

PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

TITLE OF PROPOSAL:

Proposal to rename the Department of Speech Communication to the Department of Communication

COLLEGE SPONSOR: Ann M. Mester, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 294 Lincoln Hall, MC-448; mester@uiuc.edu

SPONSOR: Barbara J. Wilson, Professor and Head, Department of Speech Communication
244 Lincoln Hall, MC- 456
Phone: 333-2683; Fax: 244-1598
bjwilson@uiuc.edu

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Speech Communication proposes to change its name to the "Department of Communication." The new name reflects the evolution of the teaching and research interests in the department as well as national changes within the discipline. The name change highlights these shifts and is necessary for the Department to attract students, faculty, and support from funding agencies.

JUSTIFICATION:

The Department of Speech Communication at UIUC has a long and proud history. It is one of the oldest doctoral programs in communication in the country. Over the years it has attracted an exceptionally talented and diverse set of faculty, students, and staff. This tradition and a legacy of strong support from alumni and friends have built a solid foundation for the program. The department consistently ranks among the top 10 departments in the field of communication in the U.S. The most recent reputational study by the National Communication Association ranked our department sixth in the nation among comprehensive departments of communication and ranked several areas within our department in the top four in the nation.

The major areas of study in the department include **organizational** and **group** communication, **interpersonal** and **family** communication, communication **technology**, **political** communication, **rhetoric** and **public discourse**, communication in **cultural contexts**, and **mass** communication. The department's newest program initiatives are in communication and **health**, communication **technologies in the workplace**, and the **impact of the mass media** on children and adolescents. Faculty members in these areas are engaged in cutting-edge research that is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Science Foundation, the National Cancer Institute, NASA, and private foundations such as William T. Grant. Faculty members also are creative and committed teachers who bring communication concepts and theories to the

classroom. Because of our strong liberal arts approach to education, our program prepares students for employment as communication specialists in the private and public sectors. Graduates with B.A. degrees in speech communication have enjoyed great success in the corporate world, in the media industry, in law, in engineering, in government, and in education. Graduates with M.A. degrees are policy analysts, human resource specialists, and consultants in organizations all over the world. Graduates with Ph.D. degrees hold faculty positions at premier universities nationally and internationally.

Rationale for Change

The label "speech communication" does not accurately describe the range of scholarly and teaching activities carried out by the department. We do teach several public speaking courses but these skills-oriented classes serve students from all over the campus and constitute a very small component of our course offerings. Instead, our undergraduate and graduate programs focus more broadly on the humanistic and social scientific **study of messages**, some of which are spoken, but many of which are not. We also include the study of nonverbal communication, written communication, computer-mediated communication, and even communication that is mediated through technologies like television. In essence, our curriculum examines the production, dissemination, and effects of messages in a variety of contexts--in families, in the workplace, in health care, in intercultural settings, in the mass media, and in politics. Our goal is to teach students to become critical thinkers about the process of communication, avid consumers of information, and effective problem solvers in the 21st century.

Given our broader focus, the term "speech" poses several difficulties for us. Several faculty members in the department, particularly those who study the impact of mass media and newer technologies, do not feel a strong fit with a department labeled as speech communication. In addition, the label restricts our ability to recruit students and even new faculty. Students and scholars alike who are looking for a department that focuses on family communication or on organizational communication would not necessarily look to a "speech" communication unit. In fact, many graduate applications erroneously are sent to the College of Communications (which has plans to change its name soon) when they are intended for our department. Moreover, we frequently get applications intended for the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences because of confusion associated with the term "speech."

These problems do not stop at the borders of our campus. Representing the department to external funding agencies and to members of the public is made problematic by a name that does not reflect the true scope of the department.

National Trends

Since the 1970s, our field has been moving along several fronts toward acknowledging this broader focus on communication rather than speech. For example, several of the professional associations in our discipline have dropped the term "speech" from their names (see Appendix A). So too have several of the major journals in our field (see Appendix B). In fact, the vast

majority of doctoral programs in the country have moved away from the term "speech" (see Appendix C). There are no longer any other speech communication departments in the Big Ten (we are the only such department left; the University of Minnesota and Pennsylvania State University were the last two to change away from Speech Communication, to Communication Studies and to Communication Arts and Sciences, respectively). And there are no speech communication departments left at 15 other campuses that are part of the Association for American Universities (AAU) and that have major doctoral programs in communication (see Appendix C).

Furthermore, several of our professional associations have successfully lobbied the National Research Council (NRC) to include the discipline of communication in its current study of research doctorates. The communication area had not been included in past NRC surveys because of the misperception that doctoral degrees in communication were primarily professional in nature. NRC staff now appreciate that communication is an academic research/teaching degree that is distinct from professional training in journalism, broadcasting, or speech. The NRC is using "Communication" as its term for the field rather than "Speech Communication," reflecting the broad shifts in the field from the study of oral communication to all forms of human communication in a variety of contexts.

Coordination with Other Campus Units

The most desirable option is to become simply the "Department of Communication," which is the name used by the majority of doctoral programs in our field in this country (see Appendix C). Dropping the term "speech" from our name is essential and would immediately help to distinguish us more clearly from the Department of *Speech and Hearing Science*. The *College of Communications* also will undergo a name change to reflect its focus on journalism, advertising, and media studies (as noted by the Provost; see Appendix D), further helping to eliminate confusion between the programs.

The proposed name change was unanimously approved by the Department of Speech Communication faculty.

BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:

The name change has no staffing implications. We anticipate a cost of roughly \$1,000 to change certain brochures and letterheads immediately upon approval. Other publications, letterheads, and cards will be changed as the need for replacement arises. There may be a slight increase in the number of undergraduate students who choose our department for a major, but we anticipate being able to handle this modest growth with current teaching resources. We do anticipate an increase in graduate applications, but we plan to maintain the current size of our M.A. and Ph.D. programs so this will have the net result of making our selections more competitive.

CLEARANCES:

Bruce Wilson
Department/Unit Head

3/23/07
Date

Ann M. Myers
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

4/5/07
Date

EFFECTIVE DATE: On approval

Appendix A

Name Changes of Professional Associations in the Field of Communication in the Last 30 Years

Original Name	Year Changed	New Name
The Speech Association of the Eastern States	1973	Eastern Communication Association
Southern States Speech Association	1988	Southern States Communication Association
Central States Speech Association	1989	Central States Communication Association
Western Speech Communication Association	1990	Western States Communication Association
Speech Communication Association	1997	National Communication Association

Appendix B

Name Changes of Journals in the Field of Communication in the Last 30 Years

Original Name	Year Changed	New Name
Speech Teacher	1976	Communication Education
Speech Monographs	1976	Communication Monographs
Today's Speech	1976	Communication Quarterly
Southern Speech Communication Journal	1988	Southern Communication Journal
Central States Speech Journal	1989	Communication Studies
Western Journal of Speech Communication	1992	Western Journal of Communication

Appendix C

Names of Major Doctoral Programs of Communication in the U.S.

UNIVERSITY	COLLEGE	FORMER DEPARTMENT NAME	YEAR OF CHANGE	CURRENT DEPARTMENT NAME
Big Ten Institutions				
Indiana University	Arts and Sciences	Speech Communication	1982	Communication and Culture
Michigan State University	Communication Arts & Sciences	Speech	1980	Communication
Northwestern University	School of Communication (formerly School of Speech)	Speech	1972	Communication Studies
Ohio State University	Social and Behavioral Sciences	Speech Communication	2004	School of Communication
Penn State University	Liberal Arts	Speech Communication	1997	Communication Arts and Sciences
Purdue University	Liberal Arts	Speech	1969	Communication
University of Iowa	Liberal Arts & Sciences	Speech and Dramatic Arts	1984	Communication Studies
University of Michigan	Literature, Science, and the Arts	Speech Communication and Theater	1982	Communication Studies
University of Minnesota	Liberal Arts	Speech Communication	2001	Communication Studies
University of Wisconsin	Letters and Science	Speech	1970	Communication Arts
Other Association of American (AAU) Universities				
Stanford University	Humanities and Sciences	Speech and Drama	1983	Communication
University of Arizona	Social & Behavioral Sciences	Speech Communication	1987	Communication
University of California, Davis	Letters and Science	Rhetoric and Communication	1987	Communication
University of California, Santa Barbara	Letters and Science	Speech	1985	Communication
University of Colorado, Boulder	Arts and Sciences	Speech and Drama	1983	Communication
University of Kansas	Liberal Arts & Sciences	Speech Communication	1984	Communication Studies
University of Maryland	Arts & Humanities	Speech and Drama	1980	Communication
University of Missouri, Columbia	Arts and Science	Speech and Dramatic Arts	1987	Communication
University of Nebraska	Arts & Sciences	Speech Communication	1993	Communication Studies
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	Arts & Sciences	Speech Communication	1997	Communication Studies
University of Oklahoma	Arts and Sciences	Speech Communication	1977	Communication
University of Pittsburgh	Arts and Sciences	Speech	1984	Communication
University of Texas at Austin	Communication	Speech Communication	2000	Communication Studies
University of Washington	Arts & Sciences	Speech Communication	2002	Communication
Texas A & M University	Liberal Arts	Speech Communication	2002	Communication

Appendix D


UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of Provost and Vice Chancellor
for Academic Affairs
Swanlund Administration Building
601 East John Street
Champaign, IL 61820



March 1, 2007

To: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Ron Yates, Dean, College of Communications
Pat Gill, Interim Head, Institute of Communications Research
Barb Wilson, Head, Department of Speech Communication

From: Linda Katehi, Provost 

Re: Proposed Merger of the Institute of Communications Research and the
Department of Speech Communication

I have received input from both the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the College of Communications regarding the proposed merger of the Institute of Communications Research and the Department of Speech Communication. Thank you for your efforts to provide due process to the proposal in a timely manner. I recognize that this time of uncertainty about the future of the units has been a challenging period for all involved. Thus, I would like to use this memo to summarize what I see before us and recommend a course of action for moving forward.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences approved the proposed merger of the two units; in contrast, the College of Communications did not support the merger. I believe that it will be difficult for us to successfully move forward with the current proposal, given the lack of support from the College of Communications. Yet, I believe that there are a number of key elements of the proposal on which the two Colleges agree and, in these areas, it seems appropriate to move ahead. To this end, I recommend that we separate some of the key elements of the proposed merger and work through each sequentially, rather than in a single step, as is in the case in the proposal. More specifically, I see three key areas and recommend that each area be addressed somewhat independently, as follows:

- First, it appears that the two Colleges and the academic units agree on the benefits of changing the name of the Department of Speech Communication to the Department of Communication. In turn, the College of Communications has agreed to change its name, most likely to the College of Journalism, Advertising, and Media. Given that there is agreement on this issue, I recommend that you prepare simple proposals requesting these concurrent name changes and move them through the appropriate channels for approval. This is a relatively quick process.

*Proposed ICR/Speech Communication Merger
Page 2*

- Second, it appears that some faculty members from the Institute of Communications Research feel that their work more closely aligns with the Department of Speech Communication. The transfer of these faculty members can occur, effective August 2007, with the approval of both academic units. For any faculty members who wish to transfer, financial arrangements will need to be worked out with the two units and the support of the Colleges. The Provost's Office can assist in these arrangements.
- Third, when the faculty members who wish to transfer have done so, each of the independent academic units may wish to prepare and submit curricular revisions and other programmatic changes. Proposals for new or revised curricula may come forward from each unit separately, and/or there may be programs developed that are shared across academic units. It will be beneficial for the units to share information as curricular proposals are developed; however, it will ultimately be the responsibility of the Office of the Provost to ensure efficiency and quality in programs of study, and to be alert to potential unnecessary duplication across curricula.

I believe that this sequential approach provides the best opportunity to move forward in a manner that meets the needs of the Department of Speech Communication, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the Institute of Communications Research, College of Communications. This approach enables each unit to advance, and to do so in a way that does not constrain or define the future of the other. I hope that you will work with me and with each other on the steps outlined above. Please let me know if you feel that it is useful for us to meet as a group, or feel free to communicate directly with me if you wish.