

Program Planning Summary

Institution:	South Carolina State University
Program Designation:	New Program Proposal (B.A. in Communications, 123 credits hours)
Designation of Undergraduate:	Four-Year Degree Program
Proposed Date of Implementation:	January 2009
Academic Unit Involved:	Department of English and Modern Languages
Delivery Mode:	Traditional –Day and Evening

Justification of Needs:

South Carolina State University has offered fifteen courses in journalism and broadcasting as minors in the Department of English and Modern Languages since 1996. There are five journalism, five broadcasting, two public relations, one sports communication course, and two internships in conjunction with these minors. SCSU also owns 80,000-watt WSSB Radio Station that serves as a laboratory for broadcasting courses and affords broadcasting minors the opportunity to put theory into practice. As a result of this experience, the broadcasting students participate in internships throughout the state and find employment in radio and some television. In the fall 2007, seven (7) minors interned at the Citadel Broadcasting, Inc., Charleston; Miller Communications, Inc., Orangeburg; WIS Television, Columbia; the Times and Democrat, Orangeburg; and the New York Times Newspaper Co. The success of the minor and the documented need to provide a greater minority presence in the communication field compel us to propose this major in Communications with Concentrations in Journalism, Broadcasting and Public Communications.

Since the inception of the journalism minor, the intent has been to build the minor into a major. Building upon the foundation of the two minor programs, we are proposing to expand the journalism and broadcasting minors into full concentrations and to add the Public Communication concentration to make the program more diversified. The objectives of the Communications Major at SCSU are fourfold:

- 1) there is a desperate shortage of minorities in journalism, broadcasting and public relations all over the country and in the state of South Carolina;
- 2) it can increase enrollment, retention and graduation rates in the Department of English and Modern Languages at SCSU because of the digital technology based professional mass media job oriented courses;
- 3) in order for SCSU students to make well-informed career choices, they need increased critical thinking competency and skills to evaluate the complex and sometimes biased information provided by modern mass media, since young students are so media dependent in making their decisions;

- 4) the new major will boost the university's standing by earning professional accreditation from the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (AEJMC), and gaining national recognition through the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) and the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

Because of a shortage of minority professionals in this dynamic industry, job opportunities are ample for graduates of this program. The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) has set a "parity goal" of having the newspaper workforce reflect the percentage of minorities in the nation as a whole. They set out to achieve this goal first in 1995 and renewed it in 2003. Nonetheless, this goal has not been accomplished. ASNE President Peter Bhatia was quoted as having said that although the gain in diversified workforce in newsrooms continued for a third successive year, the percentage of their increase still falls short of achieving the ASNE's goals of parity in the newsroom (ASNE News, April 20, 2004). The current 13% minority employment in the newspaper industry is lagging much behind the parity with 31.7% minority population in US. Because of this, the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) described the ASNE initiative as a very slow and stagnant process in newsroom diversity initiative. The NABJ President Bryan Monroe said it would take at least 40 years to achieve parity at this speed (NABJ Press Release, April 26, 2006). The minority journalists working in America's daily newspapers declined .04 percent in 2007 as reported by the ASNE Diversity Committee Chair Phil Currie (March 26, 2007).

Much wider opportunities exist for minority Communications graduates in radio-TV-satellite industries, audio-video, advertising, Internet-based businesses, public affairs, and public relations fields. The National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation has been working to create more minority jobs in broadcasting, movie and visual art industries as stated by BroadReach, Diversity Business Quarterly, (Winter 2006). The Black Public Radio Consortium in Washington DC, CPB, PBS, NPR, Disney-ABC, BET, Black College Communication Association, etc. have worked tirelessly for the last decade to create opportunities for minorities. Initiatives by these institutions clearly reflect the growing need for well-trained minority communication professionals in national, regional and local journalism, broadcast and public relations fields including South Carolina's 17 dailies, 75 weeklies, hundreds of radio stations, 15 television stations, and more than 250 PR companies or organizations with Public Affairs.

Anticipated Program Demand and Productivity:

Among students in other majors who are presently taking Journalism and Broadcasting as their minors at SCSU, 16 have expressed a desire to major in Communications. An informal survey conducted among freshmen and sophomores by Dr. Shafiqur Rahman, Coordinator of the Communications program, found more than 50 students interested in majoring in this field. If we can start with 15 declared Communications majors among the freshmen in the first year (Fall 2008), we may have 10-12 students graduating with approximately 50-80 students in the pipeline at the end of the first five-year period. The new program will generate approximately 3000-4000 credit hours yearly. In the 5th, 6th and 7th years, we expect to increase the enrollment, retention and graduation rates by 30-45 percent with a 10-15 percent rate of increase in each subsequent year.

Assessment of Possible Duplication by the Proposed Program:

Some of the state institutions of higher learning in South Carolina such as USC-Columbia, USC-Aiken, USC-Spartanburg, Clemson, College of Charleston, Lander, Coastal and Winthrop University offer full or partial major curriculum in Communications. Most of these institutions

are not close to the service area of SCSU. Furthermore, the enrollment of minority students in Communications in two nearest universities is very small: USC's minority population is 6% while the same population at the College of Charleston is 7%. There is no such program in Communications offered by any state institution in the service area of SCSU such as in Orangeburg, Calhoun and Bamberg counties. No other SC college offers a concentration in Public Communication. As the only state-supported HBCU in S.C., SCSU's Communications major will emphasize the role of African Americans in the various Communications areas. For the most part, SCSU's program will serve a minority and rural student population.

Relations with Other Existing Programs within SCSU:

The Communications major is an extension of the Journalism minor that was established in 1996, so there are curricula for minors in print and broadcast journalism. The major will be housed in the Department of English and Modern Languages, and many courses in the Professional English curriculum are a part of the core courses for the major. In addition to the courses in the department, several other communications related courses - business communications, sports communication, advertising, marketing, and digital media - are offered by other departments at SCSU, and they will be incorporated into this program's curricula. Now our students will be able to take advantage of these courses as a part of a new major to be competitive job markets in the popular, digital audio-video technology-based professional fields of print and broadcast journalism, public affairs, public relations, advertising, electronic bulletin boards, Internet newspapers, desktop publishing, speech writing, book and magazine editing and publishing, script writing, radio, television and video productions, and sales and marketing. Throughout the curricula of Communications concentrations, many existing courses are combined with new courses and experiences.

Relationship with Other Institutions via Inter-Institutional Cooperation:

There is a Higher Education Consortium agreement with Claflin University and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College. Also, the new program will have co-op and intership programs with local, state and national media, and SC Press and Broadcast Associations.

Total New General Estimated Costs:

Over a five year period, the general estimated cost for the new degree program would be approximately a million and a half dollars, much of which will be spent in the first year or two when equipment, furniture, software, and supplies will be purchased. All faculty will be hired by the beginning of the third year through the university budget. A Title III proposal has been submitted for funds to develop a broadcast and editing lab.

South Carolina State University submits this Program Planning Summary for a major in Communications for your consideration and approval.

Sincerely,

Leonard McIntyre
Leonard McIntyre, Ph.D.
President, South Carolina State University

April 30, 2008
Date