically the implementation of CalGETC and Common Course Numbering (CCN), rendered much of this early work obsolete. These statewide initiatives required a comprehensive rewrite of course outlines and SLOs across the discipline, including multiple waves of mandated revisions (Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, Essentials of Argumentation, and Intercultural Communication). As a result, the CSLOs and PSLO assessment goals we developed were accurate for their time but have to be restructured to conform to new transfer and curriculum alignment requirements.

Our original plan included embedding a capstone project in a major heavy course to serve as a program-level assessment instrument. This did not materialize. Multiple factors contributed to this outcome: significant turnover in department leadership between 2021–2023, the loss of full-time faculty, the reorganization caused by COVID-19, and insufficient staffing to launch and sustain a capstone experience while simultaneously rewriting curriculum to meet statewide mandates. With only five full-time faculty serving a large multi-course program, and two of the five assigned to forensics travel, there was simply not enough bandwidth to implement a capstone project without compromising essential instructional or operational needs.

Although the capstone project was not feasible, the department continues to assess Program SLOs through a distributed, embedded-assessment approach, which aligns with best practices for resource-limited programs. As the curriculum redesign stabilizes under CalGETC and CCN, the department plans to revisit structured program-level assessment options that are realistic for our size and staffing, while maintaining alignment with state requirements.

In short, while the original vision for SAP 4 evolved out of necessity, the department completed key foundational work and adapted responsibly to statewide reforms that reshaped curriculum and assessment expectations.

Strategic Action Plan 5: Improve Success and Retention Rates of Men of Color in Communication Studies

This action plan aimed to improve success and retention for men of color, particularly Hispanic/Latina/o/x/e and African American students, by at least two percentage points. The department also set an internal goal for at least half of full-time faculty to complete the Teaching Men of Color Certificate. While this goal reflected our values, only two of the five full-time faculty were able to complete the certificate, largely due to post-COVID staffing shortages, curricular overhaul demands, and increased service obligations. However, the department has engaged in

equity-centered professional learning in other meaningful ways. One faculty member participated in the Colonization to Sovereignty: African Diaspora Education Summit in Ghana, an international, research-grounded experience focused on centering African and African diasporic histories, cultures, and perspectives in teaching. This work has informed curriculum choices, culturally responsive examples, and the department's ongoing equity conversations.

A comparison of the department's 2017 success data with the most recent 2020–2025 outcomes shows that the long-term improvement goal has not yet been met. In 2017, success rates were 67.6% for African American students, 76.2% for Hispanic/Latina/o/x/e students, and 74.9% for male students overall. In the 2020–2025 dataset, African American success averages 65.6%, Latina/o/x/e averages 71.4%, and male students remain several percentage points below their 2017 benchmark. While there have been year-to-year improvements, particularly for African American students, who reached 71% in 2023–2024, these gains are not sustained consistently across the five-year period. The structural gaps observed in 2017 remain present today, reflecting national and statewide patterns in community college disproportionate impact and confirming that equity gains require sustained, multi-year effort.

Although the department did not achieve the targeted two-percentage-point increase, the work undertaken has deepened our understanding of equity-centered pedagogy and strengthened the foundation for future improvement. The recent upward trends in key years suggest real potential for progress as staffing stabilizes, curriculum aligns more closely with student needs, and the department expands its professional learning in culturally responsive teaching, validation theory, and trauma-informed communication pedagogy. Continued attention to these practices—paired with new tools like Canvas Insights, improved assignment transparency, and expanded tutoring—positions the department to make more meaningful gains in success and retention for men of color in the coming review cycle.

2. If additional funds were NOT allocated to you in the last review cycle, how did the LACK of funds have an impact on your program?

The department's previous funding requests produced mixed but meaningful results. Our request for continued support for Hornet Tutoring was highly successful; the investment paid off in substantial gains in course success, retention, and student confidence across COMM 1000 and COMM 135. This funding directly enabled the expansion of embedded tutoring from a small pilot into a multi-section, high-impact practice that now serves hundreds of students each semester.

Our request for two additional full-time faculty lines yielded only partial progress. The college approved one line, which has strengthened the department, but this gain was offset by the loss of multiple full-time faculty due to retirement, promotion, and external circumstances. As a result, the department remains significantly understaffed relative to enrollment, service obligations, curriculum demands, and the instructional load required to maintain a healthy major. This staffing

strain has left the remaining faculty exhausted and stretched thin, making it increasingly difficult to sustain the level of innovation, assessment, and student support expected in a modern Communication Studies program.

We also received a small allocation of funds to support major identity-building, and this investment proved both effective and high-value. These funds allowed the department to host events, strengthen community-building efforts, and support targeted outreach—activities that help students see Communication Studies as an academic home and a purposeful pathway. As we move into the next cycle, the department requests that this funding be continued so we can rebrand Communication Studies with stronger career relevance, rebuild major participation, and create the kind of vibrant program culture that supports student engagement, belonging, and persistence. Major events remain an essential and cost-efficient strategy for strengthening the COMM Studies community and reinforcing the identity of the program.

SAPs

Strategic Action Plan 1: Strengthen and Grow the Forensics Program

Short Description:

The Communication Studies Forensics Program (COMM 138) is a documented high-impact practice that builds belonging, strengthens academic identity, and improves persistence and completion—especially for disproportionately impacted (DI) students. Before COVID-19, COMM 138 regularly attracted strong enrollment and contributed directly to major identity and transfer success. Post-pandemic, enrollment and competition participation temporarily declined, mirroring statewide enrollment disruptions. However, enrollment is now rebounding, and success data show increased retention and academic engagement among students participating in Forensics. To support this recovery and ensure equitable access for all students, the department will implement the following activities: 1. Stabilize and expand Forensics participation by increasing outreach, visibility, and access to the course, especially among DI students who benefit most from high-impact practices. 2. Increase tournament participation gradually over four years, moving from primarily local and regional tournaments to multi-day and eventually national-level competitions that enhance student skills, confidence, and visibility. 3. Remove financial barriers to participation by securing travel, registration, and lodging resources so that students from low-income or first-generation backgrounds can fully participate without cost preventing their involvement. 4. Strengthen the class schedule and course design by offering COMM 138 at times with higher student availability (e.g., shifting from 9:30 a.m. to a more accessible afternoon time), which early data suggest is already improving enrollment. These activities directly address department-identified issues: • Enrollment

volatility post-COVID • Lower visibility of Forensics among new first-time students • Financial barriers that limit DI student participation • The need for sustained pathways that support long-term retention and transfer

Measurable Outcomes:

Based on the department’s historical enrollment patterns and higher-education research on high-impact practices, the expected results are realistic, and measurable: 1. A 10–15 student increase in COMM 138 enrollment over four years, reaching a projected roster of ~35 students by Year Four. 2. A 2–3 percentage point increase in fall-to-spring persistence among students enrolled in COMM 138 compared to program-wide averages, reflecting the strong retention effects of high-impact practices. 3. A 1–2 percentage point increase in program-level success for DI students (Latina/o/x/e, Black/African American, and male students) who participate in Forensics programming. 4. An increase from 3–5 tournament entries per semester to 10–15 entries across more diverse competition levels (local, regional, and national). 5. At least 5 students per year advancing to higher levels of competition, demonstrating skill development and academic engagement. These outcomes reflect national research demonstrating that academic competition improves academic identity, reduces stop-out patterns, and strengthens degree momentum, especially for first-gen and DI students.

College Goals:

3.2 Reduce equity gaps in degree/certificate completion; 3.3 Reduce equity gaps in transfer attainment; 3.4 Increase collaboration with universities

SAP Phase:

New

Resource Requests

Year 1 - Forensics Tournament Support

Enhancement:

Tournament registration fees, local competition costs, team marketing, and initial growth support as COMM 138 expands enrollment with the new time block. Supports equitable participation for all students, removes financial barriers for DI students, and strengthens retention through high-impact practice participation.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Other

Quantity:

1

Unit Cost:

\$1,200.00

Total Cost:

\$1,200.00

Year 2 - Forensics Travel Expansion**Enhancement:**

Hotel accommodations, meal stipends, and multi-day tournament fees as the team enters longer and more competitive regional events. Supports student access to multi-day, skill-intensive competitions that improve academic identity, persistence, and degree momentum.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Other

Quantity:

1

Unit Cost:

\$1,600.00

Total Cost:

\$1,600.00

Year 3 - Forensics National Tournament Travel**Enhancement:**

Airfare, hotel stays, meals, and registration fees for national-level tournaments beyond driving distance. Provides high-caliber competitive experiences that build communication proficiency, confidence, leadership, and national transfer visibility.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Other

Quantity:

1

Unit Cost:

\$2,000.00

TotalCost:

\$2,000.00

Year 4 - Forensics Enrollment Surge Support**Enhancement:**

Increased competition entries, additional travel costs, and expanded participation support for an estimated 35-student roster. Ensures equitable access to all competitive opportunities despite rising enrollment; supports DI student participation, belonging, and academic persistence.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Other

Quantity:

1

Unit Cost:

\$2,200.00

TotalCost:

\$2,200.00

Strategic Action Plan 2: Scheduling for Equity and Inclusion**Short Description:**

Redesign scheduling, modality, and cohort pathways to ensure equitable access to COMM courses for disproportionately impacted groups, especially men of color, first-time students, adult learners, athletes, Umoja, Puente, and veterans. Goals: 1. Launch equity-centered cohorts such as Umoja COMM 1000, Puente COMM 120, and reserved COMM 1000 sections for Athletics and Veterans with consistent times and high-impact instructors. 2. Develop a fully online AA-T pathway that maintains equity safeguards (tutoring, clarity, built-in support modules) to meet non-traditional student scheduling needs. 3. Redesign section times, modalities, and faculty distribution using five-term fill rates, success gaps, and DI-group pathways. Prioritize FT faculty in times/modalities where DI students enroll (evening, hybrid, Friday, and morning blocks).

Measurable Outcomes:

SAP 2 is expected to yield modest, realistic, research-aligned improvements over 4 years: • 3-5% enrollment growth in DI student groups • 0.5-1.5% increase in course success in targeted sections • 5% increase in online pathway throughput • 5-8% higher fill rates in redesigned DI-heavy time blocks These outcomes reflect what scheduling reforms can actually achieve based on national

community college research from ASCCC & CCRC.

College Goals:

1.3 Night, weekend, online degree program

SAP Phase:

New

Strategic Action Plan 3: Rebuild and Rebrand the Major

Short Description:

The Communication Studies program aims to rebuild major identity, strengthen transfer pathways, and improve completion by addressing barriers identified in enrollment and success data. Despite strong AA-T production before the pandemic, the major experienced a decline in completions and engagement during 2021–2023, mirroring statewide patterns. Current data show a rebound in completions, but persistence and momentum remain uneven for disproportionately impacted students. To address these issues, the department will implement three activities: Rebrand the Communication Studies major with clear career relevance, integrating workshops, advising materials, and curriculum messaging that highlight communication careers in the AI-driven workforce, leadership, and team collaboration. Reduce transfer friction by finalizing CCN alignment, maintaining CalGETC compliance, and partnering with Counseling to identify and nudge near-completers who are close to finishing the AA-T or CSU GE requirements. Host one annual major-building event featuring a guest speaker whose professional background and identity support representation for students from groups underrepresented in faculty demographics. This event will strengthen belonging, clarify major pathways, and connect students with peers and faculty. These activities respond directly to issues surfaced in the program’s data review: reduced major identification during COVID, uneven momentum among DI students, and gaps in early exploration and pathway visibility.

Measurable Outcomes:

Based on higher-education research on major identity, pathway clarity, and student engagement, the expected outcomes are achievable over 4 years: 1. A 3-5 percent increase in enrollment of students who formally declare the Communication Studies major or are enrolled in two or more major-applicable COMM courses within one academic year. 2. A 1-2 percentage point increase in fall-to-spring persistence among students who attend major-focused events or receive degree-audit nudges. 3. Identification of at least 25 near-completers each year through collaboration with Counseling, with at least 10 students completing the AA-T or transferring after receiving targeted guidance. 4. A 3 percent increase in the number of students completing 6-9 COMM units within one year, reflecting improved pathway momentum. 5. Attendance of 75-100 students at the annual major event, with post-event surveys indicating increased understanding of the major, transfer pathways, and career relevance. These outcomes reflect what higher-education research shows major-focused activities

can realistically influence: incremental increases in exploration, belonging, persistence, and degree momentum.

College Goals:

2.5 Increase sense of belonging/mattering ; 3.2 Reduce equity gaps in degree/certificate completion;
3.3 Reduce equity gaps in transfer attainment

SAP Phase:

New

Resource Requests

Speaker Honorarium

Enhancement:

One guest speaker whose identity and career represent DI students; supports major identity-building and pathway clarity.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Other

Quantity:

4

Unit Cost:

\$1,000.00

TotalCost:

\$4,000.00

Food & Hospitality

Enhancement:

Food and refreshments to increase event attendance, promote belonging, and reduce participation barriers for food-insecure students.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Supplies

Quantity:

4

Unit Cost:

\$800.00

TotalCost:

\$3,200.00

Printing & Marketing**Enhancement:**

Flyers, posters, and outreach materials to promote the event and reach disproportionately impacted students.

Personnel-Related:

No

Resource Category:

Supplies

Quantity:

4

Unit Cost:

\$200.00

TotalCost:

\$800.00

Strategic Action Plan 4: AI Literacy & Ethical Communication

Short Description:

Communication Studies prepares students for communication-intensive, people-centered careers, and the rapid expansion of generative AI has shifted workforce expectations across nearly every sector. Vision 2030 identifies digital literacy, AI literacy, and ethical technology use as core statewide goals for future-ready learners. Student success data also show that DI students (Latina/o/x/e, Black/African American, and male students) face persistent equity gaps in course success and completion. National research confirms that unequal access to digital and AI literacy widens these gaps, leading to disparities in academic confidence, assignment performance, and employability. To address these issues, the department will implement the following activities: • Provide faculty professional development on AI literacy, ethical prompting, bias reduction, and human–AI interaction skills that reflect emerging communication careers and align with Vision 2030’s digital transformation priorities. • Integrate foundational AI-communication modules, including prompt design, argument checking, groupwork with AI tools, and identifying bias, into core COMM courses (1000, 105, 120, 135) so students gain consistent exposure across the program.

- Develop a department-wide AI framework establishing ethical use guidelines, academic integrity expectations, and DI-student-centered supports to ensure generative AI does not inadvertently widen equity gaps in performance or learning. These activities respond to the department's data review, which revealed ongoing equity gaps and the need for clearer, future-focused, career-relevant curriculum to help students, especially DI students, achieve momentum and confidence in an AI-driven labor market.

Measurable Outcomes:

Based on conservative projections and higher-education research on AI integration and digital literacy reform, the following outcomes are measurable and achievable in a 4-year timeframe:

- At least 80% of full-time faculty and 40% of part-time faculty will complete AI literacy or ethical-AI training.
- AI modules will be implemented in at least four core COMM courses, reaching an estimated 1,000+ students per academic year.
- Faculty surveys will show a 2–3 percentage point increase in assignment completion rates (especially outlines, speeches, drafts, and group projects) in courses where AI support modules are implemented, reflecting improved task clarity and accessible scaffolding.
- A 1–2 percentage point reduction in equity gaps for DI students in targeted COMM courses, as digital literacy barriers decrease and assignment scaffolding improves.
- A published department-wide ethical AI framework by the end of Year Two, ensuring consistent expectations across all sections and improved academic integrity clarity for students. These outcomes reflect what AI-integration research shows is achievable: improved assignment completion, reduced confusion, increased confidence for DI students, and more consistent academic supports across faculty.

College Goals:

3.2 Reduce equity gaps in degree/certificate completion; 3.3 Reduce equity gaps in transfer attainment

SAP Phase:

New
