

Instruction

Section 1: Program Information

Catalog Description

Communications includes instruction in mass media and laboratory experiences in media arts and journalism. The program includes: -print journalism, -publications, -broadcasting, -narrowcasting, -podcasting, -public relations, -desktop publishing, -film studies, -reporting and writing news, -multimedia reporting, and -visual, digital, and mobile communications. Included in the communications program are critical and analytical thinking skills, sensitivity to cultural diversity, and ethical communication. Courses in communications satisfy general education requirements for the associate degree and lower division transfer and can be used to fulfill some of the requirements for an associate degree major in language arts. Communication courses are also an integral part of the Associate in Arts in Communication Studies for Transfer degree, which focuses on the areas of public communication, small group communication, oral interpretation, and interpersonal communication. Communication Studies additionally offers an Associate in Arts in Journalism for Transfer degree.

Faculty/Staff – List all faculty members (full or part time) who have taught in the program in the last year. Include the division administrative assistant. Indicate with an asterisk next to the name, those who are participating in the program review process this year.

Full-time faculty: *Patrick Schmiedt, Theresa Villeneuve, Amber Durfield.

Part-time faculty: Michael Delmuro, Tira Murray, Michael Saakyan, Hannah Walleck.

Section 2: Mission

Citrus College Mission Statement

Citrus College provides students with quality educational experiences and support services that lead to the successful completion of degrees, transfer, certificates, career/technical education and basic skills proficiency. The college fosters academic and career success through the development of critical thinking, effective communication, creativity, and cultural awareness in a safe, accessible and affordable learning environment. In meeting the needs of our demographically diverse student population, we embrace equity and accountability through measurable learning outcomes, ethical data-driven decisions and student achievement.

How does this program support the mission of the college? Write about the educational purposes of the program, including skill proficiency, degrees, certificates, transfer, and employment. Are there any specific ways the program promotes equity and cultural awareness?

The communications program offers an Associate Degree for Transfer in journalism and an Associate of Arts degree in public relations. The program also offers a skill award in journalism. COMM classes also represent part of the requirements for the multidisciplinary Media Arts certificate.

Students who complete the ADT in journalism are required to understand and exercise journalistic rights and responsibilities, as well as understand the media, information, and their relation to society. Through the required classes in the program, including participation in student publications, students specifically focus on all aspects of academic and career success. Journalism courses and public communication via student media requires effective writing, art, photography, web publishing and social media skills. Students must develop news judgment to help their work reach a diverse audience and to have information that is useful, interesting and/or relevant to their readership. Students must also solve unique problems every semester, as each set of stories for the Clarion website and Logos Magazine are always fresh, requiring the development of specific and creative problem solving skills. This requires thinking beyond the self and the kind of empathy and critical thinking necessary to understand how work will be received by readers, listeners and viewers who do not know what they know or who do not come from a background that they do. Non-lab courses such as COMM 100, 101, 104, 111, 125, 136, 150, 200, 250 and 260 provide students with the skills to tackle such problems, while lab-based courses such as COMM 240, COMM 230, COMM 280 and COMM 103 allow students the opportunity to exercise those skills in real-world situations with real-world implications and the necessity to work and communicate with others both inside and outside the class to reach desired outcomes. Such classes also require students to make contact and tell the stories of those different from themselves, thereby developing diverse perspectives. Moreover, multidisciplinary programs like the Media Arts certificate encourage students to seek coursework beyond the COMM program that will broaden both critical thinking and cultural awareness outside the required subject matter. Together, students who graduate with their associate degree, certificate or skill award are well prepared for transfer to university programs and employment in the communications profession.

Section 3: Course Curriculum

Curriculum Table ([prepopulated](#), [noneditable](#))

Review the course outlines of record (COR) for the program. Then write about the status of these courses, with statements about each of the areas listed below. Include any modifications to the curriculum that have been made or need to be made to better serve students and enhance completion.

- Currency of courses: Has each COR been reviewed by the curriculum committee within the past six years? Have each course's prerequisites been reviewed to determine if they prepare students adequately enough for students entering the course?
 - Yes, all course CORs have been reviewed in the past six years. COMM 240 is the only course in the program with any prerequisite/corequisite requirement.
- Alignment with California General Education Transfer Curriculum (CalGETC) if associated. Alignment with business and industry if career and technical education. Does it continue to meet the needs of employers in the area?
 - Numerous courses in the COMM program align with CalGETC requirements. These include COMM 100, COMM 111, COMM 136, COMM 150, and COMM 200.
- Formats (modality type, course length, evening/weekend, noncredit, etc.)
 - Courses in the COMM program are offered in a variety of modalities and lengths. Classes are offered in both eight-week and 16-week formats, and classes are offered on campus,

as hybrid courses and as online courses. Courses are also offered in the summer and winter sessions with either online or face-to-face modalities. Courses are currently not offered as evening/weekend courses or as noncredit courses.

- Are there any limitations preventing timely progress toward educational goal attainment?
 - No.

Section 4: Student Success Data

Power BI Dashboard

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoibW1NmRkOGQtOTIhMC00NzZiLThmNjctNWM1YTE4ZTA1MzM3IiwidCI6IjEzNDNjNTk0LTBmNzYtNGY1ZS04NWUwLTdhYTcxNTlyMGZkYyIsImMiOjZ9>

Review and write about the data on student success, retention, degrees, certificates, and transfer.

- How does your program compare with college-wide data?
- Compare performances within your program to those of the collegewide data.
- Write about any notable equity gaps in performance.
- What potential obstacles or barriers do students face?
- What opportunities are available to address these barriers?

Success rates for the communications program were at 64% and 68% for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024, respectively. Although below the college rates of 74% and 76% for the same time frames, the rates are in line with other Language Arts programs, whose success rates were nearly identical at 65% and 68% for the same semesters. Hybrid courses had the lowest retention and success rates but also had the lowest enrollment, so a small sample may be skewing this data.

Retention rates for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 were both 87% for the COMM program. This is slightly below the college averages for those semesters of 91% and 92%, respectively, but they are in line with LAL division programs, which had retention rates of 87% and 88% for the same time period.

No specific equity gaps were discernible in the program data for gender, age group, or ethnicity that varied significantly from college and division averages or whose swings could not be explained by a small sample size.

Faculty continue to use SLOs to facilitate success by making sure course assignments align with goals and by providing support for that work both inside and outside the classroom. Obstacles to success in COMM classes are not necessarily specific to the program itself and include challenges such as work-life balance, economic challenges, attendance and completion of class requirements.

Links to [Guided Pathways](#) and [DEIA+](#)

Section 5: Program-Level Student Learning Outcome Assessment

Program Learning Outcomes

Communications Program SLO Set

Communications Program SLO 1

Interpret and critically assess a variety of media messages, including those that reflect multicultural perspectives in order to make connections, critically compare and contrast ideas, and produce written, oral, and visual messages as demonstrated by a final product project, portfolio, and/or exam.

Mapping

SLO Goals: 1. Communication

Communications Program SLO 2

Identify and apply criteria for distinguishing fact from opinion and demonstrate awareness and sensitivity and biases in messages in order to produce communication that are accurate, objective, fair, and balanced as demonstrated by a final project, portfolio, exam.

Mapping

SLO Goals: 3. Creative, Critical and Analytical Thinking

Communications Program SLO 3

Understand and apply ethical and legal principles of professional communications organizations in order to cultivate

trust, responsibility, and credibility as demonstrated by a responsibility rubric.

Mapping

SLO Goals: 4. Community/Global Consciousness and Responsibility

DEGREE/CERTIFICATE/SKILL AWARD LEARNING OUTCOMES

Instruction Plus One Program Review Cycle 3

Communications

JOURNALISM AA-T DEGREE SLOs

JOURNALISM AA-T DEGREE SLO1

Understand and exercise journalistic rights and responsibilities.

Mapping

No Mapping

JOURNALISM AA-T DEGREE SLO2

Understand the media, information, and their relation to society.

Mapping

No Mapping

Journalism Skill Award SLOs

Journalism Skill Award SLO 1

Understand and exercise journalistic rights and responsibilities.

Mapping

No Mapping

Journalism Skill Award SLO 2

Understand the media, information, and their relation to society.

Mapping

No Mapping

Journalism Skill Award SLO 3

Gain and display skills to gather and disseminate news in multiple formats, including text, photos, audio, video and

graphics.

Mapping

No Mapping

Degree/Certificate/Skill Award Learning Outcomes ([prepopulated, noneditable](#))

Review all program, degree, certificate, and skill award SLOs. Write about their current status, as well as any modifications that have been made or need to be made. (If you need to update the degree/certificate/skill award learning outcomes, this is done through the curriculum review process. [Program learning outcomes should be updated here.](#))

Provide a summary of how well course-level SLOs align with the broader program-level SLOs and if any changes are needed.

Course-level SLOs align well with program-level SLOs. All courses in the program require understanding and assessing the role of media in society, explaining/demonstrating journalistic responsibility and ethics, and/or collecting and sharing news in a variety of media. No changes to program or course SLOs are necessary at this time.

Section 6: Assessment and Planning

Past Recommendations and Goals (prepopulated, noneditable)

Summary of Past Recommendations and Goals: Describe the progress made on your recommendations and goals from the last comprehensive program review.

2023-24 program goals

Articulation agreements for PR AA: Develop articulation agreements with nearby CSUs and UCs for the Citrus College public relations associate degree.

Progress has been slow to nonexistent on this goal. It remains a priority for the program, but no headway has been made.

Enrollment: Continue to find unique and specific ways to boost enrollment in COMM-related courses, specifically those related to student media.

Progress here has been solid, with student media courses (COMM 240/230/280/103) seeing their highest combined enrollment in several years in spring 2025. However, enrollment remains a constant concern, and we remain committed to finding unique and specific ways to recruit and retain students for courses and degree pursuit in the program.

Overall Strengths: What does your program do especially well? List some of the things that are making a positive difference for your students, as well as any recent improvements or accomplishments.

Overall Weaknesses: In what ways does your program need to improve?

Students from the COMM program are consistent winners of journalism awards from the work they produce for the Clarion website and for Logos Magazine. Combined since 2015, these two publications have won 243 total awards from the Journalism Association of Community Colleges.

A laptop bank provided by the college for classes in VA 236 has been a game changer, allowing students to do classwork and student media work from anywhere, anytime, without having to pay for a computer of their own. Student success rates in classes in VA 236 have reflected this change.

Students in the journalism program consistently transfer to universities to continue their studies. Numerous alumni dating back decades are employed as communications professionals across the country. One recent example is Erik Adams, [who recently was awarded a California Local News Fellowship](#).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the program has embraced more hybrid and online class delivery methods, with students consistently filling such sections.

COMM 125, Podcasting and Beginning Audio Production, was offered for the first time in spring 2025.

How does your program help support DEIA+ efforts and students' sense of belonging? What additional institutional resources or cross-departmental interaction would aid in offering support?

All courses in the COMM program consistently emphasize to students their rights and responsibilities when it comes to communicating messages in the public sphere. The lessons learned from such tasks allows students to develop numerous skills that improve students' cultural understanding and the ways in which they can best shape their messages to maximize effectiveness. At the Clarion and Logos, students are encouraged to take on telling stories that both tap into their individual passions as well as stories in which they feel alien and must learn from others on our campus and in our communities. Through these efforts, COMM students are often some of the most well-connected students on campus, and they become increasingly comfortable communicating not only their needs and wants but the needs and wants of others. Students are keenly aware of their ability to shape public discussion and attention, and students learn to prioritize voices from a wide range of experiences, employment levels and expertise. Students also learn how to do this across a variety of media, learning how messages must change to work best in a particular medium.

Recommendations and Goals: Identify changes you plan to make to improve your program over the next three years. (Keep in mind that goals should not include increasing your budget or getting useful equipment. Instead, they should be focused on what your program will accomplish in serving students and the college.)

Currently, we do not envision any large curricular changes such as new classes; new degrees, certificates, or skill awards; or new interdisciplinary degrees or certificates. We remain open to such collaborations, though.

The Clarion remains in a transition period, moving from 76 years of printing a newspaper to just finishing its second year as a fully digital news outlet.

Enrollment always remains a concern, and existing outreach (directly reaching close to 100 classes per academic year) will continue to be analyzed and updated to accurately reflect student needs and program offerings.

Completion and retention rates in COMM are below college averages but are consistent with division averages. Even so, faculty remain committed to finding innovative ways in which to support student success. This includes varying course modality and offerings to best meet students where they are.

Budget Planning: Describe the resources (staffing, facilities, technology, equipment, and professional development) you anticipate needing over the next three years in order to accomplish the goals/SLOs for your department. Ideally, this information will inform your resource requests in the annual updates for each of the next three years.

Staffing: The program is in a consistent cycle of seeking adjunct instructors for our classes. COMM has not filed an FNIC request for additional full-time faculty in several years, although such a request may be filed if any active full-time faculty leave, change programs, or retire. The program also pays two student employees to be the editor-in-chief of Logos and the Clarion. Such positions remain vital to the continued commitment of students to student media programs.

Facilities: The COMM program is unofficially housed in VA 236, the Clarion/Logos newsroom. The newsroom's small size makes expansion difficult. A classroom large enough to hold the newsroom, a consistent broadcast backdrop, studio photography area for student media's exclusive use, audio and video editing/recording bays and faculty/student staff offices continues to be a request of the program.

Technology: The program's technological needs are currently met by existing hardware and software. However, it remains incumbent upon the college to keep both hardware and software up-to-date to reflect current professional needs and trends.

Equipment: Equipment needs are currently sufficient for the program's class offerings. However, the program cannot offer classes in TV or online broadcasting due to a lack of space to dedicate to such offerings. Equipment needs for existing offerings will mostly be used to address updating equipment for currency and to replace worn-out, broken or outdated equipment.

Professional development: As part of the Journalism Association of Community Colleges, students and faculty advisers of student media programs attend at least two conferences per academic year. Students generally have their fees, food and lodging covered by the Clarion/Logos advertising account. However, with the loss of print advertising revenue through the Clarion due to the cut of print, the long-term ability for the Clarion to self-fund such expenditures remains in long-term jeopardy. The department faculty are already pursuing alternative funding, including fundraising, grants, direct college funding and more to supplement this gap. Outside of JACC, faculty in the program remain committed to updating teaching and advising practices to reflect the most successful practices in education, and we will use our staff development funding available through the Professional Development Committee to pursue opportunities for training designed to help us improve in those areas.