

Annual Assessment Report

Department: Communication Studies
Academic Year: 2020-2021
Date of Submission: March 3, 2022
Department Chair: Elizabeth Gardner

I. Response to the previous year PRC’s recommendations

Item: How do the 2019-2020 Biblical/Ethical Principles assessment numbers compare with past years’ results?	Response: The data from our last assessment of our Biblical/Ethical Principles PLO is available in Appendix A. By the numbers, students did better in 2019-2020 on Biblical/Ethical Principles than they had previously.
Item: What percentage of graduating seniors participated in senior research or an internship and is there a way to assess these students on this PLO?	Response: We are proposing a change to the required Senior Capstone Experience, so moving forward, seniors will have a common capstone where assessment can more easily be conducted.
Item: Plan and submit a draft of the alumni survey to administer this spring to get a head start on the 6 year report.	Response: We have drafted and sent out our alumni survey.
Notes:	

II A. Program Learning Outcome (PLO) assessment

If your department participated in the ILO assessment you may use this section to report on your student learning in relation to the assessed ILO. The assessment data can be requested from the Dean of Curriculum and Educational Effectiveness.

Program Learning Outcome	Due to COVID, the Program Review Committee granted the Department of Communication Studies a one-year extension on our 6-year report. Therefore, the department was not due to assess a PLO, so instead the department took a closer look at the data from the Diversity ILO Assessment.
Who is in Charge /Involved?	

<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	
Major Findings	
Closing the Loop Activities	
Collaboration and Communication	

or/and

II B. Key Questions

Key Question	Are Westmont Communication Studies seniors able “to effectively analyze topics and human experiences using categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socio-economic status, and disability with respect to a biblical vision of human flourishing”? (Diversity ILO)
Who is in Charge/Involved?	Elizabeth Gardner led the discussion. All members of the department participated in assessing and discussing the results.
<u>Direct Assessment Methods</u>	Twenty-six students from COM 191: Senior Capstone Internship and COM 196: Senior Capstone Seminar participated in the Diversity ILO Assessment in Spring 2021 (The department graduated 29 seniors in academic year 2020-2021). The department reviewed the Diversity ILO assignment (Appendix B) and rubric (Appendix C) and normed a sample submission at a department meeting on Sept. 13, 2021. Each member of the department then assessed a fourth of the assignments submitted by seniors as part of the Diversity ILO assignment, and the department discussed the results at a meeting on Sept 27, 2021. A table of the data is available as Appendix D.
<u>Indirect Assessment Methods</u>	None

Major Findings	<p>The department was pleased overall with the assessment results and thought the data correctly represented students' progress. Over 80% of students were highly-developed or developed on empathy/perspective taking. 62% of students were highly-developed or developed in understanding systems. 65% were highly-developed or developed in faith. 61% of students were highly-developed or developed in social responsibility.</p> <p>The empathy scores seemed accurate. Generally, students are able to imagine how another person feels. Some students who nuanced their answers in this area may have been tapping into Bakhtin's view about the difference between empathy and sympathy.</p> <p>Some students didn't engage deeply with the faith question. They articulated that God tells us to love each other, but they did not go into more depth. There seems to be more confusion on these points than there was a decade ago.</p> <p>There was disappointment that only some students engaged with the prompt analytically. It appeared that many quickly decided what side of the issue they were on, answered the questions in line with that, and failed to look at both sides fully.</p> <p>There was an extended discussion about the assignment and rubric, particularly differing definitions of "empathy" and "systems." The department also considered how campus conversations around diversity influenced engagement with this assessment (e.g., being exhausted by controversy on campus and in the media and checking out in their answers).</p>
Recommendations	<p>The department is highly attuned to how students' responses stemmed out of the work students complete in major courses <i>as well as</i> active discussions on campus and in our wider culture about diversity. The department will have a discussion in Spring 2022 about how to encourage students to engage diversity, equity, and inclusion in relation to biblical principles and their faith commitments.</p>
<p>Collaboration and Communication All members of the department engaged in the norming, assessment, and discussion of data.</p>	

III. Follow-ups

Program Learning Outcome or Key Question	
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Who was involved in implementation?	
What was decided or addressed?	
How were the recommendations implemented?	
Collaboration and Communication	

IV. Other assessment or Key Questions related projects

Project	
Who is in Charge /Involved?	
Major Findings	
Action	
Collaboration and Communication	

V. Adjustments to the Multi-year Assessment Plan (optional)

Proposed adjustment	Rationale	Timing
Turn in Six-Year Report in Fall 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extra burden of teaching during COVID - Increased advising load because 1 of 4 department members was out on sabbatical - Having no academic assistant for a stretch during the planned report-preparation period - High faculty service load across department (faculty council, search committees, athletic committee as preparations were being made to switch to NCAA) 	Approved June 2021

Appendix A: Data from last assessment of Biblical/Ethical Principles PLO

The charts below summarize the findings of our most recent assessments of COM’s Biblical/Ethical Principles PLO. By the numbers, our students did as well as or better in this area than the last time it was assessed. Significantly fewer students were “emerging” in all three categories, and many more students were “highly developed” in knowledge and application than the previous time we assessed this PLO.

Biblical/Ethical Principles PLO Data from 2015 Six-Year Report

<i>BIBLICAL AND ETHICAL PRINCIPLES</i>	<i>HIGHLY DEVELOPED</i>	<i>DEVELOPED</i>	<i>EMERGING</i>
Biblical/Ethical Self-Awareness	28	56	17
Biblical/Ethical Knowledge	28	64	8
Biblical/Ethical Application	33	51	16

Percent of papers that evidenced highly developed, developed, or emerging biblical/ethical principles, n=47

Biblical/Ethical Principles PLO Data from 2019-2020 Annual Report

	Highly Developed	Developed	Emerging
Knowledge	6 (55%)	4 (36%)	1 (9%)
Application	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	-
Self-Awareness	4 (36%)	7 (64%)	-

Appendix B: Diversity ILO Assignment Description & Case Study

This is the case study that will be used as part of your final exam AND as part of the college's assessment of graduating seniors. The collective data for seniors will be used to inform the College, including curriculum development, strategic planning, and evaluation of institutional commitments and goals. Your efforts here will greatly impact the learning experiences of future Westmont students.

- Answer the prompts based on the reading. For each question, please answer as completely as you can, providing detail.
- While you are NOT required to cite any sources other than the case itself, you should feel free to cite whatever sources come to mind as you form your response.
- Please use full sentences and try to respond in complete thoughts.
- The answer for each question will be evaluated on its own and should be complete. In other words, don't assume that a reader will also see your answer to a previous question. If you need to repeat something in order to make an answer clearer, feel free to do so.
- For the College, writing (grammar, style, etc.) is less important than the content. But please do proofread your answer and think about your writing, in addition to the content, as our department would like to know how well our graduating seniors write.
- Please don't rush through the assignment. We estimate this will take you a good 90 minutes or so.
- When you are finished, please upload your answers BOTH to *Chalk & Wire*, AND to Canvas.

CASE STUDY

"I fit the description...." (adapted) by Steve Locke

December 04, 2015

On my way to get a burrito before work, I was detained by the police. I noticed the police car in the public lot behind Centre Street. As I was walking away from my car, the cruiser followed me. I walked down Centre Street and was about to cross over to the burrito place and the officer got out of the car.

"Hey my man," he said. He unsnapped the holster of his gun.

"Yes?" I said. I took my hands out of my pockets.

"Where you coming from?"

"Home."

"How'd you get here?"

"I drove."

He was next to me now. Two other police cars pulled up. I was standing in front of the bank across the street from the burrito place. I was going to get lunch before I taught my 1:30 class. There were cops all around me. I said nothing. I looked at the officer who addressed me. He was white, stocky, bearded.

"What's your address?"

I told him.

"We had someone matching your description just try to break into a woman's house."

A second police officer stood next to me; white, tall, bearded. Two police cruisers passed and would continue to circle the block for the 35 minutes I was standing there.

"You fit the description," the officer said. "Black male, knit hat, puffy coat. Do you have identification?"

"It's in my wallet. May I reach into my pocket and get my wallet?"

"Yeah."

I handed him my license. I told him it did not have my current address. He walked over to a police car. The other cop, taller, wearing sunglasses, told me that I fit the description of someone who broke into a woman's house. Right down to the knit cap. Barbara Sullivan made a knit cap for me in pinks and browns and blues and oranges and lime green. No one has a hat like this. It doesn't fit any description that anyone would have. I looked at the second cop. I clasped my hands in front of me to stop them from shaking.

"For the record," I said to the second cop, "I'm not a criminal. I'm a college professor." I was wearing my faculty ID around my neck, clearly visible with my photo.

"You fit the description so we just have to check it out." The first cop returned and handed me my license.

"We have the victim and we need her to take a look at you to see if you are the person."

It was at this moment that I knew that I was probably going to die. I am not being dramatic when I say this. I was not going to get into a police car. I was not going to present myself to some victim. I was not going to let someone tell the cops that I was not guilty when I already told them that I had nothing to do with any robbery. I was not going to let them take me anywhere because if they did, the chance I was going to be accused of something I did not do rose exponentially. I knew this in my heart. I was not going anywhere with these cops and I was not going to let some white woman decide whether or not I was a criminal, especially after I told them that I was not a criminal. This meant that I was going to resist arrest. This meant that I was not going to let the police put their hands on me. If you are wondering why people don't go with the police, I hope this explains it for you.

Something weird happens when you are on the street being detained by the police. People look at you like you are a criminal. The police are detaining you, so clearly you must have done something, otherwise they wouldn't have you. No one made eye contact with me. I was hoping that someone I knew would walk down the street or come out of one of the stores and say to these cops, "That's Steve Locke. What the f----- are you detaining him for?"

The cops decided that they would bring the victim to come view me on the street. The[y] asked me to wait. I said nothing. I stood still.

"Thanks for cooperating," the second cop said. "This is probably nothing, but it's our job and you do fit the description. 5' 11", black male. One-hundred-and-sixty pounds, but you're a little more than that. Knit hat." A little more than 160. Thanks for that, I thought.

I noticed a black woman further down the block. She was small and concerned. She was watching what was going on. I focused on her red coat. I slowed my breathing. I looked at her from time to time. I thought: Don't leave, sister. Please don't leave.

The first cop said, "Where do you teach?"

"Massachusetts College of Art and Design." I tugged at the lanyard that had my ID.

"How long you been teaching there?"

"Thirteen years."

We stood in silence for about 10 more minutes. An unmarked police car pulled up. The first cop went over to talk to the driver. The driver kept looking at me as the cop spoke to him. I looked directly at the driver. He got out of the car.

"I'm Detective Cardoza. I appreciate your cooperation."

I said nothing.

"I'm sure these officers told you what is going on?"

"They did."

"Where is your car?"

"It's in the lot behind Bukhara." I pointed up Centre Street.

"Okay," the detective said. "We're going to let you go. Do you have a car key you can show me?"

"Yes," I said. "I'm going to reach into my pocket and pull out my car key."

"Okay."

I showed him the key to my car. The cops thanked me for my cooperation. I nodded and turned to go.

"Sorry for screwing up your lunch break," the second cop said.

I walked back toward my car, away from the burrito place. I saw the woman in red.

"Thank you," I said to her. "Thank you for staying."

"Are you ok?" She said. Her small, beautiful face was lined with concern.

"Not really. I'm really shook up. And I have to get to work."

"I knew something was wrong. I was watching the whole thing. The way they are treating us now, you have to watch them. "

"I'm so grateful you were there. I kept thinking to myself, 'Don't leave, sister.' May I give you a hug?"

"Yes," she said. She held me as I shook. "Are you sure you are ok?"

"No, I'm not. I'm going to have a good cry in my car. I have to go teach." I put my head down and walked to my car.

My colleague was in our shared office and she was able to calm me down. I had about 45 minutes until my class began and I had to teach. I forgot the lesson I had planned. I forget the schedule. I couldn't think about how to do my job. I thought about the fact my word counted for nothing; they didn't believe that I wasn't a criminal. They had to find out. My word was not enough for them. My ID was not enough for them. My handmade one-of-a-kind knit hat was an object of suspicion. My Ralph Lauren quilted blazer was only a "puffy coat." That white woman could just walk up to a cop and talk about me like I was an object for regard. I wanted to go

back and spit in their faces. The cops were probably deeply satisfied with how they handled the interaction, how they didn't escalate the situation, how they were respectful and polite.

I imagined sitting in the back of a police car while a white woman decides if I am a criminal or not. If I looked guilty being detained by the cops imagine how vile I become sitting in a cruiser? I knew I could not let that happen to me. I knew if that were to happen, I would be dead.

Nothing I am, nothing I do, nothing I have means anything because I fit the description.

I had to confess to my students that I was a bit out of it today and I asked them to bear with me. I had to teach.

After class I was supposed to go to an art opening. I went home.

Questions / Prompts:

1. Are you likely to be stopped by the police in this manner? Why or Why not? To what degree do you empathize with Steve Locke? What about the police officers? The woman in the red coat? The woman whose house was broken into?
2. Please discuss the social issues or dynamics that were raised in this case study. Identify any historical, political, economic, cultural, and/or ideological factors that may have contributed to the scenario as well as any conditions necessary for such an interaction to take place.
3. Imagine that someone from a different faith or belief system from yours sought to understand how your own deep commitments play a role in interpreting and responding to this situation. What would you say? Avoid blanket statements and sermon points.
4. If you were tasked with developing an action plan to address this situation, where would you start? What goals would you set? What people and/or institutions would you involve? What platform(s) would you utilize? What resources would you need? What obstacles would you expect to encounter?

Appendix C: Diversity ILO Rubric

	Highly-developed 4	Developed 3	Emerging 2	Initial 1
Empathy <i>Perspective Taking</i>	Students are able to reposition themselves as well as imaginatively and sensitively engage and articulate the experiences of others.	Students are able to reposition themselves and adequately engage and articulate the experiences of others.	Students are either able to reposition themselves or outline the experiences of others.	Students have very limited capacity to reposition themselves or outline the experiences of others.
Understanding Systems	Utilize deep knowledge of two or more systems (historical, political, economic, cultural, etc.) to demonstrate persuasively how these systems impact daily experiences and life outcomes.	Utilize adequate knowledge of two or more systems (historical, political, economic, cultural, etc.) to demonstrate how these systems impact daily experiences and life outcomes.	Utilize adequate understanding of one system (historical, political, economic, cultural, etc.) to outline how this system impacts daily experiences or life outcomes.	Limited knowledge of any system or systems (historical, political, economic, cultural, etc.) and its impact on daily experiences or life outcomes.
Faith	Give a substantive explanation of how their own Christian faith (or their deepest commitments, for non-Christian students) plays a role in interpreting and responding to the case study.	Give basic explanation of how their own Christian faith (or their deepest commitments, for non-Christian students) plays a role in interpreting and responding to the case study.	Able to outline how their own Christian faith (or their deepest commitments, for non-Christian students) plays a role in interpreting and responding to the case study.	Severely limited or no knowledge of how their own Christian faith (or their deepest commitments, for non-Christian students) plays a role in responding to the case study.
Social Responsibility	Convincingly demonstrate the ability to come up with plausible, real-world solutions with clear goals, adequate resources, pertinent agencies, as well as stating possible obstacles.	Adequately demonstrate the ability to come up with a plausible, real-world solution with some goals, resources, and pertinent agencies, as well as stating at least one obstacle.	Develop a limited or unrealistic solution with a goal, some resources and pertinent agencies, as well as implying at least one obstacle.	Develop a limited or unrealistic solution without stating goals, resources, or pertinent agencies.

Appendix D: Assessment of COM Seniors on Diversity ILO

Senior Capstone Seminar & Internship Student Results (26 Students)

	4	3	2	1	N/A
Empathy/Perspective Taking	11 (42%)	11 (42%)	4 (16%)	0	
Understanding Systems	7 (27%)	9 (35%)	7 (27%)	3 (11%)	
Faith	10 (38%)	7 (27%)	6 (23%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)
Social Responsibility	5 (19%)	11 (42%)	8 (31%)	2 (8%)	