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Editor's Note

This issue of *JACA* explores issues of interest to communication administrators at three levels: course, program, and individual person. Anderson, McCloskey, Scott, Alt, and Gardner describe efforts to redesign the basic course, offering insights for strategic course identity management in response to a competitive, assessment-conscious campus environment. Allen and colleagues examine assessment of faculty research productivity at the program level and individual level, exploring implications for comparison across programs and institutions of similar types. Eberhardinger explores graduate student self-branding as a site for responsiveness on the part of communication administrators, working from a philosophical approach integrated marketing communication.

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Redesigning the Basic Communication Course: A Case Study

Lindsey B. Anderson[1]
Thomas McCloskey[2]
Devin Scott[3]
Rebecca Alt[4]
Elizabeth E. Gardner[5]

In the competitive environment of higher education, the basic communication course is under pressure to defend its place in the curriculum. One way to do this is to engage in a course redesign program. In this case study, we detail our experience taking part in such a program to (re)evaluate our course. Over the course of a year, we collected active participation data and conducted a series of three qualitative surveys that focused on student perceptions of our course. In doing so, we explored the ways in which the basic communication course can take advantage of course redesign efforts. Specifically, we found that we were better able to (1) articulate our unique course identity to constituents across the campus as we (2) developed a more holistic view of the ways we were (or were not) achieving our stated learning outcomes. Based on these findings, we developed practical implications including explicating how a well-planned course redesign program can be used in the basic communication course, the need for "collaborative consistency" when redesigning a course, and the imperative to incorporate student voice into redesign efforts.

Keywords: *Basic communication course, course redesign, learning outcomes, qualitative methods*

Basic communication course administrators are under pressure to document the ways in which their courses contribute to student learning on campuses across the country (Boyd, Morgan, Ortiz, Anderson, 2014). This imperative encourages course directors to assess their learning outcomes and make continual improvements that show how the basic course benefits a host of campus constituencies (e.g., university administrators, students, parents). One avenue that allows for the evaluation of a basic communication course is through a large-scale course redesign program. These programs provide the time and structure needed to critically (re)assess the course and make curriculum changes while working with colleagues across campus.

In this case study, we use a qualitative approach to document our experience engaging in a course redesign program. In order to understand how course redesign programs can be used in the basic communication course, we incorporate active participation to allow for administrator and instructor perspectives to emerge and a series of qualitative surveys designed to elicit student feedback. These data come together to aid in our understanding of the redesign process and outcomes.

Through our course redesign, we found that our basic communication course needed to develop an identity that highlighted the unique characteristics of our course in an

[1] University of Maryland
[2] University of Maryland
[3] University of Maryland
[4] University of Maryland
[5] Westmont College

increasingly competitive higher education environment—one that includes basic course offerings housed in other departments. Additionally, we emphasized the importance of having stated learning outcomes lead the course redesign and assessment processes. Ultimately, we developed guidelines that underscore the ways course redesign programs can be used in the basic communication course to retain control of the course and advocate for resources. These guidelines include continuous (re)evaluation of the course curriculum to ensure learning outcomes are being met, engagement in collaborative consistency, and encouraging the inclusion of student voice in redesign efforts.

Literature Review

In this section, we weave together the literature on course redesigns and the basic communication course to set the framework for our case study. We begin by drawing on past scholarship to show that course redesigns are complex, ongoing, and multiform processes in higher education. We then narrow our scope to the basic communication course as we delve into the ways course redesigns can be used by administrators to retain control of the course and justify its position in the curriculum.

Course Redesigns

Course redesign is the term used to describe "the process of redesigning *whole courses* (rather than individual classes or sections) to achieve better learning outcomes...it is about rethinking the way we deliver instruction" (Twigg, 2013, p. 1). As such, it is a large-scale pedagogical activity that is simultaneously complex, ongoing, and multiform. When this process is placed in the context of higher education where courses must justify their role in the curriculum by demonstrating student learning, the role of course redesigns becomes apparent.

Given that higher education is in an "age of assessment" a growing number of colleges and universities have embraced course redesign as a potential solution to better structure courses in a way that will promote inclusivity and meet learning outcomes (Boyd et al, 2014). However, this process takes place within a complex and ever-changing context. Twigg (2013), notes that administrators are challenged to create better learning experiences that better integrate technology, account for a diverse student/faculty body, while considering costs to deliver a course in an already budget conscious higher education environment (Boyd et al., 2014). With that said, course redesigns have created a demonstrated path to increase access to education, improve student learning, aid in course completion, benefit perceptions of the subject matter, and address student/faculty satisfaction with the course (Twigg, 2013). Such efforts to rethink both foundational education models as well as microteaching practices have shown tremendous potential for students, faculty, and administrators alike.

Adding to the complexity that belies the success of a course redesign is a multitude of interconnected factors. Twigg (2000) argues that educators should consider the following criteria when engaging in a redesign process: "impact on the curriculum; capitol-for-labor substitution; collective decision making; faculty attitudes; curricular materials; requisite skills for participants; learning outcomes; measuring achievement; learning theory; and sustaining the redesign" (p. 1). These criteria demonstrate the inherent complexity of undertaking a course redesign, which is why the process of redesigning a course should not begin until these criteria have been critically examined.

In addition to being complex, course redesign is an ongoing process. As Turner (2009) argues, the goal is a "never-ending course redesign affecting teaching and learning at all levels of the institution and beyond, and creating and sustaining a course-redesign community of practice" (p. 3). Turner suggests that this process involves several stages. Course administrators should continually assess their curriculum to justify resources, inform course design, and improve student gains (Boyd et al., 2014). This demands surveying students to observe changes in their attitudes toward the subject of study, thoughts on this kind of instruction, and sense of their own development. This constant evaluation and reflection significantly increases the chances of the redesign's success.

Finally, course redesign is multiform, meaning that they can take multiple shapes, which is good given the various types of institutions, programs, and departments that make up the higher education landscape. McLaughlin, Roth, Glatt, Gharkholonarehe, Davidson, Griffin, and Mumper (2014) explored the ways in which a "flipped classroom" approach can improve student learning. This model provides students the material to learn independent of class, while class time focuses on engaging with students on how to reinforce the material in a variety of ways. They found that student attendance and learning outcomes all increased using this approach.

Ferreri and O'Connor (2013) similarly relied on a flipped classroom model when they redesigned a large lecture style class into a small group course. They explain their success: "Compared with student experiences in the previous large lecture-based class, students in the smaller-class format reported a preference for working in teams and achieved significantly better academic grades with the new course format" (p. 1). Collis, Bruijstens, and Van Veen (2003), and Vaughan (2010) each studied a "blended learning" approach to high education, with some instruction taking place online and some in person, and were able to improve student learning outcomes. In all, the redesign research focuses on redesigning traditional courses to better meet established learning outcomes.

The Basic Communication Course

Basic communication courses at colleges and universities are ripe for course redesigns. Since "the Basic Course focuses on teaching fundamental communication skills and theory to undergraduate students" (Defining the Basic Course, 2018) and contributes to lifelong learning and skills, the basic course tends to be part of general education programs (Defining the Basic Course, 2018). Given this central role of the course, each year, tens of thousands of students take basic courses and learn foundational skills instrumental to their success in college (West, 2012).

Learning outcomes as well as assessments of learning gains are at the heart of this course. In fact, learning outcomes are such an important part of the basic communication course that a task force of course administrators developed a set of core competencies that are used to inform learning outcomes for basic communication course directors across the country. These discipline-wide competencies, which are housed on the National Communication Association (NCA) website, include:

1. Monitoring and Presenting Your Self
2. Practicing Communication Ethics
3. Adapting to Others
4. Practicing Effective Listening
5. Expressing Messages

6. Identifying and Explaining Fundamental Communication Processes
7. Creating and Analyzing Message Strategies (Core Competencies, 2014).

Besides offering students critical learning outcomes, researchers have also used the basic communication course as an area of study in order to understand the scope and depth of the basic course's potential impact on students. For example, Morreale, Worley, and Hugenberg (2010) explored this course from a broad perspective in the 8th iteration of a national study on the basic course and explain its importance: "Communication education and the basic or introductory communication course in particular are important pedagogical endeavors given the basic course often is the only communication course undergraduates experience. In the course, students are provided instruction in communication skills that can benefit them for a lifetime" (p. 1). The hope, then, is that redesigning the basic communication course can improve learning outcomes attainment, increase overall student success in college, and impart valuable skills essential for career success. This is an important point given that faculty, and in this case course directors, are held accountable regarding their learning outcomes and student achievement to their University (Boyd et al., 2014).

Research confirms the potential impact of the basic communication course in a variety of ways. For instance, Zabava, Ford, and Wolvin (1993) assessed the impact of a basic speech communication course on students' perceptions of their communication competencies in class, work, and social settings, and their results showed perceived improvements for all three contexts. Similarly, Dwyer and Fus (2002) studied the relationship between the basic communication course and decreased student communication apprehension and saw very positive results.

It is also worth noting that the basic communication course can take many forms—from traditional public speaking courses to hybrid classes that incorporate other foundational communication content areas (e.g., interpersonal, group) (Defining the Basic Course, 2018). The size of these courses can also vary. In this case study, we look at a multi-section course taught by graduate students that is part of a larger oral communication program. However, other institutions may have stand-alone sections that are led by faculty members.

The format and size of the course matters in terms of how the course is structured/delivered, especially when accounting for technology. For example, Schwartzman (2006) found that even when moved to a digital format, the basic course results in significant success in achieving student learning outcomes. Denker (2013) explored the value of clickers in a basic course with a large lecture setting, finding fairly inconclusive results. This research indicates that educators have been working to improve the basic communication course in terms of the student experience and learning outcomes mastery for decades.

In all, the basic communication course can be a fruitful ground for implementing the course redesign process for several reasons. First, the class is offered in a multi-section format that is taught by many instructors ranging from graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to instructors (limited term, adjunct, professional track faculty). Thus, consistency is crucial, as students in one section should expect a similar learning experience as their friend in another section. Second, there is often a need to clarify the course identity. By this, we mean that the foundation of the course—the learning outcomes—needs to be examined and reexamined to make sure that they meet the student's communication needs while still demonstrating the uniqueness and impact of the course.

With that rationale in mind, we developed this case study research project in order to understand the role course redesigns play in the basic communication course. Specifically,

we asked: *How can course redesign programs be used in basic communication courses?* To address this question, we participated in a campus-wide program that tackled course redesign efforts and documented our experience, tracked the changes we made to our basic communication course, and qualitatively assessed the changes we implemented.

Method

We took a case study approach to understand the role that course redesign programs can play in basic course administration. A case study is "the detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena" (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984, p. 34). In other words, a case study approach is a systematic study of a given topic within a specific context. In this case, we analyzed our experience working in a course redesign program during 2016 (the context) to understand how these types of programs can be used in the basic communication course (the topic under investigation). To accomplish this goal, we will rely on several complementary sources of data; specifically, active participation and a series of qualitative surveys.

Context

We house two versions of the basic communication course in our department. The one we focused on for this research is a presentational speaking course that is grounded in the rhetorical tradition. Students enrolled in this class are exposed to rhetorical theories and concepts (e.g., Fisher's narrative paradigm, Toulmin's model of argument) as they learn to develop and critique arguments and deliver presentations.

Each semester, five section of the course are offered. Enrollment is capped at 19 students and the course is taught by advanced graduate students who research topics related to rhetoric. The instructors assigned to teach the course during spring 2016, fall 2016, and spring 2017 partnered with the course administrators to engage in a course redesign program to address issues of course consistency.

Creating consistency between sections was our original rationale for starting the course redesign process. This is an issue for many multi-section courses that have multiple people teaching the same course. Therefore, we sought to rebuild the class from the ground up to ensure that learning outcomes are being consistently met and that students are having a similar learning experience regardless of their instructor. To do this, we first redesigned the learning outcomes. We created two sets of outcomes—one that matched the University's general education program (see Table 1) and one that was course specific (see Table 2). Based on these goals, we chose a new textbook, created new assignments that mapped onto the general and course specific learning outcomes, and created a common syllabus and schedule that structured each section of the course.

Table 1: General Education Learning Objectives

On completion of an Oral Communication general education course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate competency in planning, preparing, and presenting effective oral presentations.
- Use effective presentation techniques including presentation graphics.

- Demonstrate effectiveness in using verbal and nonverbal language appropriate to the goal and the context of the communication.
- Demonstrate an ability to listen carefully.
- Demonstrate skill in asking and in responding to questions.
- Demonstrate awareness of communication ethics in a global society.

Table 2: Course Specific Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course:

- Students will be able to apply rhetorical theories of argument to develop and evaluate practical discourse.
- Students will be able to identify and analyze the appeals, premises, and values in practical argument.
- Students will be able to locate and use credible evidence to build a body of related knowledge to create an argument.
- Students will be able to create and deliver messages appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.

To address the consistency issue and aid in our redesign process, we joined a course redesign program facilitated by our university's teaching and learning center. This program is a competitively selected award that provides participants with a $22,000 grant to pay for costs related to the redesign (e.g., teaching assistants, software programs, materials). The program was led by the teaching and learning center's directors and teaching specialists, as well as past program participants. Given the access to pedagogical specialists and administrative support, we decided that this redesign program would be an ideal way to devote the time and resources necessary to completely overhaul our course.

Data Collection

We relied on our experience engaging in the course redesign process. Most notably, we participated in monthly meetings during 2016 at our University's center for teaching. This course redesign program started with a "kickoff workshop" that provided an overview of the year-long program as well as highlighted a successful course redesign. We then met a total of 12 times for two hours each during spring 2016 and fall 2016. During these meetings we discussed a variety of pedagogical topics with other faculty focused on redesigning their courses. These topics included, writing learning outcomes, integrating active learning into the classroom, responding to student concerns, and committing to embracing diversity and inclusion practices. Moreover, we reflected on our readings that corresponded to the weekly topics. These readings were academic and were used to inform our group discussions as well as our plans for course redesigns.

The faculty who participated in the course redesign program ranged from full professor to assistant professor and their area of specialties spanned the gamut of the natural sciences to the humanities. Through these interactions, we saw similar problems/struggles arise even though our course content was vastly different. For example, we discussed how to incorporate active learning classroom techniques when teaching basic chemical compounds

as well as classroom assessment techniques in a discussion about the role of ethics in journalism.

There were three main stages of the course redesign process we participated in. During the spring, we conceptualized our redesign plan. Next, we spent the summer planning to launch the redesigned course. Finally, the fall was devoted to offering the newly redesigned course. We collected data throughout this time period. Additionally, as the semester concluded, we incorporated qualitative assessment surveys to assess how students perceived our course redesign changes.

The series of qualitative surveys that we launched during the fall of 2016 served as an important data source in this case study. We conducted the surveys in five section of the course each with an enrollment of 19 students. The students who participated in this research self-selected into the study. No identifying information was collected and no points/course credit was used as an incentive. Using student feedback as a form of qualitative data is a rich source of information regarding the student experience (Anderson, Gardner, & Wolvin, 2016; Gardner, Anderson, & Wolvin, 2017).

We conducted a pre-test, midterm evaluation, and post-test online using the University's Qualtrics system. We administered the pre-test during the first week of classes. This survey asked students questions that directly corresponded to our stated learning outcomes. For example, we asked: (1) What is rhetoric?, (2) What is a practical argument?, (3) What contextual factors should be considered when preparing a message?, (4) What is an effective oral presentation? What does it include?, and (5) What is the role of ethics in rhetoric? In all we collected 61 student responses.

The midterm evaluation was conducted in between the pre-test and post-test. The focus of this survey was to gather information about the student experience in our basic communication course. The questions we asked mirrored end-of-semester evaluations like: (1) course guidelines were clearly described in the syllabus, (2) given the course level and number of credits, the workload was appropriate, and (3) the pace of the course is appropriate. These questions were designed to assess the structure of our course. In addition, we asked questions that elicited written student feedback, such as: (1) What have you learned from this course that you found particularly interesting or exciting?, (2) What material that was covered is still confusing or unclear?, (3) What is going right?, (4) What is going wrong?, (5) What would help you get more out of this course?, (6) What were your expectations/perception of the course at the beginning of the semester? How, if at all, have your expectations/perceptions changed?, and (7) Would you recommend this course to another student? We were able to gather 75 student responses.

The post-test was made available during the last week of the semester. Here, we asked the same questions that were in the pre-test in order to qualitatively gauge the learning gains that our students made over the course of the semester. A total of 22 students responded to this survey. We hypothesize that the drop off in respondents is related to the end of the semester rush and onslaught of other surveys/questionnaires (e.g., final papers and end of the semester evaluations).

Data Analysis

We used a grounded theory approach to data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This form of analysis prioritizes the participant voice/experience as researchers analyze data in an open manner rather than through theoretical lenses that can limit what is seen by the

researcher (Charmaz, 2006). As such, this data analysis approach allows results to emerge in a more organic manner.

After collecting, organizing, and scrubbing our data for identifying information, we began coding our experience and qualitative survey responses. Coding is the process of assigning meaning to a unit of data in a way that distills, sorts, allows for comparisons, and aids in understanding (Charmaz, 2006) and broadly describes the ways a researcher makes sense of collected data. In this case, we used the constant comparative coding method associated with the grounded approach to data analysis. Here, we completed a round of open coding during which we developed preliminary categories following an initial reading of the data. Example themes included, rhetoricians, course vocabulary, nerves/speaking anxiety. Next, we started to compare these categories as we collapsed and expanded the preliminary coding categories. For example, our emergent categories included student expectations, argumentation, and presentation skills. Finally, these codes were organized into larger themes that represent the data and experience. In completing this process, we uncovered themes that helped us to understand how our basic communication course used the course redesign efforts.

Results

Our results center on two central themes: (1) developing an identity and (2) evaluating learning outcomes using the student voice. These themes will be used to organize the results section.

Developing an Identity

In the competitive higher education environment, communication courses must demonstrate their uniqueness. As such, developing an identity becomes an important aspect of course redesign. Our campus allows for any academic unit to propose and offer a basic communication course as long as it meets the learning outcomes required by the General Education Board. To be competitive with other basic communication course offerings, we have worked to establish a campus-wide identity that highlights what makes our course unique. In analyzing our data, we found that our course identity centered on three ideas: (1) the course is complex, (2) argumentation is at the heart of presentational speaking, and (3) refined presentational speaking skills are important to communication.

Complexity. Students often came into the basic course with the assumption that it will be an easy class. However, students enrolled in our course recognized that the basic communication course was actually more complex than expected. Ultimately, we realized that this complexity was a key characteristic of our course identity that needs to be better communicated to our constituents.

First, complexity was expressed in the way students explained that they thought the course would be easy, but in fact, was much harder than expected in terms of time and workload. For example, one student said, "I thought this class was going to be really easy and boring, but it's really interesting and useful." Another student expressed a similar sentiment as they explained, "I thought the class was going to be relatively easy to where if I read and went to lecture then I could understand the material, but it is not the case." By countering the idea that communication courses are easy, we set ourselves apart from other general education oral communication courses.

The second way complexity emerged is that students came into the class assuming that since they communicate every day, that they do it well. However, over the time, students realized that the act of communication is much more involved than they originally thought. For example, one student explained, "my perception has changed because I had no idea all of these models and concepts existed." This comment gets at the of-repeated notion that since communication is so ubiquitous, that it must be simple, but this redesigned course powerfully challenged this assumption.

Arguments. The focus on arguments, both critiquing and creating them, was another way that this course established its identity. This component is what set us apart from other basic communication course options offered on campus. We first noticed that our focus on creating and critiquing arguments was special during our faculty course redesign meetings. During these meetings, we were able to better situate the course identity on campus and articulate the nuances of the class. In these discussions, we shared the unique characteristics of the basic communication course and other faculty from different units asked clarifying questions. For example, while discussing the role of critical thinking in developing and critiquing arguments, one of the fellow faculty participants mentioned that he wants to encourage the majors in his program to take this course instead of one of the other options that meets the University's Oral Communication General Education Requirements.

Students also homed in on this central characteristic of the course. One student explained that they initially thought "that this was a boring gen ed, but I enjoyed that we are learning to argue our opinion." While we know that we need to better capitalize on this point, some students already knew that this was one of the features of the class. One student noted, "I expected to break down arguments and to be able to formulate my own more effectively, and that is what I got."

In all, we found that this redesigned course challenged student expectations about the basic communication course—making the experience more intellectually challenging by incorporating foundational aspects of rhetoric into a traditional public speaking class—and this became a hallmark of the course that we decided to embrace.

Presentational Speaking Skills. The course is a general education course that focuses on presentational speaking, so it is not surprising that improved communication skills is one of the key components of our identity. With that said, students recognized that this was an important characteristic of the course, as evidenced by their comments regarding expectations. For instance, one student said, "I expected a rigorous course that not only expanded my communication skills but taught me more about rhetoric in the real world. The course has so far fit my expectations." Another student echoed this sentiment as they explained, "My expectations going into the course were to learn how to be a better speaker especially in front of others that I do not know. I still have the same expectations."

Students also noted that the improved presentational speaking skills they hoped to gain became more than an expectation, as they perceived real growth. For example, one student noted their perceived gains in presentational speaking, "I've become a more effective public speaker. I feel like I am growing in this way, so it's working!"

Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are the foundation of any course. In order to show that our course redesign was successful, we needed to be able to show that we had developed informed learning outcomes and that these goals were being met after a semester of instruction. To accomplish this task, we relied on an open-ended pretest-posttest format where students were asked questions relating to each of our stated learning outcomes and we qualitatively compared the responses from the beginning of the semester and end of the semester to assess learning. Our learning outcomes will serve to organize this results section.

What is rhetoric?

Initial responses to this question centered on the act of persuasion. These were short answers that simplified the concept of rhetoric to the act of persuasion. For instance, students would often equate rhetoric with persuasive thinking. Common responses were "rhetoric is persuasive speaking" and "persuasive writing or speaking"

However, by the end of the semester, students were able to better articulate their responses to this prompt. Their answers were more complex as they were able to recognize that there is not a singular accepted definition of rhetoric. "Rhetoric is not one definition. Rhetoric in the eyes of Bitzer is associated with rhetorical situations while Toulmin describes it as claims, data, warrants."

Moreover, students began to use names and state standpoints of the people discussed in class. For example, "Rhetoric has many definitions according to numerous sources. While *Aristotle* thought it was the art of persuasion, *Fisher* thought it was narratives, *Toulmin* thought it was data, a claim, and the warrant that bridges the two together, and *Jasinski* thought it was a problem, its cause, the solution, and the consequences of it." (emphasis added).

What is a practical argument?

When students were asked about practical arguments at the beginning of the semester they provided very unsure responses like, "I guess it's an argument that attempts to use logical reasoning to assert its message." Other students provided short responses that did not attempt to guess at the definition. For example, "Not sure" and "I don't know."

When students did venture a guess, their answers were simple and often focused on the idea of logic "An argument based on logic." Other responses honed in on the term practical and translated that to applied settings. For instance, one student said that a practical argument is, "an argument about real world events that has a real world application"

By the end of the semester, students were able to provide more sophisticated responses to this prompt. For example, one student wrote, "a practical argument is an argument made in order to achieve a purpose, namely to convince the audience of the speaker's point of view. This is a mainly pragmatic form of argument and does not usually focus on the philosophical forms of rhetoric."

Logic still plays a major role in the definitions, but its role is more fully fleshed out. One student demonstrated this point as they stated, "a practical argument includes logical data to back up a claim that addresses an issue. A practical argument includes speaking on an intellectual issues either one on one or to an audience."

What contextual factors should be considered when preparing a message?

Initial responses focused on the audience, which is a good sign of awareness on the part of the students. Common responses prioritized the audience, such as, "the culture and beliefs of the audience you're speaking to" and "the audience's background and recent events."

Not surprisingly, the situation was also a common theme in the initial response. Students discussed current events. For example, one student said, "You should be concerned with whom you are speaking to along with the current events of the time." In addition, environmental factors like the presentation, available technology, and the communication medium, were discussed as contextual factors of which a speaker should be aware. One student exemplified this point as they said, "the audience, the situation, the platform for communication (i.e., speech, PowerPoint, email)."

The biggest gain seen in this learning outcome was the correct use of course vocabulary. For instance, one student explained that a speaker "should consider the context of the message, opposing messages and reasoning, the audience, time constraints, personal ethos, and location." Moreover, students often incorporated elements of argument, like "grounds, warrants, and claims." They also offered questions to guide a speaker's decisions. For example, "do you have background information to support your claim/argument, and the logic to back up the transition from the background information to your claim?"

What is an effective oral presentation? What does it include?

At the beginning of the semester, students tended to equate an effective oral presentation with delivery. Physical and verbal delivery were the focus of this round of response. One student exemplified this focus by saying, "It takes into account all of the following: body language, facial language, conciseness/clarity, how effectively the listener can interpret it, tone of voice, diction, speed, etc." Another student echoed this point as they explained, "fluid speech, limited pauses, etc." Make for an effective oral presentation.

After taking the course, students were better able to integrate both content and delivery into their responses regarding what makes for an effective oral presentation. Moreover, and as seen before, they used course vocabulary correctly in their responses. For example, one student said, "an effective oral presentation includes a strong point with backing, along with an introduction, body, and conclusion. It also includes a speaker who is confident in themselves and their topic. This may be shown through movement along with their tone. This presentation may also include a visual aid to help enhance the argument." A fellow classmate furthered this point as they explained: "an effective oral presentation contains the necessary context—grounds, warrants, and claims, it may also utilize a visual aid, and requires proper presentation of the person speaking, in terms of appearance, gestures, tone, etc."

What is the role of ethics in rhetoric?

Our last learning outcome looked at the role of ethics in rhetoric. The students' initial responses were basic. For example, one student said, "I didn't know ethics had a role in rhetoric"; while another student equated rhetoric with unethical communication. Here they said, "the presenter has a responsibility to not use rhetorical devices to mislead or trick listeners into believing something they know is wrong." Another common idea was that ethics was synonymous with plagiarism. For instance, one student said, "Ethics plays a role in rhetoric because it is plagiarism to steal another person's language."

The students seemed to have a better grasp of ethics by the end of the semester based on their responses. Students recognized that ethics were important in the construction and communication of a message. One student said, "ethics is what determines whether or not rhetoric should be implemented." While another student pondered a bigger issue regarding rhetoric. Here, they said, "Rhetoric that is good in implementation but is overall detrimental to society as a whole is deemed ethically bad and should be chastised by rhetoricians for its underhanded techniques."

The idea that rhetoric is powerful seemed to emphasize the importance of ethical decision making on the part of the speaker. For instance, one student explained, "Ethics have a role in rhetoric because of the action that may result from an act of rhetoric. You want to make sure the rhetorical act is ethical, in that it would not lead to detrimental or harmful action. Additionally, the rhetorical act should be composed with ethics, making use of the proper authorities, sources, and appealing to appropriate emotions, etc."

In all, our qualitative data showed gains in each category. Students were better able to articulate responses to the questions we posed that were directly related to the learning outcomes set in the course. The final answers were more sophisticated, incorporated course language, and correctly used course ideas; all of which point to positive student learning outcomes.

Discussion

We found that engaging in the course redesign process was useful for bolstering our basic communication course. Specifically, our research reaffirms the need to constantly (re)evaluate the basic communication to establish and maintain a clear course identity, ensure that the course is guided by the stated learning outcomes, and make sure the course is up to date. Courses should focus on these aspects not only to enhance the teaching-learning process, but also to remain competitive in the higher education environment.

Implications

These findings have led us to develop implications for our research. First, this project demonstrated how a well-planned course redesign program can be used in the basic communication course. In our case, the redesign process gave us a dedicated time to critically evaluate our course. In doing so, we were able to hone in on the areas that we needed to improve (establishing our identity and letting learning outcomes guide the course). Other basic communication course programs will have different areas of focus, but the benefits of course redesign should still hold true as it adds structure to the evaluation and change process. In addition, participation in course redesign programs can also be used demonstrate the pedagogical commitment of course administrators and emphasize the strengths of the class to further establish the importance of the basic communication course in communication departments and across campus.

Second, our research underscored the need for collaborative consistency in the basic course (Anderson, Gardner, Wolvin, Kirby-Straker, Bederson, Yalcin, 2016). Collaborative consistency refers to the way that basic communication course directors work in tandem with course instructors to develop and institute changes. In other words, course administrators need the buy in of those who teach the basic communication course in order for curriculum changes to be successful. We took this approach in our redesign process as

we developed a team of course administrators and experienced instructors to tackle the course redesign. As a result, we had multiple perspectives that served to enhance our course.

Finally, this research emphasizes the need for course administrators to focus on the student experience while engaging in the redesign process. Traditional assessments have tended to focus on quantitative accounting of learning gains or improvements made. However, this approach only provides a partial picture of what is going in in the course as student voice is all but neglected (Anderson, Gardner, & Wolvin, 2016). Prioritizing the student experience and taking a case study approach to understanding how the course redesign process can be used in the basic course demonstrates the strength of method variation when assessing learning outcomes. We believe that student perceptions of the course and learning serve as a critical source of information that course administrators can and should use for the redesign process.

Limitations and Future Directions

As with all research, this case study has limitations that should be noted. First, the case only accounts for one year of data. With that said, we are still enmeshed in the redesign process as we assess how the changes we made to the course support our learning outcomes. Second, there may be sample bias in the results. By this we mean, that the students who took part in the optional qualitative surveys may not represent the experiences of all students who took our basic communication course. Finally, this case study focuses on one specific course, while conventional academic thinking criticizes case studies for their lack of social-scientific standard of generalizability, objectivity, and validity; this thinking is an over simplification of the methodology and case studies provide useful insights into the phenomena under investigation (Flyvbjerg, 2006). While our findings are not generalizable, the lessons we learned can be passed on to other basic communication course administrators and adapted to the specific contexts of their universities, departments, and courses.

There are several avenues for future research. In terms of our course, the redesign process is ongoing. This research is based on the first round of data collection and analysis but we continue to make changes each semester and see this as an iterative process where we use the data to inform course changes. We plan to continue to document our course redesign experience to demonstrate the iterative nature of course administration. Moreover, we believe that this type of research could demonstrate how to close the assessment loop by showing how data collection and analysis can lead to course changes, which are then further assessed.

Course redesign programs, like the one we detailed here, are a resource that basic communication course directors can use to (re)evaluate their course. By participating in these programs, course directors not only have the opportunity to critically assess their course and corresponding learning outcomes, but to also promote their course and among key constituencies.

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Evaluation Communication of Master's Program On the Basis of Google Citations

Mike Allen[1]
John Bourhis[2]
Nancy Burrell[3]
Bailey Benedict[4]
Tosin Comfort Adebayo[5]
Maura Cherney[6]
Derrick Langston[7]
Brittney Peck[8]
Samantha Quinn[9]
Riley Richards[10]

This paper provides an assessment of Master's degree programs and faculty research in Communication departments using citations available in Google Scholar. Identification of the Master's degree programs relied on the National Communication Association website. Individual faculty were identified from the web page of the department for the institution. The combined number of citations to faculty publications identifies the top five departments (University of Alabama-Birmingham, California State University-Fullerton, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Cleveland State University, and California State University-Long Beach) and the top five most cited faculty members (Stella Ting-Toomey, Virginia Richmond, George Cheney, Kimberly Neuendorf, and Brian Spitzberg). The overall set of information provides useful insights for the expectations for Master's program faculty productivity.

Key Words: Master's Degree Programs, Research Productivity, Program Evaluation, Publication Citations

A central consideration for the evaluation of faculty involves some combination of three elements: (a) research, (b) teaching, and (c) service. Institutional priorities determine the relative emphasis of each element, consistent with mission and expectations for the program (Allen, Bourhis, Burrell, Mukarram, Blight, Gross, Lambertz, and Anderson, 2015). The institutional goal involves the creation of a record and set of departmental accomplishments consistent with the expectations. The evaluations involve an examination of two different levels of accomplishment: (a) departmental and (b) individual faculty. The focus on the department becomes how individuals (faculty) combine to establish a record of excellence for the department in achieving the mission set forth in the combination of

[1] UW-Milwaukee
[2] Missouri State University
[3] UW-Milwaukee
[4] Purdue University
[5] UW-Milwaukee
[6] UW-Milwaukee
[7] UW-Milwaukee
[8] UW-Milwaukee
[9] UW-Milwaukee
[10] UW-Milwaukee

departmental and institutional level statement of goals. Individual faculty should provide an identifiable contribution towards the attainment of that goal while achieving some level of individual recognition. The problematic element becomes how to provide "hard" evidence of excellence or achievement capable of evaluation towards those goals.

The normal evaluation criteria for teaching can involve number of student credit hours generated, number of degrees (and minors) earned by students, time spent from admission to graduation, evidence of post-graduate employment or graduate school admission, as well as various teaching evaluations (peer, student and institutional). Service excellence becomes documented by election and participation in various governance bodies (both professional and institutional) combined with community service efforts. All of the contributions become evidence of the value of the department in achieving the mission.

Research excellence is more challenging to demonstrate. Publication evaluation, either by the number and quality (prestige) of the publisher (journal, books, monograph) becomes a set of standards used to interpret the various outcomes. The number of publications, while important, does not demonstrate the value of the work to other scholars. Part of the challenge of publication becomes demonstrating that the published work provided some sense of contribution beyond simply taking up space within a journal. One possible method of examination becomes the use of citation metrics that measure how frequently a work is cited by other scholars. The utility of the article is demonstrated by how useful other scholars found the work in formulating additional questions. One of the important elements becomes the small but important positive relationship of research productivity and teaching effectiveness (Allen, 1996) indicating that goals may reinforce each other. Successful research and successful teaching both involve the ability to explain ideas clearly to an audience not always as expert or as well versed as the author. Both effective teaching and quality research require energetic pursuit of improved outcomes as the result of accumulated experience.

Evaluation of Departments

Departments perform a constant and regular set of evaluations, both internal and external. For example, students provide evaluation of individual instructors each semester and departmental averages (if statistical information is requested) and/or profiles are assembled. The combination of statistical and open-ended responses forms the basis of the file of evaluations. Assembled into a student evaluation portfolio, along with peer teaching assessments, and educational materials generated by the department form the basis for the evaluation of instruction. The departmental evaluation becomes some composite or overall assessment of the instructional quality, based on individual teaching assignments at the section or class level.

The value placed on teaching by a department varies based on the fundamental structure of the institution. A private institution charging more in tuition finds the economic structure fundamental to the ability to attract and retain students willing to pay a premium for an educational experience. For many private institutions, economic survival requires excellence in instruction as perceived by the students. A department receiving consistently low teaching evaluations, small numbers of majors, and low retention would face difficulty with the administration in this environment.

A great deal of educational effort is spent establishing and promulgating a "reputation" for the department with potential students, alumni, administrators, and colleagues. The question often focuses on how to "objectively" provide evidence that the

claim of a "reputation" represents more than wishful thinking or hope. The need to provide some basis for any claim provides a driving force for various efforts undertaken by professional organizations and news media to generate a series of rankings for programs. The goal of most institutions becomes a focus on hiring the best possible candidate to promote the goals of the organization (Barnett, et al., 2010; Barnett & Feeley, 2011).

The use of the *US News* as well as other popular media evaluations attempt to provide some assessment of programs to provide a means of comparing degrees offered by colleges and universities. The *US News* evaluation considers a number of factors in making the determination of excellence (including student/faculty ratio, class size, acceptance rate, percentage faculty that are full time). What is interesting is that the evaluation of programs often does not directly consider any service or research factors as part of the evaluation criteria. More importantly, the *US News* ranking of graduate programs provides no separate listing for the discipline of Communication.

The National Research Council's (NRC) report (NRC, 2012) dealing with doctoral programs explicitly considers program faculty characteristics related to research (e.g., number of publications, number of citations, number and type of research awards). Similar efforts involve communication scholars examining the implications of various citation patterns to evaluate programs and publications (Allen, Maier, & Grimes, 2012; Beatty, Feeley, & Dodd, 2012; Funkhouser, 1989; Levine, 2010; McBath, 1979). The focus in terms of the program deals with issues regarding the extent to which faculty are involved in mentoring of doctoral teaching assistants and engaged in developing the instructional skill of faculty. A great deal of the NRC's doctoral assessment deals with library support and financial support for the program.

An assessment of Master's programs would require a different set of expectations related to the change related to assignment of faculty duties. The problem is that the NRC focus fails to include a recognition or inclusion of programs offering the Master's degree as a separate entity. The focus on doctoral programs or non-inclusion of Communication degrees as a separate entity fails to contribute to assessments of Master's programs. There exists a general lack of professional organizational emphasis in higher education on faculty in Master's programs. Master's faculty lack the access to resources (doctoral research assistants), usually have increased teaching loads (3 courses a semester rather than 2 courses), and the expectations of a research record for tenure may be reduced. This combined lack of resources, opportunity, and institutional motivation (reward) creates a different professional reality compared to most doctoral programs. Examining and establishing expectations for excellence should consider how institutional design impacts on productivity for some outcomes.

Evaluation of Faculty

The nature of each element (i.e., research, teaching, service) provides a separate consideration and effort at evaluation for faculty. Faculty members are routinely evaluated using a combination of those elements. One of the questions or challenges for institutional logic becomes establishing the relative value for each element. How important is teaching relative to research or service when conducting promotion, tenure, and merit evaluations? Part of the definition of the program and the institution plays out involving the relative importance of the elements of evaluation.

The normal comparison when addressing institutions usually involves some comparison based on research since teaching and service metrics for comparison remain

underdeveloped. The lack of any sort of metric permitting comparison across institutions for service or teaching contributions make the focus of institutional comparison related to metrics involving research inevitable. Similarly, faculty teaching at Master's programs may be excellent but become excluded from recognition when evaluations involve only faculty teaching in doctoral programs. When examining faculty, the goal often becomes establishing some normative view of publication productivity (Stephen & Geel, 2007). Numerous efforts to evaluate faculty productivity in terms of quantity and associated institutional reputation exist (Bolkan, et. al., 2012; Edwards, Watson, & Barker, 1988a, 1988b; Hickson, Bodon, Turner, 2004; Hickson, Stacks, & Amsbary, 1989, 1992, 1993; Hickson, Stacks, & Bodon, 1999; Hickson, Turner, & Bodon, 2003; Stephen, 2008, 2009, Watson, Edwards, & Barker, 1989). The evaluations end up targeting or prioritizing primarily doctoral programs.

Departmental numbers (e.g., degrees granted, student credit hours, external contract dollars) tend to be aggregated at the level of the department. The aggregation of such information provides little direct ability to make direct inferences or statements about individual faculty. The move makes individual faculty evaluations or representations move more towards research efforts. Part of this move becomes associated with the issue of the ability to identify the affiliation of individual faculty since authorship carries a particular set of easily identifiable parameters.

Part of the challenge becomes how to evaluate the appropriate level of productivity in terms of research for a faculty member teaching at a Master's program. The use of doctoral program comparison data provides a basis failing to reflect the institutional reality of the person teaching a much larger instructional load with fewer support resources. The problem becomes more severe when faculty teach in institutions where other departments offer doctoral degrees. The comparison of the communication faculty to other faculty teaching in departments offering doctoral degrees may cause difficulty. Individual faculty could be held to a standard at the university or college level that reflects the design or circumstances not reflected when teaching in a Master's degree environment. Evaluation of the research productivity of Communication departments and individual faculty members at terminal Master's programs may improve the measurement and understanding of excellence for the scholarly contributions of both departments and faculty.

Method

Selection of Institutions Included in the Analysis

The institutions chosen for analysis were taken from the National Communication Association list of programs offering Master's degrees in Communication.[1] Every institution on the list was examined for potential inclusion in the analysis. Some institutions currently offer doctoral degrees and were not included because the inclusion of a doctoral program would fundamentally change the nature of the role and responsibilities of the faculty within that department. A program offering a doctoral degree should be reviewed and compared to other doctoral programs and not Master's level programs. M.A. programs that were interdisciplinary without a clear focus or track on communication were similarly excluded from this analysis. A program dealing with business communication where the focus was on a combination of business courses and communication courses was not considered as a communication degree.

Programs focusing primarily on the production of communication media/film, journalism, or entirely on public relations were not included in the analysis. The focus on the

production of film, digital video material, website design, or other very applied and practical outcomes remains different from a liberal arts communication department. Part of the challenge of the inclusion of departments focused on the production of communication artifacts becomes the difficulty of providing a metric that equates creative work to published scholarly work. A publication and ultimately citations to that publication provides a marker of the value of the work. Finding such a simple metric is much more difficult when trying to evaluate the value of generating a web page. Inclusion of these departments would be unfair, since the goal of the program, and therefore the faculty, often has little with published academic work.

Collection of Faculty Information

After departments were identified, the web page for the institution and department was used to identify faculty considered as part of that program. Every institution and department had an accessible web page and listed members of the faculty. While the structure and nature of the web pages differed, the essential information necessary for this investigation was available.

A person listed as faculty was included if they were represented as ranked as an Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or rank of Professor. A person was not included if they were listed as a: (a) visiting professor, (b) instructor, (c) clinical professor, (d) practicing faculty, (e) an administrator with primary responsibility outside the department (dean, provost, director of a program outside the department), (f) listed as an emeritus faculty, (g) listed as part-time or ad hoc, and (h) faculty from other departments cross-listed as part of the program.

The goal involved representing permanent faculty that contributed to the graduate education in the Master's program. In some departments faculty were listed by whether or not they had graduate status, only faculty listed as having graduate status were included in this analysis. When no separate listing was provided, the assumption was that all tenure track faculty were contributing to the Master's program and included, unless some notation existed on the departmental web page.

The net impact of the application of the standards varied from institution to institution. For some programs, the number of faculty shrunk from a relatively large number to a very small number of contributors when considering the categorization of the instructional staff in terms of such criteria. Other programs essentially were not effected greatly by the application of these set of standards.

For each faculty member, the year of earning the doctoral degree was recorded. Many institutions list that as part of the web page. A search of the NCA and International Communication Association database, along with the name entered in Dissertation Abstracts International provided the basis of establishing the date of degree.

Collection of Citation Information

The names of each faculty member were used to search for citations of published research using *Google Scholar*. Whenever possible, the vita or other information (like institutional affiliation) was used to supplement and identify relevant publications. For each article authored by the particular faculty member the number of citations were identified and added to create a citation score for each person. *Google Scholar* is not entirely complete, no index can provide information for every article or book published, but the size of the

inclusion and material makes *Google Scholar* the most complete and largest set of available citations.

For each department, all the relevant members of the faculty were identified and the number of citations for each person summed to create a score for the department. The department score represents the overall sum of all citations listed in *Google Scholar* to each author individually.

Results

Ranking by Institutional Departments

Examination Using Total Combined Citations. According to the citation counts, the top ten Master's research programs are: University of Alabama-Birmingham, California State University-Fullerton, University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Cleveland State University, California State University-Long Beach, Boston University, San Diego State University, University of Delaware, Northeastern University, and the University of Texas-El Paso. A complete listing of programs is available in Table 1.

Examination Considering Faculty Size. Among institutions the variability in the average number of faculty is relatively large. The size of the programs across the entire set of institutions ranges from a single individual to a high of 26 faculty in the department. For total citations, the number of faculty in the department plays a significant role because a larger number of faculty permits more publications and a larger total number of combined citations. Table 1 provides a consideration of faculty based on average faculty citations on a per faculty basis, essentially taking the total number of citations and dividing by faculty size.

The results indicate that only one program would not remain in the top 10 (CSU-Long Beach). The reason for this was that CSU-Long Beach has a large faculty (26). Considering the top 20, three programs drop out based on average (#18, Illinois State, #19, CUNY-Baruch, and #20 Arkansas-Fayetteville). All programs have a sizable faculty number (Illinois State with 17, CUNY-Baruch with 14, Arkansas-Fayetteville with 11). The three programs added to the top 20 are Hartford (#11), St. Louis (#19), and Kansas State (#20) and all have a small number of faculty (Hartford has 4, St. Louis has 7, and Kansas State has 6).

Examination Considering Faculty Size and Duration. The consideration of the age of faculty (measured in years, post-doctoral degree) provides a crude measure of the average number of citations per year to each faculty member. The impact of considering age on the top twenty compared to average per faculty has nineteen of the twenty remaining the same although the rank order does shuffle. One institution drops out of the top twenty, Louisville, indicating an older faculty. The institution added, Wyoming, is one with relatively few faculty, but the average per year indicates a younger but productive faculty in the Department of Communication.

The overall summary based on the three different approaches (total number, average number per faculty member, average per faculty member per year) indicates general agreement among the various methods of evaluation. While some changes in the rankings occur, the general agreement among the various methods indicates a consistency in the quality of the faculty.

Ranking of Individual Faculty

Considering individual faculty teaching at a Master's program, the top cited scholar was Stella Ting-Toomey from California State University-Fullerton with 13,363 combined career citations. The next nine rounding out the top ten were Virginia Richmond (Alabama-Birmingham, 10,028), George Cheney (Colorado-Colorado Springs, 9,430), Kimberly Neuendorf (Cleveland State, 9,628), Brian Spitzberg (San Diego State, 9,214), James Katz (Boston University, 9,185), Matthew Nisbet (Northeastern, 6,345), Arvind Singhal (Texas, El-Paso, 5,352), Michael Cummingham (Louisville, 5,158), and Scott Caplan (Delaware, 4,548). No institution had more than one in the top ten, although the 11th rated faculty member is Timothy Levine from Alabama-Birmingham.

The list in Table 2 provides every faculty member with 1,000 or more career citations. The number of scholars and number of different institutions provides a frame for understanding the range of contributions from many different Master's program faculties to research in the discipline. Many of the scholars listed demonstrate large contributions to the scholarly thinking of research in the discipline. The average citation rate per faculty member across a career ranges from about 1,000 in the top ten institutions to about 100 in more mid-range programs to less than 25 for most programs with smaller number of combined citations.

The University of Alabama-Birmingham has five faculty (Richmond, Levine, Park, McCornack, Morrison) on the list, the University of Texas-El Paso has four faculty (Yang, Ruggerio, Peterson, Singhal) as does California State University-Long Beach (Kearney, Plax, Cargile, Ma). The University of Colorado-Colorado Springs (Cheney, Planalp, Shockley-Zalabak), Cleveland State University (Neuendorf, Ableman, Ray) and Texas Christian University (Witt, Ledbetter, Schrodt) each contribute three faculty members to the list.

Comparison to Doctoral Programs

Comparing the pattern of results to that of doctoral programs (Allen, et. al., 2013, see Table 1, p. 61) indicates that the top Master's program would be ranked as the 9th most published graduate program. The second ranked Master's program, California State University-Fullerton would be ranked 10th, and three universities (University of Colorado-Colorado Springs, Cleveland State University, and California State University-Long Beach) would all receive a 14th place ranking. Essentially, ten of the Master's programs would appear in the top 20 programs when compared to doctoral level institutions. The results indicate that the level of contribution by Master's faculty in terms of research citations is significant and evidence of serious contributions of the faculty in those programs to research.

Examining individuals, the top-rated Master's faculty in terms of citations (Stella Ting-Toomey) would be the second most cited faculty member if she were employed at a doctoral program (only Marshall Poole at the University of Illinois-Urbana had more citations, using the Allen, et al., 2013 data from Table 3, p. 65). Examining the top five, Richmond would appear as the sixth most cited doctoral scholar, Cheney would appear as the sixth most cited scholar, as would Neuendorf and Spitzberg. Nine of the top Master's level scholars would appear in the top 25 most cited individuals if working at doctoral degree granting institutions with doctoral degree granting institutions.

The comparisons, conducted both using departmental and individual analysis indicate that the top Master's faculty compare favorably with faculty at doctoral level

programs in terms of scholarly citations. However, the average level of contribution when comparing the programs clearly indicates that many of the Master's institutions do not provide the same level of average contribution to research as measured by citations. The greater variability and number at the smaller end is what creates the difference.

Discussion

Every department within an institution needs to establish guidelines and criteria for the evaluation of the combined efforts of faculty. A central question often asked of administrators becomes the evaluation of a department relative to other departments. The sense of the "horse race" or the need to provide a sense of a department being "above average" provides a certain level of justification. A part of the justification becomes an examination of how the department fits within national norms or as compared to other similar programs. Institutions should examine the goals for the program and for faculty in determining how best to provide desirable outcomes. The data provided in this report demonstrates one method or approach at establishing normative expectations for one measure of research impact.

A Master's program with a terminal focus, where the students have no expectation of continuing for a doctoral degree, remains divergent from other Master's programs with an expectation of continuation on for doctoral work by a serious number of students. Not all Master's programs offer or expect students to move on to the next degree. However, a Master's program with that level of aspiration probably will have faculty whose *vitae* and research efforts more closely resemble or approach doctoral level programs. The match between the elements of faculty achievement and ultimately student career goals requires some consideration and investigation. Some programs clearly have a record of generating or attracting a number of scholars with substantial research records (e.g., University of Alabama-Birmingham, California State University-Fullerton, Cleveland State University, California State University-Long Beach, University of Colorado-Colorado Spring and Texas Christian University). An examination of how those departments have generated an environment that encourages research excellence would provide some additional information on how such cultures evolve and maintain.

The challenge of identifying how to compare programs remains difficult. Clearly, compared to doctoral programs, faculty at Master's programs generate research with collectively and, on average, fewer citations. Most doctoral program faculty teach two classes per semester and work with doctoral students as part of research teams. Essentially, the efforts of the faculty member become enhanced when research assistance is readily available and a reduced teaching load exists. Qualitatively, the doctoral students have more training (usually most doctoral students have already earned a Master's degree) and experience as well as career goals more aligned with the motivation and expectation of generating high quality research. Faculty at a Master's program teach more classes (three or four per semester) with less ability to devote effort to graduate education. In addition, a Master's faculty member typically has less research resources in the department where the Master's student may have a terminal nonacademic focus for future employment and not be focused on developing research skills.

The evaluation provided in this analysis fails to consider two major aspects of evaluating individuals and departments: (a) teaching and (b) service efforts. Both efforts represent criteria and outcomes of serious consideration for programs. The problem of generating some level of comparison between departments remains difficult and not yet

articulated in a meaningful manner. Many institutions view the evaluation of instruction as part of a personnel issue and therefore do not make available information about individual instructors or even departments. The fear of a negative evaluation becoming public provides for a need to protect both a department and individual faculty from embarrassment. In addition, new faculty may need to adapt the new institutional norms and require a bit of experience to improve effectiveness in instruction.

Various educational or pedagogical practices require serious effort and meta-analyses to examine the provide evidence for the effectiveness of programs (Gayle, et al., 2006; Preiss & Allen, 1990, 2006). For example, the use of distance learning required (Allen, et al., 2002; Allen, et al., 2004; Allen, et al., 2013), the examination of classroom interaction and race (Bradford, et al., 2006; Cooper & Allen, 1998), the use of forensics to teach critical thinking (Allen, et al., 1999; Allen, Trejo, Bartanen, Schroeder, & Ulrich, 2004), efforts to reduce homophobia (Allen, et al., 2014), and service learning (Novak, et al., 2007) should all be considered. The implementation of various curricular issues often requires a serious effort at evaluation

Part of the challenge becomes the nature of the Master's program's responsibility and requirements differentiated from the doctoral program. In part, the other aspect of departments where the program offers no graduate education remains yet another element needed to understand how to generate and evaluate faculty. The undergraduate degree institution (whether private or public) provides a valuable contribution in instruction but may or may not focus on the need for faculty to conduct published research. In addition, the quantity and/or quality standards are probably not going to be as focused as institutions that represents the primary evaluation of a faculty member as one related to research. In particular, a private institution may view the primary criteria for evaluation as instructional. Unlike the public doctoral institution with a much lower tuition, the focus on service provided for the fee required may change the institutional resource model. A private institution with a set of instructors viewed as poor or inaccessible may find difficulty over the longer term attracting students.

A remaining challenge becomes to articulate metrics for the comparison of teaching and service to permit a greater understanding of the contribution of faculty to institutions and the profession. The inability to provide data and information restricts the comparisons to those activities or pursuits that carry some public or accessible means of articulation and accumulation. The reason research metrics become pursued for inter-institutional comparison simply reflects the ability to articulate a metric and provide a means for relatively accessible information. Much of teaching and service contributions (or evaluation of excellence) involve contributions that are not nearly as accessible. What this means is that the relative instructional merits of a program remain unclear. Similarly, the lack of information on service contribution provides no ability to compare institutions on that basis as well.

One of the challenges of the use of this kind of metric becomes the sensitivity to the ranking based on one scholar or two with exceptional records. For example, the addition of Stella Ting-Toomey (13,363 citations) to any program virtually guarantees the program a top five institutional ranking for combined citations. Similarly, the addition or deletion of any of the top ten scholars listed can change the ranking of the program dramatically (by relocation or through retirement). Also, many of the top-rated scholars (e.g., Ting-Toomey, Richmond, Cheney, Levine, T. Sellnow) spent a number of years teaching at doctoral programs before the current institutional affiliation. Essentially, the comparison to other faculty that spent

entire careers at Master's level or undergraduate programs may create a bias in favor of particular career paths.

The issue of citations becomes subject to arguments about the manipulation of citation counts to achieve status. A number of online or electronic journals that are considered "open" journals have been accused of requiring articles to provide a number of citations to the material in the journal. The goal of the requirement becomes the focus on increasing the number of citations (both for the power ranking of the journal as well as individual citations). The accusation is similar to that made about the use of "bots" on *Twitter* or *Facebook* to increase the number of "likes" and reposting to make the material considered "trending." The issue is that the impact of such efforts creates an artificial inflation of the importance of the material compared to other articles and publications that do not have such efforts at inflation.

Google Scholar receives criticisms of inclusion and citation limitations. The service does not include all books or some web-based materials. The problem remains of understanding how and what material is included becomes a central issue. Also, the retrieval process varies based on what key word combinations are used when searching for a scholar. In some cases, the person's name had to be combined with the various institutional affiliations to provide complete information.

The use of citations may favor particular areas of the discipline over areas. For example, rhetorical scholars publish fewer works (more weighted in terms of books) that use a reduced number of citations. The impact of areas of the discipline that are simply smaller, means fewer opportunities to gain citations. Areas of the discipline that are much more interdisciplinary (like health communication) have other areas of the academy likely to use the material. Health communication often publishes in journals that are jointly sponsored by other larger organizations (American Psychological Association) and therefore have simply more opportunity to create larger numbers of citations. A small area, like public address, may have much fewer scholars involved using practices less likely to generate larger numbers of citations. The result becomes a focus on employing a method of evaluation that may create a bias in favor of particular areas of scholarship. The solution for this may be the designation by area of scholars or the affiliation of departments by area of concentration.

Other critiques of the use of publication metrics exist including concerns about gender inequity (Blair, Brown, & Baxter, 1994) as well as issues with regard to misuse or creating pressures that are dysfunctional to other institutional goals (Erickson, Fleuriet, & Hosman, 1993, 1996). The problem becomes the reliance on numbers may obscure the necessary narrative required to understand and interpret the information (Huxman & Allen, 2004). The focus on creating a sense of objective measurement may introduce other biases that do not serve other institutional goals.

Despite the limitations of overall institutional assessment, the data provide some ability to evaluate individual faculty relative to the expectations vis-à-vis similar kinds of institutions. Rather than making comparisons of faculty achievement to doctoral programs, this paper generates a more relevant comparison for Master's level programs and the research agenda and outcomes of faculty. The nature of administrative or competitive comparisons is such that the claims of excellence require some element of evidence, preferably objective and quantifiable comparisons using some metric. This paper provides a more relevant institutional comparison by creating a system that provides more similarity in function than a comparison to doctoral program faculty.

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Table 1

Institutional Level Data

INSTITUTION	# FACULTY	Total Citations	Average per faculty Citations	Average Citations per faculty per post PHD year
1. Alabama-Birmingham	11	21,949**(1)**	1995**(1)**	69.16**(3)**
2. CSU-Fullerton	14	17,091**(2)**	1221**(6)**	42.25**(11)**
3. Colorado-Colorado Springs	8	14,804**(3)**	1851**(2)**	58.39**(6)**
4. Cleveland State	9	14,325**(4)**	1592**(3)**	50.07**(9)**
5. CSU-Long Beach	26	14,158**(5)**	545**(16)**	27.48**(18)**
6. Boston University	9	13,102**(6)**	1456**(4)**	54.14**(7)**
7. San Diego State	11	12,811**(7)**	1165**(8)**	72.99**(2)**
8. Delaware	9	11,864**(8)**	1318**(5)**	67.32**(4)**
9. Northeastern	10	11,800**(9)**	1180**(7)**	80.74**(1)**
10. Texas-El Paso	12	11,499**(10)**	958**(9)**	39.80**(12)**
11. Rhode Island	12	9,348**(11)**	779**(12)**	30.78**(15)**
12. Louisville	17	8,881**(12)**	522**(17)**	18.37
13. Texas Christian	11	7,735**(13)**	703**(13)**	50.68**(8)**
14. Western Michigan	12	7,130**(14)**	594**(15)**	30.55**(16)**
15. Houston	13	6,746**(15)**	519**(18)**	32.61**(13)**
16. Central Florida	10	6,303**(16)**	630**(14)**	28.30**(17)**
17. Texas State-San Marcos	12	5,269**(17)**	439**(20)**	30.91**(14)**
18. Illinois State	17	5,266**(18)**	310	22.64
19. CUNY-Baruch	14	5,064**(19)**	361	16.39
20. Ithaca College (NY)	5	4,643**(20)**	929**(10)**	61.39**(5)**
21. Arkansas-Fayetteville	11	4,007	364	15.27
22. College of Charleston	14	3,768	269	20.19
23. CSU-Northridge	15	3,658	244	17.06
24. Virginia Tech	11	3,630	330	18.15
25. Akron	11	3,327	302	9.79
26. North Carolina-Charlotte	14	3,281	234	19.69
27. San Francisco State	15	3,256	217	10.79
28. Hartford	4	3,247	812**(11)**	21.03
29. Northern Iowa	18	3,189	177	13.22
30. St Louis	7	3,159	451**(19)**	46.34**(10)**
31. Wake Forest	10	3,118	312	14.93
32. Colorado State	12	3,118	260	27.11**(20)**
33. Montana	8	3,092	387	16.84
34. DePaul	16	2,840	178	11.63
35. Texas-San Antonio	15	2,775	185	14.23
36. North Carolina-Greensboro	11	2,677	243	13.69

37. Baylor	11	2,491	227	9.15
38. West Chester	14	2,264	162	7.50
39. Nevada-Las Vegas	8	2,224	278	14.29
40. Oakland (MI)	17	2,154	127	10.40
41. Missouri State	11	2,151	196	9.48
42. Michigan Technological	7	2,112	301	13.80
43. University of Pacific	5	2,018	404	23.19
44. Emerson	10	2,003	200	9.59
45. Western Illinois	9	2,002	222	22.50
46. CSU-Los Angeles	9	1,980	220	8.10
47. Florida Atlantic	10	1,772	177	6.58
48. Northern Colorado	8	1,691	211	10.47
49. James Madison	20	1,689	84	6.20
50. East Carolina	9	1,678	186	13.56
51. Tennessee-Knoxville	7	1,601	229	20.56
52. Farleigh Dickinson	7	1,439	206	11.60
53. CSU-San Bernadino	8	1,431	179	8.36
54. Western Kentucky	10	1,361	136	12.87
55. Marquette	4	1,343	335	12.57
56. Ball State	10	1,321	232	6.73
57. Florida International	11	1,320	120	18.69
58. Old Dominion	6	1,302	217	11.64
59. CSU-Chico	8	1,268	159	14.79
60. Wyoming	6	1,183	197	27.36**(19)**
61. SUNY-Brockport	7	1,104	158	8.60
62. Indiana State	9	1,073	119	5.51
63. Louisiana-Lafayette	7	1,070	153	9.71
64. Fordham	4	1,045	261	20.41
65. Eastern Washington	6	991	165	6.86
66. CSU-Sacramento	18	883	49	10.79
67. Arkansas-Little Rock	6	870	145	7.92
68. Boise State	9	865	96	10.46
69. Valdosta	9	850	94	3.89
70. Kansas State	6	808	135	24.89
71. Kennesaw	3	800	267	9.94
72. Northern Kentucky	12	732	61	6.29
73. Drexel (PA)	3	723	241	10.57
74. Wisconsin-Whitewater	12	720	60	6.55
75. Pepperdine	11	680	62	5.51
76. Southern Illinois-Edwardsville	5	669	134	13.99
77. Texas-Grande Valley	11	666	61	4.43
78. Rochester Institue of Technology	5	665	113	9.19
79. Auburn	6	654	109	8.90
80. Northern Arizona	7	555	79	4.01
81. Fairfield	7	513	73	6.70
82. Texas A&M-Corpus Cristi	10	498	50	24.28

83. Villanova	6	479	80	4.18
84. Indiana/Purdue-Fort Wayne	5	438	88	4.26
85. Grand Valley State	7	434	62	3.74
86. Bethel	7	428	64	3.33
87. University of Portland	6	413	69	4.19
88. Liberty	8	404	51	3.12
89. West Florida	4	399	100	5.41
90. Central Connecticut	4	368	92	4.31
91. Kean	4	344	86	5.68
92. Murray State	6	343	57	2.79
93. Governors State	3	324	108	17.36
94. Gonzaga	5	321	64	3.81
95. West Texas A&M	7	313	45	2.69
96. Southern Utah	2	297	149	11.44
97. Idaho State	3	288	96	3.50
98. Cal State University-East Bay	7	276	39	5.35
99. SouthEast Louisiana	7	275	39	2.55
100. Texas-Arlington	3	246	82	8.14
101. Marist	4	244	61	6.85
102. South Dakota State	5	201	40	5.39
103. Abilene Christian	8	188	24	0.91
104. Queens	5	185	37	3.42
105. Austin Peay	7	173	25	1.86
106. South Dakota	5	168	34	5.94
107. Alaska-Fairbanks	4	157	39	13.80
108. Radford	7	156	22	2.17
109. Spring Arbor	2	153	77	3.48
110. Eastern Michigan	8	146	18	1.14
111. Louisiana-Monroe	6	120	20	0.80
112. Illinois-Springfield	3	110	37	1.98
113. National University	4	109	29	2.44
114. Wisconsin-Stevens Point	6	106	18	4.05
115. Lynn	2	103	52	1.84
116. Arkansas State	4	86	22	3.09
117. Drury	4	84	21	1.13
118. Eastern Illinois	12	84	7	0.98
119. Purdue-Calumet	2	76	38	1.72
120. CUNY-Brooklyn	2	74	37	2.20
121. Eastern New Mexico	3	67	22	1.18
122. Fort Hayes	7	63	9	1.01
123. Regis	3	60	20	3.67
124. Stephen A. Austin	4	57	14	1.70
125. Bellermine	3	51	17	4.28
126. Louisiana Technological	3	49	16	2.04
127. Texas Southern	1	39	39	1.11
128. Hofstra	5	30	6	1.46

129. University of Dubuque	2	22	11	2.20
130. Suffolk	3	22	7	0.27
131. Spaulding	1	14	14	1.17
132. SUNY-Potsdam	5	8	2	0.12
133. Lasell	1	4	4	0.50
134. Iona	3	3	1	0.21

Table 2

Data on Individual Faculty

Faculty Member	Citations	Institution
1. Ting-Toomey	13,363	CSU-Fullerton
2. Richmond	10,028	Alabama-Birmingham
3. Cheney	9,430	Colorado-Colorado Springs
4. Neuendorf	9,628	Cleveland State
5. Spitzberg	9,214	San Diego State
6. Katz	9,185	Boston University
7. Nisbet	6,345	Northeastern
8. Singhal	5,352	Texas-El Paso
9. Cunningham	5,158	Louisville
10. Caplan	4,548	Delaware
11. Levine	4,408	Alabama-Birmingham
12. Kearney	3,833	CSU-Long Beach
13. T. Sellnow	3,699	Central Florida
14. Nakayama	3,688	Northeastern
15. Hobbs	3,596	Rhode Island
16. Plax	3,567	CSU-Long Beach
17. Chen	3,447	Rhode Island
18. Wu	2,709	Boston University
19. Schrodt	2,677	Texas Christian
20. Planalp	2,530	Colorado-Colorado Springs
21. Peterson	2,520	Texas-El Paso
22. Rancer	2,477	Akron
23. Goodman	2,472	CUNY-Baruch
24. Orbe	2,398	Western Michigan
25. Ellis	2,293	Hartford
26. Jowett	2,274	Houston
27. Park	2,274	Alabama-Birmingham
28. C. Simonds	2,019	Illinois State
29. Ferguson	2,001	College of Charleston
30. Ruggiero	1,953	Texas-El Paso
31. Ryan	1,852	Houston
32. McCornack	1,848	Alabama-Birmingham
33. Allen	1,842	Arkansas-Fayetteville
34. Beach	1,812	San Diego State
35. Abelman	1,612	Cleveland State
36. Leichty	1,743	Louisville
37. Teven	1,726	CSU-Fullerton
38. Courtright	1,721	Delaware
39. Shockley-Zalabak	1,685	Colorado-Colorado Springs

40. Emmers-Sommer	1,665	Nevada-Las Vegas
41. Medhurst	1,606	Baylor
42. Witt	1,579	Texas Christian
43. Beebe	1,537	Texas State-San Marcos
44. Jones	1,483	CSU-Northridge
45. Cargile	1,327	CSU-Long Beach
46. Houser	1,324	Texas State-San Marcos
47. Tedesco	1,277	Virginia Technological
48. Ledbetter	1,278	Texas Christian
49. Dong	1,218	University of the Pacific
50. Yep	1,213	San Francisco State
51. Ma	1,126	CSU-Long Beach
52. Bourhis	1,116	Missouri State
53. Ray	1,105	Cleveland State
54. Sillars	1,085	Montana
55. Apker	1,085	Western Michigan
56. Hinsley	1,079	St. Louis
57. Slack	1,071	Michigan Technological
58. Ivory	1,073	Virginia Technological
59. Mundorf	1,019	Rhode Island
60. Yang	1,010	Texas-El Paso
61. Fejes	1,009	Florida Atlantic
62. Morrison	1,000	Alabama-Birmingham

Footnotes

[1]Some M.A. degrees are no longer offered (UW-Superior, Ithaca College) despite listing at the National Communication Association. The data collection occurred during the months of January to May 2016 using web pages and changes in faculty and degree availability are not reflected after that date. Retirements, relocation, or program changes may result in inclusion or omission of departments/faculty after that date.

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Graduate Student Self-branding as Integrated Marketing Communication: The Call for Reflexivity

Mary J. Eberhardinger[1]

Self-branding among graduate students is explored conceptually in this essay as an extension of the notion of personal branding. This concept is tangential to impression management, sense-making, and face negotiation. A central contention pursued in this essay is the call for administrators to reconsider how to respond to the perceived need of student self-branding. Moreover, graduate student self-branding is compared to a respective form of IMC that utilizes the Kellogg School's notion of contact points. The present essay explores theoretical reasons for why the increased individualized practice of graduate student self-branding occurs. Importantly, the essay invites communication administration into the conversation from a graduate student perspective. The increased demand, desire, and expectation for graduate students to self-promote their personal brand like a business is discussed in this essay through the lens of Beck's notions of individualization, risk society, and reflexivity.

Keywords: self-branding, reflexive modernity, integrated marketing communication

" … we must manage the entire range of things from which they take (as) brand information..."

-Lisa Fortini-Campbell
The Kellogg School

Self-branding is a self-validating and confidence-boosting phenomenological construct that executes a micro-level form of integrated marketing communication (IMC). This kind of reflexively modern branding harnesses persuasive potential in the promoting of a singular voice, message, and idea about any given individual. While graduate students who consciously utilize self-branding traditionally fall under some kind of pre-professional sphere, self-branding extends to non-professional social spheres and other kinds of newly formed roles and professions. Administrators might ask the question: how does self-branding *happen*? Graduate students might ask an ongoing question: should I post (self-brand) or not post? Phenomenologically, self-branding begins with a directed intention that projects outward to an object of experience. At the same time, self-branding can also happen unintentionally. When audience members or customers ultimately possess the determination over what kind of brand a person has (Iacobucci & Calder, 2002), self-branding occurs at the unintentional and merely unconscious level, or in other words, a level that is out of the brand-maker's realm of control.

In this essay, I consider how self-branding practice among graduate students can inform communication administration practice. I also contend that contemporary uses of self-branding practice are congruous to what the Kellogg School of Marketing identifies as contact points, touch points, or moments of truth. Contact points are any moments when customers come in contact with a product, whether physically or sensually, digitally, or psychologically. As a theoretical framework, contact points help explain how the

[1] Duquesne University

presentation of self (Goffman, 1956) in digital and physical life is meditated, constituted, managed, contested, and decided. Moreover, self-branding is discussed here as a reflexive speech event supported by Ulrich Beck's notion of risk society and individualization. The essay unfolds through an exploration of the following sections: graduate student self-branding and individualization, self-branding as IMC, the risk of not self-branding, university students and personal branding, and finally, administration and the call to reflexivity. These sub-categories will provide evidence to support how self-branding can be considered as a contemporary and popular form of IMC.

As we come to understand an ever-mediated phenomenon of self-branding as a distinctive form of integrated marketing communication (IMC), a rationale for its popularity reaches clarity. After all, self-branding is something self-manageable, democratic, doable, and attainable. For example, anyone can open a social media account and post professional updates to it. Self-branding is for all. In this current age of what Ulrich Beck argues as reflexive modernity, students take visibly concerted efforts to publish updates, articles, photographs, and other personally branded phenomena to various discursive and digital modalities. Indeed, we live in a world now where individuals can even pay to be branded. The sources of expert advice for such aligned branding efforts can come from consultants, classes, websites, airport books, textbooks, family friends, and other prescriptive agents.

Importantly, professionals in higher education such as academic advisors and counselors harness specific rhetorical power to help students navigate modern pressures to self-brand. At this point in modernity, we can nearly predict the mantras about how to post, update, upload phenomena in a cognizant, mindful, and aligned manner. Students might frequently ask themselves: *to post or not to post?* In any case, student-scholars should pause to ask critical questions about self-branding in this very moment. For instance, why do some individuals now choose to disseminate the self across contact points (Iacobucci & Calder, 2002) such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Academia.edu, Research Gate, personal homepages, and LinkedIn? In addition, is this practice disseminating, presenting, promoting, asserting, competing, expressing, communicating, selling, advertising, branding, or something else?

The question of whether self-branding actually affects employer perceptions or decisions remains unanswered and open for future deliberation. One troubling thought is that self-branding does not make much of an impact upon some employer perceptions. In other words, the practice of branding solely affects the brander's *own* sense of self, confidence and self-efficacy. Self-branding becomes a therapeutic way to manage uncertainty, unpredictability, and precarity in a world of risks and threats. Self-branding could be a waste of time, time that could be spent doing actual work or labor. This possible paradox of self-branding sets up an exigence for analysis. Regardless of whether or not self-branding affects real-world outcomes with employers, the practice seems to harness significant philosophical and rhetorical potential in the fostering of positive self-esteem and sense-making of one's self. Such possibilities of increased positive attitude matter because positive self-image can allow one to do the best work that one is capable of doing in the public sphere.

Graduate Student Self-Branding and Individualization

Self-branding enters the scene as one of the many effects of individualization, a sociological, psychological, and economically laden process concomitant with a risk society. The disembedding from previous institutions in pre-modernity and Industrial modernity

brings forth a kind of re-embedding into a reflexive state, one in which individuals must see themselves as "the centers of action" (Beck, 1992, p. 135). Thus, the need for an ego-centered worldview becomes necessary to survive in a risk society (p. 136). Graduate students need to re-embed themselves in a world where they suddenly stand alone, above, and independent of institutions. This kind of non-reliance on institutions is what jettisons the construction of self-biographies. In other words, habits and patterns constructed in reflexive modernity (Aiken, 2000) propel enlightenment tendencies and a do-it-yourself (DIY) ethic that celebrates the individualistic notion of doing something with one's own hands rather than relying on a community for approval or validation. This very modernity came abruptly, unseen, undesired, and in the wake of a period of dynamic modernization. In a way, the current stage has imposed itself in our lives like a slap in the face after periods of pre-modernity and industrial modernity. We are thrown into an expectation of Being (modernity) in which we must think, react, and respond reflexively. It should be specified that this (condition of) thrownness is something we did not ask for.

Importantly, for Beck, we have some options for response to the unfortunate thrownness of our Being. When left with just ourselves in void of institutions, we become compelled to respond reflexively, which reveals itself in self-promoting and self-branding practices (Aiken, 2000, p. 6). Self-promotion and branding are survival mechanisms in a newly Darwinian kind of thinking. In other words, "Individuals must produce, stage and cobble biographies themselves. They become chosen, reflexive, do-it-yourself biographies" (Beck, 1998, p. 33). This condition is an effect of a kind of withering away of solidarity. In a state where the reliance on institutions atrophies, places without communities and communities without places emerge, pushing individuals to self-branding practice. In public self-branding processes, one also may invoke the threat of attracting envious voyeurs. This kind of voyeurism can arise out of destructive polysemy. Destructive polysemy means that self-brands can be misinterpreted, misunderstood, and judged unfairly. Is it possible to have a democracy without enemies in a reflexive modernity? If self-branding is turned into mere self-promoting, will it end up working counterproductively by forming increased and new enemies and competition?

The aforementioned questions operate on the premise that the digital sphere represents freedom and democracy. There are risks in both choosing to self-brand and choosing not to self-brand. When one chooses to brand, it can create an unintended effect where the individual becomes a point of passage that sometimes leads to unintended and destabilizing consequences. For example, Beck and Beck-Gersheim (2001) argue that when all expectation and labor is turned upon oneself through the process of individualization, one becomes a point of passage for error. In the digital sphere, the onus of making an error or self-defacing speech act when the individual is the primary point of contact and passage can ruin some kind of systematic outcome even as far as destabilizing a particular kind of future for that individual.

Self-Branding as IMC

IMC is defined as a process where companies accelerate returns by aligning communicative objectives with communicative goals (Schultz & Schultz, 2003, p. 3). In this case, aligning goals, objectives, mission, image, and expression all fall under the efforts of IMC. On the micro-level, self-branders attempt to perform this kind of alignment through the representation of self in various modalities. Self-branders in the graduate student world disseminate bits and pieces of hints throughout their day regarding how an academic might

engage in a particular routine or method of teaching or doing scholarship. Although the self-brander may not think much of the activity, it becomes part of the process of branding the moment it is decoded by a public audience. People relate to brands rather than a strict sense of "cold" marketing communication. Brands can be viewed as a natural way that people sort out preferences. Brands can be an unconscious or subconscious sorting mechanism. Behind each brand, however, there is always a form of marketing communication (Schultz & Schultz, 2003, p. xvii) and demand for new forms and types of marketing communication.

One school of thought in IMC practice comes from The Kellogg School. The Kellogg School advocates a mindfulness of how consumers are experiencing contact points with a particular brand or product across time (Iacobucci & Calder, 2002). Contact points, in traditional advertising, come across in forms such as print media, digital media, and face-to-face encounters. In the phenomenon of self-branding, contact points are utilized in a similar fashion. Individuals enter the consciousness of their audience across many social media modalities. Audiences become analogous to the concept of customers when considering self-branding. Despite not intending to encounter the self-brander, audience members may accidentally encounter the digital images in rhetorically powerful ways. For example, audiences observe the everyday informal behavior of self-branded individuals through mediums like Google +, Instagram, and LinkedIn. When audience members encounter a self-branded person visually through various contact points and then physically in real life, an alignment of perception begins whether the self-brander intends for it or not. The alignment of image contact points across boundaries and countries is made possible through a new sense of thinking about expectations from globalization within a world that now has no boundaries (Beck, 2006).

The Risk of Not Self-Branding

After situating the context for why graduate students are compelled to self-brand in universities, the perceived risks associated with not branding may come to fruition. The professional advice to self-brand delivered from administrators can be so prescriptive that some graduate students seem to rebel against this advice simply to see what they can "get away with" online. Sometimes, professional advice to graduate students comes from the *perceived* threat that if individuals do not self-brand, they will encounter *more* (socially constructed and perceived) risks. As the process of globalization creates less distinguishable boundaries for institutions and nation-states, the idea of crossing boundaries as social entrepreneurs or freelancers becomes an emergent, respected, and viable possibility. The entrepreneurial workforce members "know that they must no longer and can no longer simply carry out work given to him by others in fulfillment of their bounden duty…the work always has to be justified in the sense of a socially enlarged use-value" (Beck, 2000, p.151). Hence, freelancers feel the need to advertise themselves as a survival method and way to make sense of their own identity.

The perceived need to self-brand comes from a condition of precarity. Precarity is defined as "an uncertain adjustment to the natural world" (Bourdieu, 1958, p. 7). How can one be sure about the identity of self in a place where community has withered as an effect of the market? One of the ways that people make sense of who they are is by projecting images, words, text, and other rhetorical activity through self-branding practice. Sense making is vital in reflexive modernity to keep motivated and within (the simulation of) control. The practice of self-branding is neither entirely helpful nor destructive. Both benefits and constraints occur during the practice of branding. For example, a study on

personal branding among pharmacy students points to a need for more education on how to reconcile private and public personas through the online branding process (Kleppinger & Cain, 2015). This need was identified due to a mentioned ability for self-branding to be a large asset for young professionals in the twenty-first century. On the other hand, more critical learning studies (Dijck, 2013) have asserted that the recent imposed connectivity to social media sites has limiting, unrealistic, and negative effects due to the promotion of one sole identity.

The freelance and social entrepreneur movement can be explained as a kind of enterprise culture. The discourse of enterprise started with discussion of managerial tendencies in the 1980s and 1990s, which involved the idea of "excellent cultures." Du Gay (1994) argues for the need to translate the residue of enterprise culture to a contemporary context that still holds on to natural entrepreneurial characteristics. In the present century, however, managerialism, control, bureaucracy, and self-regulation tendencies shift into new demands in the work world. "Enterprising selves," thus, are cultivated to calculate, control, think, and improve themselves. Enterprising selves are constituted through communication in the digital world even though online selves are merely hyper real representations of an actual person-referent. Audience members can be viewed here as customers who come to know these enterprising selves as authority figures. Authority figures who take the time to initiate branding practice become brands themselves. People as brands can bestow different kinds of habits such as thoughtlessness or virtuousness. This kind of brand expression is something that customers can emotionally attach themselves to. While brands need to be attached to something that is real, hyper real selves gain power and can sometimes interpellate even more authority than "real" selves (Eco, 1986).

University Students and Personal Branding

David Ogilvy (1983) once asked, "If you can't advertise yourself, what hope do you have in advertising anything else?" For students, there can be risks associated if they neglect branding activities. For example, not announcing one's accomplishments (publications, service, and/or conferences) in a timely matter or not sharing information about future classes to be taught can lead to a sense of invisibility for graduate students. The higher up the social hierarchy one goes in academia, the more branding inevitably takes place, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Since the ultimate decision of brand image lies within the hands of the audience, we can see how branding in academia can be an unintentional phenomenon. Students vary in their tendency to promote their own brands—that is, some students choose to push their own brand more intentionally than others. Regardless, branding is a necessary kind of evil that is here to stay. Self-branding is not leaving our modern consciousness any time soon, so we must come to terms with how to manage this form of branding practice.

Self-branding is a both/and concept in the sense that it is both vulgar and helpful. In Holmberg and Strannegard's (2015) study on the practice of branding in Swedish schools, brands are considered props and scripts that allow people first to create their identities and then to shape their lives. Brands constructed by academics must be managed through a variety of modalities. Media technologies have come a long way since faculty members used to have only their photo and biography listed on university departmental web pages. Even before that, a pre-internet era for faculty entailed relying on forms of orality for making one's status in academia known. In other words, the pre-internet form of self-branding was largely based on primal scenes of communication (Angus, 2000), which were constituted by

face-to-face encounters. Through departmental web pages, universities were one of the first institutions to display, digitally and publicly, photographic information in a way that aligns with self-branding. In other words, departmental profile pages were a kind of noetic in a particular historical moment. They existed as one of the only means of advertising or presenting information about one's self. Today, we can consider how the original visual referent (faculty home pages) has been abstracted to contemporary modalities like Facebook or LinkedIn that display a similar, yet different, visual yearbook of headshots and biographical information.

While early forms of faculty and departmental web pages may have looked pithy and unglamorous, they were early forms of people-as-brands. According to Aaker (1996), brands have personalities and can be "humorous, serious, competent, trustworthy, or even active" (p.83). These human qualities alone can solidify the relationship between the consumer and the brand. People in this age of postmodernity respond soundly to the concept and image of human expressiveness. Expressiveness creeps its way into and across various modalities, showing characteristics and attributes in discursive ways, contributing to a strong personal branding. A few everyday examples include the practice of academics taking photographs of hints or routines that allude to their daily writing routines, books obtained, conference events, and even outings with students.

Today, it would not be outside the status quo to encounter students who upload selfies to their social media accounts to showcase just another day in their awesome and fun class culture. In other words, personal phenomena relating to one's academic job now enter the public sphere through media such as Instagram and Facebook. The private and personal choices within a student's classroom are now readily and directly understood as involving real public implications. Such formerly private sphere, journal-like outlets have been reflexively reconstructed as a hyper-public outlet of professional expressiveness.

The many expressive ways in which individuals now use these media represent a new individualized status quo. When expressing such personal information about student or faculty life on social media, consideration for ethics and accountability of such actions now indubitably changes. For instance, even posting something as commonplace as internet memes about academic life should be examined for their ethical implications, since internet memes signify real feelings and thoughts about some phenomenon. The choice to post internet memes about graduate student life could imply a lack of shame since memes are often veiled in humorous codes. Such humorous codes can be perceived as productive and helpful. However, this possible lack of shame could also be a revealing factor of one's code of communication ethics, whether realized or not. As Johannsen, Valde, and Wedbee (2007) argue, the role of shame is central to one's communication ethics and a powerful emotion for moral behavior (p. 243). This kind of contemporary online expression is increasingly viewed as normal. What was once intended for private expression has now been normalized into a public performative presentation of self. This is especially the case for students. Ulrich Beck argues that through the process of individualization, we are condemned to self-express whether or not we have the guidance or tools to do so. He would further argue that this kind of turning on the self with little help from others sets us up, ultimately, to fail. In other words, people sometimes post, promote, share, like, create, and express without really knowing what they are doing. Ultimately, however, some people believe that this kind of publicly expressive behavior simply feels good, giving in to emotive justification.

Moreover, graduate students may also engage in a process of co-branding. The value of a personal brand can increase when graduate students are presented with others of certain capital or social statuses. Co-branding (Blackett, 1999) occurs as a phenomenon when pre-

meditated photographs are taken strategically with others who could positively influence one's brand. For example, photos might be taken with colleagues, romantic partners, professors, and even complete strangers such as homeless people. Another example and positive way that co-branding occurs among graduate students in academia is through co-authoring. It is important to note, here, that co-branding is not a negative phenomenon. It is a both/and phenomenon. Co-branding can be necessary to exist and thrive in academia. Another way that graduate students co-brand is by sharing another colleague's research publicly on social media to highlight how fascinating it is.

The intentional act of public sharing binds two names together in a meaningful, positive, and constructive way. I will carefully say, however, that when everything is fascinating, co-branding in academia can potentially set one up for burnout. Simply put, when all research and studies are fascinating, they become both everything and nothing. When everything is fascinating, there is no delineation between particular research interests or schools of thought. As an example, burnout through co-branding can happen to graduate students when they mimic or take on their advisor's and collaborator's research interests instead of choosing their own. This form of burnout can overlap into the well-known cul-de-sac of graduate students choosing writing and research motifs that are too broad rather than selecting "one piece of the pie" for research purposes. Therefore, it is worthwhile for graduate student academics to push for intentional particularity in (the publicizing of) their interests and co-branding practices. What I am respectfully advocating is for graduate students to recognize limits in their research interests. More is really not better, sometimes, and student academics should be as specific as possible in order to avoid burnout.

Furthermore, co-branding and co-authoring can be a sub-political gesture used to mitigate some kind of more dominant political institution. In Beck's (1997) *The Reinvention of Politics*, we find an opening for sub-political activity due to the disembedding of traditional institutions. Beck calls this second modernity a political modernity, due to the reconstruction of decision-making or politics. While academics do not necessarily disembed from traditional institutions, they do find creative, new, and reflexive ways to self-politic, brand, and advertise themselves as a survival mechanism in a world that feels rife with globalized risks. Reflexive ways of branding via social media outlets present various constructive sub-political opportunities for academics to engage digitally in impression management and face negotiation.

Administration and the Call to Reflexivity

Some administrators in the roles of faculty members already recognize the importance of self-branding for graduate students and incorporate the practice into curricula. Warren and Cavanaugh (2016) use infographic résumés to engage awareness of branding through a visual medium. Similarly, Hill and Ferris-Costa (2016) advocate for using personal branding assignments in order for students to practice their "brands". Such pedagogical gestures take on a tone that is noticeably less profit-centric than some self-branding instruction for corporate level workshops. For instance, Vallas and Cummins (2015) discuss how much self-branding curricula in firms operates on the premise that not enough jobs exist for everyone. This kind of lump-sum fallacy of economic activity can be common rationalization and rhetorical motivation behind self-branding practices. In other corporate instructional materials such as ones used for the Price Waterhouse and Coopers firm, self-branding curricula advocate direct marketing principles so that individuals can simply be more profitable (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Self-branding instruction, while currently practiced in some curricula by communication administrators, could better incorporate in-between jobs and evolving forms of work. The boundaries between what is considered work, job, and career and how students choose or simply accept such professional options are changing. A study by Stephanie Ross (2017) shows that temporary jobs grew by 2.7 per cent since 2016. Ross's study further discusses how the notion of offering students secure long-term jobs, a trend that stretched four decades after the Second World War, has tapered significantly. Such a situation presents several questions for administrators and those in other leadership positions. In current cultural conditions laden with precarity, ambiguity, and uncertainty about one's occupational future, how can communication administrators help students communicate what it is that that they do? How can administrators help students envision and craft their profession in a precarious world? Is the impetus to self-brand a mere perception of risk rather than a necessity? Such questions could help communication administrators re-examine how they frame advice to the current generation of students pursuing academic careers.

Furthermore, administrators could help explain how newly formed anxieties in a risk society propel the perceived exigence for self-promotion behaviors. Importantly, whether the exigence is perceived or realistic, the phenomenon of how we talk about and do self-branding should not be left unexamined. Self-branding becomes a natural resolution to managing uncertainty and making sense out of one's self and identity. A risk society, as defined by Beck (1992), shapes the current professional place as one that entertains the everyday phenomenon of waking up to managing myriad micro-level (personal), meso-level (institutional) and macro-level (global) risks. On the macro level, the degree of risk felt in one country can transcend to other nation-states like a domino effect on the macro level. Beck (1999) argues that this is the effect of a cosmopolitan society that starts to feel similar challenges across borders. For Beck (1999), cosmopolitanism is an outlook that analyzes the process of overcoming boundaries that trigger the neo-national reflex to re-erect walls and boundaries (p. 18). Fear of perceived threats and other fears may occur either personally, locally, or globally, translating into a psychological state called a global risk society.

Starting with administration, the advice for students to have a reflexive mindset could help students feel less pressure to perform or act in branded ways in *only* high-stakes situations. The call to a reflexive approach by administration means first acknowledging that students are constantly branding themselves or "in branding" whether they know it or not. For example, working off the clock or simply being oneself becomes reflexively intertwined with one's brand. There is no "on and off" switch with a brand, with brand becoming a condition of everydayness. Adopting this understanding means that one's brand becomes an unconscious and automatically erupting reflex, coming into play when one is most un-prepared and in discursive spaces. This way of thinking, a reflexive call to self-branding, considers the overall lifestyle and character of the student, extending far beyond one's personal webpage online or elevator pitch at a conference. Reflexive branding moves away from the traditional thought of only branding in compartmentalized spaces like social media, classes, and conferences. This rather holistic notion of being reflexive about at student's own brand could come closer to a more balanced and healthy attitude in response to today's historical pressures.

Reflexivity as a characteristic of self-branding can also be practiced in various discursive digital media. The question becomes how administrators can help students navigate the many self-branding websites available. Websites that involve number counts, hits, or website traffic now seem to function as a marketing measure. Countless personal

websites embody the do-it-yourself ethic, equipped with analytics and tracking information. In effect, student-scholars are able to track the rhetorical activity of their own brands online.

Website statistics are not new in this contemporary moment. For example, Van Neunen's (2015) study on couples' travel blog websites, for example, revealed celebratory, epideictic announcements about travel and nomadic lifestyle under the guise of a modest and authentic living of one's life. Specifically, the "About Me" page displays metrics on website traffic and reader and comment count. Such statistics and other numeric information on personal websites make seemingly honest, open, and modest speech acts into marketized brands. This phenomenon is evident in self-branding websites such as Academia.edu or ResearchGate, places where academics are emailed with analytics and numbers regarding how many people visit and read their web pages.

Importantly, student-scholars can choose to act reflexively by taking it upon themselves to set up select, appropriate web pages and mindfully track information about their own brand. The intentions behind these practices seem to be ways to seek positive approval of one's face and impression. Those interested in traffic numbers on websites care, to some degree, about negotiating and presenting face in the public sphere in the theoretical sense of face and impression-making (Goffman, 1956, Ting-Toomey & Oetzel, 2003). Face is constructed and learned at early stages of one's socialization but continues to express itself over time and now through different technological media, such as websites for academics (e.g., Academia.edu).

Impression management is at play when student academics care enough to update such websites regularly. However, it can become nearly impossible to determine how one is received or perceived. In other words, how can we ever really know what other people think of us? In a reflexive approach, we must always be careful about *over* self-presentation. Caution should be exercised if students are advised by administration to see themselves as brands. If one is a brand, then (online and in real life) audience members might start to be viewed as customers. As Fortini-Cambell points out (cited in Iacobucci & Calder, 2003), regardless of how diligently marketers and advertisers attempt to create and control brand image and expression, they ultimately end up being determined by customers. The possibility of polysemy could, in turn, largely serve as counterproductive to the integrated efforts of the self-brander. In a potentially democratic digital sphere, the question of whether or not self-branding actually creates more or fewer customer-like enemies should be explored in a future essay.

Implications and Conclusion

This essay demonstrates how the popular practice of graduate student self-branding can be re-considered by communication administrators as both a form of IMC in light of modern pressures as well as reflexive approach. IMC is argued as a theoretical reality within this contemporary phenomenon since self-branding utilizes intentionally or unintentionally aligned contact points. Moreover, this kind of practice of focusing on the self also theoretically derives from communication goals inherent in impression management and face negotiation theory. Through Beck's lens of individualization, irony, and the call to a reflexive approach, the justification behind self-branding might allude to a merely perceived exigence rather than fully realized one. Students, with the help of campus advisors, counselors, and administrators, must respond in some kind of way to the myriad risks, both perceived and real, that suddenly and forcibly confront their livelihood, families, and sense of self-efficacy. The call to a reflexive response incorporates, first, a component of reflection

upon the self and, second, fundamental questions about who the self even is. Once the self is called into question, monologically negotiated, and examined reflectively, a person is then able to disseminate images of the self for public consumption and survival. One indeed survives an academic horizon of being through the reflexive activity of self-branding.

Reflexivity and reflection go hand in hand during the contemporary practice of self-branding, eventually leading to projecting one's brand expression through digital modalities. After all, brand expression cannot operate or make sense to a public audience or customer base without a concrete idea of an initial brand image. This assumes that brand image and brand expression are different constructs. The conditions of reflexive modernity require modern individuals to reflect and take matters into their own hands. This contemporary practice is a reflexive speech act deriving from individualization, pushing us to make sense of the self in a post-professional world through forced constructions of our own biographies.

As this essay points out, graduate students training to become professionals can choose to act in more reflexive ways if guided by sympathetic and reflexive administrators. A reflexive approach could be helpful in today's institutional environments that are sometimes propagated by hierarchy, meritocracy, and precarity. Individualization propels the very skepticism associated with dependency on traditional institutions for a stable economic future, thus motivating such a noticeable increase in self-promoting acts. This Darwinistic survival mechanism serves both to benefit and to inhibit us. Psychologically, the practice helps us gain order, control, sense, and confidence during a precarious time. At the same time, self-branding can be merely therapeutic or cosmetic in asserting hyper real or simulated ideals about the self, ideals that we create to be increasingly difficult to live up to in real life. As Beck would argue, competing in a reflexive modernity means that we already know that we will fail.

Connecting Ulrich Beck to self-branding, this essay has shown the risk of ultimately failing when setting ourselves us with such high digital ideals. Self-branding, as an expressive and therapeutic practice, sets one up for failure or a confrontation with reality in the existential world beyond screens. It can set graduate students up for violated expectations. When we publish something, we create the parrallel and subsequent expectation to then live up to the publicly and digitally claimed semantic imprint. This can create a new problem, bringing us briefly to a new question. Can we live up to our own self-constructed biographies? The exigence is clear especially considering how more graduate students drop out or change careers to pursue drastically different endeavors (Lanza-Kaduce & Webb, 1992).

Future research should be pursued in the specific content area of graduate student social media self-branding but could also extend beyond academe. Each specific profession comes with unique cultural expectations that affect digital self-branding. This kind of research could utilize textual or semiotic analyses that track the attempted alignment of one person through various web sites and ultimately in real life. IMC practitioners could benefit from understanding the information, conclusions, and implications yielded from rhetorical and philosophical textual analyses. After all, individuals now serve as individual enterprises or businesses in a post-professional world. Communication administrators could intentionally re-examine the intersectionality of modern pressures faced by students in order to advise more empathetically and professionally in this historical moment. Specifically, faculty and advisors could add content about methods and implications of self-branding to current public relations and IMC curricula. The pressures extend across the economic, personal, political, and psychological. Turning the phenomenological focus on how

administrators can make the choice to know today's graduate student perspectives and pressures better can no doubt strengthen their advice for graduate student self-branding.

Returning to Beck's (1992) notion of risk society, institutions are made up of not only individuals, but self-branded individuals. Understanding the crucial role that administration plays in shaping a climate of health for graduate students as well as the intricacy of branding processes from a philosophical and rhetorical point of view and could lead to increased productivity for that particular institution. Finally, this essay has discussed how self-branding reveals both positive and negative effects in a reflexive modernity, leading graduate students back to the original question: to self-brand or not to self-brand?

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