

## **Bachelor of Arts: Professional Writing and Communication (PWC)**

### **Mission, Goals, Learning Outcomes and Assessment Plan**

**Mission:** The Professional Writing and Communication Major teaches students to become flexible and ethical writers and communicators who can be successful in a variety of contexts including, but not limited to, manufacturing, journalism, advertising, grant writing, technical writing, and software publishing. Faculty in the Professional Writing and Communication Program are committed to working together to provide students with a liberal arts education that is enhanced with practical experiences such as internships and service learning opportunities that prepare students to earn a living as writers. Through this combined liberal arts and technical emphasis, the Professional Writing Major supports SMSU's mission to help students become "engaged citizens in their local and global communities."

**Goals:** Faculty in the Professional Writing and Communication are committed to these core program goals:

- To graduate students with professional writing and communication skills who can pursue career opportunities in variety of fields such as journalism, periodical and book publishing; software publishing; advertising and related services; computer systems design and related services; corporate communications; corporate training; government agencies and other not-for-profit agencies;
- To graduate students who are flexible thinkers, writers, and communicators with the ability to write and communicate in a variety of contexts and environments, including electronic ones.

**Learning Outcomes:** To meet the program goals, faculty work together to help students meet the learning outcomes that follow. As stated in the SMSU catalog and the Professional Writing and Communication web site, graduates of the Professional Writing and Communication Major will be able to:

- Understand and apply principles of rhetoric and document design to a variety of communication situations, including written, oral, and visual ones;
- Apply critical thinking, reading, listening, and writing skills to specific communication tasks or problems;
- Demonstrate a consideration for purpose, audience, and context in communicating;
- Demonstrate an ethical sensitivity to language, including its inflammatory and persuasive aspects;
- Create documents that are 'user-friendly' in content, structure, and design;
- Make use of credible, reliable, and relevant source material (both primary and secondary) in a manner that is appropriate for specific communication situations;

- Write documents in a variety of electronic environments;
- Manage large projects effectively by allowing adequate time to write, complete research, revise, and receive feedback;
- Vary levels of style and language use as appropriate for the communication situation;
- Produce a variety of documents that are grammatically and technically correct.

**Assessment Plan:** What follows is a brief timeline for assessing learning outcomes of the major. This timeline is subject to change. If changes should become necessary, the English Department will be informed of those changes in writing.

**Step One:** Gather portfolios from the capstone course each time it is offered. To date, portfolios have been gathered from fall 2009 and fall 2011 classes. These are the only two offerings of the course thus far.

**Step Two:** Complete a pilot assessment of one or two portfolios to test both the portfolio instrument and the learning outcomes. This step will be completed in fall 2012.

**Step Three:** Review the results of the pilot and adjust learning outcomes and assessment instrument before the next offering of the capstone course. The capstone course is scheduled for spring 2013, so any adjustments should be made no later than December 2012.

**Step Four:** Complete a full assessment of portfolios gathered to date. Readers from the other disciplines that serve our major – especially speech, business, and art – will be invited to participate in the assessment. These readers will consider not only the quality of the student portfolios but also how well the learning outcomes and assessment instrument capture student achievement. This step will be completed in spring 2013.

**Step Five:** Complete a program review and self-study in 2013-2014. As part of this process, assessment data from steps two, three, and four will be discussed and analyzed. A new assessment plan for years 2014-2019 will be included in the self-study document.