

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY: SHORT PROGRESS REPORT

- 1. Reporting Institutions:** Eastern Illinois University
- 2. Program Reviewed:** Bachelor of Science in Health Communication
- 3. Date:** 1/21/2021
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5. Summary of Program Goals and Objectives and Progress at Meeting Them

The original goals of the Bachelor of Science in Health Communication were:

- To prepare students to communicate and promote positive health behaviors in professional health care settings and in health advocacy.
- For students to learn how to design, evaluate, and implement health communication programs in a variety of health related settings.

To accomplish these goals the Health Communication major takes an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes the intersection of strategic communication and health promotion as the foundation for educating individuals and creating healthier and more vibrant communities.

Program learning goals:

At the completion of the Health Communication major:

- Students will cultivate ethical responsibility and cultural sensitivity in communicating with diverse populations.
- Students will demonstrate critical thinking in their ability to analyze the impact of context on health-related interactions.
- Students will apply the appropriate theories and perform the research and audience analysis necessary for health intervention.
- Students will create and implement appropriate message strategies in written and spoken formats emphasizing campaign/program development and professional health-related settings.

Assessment:

The assessment plan for the Bachelor of Science in Health Communication annually assesses the program's student learning outcomes. The program's learning goals are aligned with university learning goals: disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking, writing, oral communication, and quantitative reasoning. Furthermore, responsible citizenship, communication flexibility, professional ethics, and multicultural sensitivity are assessed centrally across all majors in the communication studies division of the School of Communication and Journalism.

The assessment program was revised last year in light of changes in the university's assessment process. Preliminary data indicate the major is meeting or exceeding the target scores set in the assessment plan. For example, 88 percent of majors scored at the level of competent or highly competent in critical thinking and 90

percent of majors scored 80 percent or higher in their patient-provider communication workshops, which are used to assess their ability to engage in health intervention.

Enrollment and Students:

The Health Communication major began in Fall 2017. After the first year of recruiting we had attracted 14 students to the program. The program has been growing slowly, but steadily, each year since and our current enrollment represents a 64% increase in enrollment over Fall 2018. Over the last two years we have recruited more students than we have graduated, helping the major grow.

	Fa 2017	Sp 2018	Fa 2018	Sp 2019	Fa 2019	Sp 2020	FA 2020	Sp 2021
Students Enrolled (10 th day numbers)	0	1	14	16	15	18	19	23
Degrees Awarded (Summer graduated incl. in Spring numbers)	0	0	0	1	2	3	3	N/A

The major has also attracted high-caliber students. Our graduating majors have an average GPA of 3.72, reflecting their classroom success. On average, over 32% health communication majors make the Dean’s List in any given semester. And among the nine students who graduated with a B.S. in Health Communication five graduated with institutional honors (Summa Cum Laude (2), Magna Cum Laude (1), or Cum Laude (2)).

Career Outcomes:

Based on EIU career services data (through the 2019 annual report), 100% of Health Communication graduates found a position within six months of graduation. Post-graduation positions include health and nutrition manager for social services agency, regional hospital communications manager, and registrar at the Illinois State Cancer Registry.

Noteworthy Developments:

- In fall 2018 curricular changes took effect that enabled students to complete the major completely online. This has created extraordinary flexibility for our students, especially working professionals, and online students currently represent approximately 50% of all health communication majors.
- In 2018 the program added a prior learning assessment option where students can earn up to twelve credits by documenting their professional training and learning experiences. This addition has increased the accessibility of the major for non-traditional students currently working in health-related industries who have been learning on the job without a way to transcript their experiences.

- Students who meet the requirements may now also enroll in the Communication Studies **Accelerated Graduate School Program**. Specifically, students can take three senior-level communication classes for graduate credit, one of which is a required Health Communication course (HCM 4910Z).

Future Plans:

- We are currently working on the creation of a senior capstone class to give students greater focus on career options and professional preparation. The class will include a pro-seminar, with visits from professionals in various fields related to health communication.
- Additionally, while the pandemic has put a hold on study abroad programs, we are considering the creation of a future study abroad program. This program will be a collaboration between the health communication major, the human services major, and the aging studies minor and will travel to one of the world's Blue Zones. Blue Zones are regions identified as having a higher proportion of the population living significantly longer than average. In the program students will examine the communication and cultural practices, values, norms and behaviors that promote health and longevity.

COMMENTS FROM CLAS DEANS

The launch of this interdisciplinary program in Fall 2017 was eagerly anticipated and was projected to be a growth area for the University. In its short lifespan, this program has indeed garnered steady growth in enrollment, and evidences that it attracts high-achieving students. It was also anticipated to have a high post-graduate job placement rate because of the explosive growth of the health care industry, and is meeting those expectations very well. The addition of the all-online modality as an option as well as the possibility of prior learning assessment only makes it more attractive to prospective students, and we have observed quite a bit of interest in the program in recruitment events. We expect the enrollment growth to continue at a steady clip, and the plans to create a study abroad option (post-pandemic) will offer even more developmental possibilities for students.

We recommend a decision of **Program in Good Standing**.

6. Decision:

Program in Good Standing

Program flagged for Priority Review

Program Enrollment Suspended

6.2. Explanation:

This is the most detailed and data driven three-year short form report I have observed at EIU. The department and its faculty are to be applauded for the sustained growth of program enrollments and continued focus on curriculum development & innovation. With respect to program productivity, I am confident the B.S. program will exceed critical IBHE benchmarks. Further, I appreciate the program's emphasis on multiple student pathways insofar as the faculty have intentionally charted paths to both the workforce and graduate school (including focusing on the accelerated programs).

Jay Gatrell, Provost & VPAA