

PhD Dual Title in Communication and Urban Sustainability Assessment Report 2022-2023

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Contents

PhD Dual Title in Communication and Urban Sustainability Assessment Report 2022-2023	1
Mission Statement:	3
PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #1	4
Assessment Method:	4
Assessment Rubric and data:	4
Results:	4
Program Action Plan:	4
Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:	4
Reporting to Stakeholders:	4
PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #2	6
Assessment Method:	6
Assessment Rubric and data:	6
Results:	6
Program Action Plan:	6
Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:	6
Reporting to Stakeholders:	6
PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Method #3	7
Assessment Method:	7
Assessment Rubric and Data:	7
Results:	7
Program Action Plan:	7
Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:	7
Reporting to Stakeholders:	8
PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #4	8
Assessment Method:	8
Assessment Rubric and Data:	8
Results:	8
Program Action Plan:	8

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:..... 8

Reporting to Stakeholders: 8

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #5 9

Assessment Method: 9

Assessment Rubric and data: 9

Results:..... 9

Program Action Plan: 9

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:..... 9

Reporting to Stakeholders: 9

Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data 11

Mission Statement:

The dual-title Ph.D. degree in communication and urban sustainability will provide graduates of the Communication doctoral program

with:

- Theoretical and applied interdisciplinary expertise in urban sustainability, suitable for solving complex societal challenges that require an integrated understanding of scientific, engineering, and social science approaches.
- Specific credentials demonstrating advanced qualifications.
- A flexible position for applying to jobs in both academia and industry.
- The theoretical and practical knowledge as well as the analytical tools to work in the fields of crisis communication, environmental communication, health communication, organizational communication, risk communication, which offer employment opportunities in both academic departments and various industry sectors.
- Core competencies in problem-solving, multidisciplinary research methods, communication to different audiences, and application of multidisciplinary analysis techniques.
- Specific demonstrated skills in collaboration on group projects through their work with community partners, faculty mentors, undergraduates, and their peers.
- The knowledge, network, and practical skills to be successful in the emerging field of urban sustainability.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Critically evaluate literature and theory in the communication field and related fields.
2. Identify new research questions about human communication.
3. Select and use appropriate methods to analysis and evaluate human communication.
4. Support a coherent argument with interpretative analysis of communication.
5. Students will produce high quality writing able to meet the standards of writing appropriate in communication disciplines.

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #1

Assessment Method:

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students in the dual title program, current students in the program were surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year to note how well they have been trained in the learning outcome.

Rationale: Identifying original, theory-driven questions is a building block of the research process. Student have had experiences both in our department and other interdisciplinary programs to gain insight into these processes.

We asked students to assess how well their experience in the dual-title program trained them in this LO area. A score of 1 is excellent, 2 is above average, 3 is average, 4 is below average, and 5 is not at all.

For AY2022-2023, we had 3 students enrolled in the dual-title program. Two responded to the survey.

Assessment Rubric and data:

See Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Results:

Of the two respondents, both rated training in review of literature in the communication field to identify new research questions as a 1.0 for Excellent.

Program Action Plan:

Despite the excellent assessment data, we will continue to work to provide appropriate theory courses for students and to mentor better engagement with relevant scholarship. All graduate students – PhD and MA – need improvement in synthesizing and evaluating existing literature in our introductory courses (Intro to MA Studies; Intro to PhD Studies) and theory course offerings.

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

In September, the Graduate Committee will discuss this issue for both the MA and PhD programs, examining how we can improve students' synthesis and evaluation of existing literature in our introductory courses (Intro to MA Studies; Intro to PhD Studies) and theory course offerings.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students by September 2023.

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #2

Assessment Method:

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students in the dual title program, current students in the program were surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year to note how well they have been trained in the learning outcome.

Rationale: The ability to conduct a study using appropriate research methods is a building block of the research process. Student have had experiences both in our department and other interdisciplinary programs to gain insight into these processes.

We asked students to assess how well their experience in the dual-title program trained them in this LO area. A score of 1 is excellent, 2 is above average, 3 is average, 4 is below average, and 5 is not at all.

For AY2022-2023, we had 3 students enrolled in the dual-title program. Two responded to the survey.

Assessment Rubric and data:

See Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Results:

Both respondents rated the program with a 1.0 in this LO.

Program Action Plan:

The results suggest that the program is doing an excellent job in training students to use appropriate methods to conduct research.

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

We will continue to use both introductory courses (e.g., COM 7000 and 8000) and method courses to discuss how to assess and use appropriate research methods to conduct studies.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students in September 2023.

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Method #3

Assessment Method:

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students in the dual title program, current students in the program were surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year to note how well they have been trained in the learning outcome.

Rationale: Addressing urban sustainability topics is critical to the mission of this interdisciplinary dual-title degree. Student have had experiences both in our department and other interdisciplinary programs to gain insight into these topics.

We asked students to assess how well their experience in the dual-title program trained them in this LO area. A score of 1 is excellent, 2 is above average, 3 is average, 4 is below average, and 5 is not at all.

For AY2022-2023, we had 3 students enrolled in the dual-title program. Two responded to the survey.

Assessment Rubric and Data:

See Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Results:

Both respondents ranked the program with a 1.0 for excellent.

Program Action Plan:

The results suggest that students are doing good to excellent work in learning how to address urban sustainability issues in their research studies.

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

We will continue to depend on the interdisciplinary courses to train our students in topics of urban sustainability.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students in September 2023.

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #4

Assessment Method:

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students in the dual title program, current students in the program were surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year to note how well they have been trained in the learning outcome.

Rationale: Presenting one's own scholarship and others' scholar ideas is a central aspect of work in urban sustainability and communication scholarship and practice.

We asked students to assess how well their experience in the dual-title program trained them in this LO area. A score of 1 is excellent, 2 is above average, 3 is average, 4 is below average, and 5 is not at all.

For AY2022-2023, we had 3 students enrolled in the dual-title program. Two responded to the survey.

Assessment Rubric and Data:

See Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Results:

Both respondents ranked the program with a 1.0 for Excellent.

Program Action Plan:

The results suggest that the program is doing an excellent job in encouraging students to present their research in public settings.

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

We will continue to encourage students to submit and present at international, national, regional, and specialized conferences.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students in September 2023.

PhD Dual Title in Com and Urban Sustainability Assessment Method #5

Assessment Method:

Qualtrics survey of PhD students

To assess doctoral students in the dual title program, current students in the program were surveyed by the graduate director at the end of the academic year to note how well they have been trained in the learning outcome.

Rationale: Ability to adhere to ethical guidelines in communication and urban sustainability is vital to producing appropriate research and public policy without causing harm..

We asked students to assess how well their experience in the dual-title program trained them in this LO area. A score of 1 is excellent, 2 is above average, 3 is average, 4 is below average, and 5 is not at all.

For AY2022-2023, we had 3 students enrolled in the dual-title program. Two responded to the survey.

Assessment Rubric and data:

See Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Results:

Both respondents assessed the program with a 1.0 for excellent.

Program Action Plan:

While both respondents report that we have done an excellent job training them in ethics, we should better define the term “ethical guidelines” in our survey or replace this LO.

Timeline for Action Plan Implementation:

The graduate committee will review this LO in September of 2023.

Reporting to Stakeholders:

The results of the assessment will be put as a discussion item on the agenda for a meeting of the graduate committee, posted on our department website, and distributed to graduate faculty and students in September 2023.

Appendix - Com and Urban Sustainability Survey and Data

Default Report

COM Urban Sustainability assessment survey

May 5th 2023, 4:13 pm EDT

Q1 - On a 1-5 scale, based on your experience in the dual title Communication & Urban Sustainability program, how well have you been trained on the following items?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Review literature in the communication field to identify new research questions.	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2
2	Conduct a study using appropriate methodology to answer a research question.	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	3
3	Address urban sustainability topics in your construction of research studies.	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2
4	Communicate one's own and other's research in a public setting, like a conference.	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2
5	Adhere to ethical guidelines for work in our discipline.	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	2

Q2 - Based on your experience in the dual title program, what are the strengths of the program?

Based on your experience in the dual title program, what are the strengths of the program?

The main strength of the program is its interdisciplinarity. The potential is there for communication-focused research on urban sustainability topics. The program also enabled me, as a person who does not have a communication master's degree, to transition into a communication PhD program with some transfer credits. The existence of the program means that others in similar situations can find pathways to communication.

1. Increase Ph.D. employability. 2. Provide a wide scope of knowledge and skills 3. Wholistic approach to resolving urban sustainability issues 4. Connection with the industry experts 5. Opportunities to understand field problems for better research

Opportunities for research, work & collaboration outside of the department. More exposure to

Q3 - Based on your experience in the dual title program, what are things that should be added or improved?

Based on your experience in the dual title program, what are things that should be added or improved?

I've just finished my 2nd year in the dual-title program, and I was not officially a part of T-RUST. I felt separated from the T-RUST folks in my non-communication required courses. I also feel that I was sort of just going through the motions in some of the non-communication required courses. I think an Environmental Communication class should be integrated into the Core Courses list. Additionally, the required Civil Engineering class (CE 5410) listed in the Core Courses has not been offered for several semesters, and I had to find a replacement in order to complete my coursework. Overall, I felt there was very little communication with me about the "other required activities" listed for the dual-title program, and am unsure how I would have been able to participate in community service as I was unaware of any opportunities to do so.

1. Improve communication Ph.D. and T-RUST program integration. 2. Add courses on data analysis 3. R software teaching 4. Diversification of the course list

More clarity around responsibilities - dedicated support from a program manager - help with sharing information about the dual-title program with Communication department faculty