

Proposal for an Online Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies

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Overview

This document sets forth the basic features and rationale for a proposed undergraduate **Online Certificate in Traditional** (face-to-face) **and Mediated** (computer) **Communication Strategies**. The courses in the Certificate will be delivered *totally online through computer-mediated distance learning* by faculty of the Department of Communication Studies, School of Liberal Arts, IUPUI.

- **Campus:** Indianapolis (Virtual)
- **Proposed Title of Certificate:** Online Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies
- **Projected Date of Implementation:** Summer 2007 (partial); Summer 2008 (complete)

I. What is the Certificate (history & specifications) and why is it needed (rationale):

History and Specifications

The Communication Studies Curriculum Committee proposed a Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies to the Department faculty who approved the idea in Spring 2005. The need for the certificate is a response to *increasing student demand for online courses*.

The Committee proposed a Certificate as an organized method of attracting new students from both inside and outside the University by offering an 18-hour online educational experience that is different than a Communication minor (15 hours in the areas of Communication Arts, Media Organizational Communication, Rhetoric, or Theatre). The difference between the Certificate and a minor is that the Certificate would have the unique feature of offering students *an opportunity to examine, understand and apply communication processes and strategies in computer-mediated environment while learning in that environment*.

Although the online versions of the Certificate courses could be offered at any time of the year, they *will* be offered in rotation during summers, so that students may earn the Certificate in two summers (9 hours per summer) if they wish. A Certificate designation would document a stand-alone experience for outside professionals (locally, regionally, nationally and internationally) as

well as for students from other disciplines who wish to earn a certificate to their major.

The Certificate project responds to Chancellor Bantz's 'doubling' initiative by making the effort to expand distance education options, courses and programs. Currently, the Department offers only three of its courses online. However, the Department was recently awarded a 100K Academic Transformation Grant, which was written to fund faculty time and technology to develop online courses. The Department also has appointed a Director of Online Teaching and Learning, who oversees the individual course transformations in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Professional Development.

Rationale

The Department of Communication Studies seeks to respond to a system-wide deficiency of online courses through the proposed Certificate program.

"According to Judy Dahl, in a 2003 article in *Distance Education Report*, distance education can be the salvation of public institutions and "the answer to state cutbacks...Distance education can enable universities to increase student numbers without adding buildings, technology, or instructors." IUPUI undergraduate and graduate students should have increased distance education options that allow them to be flexible with their time and enroll in more credit hours in order to progress to graduation at a faster rate. In addition the institution should commit to developing options that deliver more undergraduate and graduate programs completely at a distance.

Distance education can provide better service to students, (including 24 hour access—from any computer—to course materials, student records, technical assistance, and libraries); better monitoring and assessment of student progress through online tracking of attendance, class participation, and assignments; the ability to add courses without additional technology investment; and the ability to add students without adding infrastructure.

While IUPUI has made great strides in the use of distance learning technologies and pedagogies, there is still much work to be done. Many units routinely offer courses, certificates, and in some cases, degrees online. Indeed, there is a growing expectation and anticipation that more online offerings will continue to emerge. Retarding the ability to offer a total solution to students seeking programs of study-at-a-distance, however, is the lack of planning and delivery of courses that comprise a general education experience for students. Simply put, many needed courses are not regularly and consistently available online. This prohibits units from being able to offer students a holistic, coordinated approach to their IUPUI online course experience."

From: <<http://www.iupui.edu/~fcouncil/documents/Teaching.htm>>

Doubling the Numbers Teaching and Learning Task Force Report May 7, 2004

II. Curriculum Information

The following is a list (not limited) of the courses that are included in the **Online Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies**:

C180: Interpersonal Communication*
C380: Organizational Communication**
C482: Intercultural Communication*
R321: Persuasion*
M150: Media and Society**
M215: Media Literacy*
C394: Communication and Conflict***
C223: Business and Professional Communication*
C363: Family Communication***
C392: Health Communication***

* Scheduled for development Summer 2006 and available Summer 2007 or earlier

** Available online now

***Scheduled for development Summer 2007 and available Summer 2008 or earlier

Although the Department currently offers these courses in traditional face-to-face format, their unique academic value in the *online* Certificate is that each will contain a unit or module or an “embedding” of computer-mediated communication as applied within the context of each course (see example below). Students taking the courses online will *learn about* communicating in traditional and mediated contexts while *learning in* a mediated context at the same time.

Typically, a student who has an interest in business or public relations might take the following certificate courses: Interpersonal, Organizational, Intercultural, Media Literacy, Communication and Conflict, and Business and Professional Communication. Students will be encouraged to construct an individualized plan of study in conjunction with a Department advisor.

III. Major Student Learning Outcomes

Each course in the proposed certificate has unique objectives and outcomes. Our online courses will be designed according to American Distance Educational Consortium guidelines, best practices suggested by CTL and OPD resources, and built around the Principles of Undergraduate Learning. By necessity, course pedagogy will be student-centered, constructivist or inquiry-based, and utilize active, problem-based learning when possible. They will combine the best features of technology and incorporate a variety of media, thus appealing to different learning styles and to students with special needs.

The general *objectives* unique to this Certificate are:

- 1) Students will understand and apply traditional and mediated communication theories in organizational, intercultural, inter-personal, persuasive, and mass media communication contexts.
- 2) Students will examine, understand and apply communication processes and strategies in computer-mediated environments.

The specific *outcome* unique to this Certificate is:

- 3) Students will *learn about* communicating effectively in a virtual environment while they *learn and communicate in* that environment. See example below.

Student Outcome	Where learned?	How Assessed?	Assessment Setting
1.Students will <i>learn about</i> communicating inter-culturally in a virtual environment while they <i>learn and communicate in</i> that environment with a guest professional.	Intercultural Communication class (C482) discussion project	Project rubric developed by the instructor that includes evaluation of the actual discussion as well as the final paper.	Archived asynchronous discussion forum with member of a profession from another culture. Analysis and synthesis paper posted to instructor email.
2. Students will make a brief business presentation/demonstration using BreezeLive.	Business and Professional Communication, (C223) assignment.	Instructor-created rubric for virtual presentation.	Via synchronous computer net meeting using BreezeLive.

IV. How Learning Outcomes Will be Assessed/Certificate Assessment

Because of the change in pedagogy necessitated by the virtual computer environment, the teacher must integrate assessment instruments throughout the course and use the results to identify excellent or inconsistent work, create criteria and standards for the course, discover what assignments work well and those that do not, and communicate expectations and results to the students.

Communication courses, by nature of the discipline, offer a huge variety of outcome-driven strategies and authentic assessments whereby students can demonstrate what they have learned. Speeches, taped projects, archived group work, international interactions, and service learning are just a few examples of possible assessment strategies. Integrated assessment events such as these foster increased engagement with the course content as students seek to demonstrate what they've learned in on an on-going basis. Assessment of online courses generally is not well served by a traditional "final" exam. Our Certificate courses and other online courses will be developed according to these best practices.

Certificate and Student Assessment

The success of the Certificate will be evaluated by student demand and feedback. Since we anticipate a high demand for these courses, we will be able to track the number of students who sign up for the Certificate and whether they are traditional students or professionals who want documentation of an specific course of study. The web portal design for the Department online course curriculum, which is part of the Academic Transformation Grant, will record the number of hits on the site as well as subsequent inquiries and enrollments. Plans are being made to document those who earn the Certificate. Since the School of Liberal Arts presently does not have a formal way to conduct student evaluation of online courses, student evaluation of the courses in the Certificate will have to be initiated by the instructor as part of the course.

V. Student Population Served by Certificate

It is expected that the proposed **Online Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies** will serve students in a wide variety of majors such as Business, English, Sociology, Psychology, Tourism, Restaurant Management, and many others. People who are already established in business and professions will benefit from learning about and applying effective communication strategies in a media-saturated global society. The Certificate can add to a degree or a degree in progress (taken in two summers) or can stand alone for anyone needing documentation of advanced communication skills.

VI. How Certificate Complements Campus and Departmental Mission

The Department of Communication Studies has an academic obligation to remain on the cutting edge of the discipline by examining ways that computer-mediated communication (used by all disciplines and in business and the professions) is shaping communication itself. The development of this Certificate will require faculty research and praxis in order to reinvigorate pedagogy.

Development of an **Online Certificate in Traditional and Mediated Communication Strategies** is in keeping with IUPUI's mission and vision, locally, regionally and nationally. Providing educational opportunity to Indianapolis and Central Indiana is at the core of IUPUI's mission. Recent vision statements have supported university outreach to national and international audiences. (From IUPUI Mission Statement:

www.planning.iupui.edu/mission/missionvalue.pdf) The Certificate responds to the following:

- IUPUI's support of effective teaching by providing faculty development in the use of innovations in instructional strategies pertaining to distance learning.
- the university's mission to facilitate the development of post-baccalaureate certificate programs to meet local, national and global needs.

- the vision for expanding distance-learning offerings and degree availability online.
- the student demand for flexibility and accessibility to course material and programs.

VII. Relationship to Existing Programs within IU

We have examined certificates offered throughout Indiana University and have found none that overlap with the proposed Certificate.

VIII. Resources Needed to Implement Proposed Certificate

The Department of Communication Studies has been awarded an Academic Transformation Grant totaling \$100K. These funds will be used to research, reinvigorate, develop, and implement existing course content and deliver it online. The course developers are the faculty who teach these courses and the grant will be used to pay a stipend for developing the course. The work will happen largely in the summer when faculty time is not encumbered with other duties. There is money in the grant-operating budget for advertising, a website/portal to advise and direct enrollment. Since we are not proposing any new classes and the courses are a part of the existing rotation, no extra resources are needed.

IX. Describe Innovative Features of the Certificate

The innovative feature of this Certificate program is that it is all delivered online. The student should have a much better understanding of computer-mediated communication in different communication contexts by having learned in that environment. The result will be a truly unique and cutting-edge communication experience that will enhance the student's life, job and career.

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