

**New Program Proposal  
Master of Arts in  
Communication, Technology, and Society  
Clemson University**

**Summary**

Clemson University requests approval to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication, Technology, and Society to be implemented in Fall 2011. The proposed program is to be offered through traditional instruction on the main campus and through blended instruction at the University Center of Greenville.

The Program Planning Summary was submitted to the Commission on April 30, 2008, and reviewed and voted upon favorably without substantive comment by the Advisory Committee on Academic Programs (ACAP) on July 17, 2008. The Clemson University Board of Trustees approved the proposal on April 17, 2008. The full proposal was received by the Commission on February 12, 2010, and was reviewed and voted upon favorably without substantive comment by the Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing (CAAL) on April 1, 2010.

According to the proposal, the proposed program will focus on how people use communication mediated by technology. Its purpose is to prepare graduates to enter business and industry as communication practitioners in a variety of fields. The *Job Outlook 2009* survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers cites communication skills as one of the skills employers desire most. In addition, the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* of the Bureau of Labor Statistics offers evidence that sectors using communication mediated by technology will experience significant growth through 2016. For example, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector is expected to increase by 28.8%, a result of the increased use of technology in business. Other job categories for which graduates with this degree will be prepared include the public relations specialist job category, projected to experience 24% growth between 2008 and 2018, and the market and survey researchers job category, projected to experience a growth of more than 28% between 2008 and 2018.

Furthermore, there is a strong demand for the proposed program among students and local professionals. The proposal cites a recent survey of communication studies undergraduates that indicated that nearly half (45.1% of 91 respondents) were interested in pursuing a graduate degree in the same field. Similarly, a survey of area professionals revealed that 40.6% of the 33 respondents were interested in the proposed degree program.

Presently, no institution in South Carolina offers a degree program focused on Communication, Technology, and Society, but three institutions offer graduate instruction in communication at the Master's level. Clemson University offers an M.A. in Professional Communication, USC-Columbia offers an M.A. in Journalism and an M.A. in Mass Communications, and the College of Charleston offers an M.A. in Communication. However, the proposal states that these programs are not similar to the proposed program which will focus on the entire spectrum of communication including interpersonal, organizational, health, and media as well as communication theory in relation to communication processes driven by technology; interpersonal, group, and social cyberorganizing; and cyberinfrastructure. A national review of communication graduate programs revealed only a handful with a focus on communication, technology and society, including an M.A. in Communication, Culture, and Technology at Georgetown; an M.A./Ph.D. in Media, Technology, and Society at Northwestern;

a Master's in Media, Technology, and Society at Purdue; and a Ph.D. in Technology, Media, and Society at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

In response to staff inquiry, an institutional representative explained the differences between the proposed M.A. in Communication, Technology, and Society and Clemson's existing M.A. in Professional Communication. She stated that the proposed program is distinct from the M.A. in Professional Communication because of the differences in the intellectual domains involved. She stated that the proposed program represents the discipline of Communication with historical roots in the analysis of public address (i.e., the spoken word) which has evolved to include the study of the spoken word now often mediated by technology in interpersonal, group, organizational and public communication. The M.A. in Professional Communication, however, is administered by the English Department and represents the discipline of English, with historical roots in the analysis of written text (i.e., language and literature), which has expanded to include the study of written communication in mediated forms. Because of these differences, faculty members' teaching and research interests, while falling under the very broad umbrella of the term "communication," are distinct. Students who will matriculate into these programs will similarly represent different backgrounds and interests and enter careers that reflect these distinctions. Furthermore, the institutional representative stated that a group of faculty members representing both the Communication Studies Department and the M.A. in Professional Communication met to identify areas of distinctiveness as well as points of contact and potential collaboration between the proposed M.A. program in Communication, Technology, and Society and the M.A. in Professional Communication. The group concluded the following: the existing M.A. program in Professional Communication "primarily focuses on the production and creation of these technologized messages" while the proposed program will "analyze and critique media content, effects and implications."

The institution anticipates there will be ten new students (7.5 FTE) in the program's first year, increasing to 20 students (15 FTE) in the second year and thereafter. If enrollment and program completion projections are met, the proposed program will meet the Commission's productivity standards.

Admission to the proposed program will require a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution; a GPA of 3.0 or better; scores of 500 verbal, 500 quantitative and 4.0 in writing or better on the Graduate Record Examination; strong writing skills and focused reasons for pursuing the proposed degree as demonstrated through a writing sample; a resume; and promise of success in graduate study as demonstrated in faculty letters of recommendation. The curriculum for the proposed program will consist of 30 credit hours, including the three core courses of Communications Theory, Research Methods in Professional Communication, and Communication, Culture, and Social Net; 18 credits hours of Communications courses at the 800 level; six credits hours in a field other than Communications selected in consultation with an advisor; and up to six credit hours of thesis work. Two new courses will be added to the institution's catalog: Cross-cultural Media Comparisons and Globalization, Technology, and Culture. To complete the degree program, students must complete a Master's thesis or pass written comprehensive examinations.

Two new faculty will be hired. One new faculty member will be hired in the third year of the proposed program, the other in the fourth year; both new hires must possess terminal degrees in Communications, have an active scholarly agenda, and be consistently presenting work at academic conferences and publishing in appropriate outlets. In the first year of the proposed program, there will be eleven faculty members supporting the program (1.5 FTE); by the fifth year, there will be thirteen faculty members (3.50 FTE). In response to staff inquiry, an

institutional representative stated that the two new faculty positions needed to support this proposed program are reallocations of current positions and thus do not constitute new costs to the state. The representative also explained that the use of graduate teaching assistants will reduce the need for lecturers who teach some of the freshman-level courses; the salaries of these lecturers will instead be used to cover the cost of the graduate assistantships.

Existing office space is available for the two new faculty to be hired. The proposal also notes that no significant equipment needs are anticipated for the proposed program. According to the proposal, the program will not require additional library resources. Holdings necessary for offering the proposed program are ample at this time since the institution already offers programs leading to an undergraduate degree in Communication Studies and an M.A. degree in Professional Communication.

There is no specialized accreditation for the proposed program. Licensure is not required for employment.

New costs and sources of financing identified by the institution for the proposed program are shown below.

<b>ESTIMATED COSTS BY YEAR</b>						
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Program Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0
Faculty Salaries (plus fringes)	0	0	\$77,100	\$160,625	\$160,625	\$398,350
Graduate Assistants (plus fringes)	\$100,800	\$201,600	\$201,600	\$201,600	\$201,600	\$907,200
Clerical/Support Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies and Materials	0	0	0	0	0	0
Library Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$100,800</b>	<b>\$201,600</b>	<b>\$278,700</b>	<b>\$362,225</b>	<b>\$362,225</b>	<b>\$1,305,550</b>
<b>SOURCES OF FINANCING BY YEAR</b>						
Estimated FTE Revenue Generated from the State	\$126,790	\$253,580	\$253,580	\$253,580	\$253,580	\$1,141,110
Tuition Funding (New students only)	\$70,720	\$141,440	\$141,440	\$141,440	\$141,440	\$636,480
Other State Funding (Legislative Appropriation)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reallocation of Existing Funds	\$100,800	\$201,600	\$278,700	\$285,125	\$201,600	\$1,067,825
Federal Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Funding (Endowment, Auxiliary etc.)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$298,310</b>	<b>\$596,620</b>	<b>\$673,720</b>	<b>\$680,145</b>	<b>\$596,620</b>	<b>\$2,845,415</b>

These data show that if the institution meets the projected student enrollments and contains costs as they are shown in the proposal, the proposed program will be able to cover costs beginning in the first year and thereafter. In an effort to deal with reductions in appropriations to the state, and because tuition revenue alone will not support the proposed program, Clemson University is reallocating existing internal resources to cover the cost of this program.

In summary, Clemson University requests approval to offer a program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication, Technology, and Society. The proposed program focuses on the entire spectrum of communication, and graduates will have an advanced communication skill set in general and a unique skill set in the effective use of interactive communication technology, an area that continues to grow in significance for organizational conferencing and training. As such, the proposed program will prepare graduates to enter business and industry as communication practitioners in a variety of fields. The need for the proposed program is based on the expected increase in demand for graduates with such knowledge and skills. No institution in the state and very few institutions in the nation currently offer a graduate degree with such a unique focus on communication in relationship to technology and society.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee on Academic Affairs and Licensing commends favorably to the Commission approval of the program leading to the Master of Arts degree in Communication, Technology, and Society at Clemson University to be offered on-campus and at the University Center of Greenville, to be implemented in Fall 2011, provided that no “unique cost” or other special state funding be required or requested.