SPECIAL REPORT

of the

ACADEMIC MATTERS, ACADEMIC PRIORITIES, AND
PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCILS

concerning an

UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE
MEDIA LITERACY: A COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE

Presented at the
748th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
April 30, 2015

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL
Richard Bogartz (Chair), Nicholas Bromell, Javier Campos, Elizabeth Chilton, W. Curt Conner, Suzanne Daly, Kathleen Debevec, Piper Gaubatz, Bryan Harvey, Masoud Hashemi, A Yemisi Jimoh, Nancy Lamb, Ernest May, Deborah Picking, Monroe Rabin, James Rinderle, Barbara Stanley, Scott Stangroom, Susan Sturgeon, Jerri Willett

PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL
ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

The Department of Communication is proposing to create a new undergraduate certificate with the title Media Literacy: A Communication Perspective. The certificate is intended to serve students who want to pursue teaching careers and/or advanced degrees in media studies, work in media production, or work in other careers such as health communication and education in which an ability to evaluate, analyze and produce media is particularly valuable. The certificate will be available to both matriculated and non-matriculated students. There are three required courses and two electives, all offered by the Department of Communication, for a total of 18-20 credits. It will be possible to complete the certificate entirely with courses taken online.

At its meetings on April 15, 2015, the Academic Matters Council voted unanimously to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the Media Literacy: A Communication Perspective. It was submitted as proposal #1586 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL

Through an email vote concluding on Monday, April 13, 2015, the Academic Priorities Council recommended endorsement of this proposal – the Media Literacy: A Communication Perspective.

PROGRAM AND BUDGET COUNCIL

This is a proposal for a blended/online undergraduate certificate to be housed in the Department of Communication. It is intended to be available to undergraduate UMass students and to non-matriculated students beyond our campus.

It requires 18-20 credits (3 required courses and 2 electives). It responds to a clear desire by students to have greater access to, and learning of, media literacy. It is also created in response to the call for revenue generating plans from the Chancellor’s office in 2009.

There were questions from the Program Subcommittee related to budget for marketing and ad-comp. It is expected that additional resources needed will come from the Department of Communication and also from CPE. Other questions regarded enrollment for non-matriculated students, space availability in campus courses and advising. These were address and answered by the proposer.

At its meeting on February 18, 2015, the Program and Budget Council unanimously approved the Media Literacy: A Communication Perspective, submitted as proposal #1586 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Undergraduate Certificate - Media Literacy: A Communication Perspective, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 15-045.
Briefly describe the Certificate.

This is a proposal for a blended in-person/online undergraduate Certificate in Media Literacy to be housed in the Department of Communication and open to undergraduate students across the University and non-matriculated students beyond the university. The undergraduate Certificate provides students with a unique opportunity to expand on their major/minor course of study with a program unique to the university.

The Certificate will be a 5-course, 18-20-credit, blended program of study. The 18-20 credits are comprised of three required courses and two elective courses, chosen from a pre-approved list of Communication courses. All undergraduate students matriculated at the University and all 5-college students will be able to pursue the Certificate in conjunction with their major course of study. Non-matriculated students will also be able to pursue the Certificate. It is possible to pursue the Certificate completely online, which allows interested students beyond the immediate geographic area to enroll. The Certificate will be especially helpful for the Department of Communication to serve students beyond the major. Students who complete five eligible courses will receive a Certificate of Media Literacy, noted on their transcript. If Communication students are interested in the Certificate, they must take two of the approved courses above the 36/37 credits required for a BA/SM in Communication (consistent with the Interdepartmental Film Certificate, three courses may work for both the Certificate and the Major).

Provide a brief overview of the process for developing this Certificate.

This Certificate has grown from the (former) Chancellor’s call for revenue generation plans in 2009. The Department of Communication was granted $20,000 in funding from the Chancellor’s Office to launch the program. We will begin with an Undergraduate Certificate program with the larger goal of building a blended online Master’s program in Media Literacy. There is a clear desire on the part of undergraduate students to have greater access to, and learning of, media literacy. Intimately connected to the University’s pursuit of greater community engagement and service learning, an undergraduate Certificate in Media Literacy provides opportunities for students to work directly in their communities. In conjunction with increased community engagement opportunities, undergraduate students across the university and non-matriculated students can pursue a Media Literacy certificate to enhance their professional and intellectual skills.

Describe the Certificate’s purpose and the particular knowledge and skills that will be acquired by participating students.

Undergraduate students may use this Certificate for multiple purposes. They may use it as part of their application to graduate programs, especially helpful for those who want to pursue teaching careers and/or advanced degrees in media studies. Students interested in work with youth, especially in community organizations, social work, health communication and education, will benefit greatly from the Certificate. Because media literacy encompasses both analysis and production, students who want to pursue careers in media production will also benefit from the Certificate. Massachusetts is currently exploring the inclusion of comprehensive media literacy in the K-12 classroom and this Certificate will be especially helpful for those who want to pursue work in primary and secondary schooling in the state. In the short term, the Certificate program will enhance the revenue of the University through increased attendance in online, summer courses; in the long term, it will undoubtedly contribute to job readiness and expertise for those living and working in Massachusetts.

The purpose of this undergraduate Certificate program is to provide matriculated students across UMass and the 5-colleges and non-matriculated students across the nation the opportunity to learn the theoretical and practical skills of media literacy. Media literacy distinguishes itself from the larger field of media studies with its focus on, and attention to, young people in a variety of settings. In 1992, a collection of U.S. scholars met to make sense of and work to define media literacy. The Aspen Institute argued media literacy “helps people understand, produce and negotiate meanings in a culture made up of powerful images, words and sounds.” The media literate person “can decode, evaluate, analyze, and produce both print and electronic media.” In the 20+ intervening years, U.S. scholars still struggle to include media literacy in classrooms and community organizations. Many states have recognized the need for media literacy in education and practical work, but have yet to develop or implement legislation on its behalf.
Massachusetts is currently a leader in making media literacy a part of the public school classroom. Department of Communication Lecturer + Advisor Allison Butler co-runs Mass Media Literacy (MML), a state-based grassroots organization that supports legislation of media literacy and develops curriculum for the inclusion of media literacy across the K-12 curriculum. Butler works with state legislators in development of legislation that provides for teacher training in media literacy. She is also in communication with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to make comprehensive media literacy curriculum viable for Massachusetts schools, especially as the state makes the transition to the Common Core. In collaboration with early childhood and early adolescent professionals in the field, Butler has developed over 20 pieces of curriculum, some of which are in pilot application middle- and high schools in Massachusetts.

Residential and local students who enroll in the Media Literacy Certificate program will be able to draw from the work being conducted in Massachusetts and participate in local civic engagement opportunities with organizations and projects devoted to media literacy application and learning. For example, Certificate participants may work as Educational Facilitators at Amherst Cinema as part of the See-Hear-Feel-Film program that teaches 3rd graders visual literacy skills; as Educational Facilitators to conduct media literacy workshops and lessons in schools across the state; in curriculum development and media literacy implementation as part of MML’s media literacy infusion; in policy development, participating in legislative meetings and Bill development for media literacy legislation. Online students will learn the skills of media literacy and will be able to research and participate in media literacy efforts in their communities and/or build media literacy curriculum for local or national efforts. Online students may have the opportunity to develop community engagement opportunities in their own geographic areas. The flexibility of online learning enables students from a variety of geographic and intellectual backgrounds to expand their learning while also expanding the infusion of media literacy beyond the walls of the classroom. The Media Literacy Certificate program, as envisioned, is the only one of its kind in the United States. Universities that offer certificates in media literacy do so exclusively for graduate students or with an emphasis on technical skills and do not include undergraduates or civic engagement opportunities.

Broadly speaking, students enrolled in the Certificate program will learn that media are constructed; the context and industry of the media; the particular role that audiences play; and the value of production as experiential learning. Students will learn how to deconstruct texts across a variety of media and technologies and through civic engagement opportunities will be able to apply their learning immediately in the surrounding communities. Recipients of the Certificate will be able to connect their learning to their Major field of study and will be able to put their learning to work immediately across a variety of fields.

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

As designed, the Certificate will be a revenue-enhancing program. Assuming a consistent enrollment beginning in Fall 2015, resources will be provided through the remainder of the (former) Chancellor’s $20,000 development funding and through revenue gained through the offering of online courses. The courses will be open to matriculated and non-matriculated students across the University and 5-college system and beyond. Courses will be taught both in-person and online with a specific invitation for non-majors, 5-college, non-matriculated and non-local students to take the courses online. Non-majors, 5-college and non-matriculated students who wish to take in-person courses will need to receive permission from the Professor of Record. The Certificate is accessible to students both on and off campus, in and out of the Communication major because Comm121, 287, 288 and 387 are taught year-round both in-person and online. Courses designated for the Certificate are available and are taught regularly both in-person and online. Two of the three required courses are centrally about media literacy and the elective options are complementary to media literacy; the instructors of the complementary courses will be encouraged, but not required, to include assignments particularly connected to media literacy and/or media and youth for students taking the courses towards the Certificate. Anticipated expenses include marketing, publicity and website development, paid for out of the Department of Communication’s budget and the Media Literacy Certificate Program Coordinator will be paid add-comp time administering the Certificate and advising Certificate.
Please describe the curriculum for this Certificate, listing all required courses and possible electives, any prerequisites or GPA requirements, the recommended order or coursework and any other pertinent information. You may attach additional materials related to the curriculum at the end of this section.

3 REQUIRED COURSES (offered in-person and online during summer terms)
pre-requisite: Comm121: Introduction to Media and Culture (3 cr)
Comm 335: Media and Education (4 cr)
Comm 427: Media Literacy (4 cr)

2 of the following courses (offered in-person and online)
Comm 287: Advertising as Social Communication (4 cr)
Comm 288: Gender, Sex and Representation (4 cr)
Comm 319: Health Communication (3 cr)
Comm 336: Consumer Culture (3 cr)
Comm 338: Children, Teens & Media (3 cr)
Comm 387: Media, PR and Propaganda (4 cr)
Comm 397LR: Health Literacy (3cr)
397SS: Youth, Democracy and the Entertainment Industries (3cr)
397WW: Sports, Culture and Advertising (3cr)

Explain how these courses represent a coherent course of study.

Overall, the courses focus the study of media literacy specifically on youth. The required courses provide a foundation of basic media and cultural studies, the theoretical and practical development of media literacy and the connection between media literacy and education. The electives courses provide students with the opportunity to take their learning in a direction of their choosing, organized within the focus of media and youth.

Describe how there is a clear educational objective that can be achieved in an efficient and well-defined manner.

The educational objective of this certificate is to attain a comprehensive understanding of media literacy and the ability to apply it to multiple forms of learning, advocacy and activism. This can be completed through the 5-course progression of study as well as in communication with the Media Literacy Certificate advisor for ways to apply this learning to one's major, career choice and civic engagement. Matriculated students can spread the courses over their college career, weaving them in with their major and Gen Ed requirements, or take them within 2-3 semesters. Non-matriculated students can take courses in person or online, increasing their flexibility of progression.

Explain how the course sequence offers a clear objective at the appropriate educational level.

The course sequence begins with a 100-level introductory course and 300- and 400-level required courses, so students progress through their learning. Electives courses range from the 200-400 level, so students can build a progression in line with other courses or with their own personal development.

Describe the perceived need for this Certificate.

Students, youth advocates, teachers, and youth activists are interested in advancing their formal learning of media literacy. This certificate can support that desire.

Massachusetts is currently a leader in making media literacy a part of the public school classroom. Department of Communication Lecturer + Advisor Allison Butler co-runs Mass Media Literacy (MML), a state-based grassroots organization that supports legislation of media literacy and develops curriculum for the inclusion of media literacy across the K-12 curriculum. Butler works with state legislators in development of legislation that provides for teacher training in media literacy. She is also in communication with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to make comprehensive media literacy curriculum viable for Massachusetts schools, especially as the state makes the transition to the Common Core. In collaboration with early childhood and early
adolescent professionals in the field, Butler has developed over 20 pieces of curriculum, some of which are in pilot application middle- and high schools in Massachusetts.

*If the courses that comprise the Certificate have been or currently are being offered, describe their schedule of availability. If the Certificate is comprised of new courses, describe their planned availability.*

All courses in the certificate are regularly available in-person during the regular semester and online over the summer or during the winter. The following details when the courses are available and to whom:

121: Intro to Media & Culture
Availability: In-person both semesters; online Summer; open to non-majors in-person and online

335: Media & Education
Availability: In-person fall semester; online Summer; open to non-majors online, in-person with permission

427: Media Literacy:
Availability: In-person Spring semester; online Summer; open to non-majors online, in-person with permission

287: Advertising and Social Communication
Availability: Online Fall, Winter, Summer; open to non-majors regularly

288: Gender, Sex & Representation
Availability: Online Spring, Winter, Summer; open to non-majors regularly

319: Health Communication
Availability: Semester in person; online summer; open to non-majors during semester with permission, open to non-majors online

336: Consumer Culture
Availability: semester in person; online Summer; open to non-majors with permission during semester, open to non-majors online

338: Children, Teens & Media
Availability: Fall semesters; online Summer; open to non-majors during semester with permission, open to non-majors online

387: Media, PR and Propaganda
Availability: Online Spring, Winter, Summer; open to non-majors regularly

397LR: Health Literacy
Availability: Spring semester; online Summer; open to non-majors during semester with permission, open to non-majors online

397SS: Youth, Democracy and the Entertainment Industries
Availability: Semester, in person; open to non-majors with permission; no online component of this course

397WW: Sports, Culture and Advertising
Availability: Only available online, Summer; open to non-majors

*If the Certificate requires or includes courses from outside the sponsoring department, provide evidence of agreement(s) with the unit(s) offering those courses. You may attach any memoranda of understanding below.*

This certificate does not include courses from outside the sponsoring department.
If the requirements for this Certificate overlap with those of another certificate or a degree or a degree program, describe that overlap. (Note that if a student who has completed a certificate seeks clearance for a degree program that overlaps with that certificate program, the Registrar will note on the transcript that the certificate has been superseded by the degree.)

For non-Comm students, there is no conflicting overlap with other certificate or degree programs. Comm students will take courses above the 36/37 credits required to complete their major and up to 3 classes may be used towards both the degree and the certificate.

What type of student is allowed to participate in this certificate program? (E.g., matriculated UMass students, non-matriculated CPE students, Five College students, graduate students, students in a specific degree program, etc.)

All matriculated UMass students, non-matriculated CPE students, and Five College students are allowed to participate.

What role will this Certificate play in relation to other departments or degree programs on campus? Certificates vary widely across campus and may represent a subset of an existing degree program, a multidisciplinary program, or an entirely free-standing area of focus.

This certificate will be open to all students across the university. The emphasis on media literacy draws from a subset of our Comm major that may be of interest to a variety of matriculated and non-matriculated students.

Is this a transitional certificate program? (Transitional certificate programs are comprised of core courses from specific degree programs and may act as stepping stones into those programs. If a student who has completed a transitional certificate matriculates to the University and completes the degree program associated with that certificate, the transcript will note that the certificate has been superseded by the degree.)

No.

If applicable, please attach any additional material relating to the certificate (such as requirement checksheets for students, etc.) below.

None at this time.