COMM 145 Proposal

The Colonnade Implementation Committee will spend the fall semester reviewing courses to be included in the Foundations Category. Your department offers COMM 145 which will be included in that category. Please review your existing course in light of the learning outcomes listed in the Colonnade Plan (see below).

The implementation committee asks that you send me the following material by October 12, 2012:

1. A sample syllabus for this course. This should contain course description, student learning outcomes, goals of the course, and types of assignments. You do not need to send us a course schedule of topics, exams, etc.   [**Attached**]

2. Statement of how your course meets the Colonnade Plan's learning objectives.

COMM 145: Fundamentals of Public Speaking and Communication (3 hours) meets the four learning objectives included in the Human Communication section of the Colonnade Plan. As documented in this section, COMM 145 develops foundational skills of critical listening, speaking, and presentation in a variety of social and cultural contexts. Further, students will learn to analyze arguments and to communicate ideas clearly and effectively in oral and written formats. Below, I specifically detail how COMM 145 meets each of the four learning objectives.

Learning Objective 1: Students will demonstrate the ability to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, which may include public, interpersonal, and/or small-group settings.

Students in COMM 145 will demonstrate the ability to listen and speak competently in a variety of communication contexts, including public, interpersonal, and small-group settings. First, with respect to competent speaking in the public context, students give three speeches aimed at developing the ability to design and deliver messages appropriate to various audiences and occasions. Students are taught to communicate a clear thesis and purpose to their audience. Further, by the end of the course, the goal is for students to be able to demonstrate their ability to construct and deliver organized presentations with well-developed introductions, main points, conclusions, and transitions. Students are also expected to deliver speeches using appropriate and effective vocal and physical behaviors to enhance messages such as vocal variety, articulation, and movement.

Second, students acquire skills to communicate with others interpersonally, including being introduced to interpersonal communication theories which give students a broader and more complex understanding of how to communicate with others interpersonally. Course readings, discussion, and activities focusing on interpersonal communication assist students in acquiring skills and theoretical understanding that assist them in speaking with others in the interpersonal context. This also includes students being introduced to a variety of listening skills

and strategies relevant to interpersonal as well as public and small group settings. Students have the opportunity to focus their theory/context paper on any of these areas.

Third, students will be exposed to reading, discussion, and activities related to small group communication. Students will not only learn how to communicate more effectively in the small-group setting, but also learn key elements of group decision making as well as specific skills and communication strategies related to effective group processes. Students who take COMM 145 should be able to demonstrate understanding and be able to identify the basic principles of effective group communication and listening.

Learning Objective 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to find, analyze, evaluate, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts.

Students in COMM 145 will demonstrate the ability to find, analyze, evaluate, and cite pertinent primary and secondary sources, including academic databases, to prepare speeches and written texts. These elements are prominent in both the three speeches in the course and the theory/context paper. In COMM 145, students are taught to research, evaluate, and incorporate supporting material in both speeches and in their writing. Students are required to use the academic databases and are trained to use different academic databases for their speeches and papers. In their speeches, students learn how to use the academic databases available through the library system to locate primarily books, magazines, and newspapers and are also taught how to find and use credible internet sources. Students are required to cite at least three different sources in their informative and persuasive speeches, which must come primarily from the academic databases found within the WKU library system (they are restricted to using only one internet source). For the theory/context paper, students learn how to use the academic databases to find journal articles as well as how to analyze and cite these sources in their paper. Students are required to include a minimum of three primary and/or secondary sources cited within the text of their paper (primarily communication journals and books located within the academic databases).

Learning Objective 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view, and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response.

Students in COMM 145 will demonstrate the ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate statements, assumptions, and conclusions representing diverse points of view, and construct informed, sustained, and ethical arguments in response in the Speech of Information and Diversity. In this informative speech, students must take a multicultural perspective, comparing and/or contrasting an aspect of two cultural groups or discussing an aspect of one cultural group in detail. This requires students to step outside of their own cultural perspective in some way and demonstrate ability to identify, analyze, and evaluate assumptions, ideas, and cultural practices and construct ethical arguments to present to their audience for the speech. Students must ethically incorporate primary and secondary sources as part of the supporting materials used in the speech.

Learning Objective 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas.

    Students in COMM 145 will demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, revise, practice, edit, and proofread to improve the development and clarity of ideas primarily through their three speeches. Students are required to complete outlines to demonstrate their planning and organizational structure for their speeches. The outline includes a specific purpose, central idea, a sentence outline of the speech, as well as a list of sources used in the preparation of the speech. For each speech, students are required to turn in their outlines two class periods before they give their speeches. This allows students to receive feedback from their instructor in order to revise/edit their speeches to more clearly communicate their ideas, incorporating the suggestions as they practice for the presentation of their speech. Students are expected to create longer speeches with more sources as the speeches progress throughout the semester.

    While students do not go through the same planning and revision process for their papers as they do for the speeches, students are expected to include an introduction, clearly organized and supported paragraphs in the body of the paper (incorporating topic sentences), a conclusion, and source citation along with a bibliography in APA format. Academic writing is expected and the paper is graded on content, organization, and writing. Thus, proofreading, editing, and revision are expected and evaluated.

3. Brief description of how your department will assess this course's effectiveness.

    For COMM 145, assessment will occur on three levels. First, to assess the speeches, an assessment team comprised of department faculty members will rate the problem-solution (persuasive) speech (students' final speech assignment) using the National Communication Association's Competent Speaker Speech Evaluation Form. The raters will view randomly selected recorded speeches via the Communicoach recording system adopted by the Department of Communication. This process enables us to assess eight public speaking competencies and compare the means across calendar years in order to continually improve our students' oral communication competencies related to topic selection, content, supporting material, organization, as well as vocal, verbal, and physical delivery. The eight public speaking competencies assessed correspond directly with the four learning objectives with respect to public speaking by addressing students' ability to demonstrate competent public speaking through delivery, organization, argument construction, development of clear ideas, and use of sources (including source citation). Approximately 100 speeches will be assessed per calendar year.

    Second, to assess the course objectives related to listening, interpersonal, and small group settings (learning objective 1) we will use standardized testing. These objectives will be assessed using standardized test questions (10 questions per context: listening, interpersonal, and small group communication) across the sections of COMM 145. This process has already been implemented and used for the first three years of the revised COMM 145 hybrid course; we have also assessed students' understanding of the communication process. Based on the results of the

initial test assessment, changes were made to the test assessment questions for the 2010 calendar year. These changes included adaptations to both the teaching strategies and test questions (primarily wording of the questions) in order to help students' scores and overall comprehension of the objectives improve.

The Basic Course Director will randomly collect 100 tests per calendar year across designated sections of COMM 145 to help assess students understanding of listening, interpersonal, and group communication, scoring the questions in conjunction with each of these areas. These ten questions for each respective area are included on the test that covers the course readings and discussion of that specified area. The following criterion will be used to assess student learning outcomes for listening, interpersonal, and small group communication:

Excellent = at least 70% of students answer 9 out of the 10 the question correctly

Satisfactory = at least 70% of students answered 7 out of the 10 questions correctly

Unsatisfactory = under 70% of students answered 7 out of the 10 the question correctly

For example, in our most recent round of test assessment, students scored at the satisfactory level (at least 7 of the 10 questions for the objective were answered correctly by 70% of students) on the listening, interpersonal, and group objectives. This represented an improvement in students' scores on these learning objectives as compared to the previous year.

Third, the theory/context papers will be assessed to measure learning objective 2. 50 papers will randomly collected from across sections of COMM 145. The papers will be assessed by an assessment team using a rubric which assesses organization, writing (grammar, clarity, and effectiveness), research (incorporation of supporting materials, quality and quantity of primary and secondary sources, APA format (in-text citations)), and explanation of the theory/context. Each area will be scored on a 5 point scale (5 -Excellent ; 4 - Good; 3 - Satisfactory; 2 - Poor; 1- Fail). The scores will be assessed on the following scale (all four areas assessed on 5 point scale): 20-18 Excellent, 17-16 Good, 15-12 Satisfactory, 11-8 Poor, 7 or less Fail. The goals will be as follows:

70% of students will score at the satisfactory level or better.
50% of students will score at the "good" level or better.

These three forms of assessment represent a comprehensive approach to evaluating the effectiveness of COMM 145 across the learning objectives.

4. If necessary, a list of any proposed revisions needed to bring you course in line with the Colonnade Plan.

Overall, very little needs to be done in terms of revisions for the course to bring the course in line with the Colonnade Plan. COMM 145 was revised three years ago, changing it from a purely public speaking course to a course that covers communication more broadly adding interpersonal, listening, and small group communication skills and theory to the course. At that time, a written paper was added to the course as well as objectives assessed through standardized

test questions. This move, as outlined above, has allowed us to develop COMM 145 into a course that already meets the learning objectives in the Colonnade Plan. The only minor changes involve the additions of the language used in the objectives regarding the use of primary and secondary sources and academic databases as part of learning objective 2. These elements were already addressed within the course; they just needed to be specified more directly in the syllabus.