

## PROPOSAL TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY

### TITLE OF PROPOSAL:

Proposal to rename the M.A. in "Speech Communication" to "Communication"

### SPONSOR:

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### BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The Department of Communication (formerly Department of Speech Communication) proposes to change the name of its Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in "Speech Communication" to "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 and faculty.

### JUSTIFICATION:

The Department of Speech Communication at UIUC has a long and proud history. It is one of the oldest 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 M.A. degrees are policy analysts, human resource specialists, and consultants in organizations all over the world. In addition, many continue on to our or another doctoral program.

### **Rationale for Change**

The Department of Speech Communication changed its name to the Department of Communication; therefore, we want our degree names to be consistent with our department name.

### **BUDGETARY AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS:**

The name change has no budgeting or staffing implications. 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.

- a. Additional staff and dollars needed

NONE

- b. Internal reallocations (e.g., change in class size, teaching loads, student-faculty ratio, etc.)

NONE

- c. Effect on course enrollment in other departments and explanations of discussions with representatives of those departments

NONE

- d. Impact on library, computer use, laboratory use, equipment, etc.

NONE

CLEARANCES:

Banyan 11/20/07  
Department/Unit Head Date

Donna J. Mott 1/22/08  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Date

Greg Lippard 2/25/08  
Graduate College Date

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Provost Date