

**CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO**  
**ANNUAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT REPORT**

Save your Report with the following file name: APAR-22-23-Dept OR Program Name, for example APAR-22-23-CMST

Date: 11/27/22

**Due: 9/30/20XX**

**Assessment of Program Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

**1. Program Name:**

Communication Arts and Science, CSUC  
 CMST MA Program

**2. CMST Graduate Program Level Student Learning Outcomes:**

**Goal 1. Articulate the discipline and related sub areas.**

SLO 1.1 Discuss the current landscape and evolution of the discipline and /or sub areas through a variety of roots, noting critical points of development and significant contributors.

**Goal 2. Appropriately apply communication theory to human communication phenomena.**

SLO 2.1 Compare the various theoretical perspectives associated with the discipline with regard to their assumptions, predominant focus, and weaknesses.

SLO 2.2 Analyze current communication phenomena using communication theory.

**Goal 3. Apply research methods knowledge to communication problems.**

SLO 3.1 Design and/or conduct a qualitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.

SLO 3.2 Design and/or conduct a quantitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.

SLO 3.3 Design and/or conduct a rhetorical research study incorporating all the principles of good rhetorical scholarship.

**Goal 4. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specialized area of communication studies.**

SLO 4.1 Present in written form a comprehensive understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.

SLO 4.2 Orally present and/or defend individual understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.

Source: See page 4 of <https://www.csuchico.edu/cmst/assets/documents/graduate-student-guide-1415.pdf>

**3. Course Alignment Matrix:**

CMST Graduate Program Goals/SLOs <i>Revised Spring 2012- Finalized Fall 2012</i>	Required Core Courses				Seminars								
	601	602	603	613	604	606	607	609	611	612	614	699TP	Comp
<b>1. Articulate the discipline and related sub areas.</b>													
<b>1.1</b> Discuss the current landscape and evolution of the discipline and /or sub areas through a variety of roots, noting critical points of development and significant contributors.	I	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	D	D	D		M
<b>2. Appropriately apply communication theory to human communication phenomena.</b>													
<b>2.1</b> Compare the various theoretical perspectives associated with the discipline with regard to their assumptions, predominant focus, and weaknesses.	I		I		D	D	D	D	D	D	D		M
<b>2.2</b> Analyze current communication phenomena using communication theory.	I		I	I	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	M	M
<b>3. Apply knowledge of research methods to communication problems.</b>													
<b>3.1</b> Design and/or conduct a qualitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.			I/D		D	D	D	D	D			M	M

3.2 Design and/or conduct a quantitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.		I			D	D	D	D	D			M	M
3.3 Design/or conduct a rhetorical research study incorporating all the principles of good rhetorical scholarship.				I/D	D		D	D	D	D	D	M	M
<b>4. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specialized area of communication studies</b>													
4.1 Present in written form a comprehensive understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.	I	I	I	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	M	M
4.2 Orally present & defend individual understanding of a body of research in a specialized area	I			D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	M	M

Key: I = Introduction; D = Demonstrated; M = Mastery

**4. Closing the Loop: Departmental or College Discussions/Feedback:**

Last year’s report was circulated digitally among the full time CMST faculty. (See “Appendix A - APAR 19-20 CMST MA PROGRAM” for circulated report.) Time was provided during a subsequent faculty meeting to field questions. No additional feedback was shared.

**5. Closing the Loop: Programmatic Actions:**

A series of ongoing conversations about the value and utility of earning a Master’s degree in Communication Studies were launched in Fall 2022. These conversations were aimed at reconciling how/why our department has experienced a significant decline in enrollment over the past 5+ years while simultaneously producing high-quality, award-winning graduate level scholarship. Our Program appears to maintain high standards for achievement and an ability to yield impactful thesis level research, but the decline in enrollment paired with an ongoing, underwhelming Comprehensive Exam process signals that changes should be made.

**6. What is your current Assessment Plan?**

Since mastery of SLOs are evaluated in our culminating experiences, we find this point in the graduate student’s journey an appropriate one to assess the extent students are meeting them. In our last review cycle, we reviewed comprehensive exams and also did so for the preceding 5-year review. Thesis projects have not been reviewed as routinely as our comprehensive exams, yet both constitute culminating experiences for our degree that require students master the majority of our SLOs upon graduation. In this particular cycle, the majority of our graduating students (3/4) completed a thesis project instead of Comprehensive Exams, and so it made sense to turn our attention to this metric at this time.

**7. Learning Outcome(s) Assessed:**

As a culminating project for the Master’s Degree, successful completion of a thesis demonstrates Mastery in the following areas:

- SLO 2.2 Analyze current communication phenomena using communication theory.
- SLO 3.1 Design and/or conduct a qualitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.
- SLO 3.2 Design and/or conduct a quantitative research study incorporating all the principles of good design.
- SLO 3.3 Design and/or conduct a rhetorical research study incorporating all the principles of good rhetorical scholarship.
- SLO 4.1 Present in written form a comprehensive understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.
- SLO 4.2 Orally present and/or defend individual understanding of a body of research in a specialized area.

**6. Artifact Components (assignments, rubric, and benchmark):**

Describe the components of your artifact:

a. **What artifact(s) did you assess and for what course(s)?**

CMST 699T is the course that was assessed.

Each of the following theses were assessed:

- Appendix B: Burke Thesis - Sham Engagement
- Appendix C: Sutcliffe Thesis - Acculturation and Concealment
- Appendix D: Wilson Thesis - Transgender Health Communication

**b. Why was/were this/these artifact(s) chosen and how many?**

These three theses were the only ones defended during the review period. Three of the four MA graduates completed a thesis, representing the majority of the culminating experiences for this graduating class.

**c. Who evaluated the artifact(s) and how?**

Serving as committee members on one or more of the thesis projects under review, each of the following CMST tenured faculty members prepared for, provided feedback during, and participated in Oral Defense meetings and the final assessment:

- Jennifer Malkowski
- Stephanie Hamel
- Zach Justus
- Nan Li

At the conclusion of that Oral Defense, faculty committee members convened (in private) to review the “outstanding thesis” eligibility criteria (linked below) and – through discussion – moved to nominate eligible projects when consensus was reached.

**d. Was a rubric used?**

See Appendix E: “CMST Thesis Assessment Form” for how our department determines and advances nominees for the Graduate School’s Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award:

<https://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/assets/documents/current-outstanding-thesis.pdf>

**e. What benchmark was chosen to demonstrate proficiency?**

For a student to pass their Oral Defense and demonstrate proficiency in key areas, they must earn an “Acceptable” rating or above across all categories. For faculty to advance an award nomination, all CMST faculty member reviewers must unanimously vote that a thesis ranks as “Exceptional” across the board, which indicates that an Exceptional rating was earned across the majority of categories as assessed by the majority of CMST fulltime faculty member reviewers.

**7. Assessment Results:**

Please describe/report outcomes of assessment.

**a. How well did students perform on the task? What percentage of students met the benchmark?**

100% met the proficiency benchmark. 2/3 were assessed as reaching Exceptional status.

**b. Were there significant differences in the ratings of the evaluators? If so, what might account for these difference?**

No.

**c. If students met the benchmark, what do they appear to be doing well and why? If students did not meet the benchmark, what are some possible reasons?**

The benchmark was met across the board. Students seem to excel in their ability to connect theory with practice to advance arguments about the value and implications of their findings. Students are also clear about study limitations and are able to articulate future directions for their work, which indicates burgeoning, programmatic lines of inquiry to come.

- d. **You may use the table below to report results, adapting the table as necessary, but you should also provide a narrative describing and analyzing the assessment results.**

Summative, Qualitative Assessment for each thesis under review:

- *Transgender Health Communication* (See “Appendix H - Wilson, Christian (Alex) – FPS”)  
“This thesis demonstrates advanced mastery of and advanced contributions to communication theory and practice. Moreover, in distinct and eloquent ways, this thesis speaks directly to the needs of academic and activist communities alike.”
- *Sham Engagement* (See “Appendix F - Burke, Sheila – FPS”)  
“The committee approves this thesis noting with distinction the methodological rigor and promising cross-disciplinary theoretical implications of the research.”
- *Acculturation and Concealment* (See “Appendix G - Alora Sutcliffe FPS”)  
“Alora complete[d] her thesis in March with minor revisions submitted to and approved by the chair.”

After successful completion of their oral defense and required edits, each of the three candidates was recommended for graduation with distinction. Two of the three (Burke & Wilson) are further eligible to be nominated for the Outstanding Thesis Award. Faculty will commence and decide on which candidate to advance as the official CMST Program nomination by the mid-March 2023 deadline.

### 8. Planned Program Improvement Actions

On Friday November 4, 2022 the CMST faculty voted 8-1 to suspend the graduate program with the intention of relaunching a redesigned program. After many committee meetings, much deliberation, careful consideration about changing student demographics, the current post-grad-environment, and our core faculty’s expertise, the CMST faculty will hold off on recruiting a new incoming Fall 2023 class, and instead channel our collective energy into revitalizing the CMST graduate curriculum in more sustainable and student-driven directions, while building on current faculty areas of expertise, research, and scholarship, and supporting the emerging trends that promote a more applied research focus as part of the curriculum and/or culminating experience for this Degree.

### 9. Name, Title, and E-Mail Address of Person Completing this Form:

Jennifer Malkowski  
Associate Professor of Communication Studies  
jmalkowski@csuchico.edu

### 10. Acknowledgement and Signatures:

a) Department Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (if desired):

b) College Coordinator or Associate Dean (if applicable):

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Comments (if desired):

c) Dean or Associate Dean: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments (if desired):

**Appendices (please include any of the following that are applicable to your program):**

**A. Rubric**

**B. Artifact Evaluated**

**Please submit completed reports electronically to your dean, associate dean, and/or college assessment coordinator by 9/30/XX.**  
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