

**COMMUNICATION STUDIES**  
**Strategic Plan**  
**May 1, 2009**

**Section 1 Description of the Department of Communication Studies**

**1.1.1 Mission, vision, and goals**

The Department of Communication Studies has eight positions—seven tenure/tenure track professors and the director of forensics. On average, the Communication Studies Department has 150 majors, graduating between 50-60 students each year. In the past three years the department has averaged 40 semester courses per year and five Interim Experience courses (not including Career Exploration supervision assignments). In 2008-2009, because of staffing, the department offered 34 semester courses and three Interim Experience courses (not including two Career Exploration supervision assignments). Over the past ten years, the department served an average of 963 students per year (not including internships [average of 11 per year], career explorations [17 per year], independent studies [4 per year], honor theses [4 per year], or domestic and international NDL courses). The department offers a Communication Studies major, a Communication Studies major with honors, and contributes to the Communication Arts/Literature Teaching major as well as provides support for General Education, First Term Seminar, the Elementary Education major, the Health Education major, and Gender Women and Sexuality major and minor.

The department reflects the mission of the college in its solid grounding in the liberal arts and its commitment to civic engagement, social justice, and leadership. In the next decade, the department seeks to fortify its strong foundation in liberal arts and develop more deeply its emphases in civic engagement, social justice, and leadership.

**Mission**

Faculty and students in Communication Studies study the social, political, and cultural functions of communication in diverse environments ranging from interpersonal and public settings to mediated and global contexts. Students learn the theories and principles of communication as they sharpen their communication and critical thinking skills. Our encouragement of internships and study abroad programs invites students to enhance their understanding of communication through practical experience. By sharing our expertise in communication with our college and our communities, students and faculty in Communication Studies enact our commitment to civic engagement, social justice, and leadership.

**Vision**

When the Department of Communication Studies is functioning perfectly, students are active participants in courses that have reasonable enrollments, have access to technology and other academic resources, and are taught by engaged, available faculty. Our courses are firmly grounded in a liberal arts tradition that seamlessly meshes theory and knowledge with practical

application and ethical examination. Students recognize these qualities and the interconnectedness of courses within the Communication Studies major and with courses taught in other departments. Students engage in fascinating international education opportunities that expand their recognition of the interplay between culture and communication; faculty members embody this commitment through their design and leadership of study abroad courses around the globe. Students regularly enhance their course of study with internships that bring invaluable practical experience, skills, and access to technology and equipment.

When the Department of Communication Studies is functioning perfectly, faculty are afforded adequate time and resources to design and teach innovative courses grounded in the liberal arts tradition. Moreover, faculty can meet with course students, advisees, prospective majors, and prospective students in a relaxed conversation. Faculty can fulfill commitments of campus service, service to professional organizations, and enact the civic engagement expected of the department's students. With adequate time and resources, faculty can engage in research and scholarship. Faculty can engage in meaningful conversations about departmental and college mission, vision, goals, and policies.

When the Department of Communication Studies is functioning perfectly, the expectations and aspirations of Communication Studies students and faculties are supported by adequate resources, including technology needed for courses and classrooms, funding for student and student-faculty research and presentations, and time for mentoring, advising, research, scholarship, and contemplation and reflection essential to purposeful mission and vision setting.

When the Department of Communication Studies is functioning perfectly, the department is a community of scholars and civically engaged students and faculty who enjoy warm, collegial relationships. It is a place where lively, intellectually vibrant, and socially committed conversations occur regularly.

In order to achieve this vision, the Department of Communication Studies has set the following six goals:

Goal 1: Fortify Communication Studies as a strong department grounded in a liberal arts Communication Studies experience to better prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through expanded course and research opportunities

Goal 2: Become a model undergraduate liberal arts communication studies department by developing civic engagement, social justice, and leadership development emphases that prepare students for their lives as engaged citizens

Goal 3: Stabilize and enhance programming in media literacy and new technologies to prepare students to effectively and ethically create and critique communication in a high tech world

Goal 4: Enhance strength in international and intercultural communication to better prepare students for their lives beyond Gustavus and provide curricular support for a more diverse student body

Goal 5: Position the department as a communication resource for the region to support departmental principles of civic engagement and social justice and provide opportunities for student experiences

Goal 6: Develop outreach programs for alumni and friends of the college to offer lifelong learning opportunities in communication

## **1.2 Programs**

The Department of Communication Studies offers the following majors: Communication Studies, Communication Studies with Honors, and Communication Arts/Literature Teaching. We offer no minor.

The department maintains a close synergistic relationship with the Gustavus Forensics Program (the strategic plan for the forensics program is attached at the end of this document). Even with student and staffing pressure, the department continues its dedication to the First Term Seminar Program by teaching at least one seminar a year. The Department maintains a commitment to General Education and offers three LARS courses (at least 11 sections per year) and nine Writing Across the Curriculum courses. The Department makes significant contributions, including teaching, advisory support, and preferred course access, to the following interdisciplinary programs, departments, and majors: Center for International and Cultural Education, Gender and Women and Sexuality, Pre-Law, Health Education, and Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **1.3 Support relationships**

The Department of Communication Studies has developed strong relationships with many offices and programs across campus; many of these have proven productive and vital as we work toward meeting our own ambitious program goals.

Involvement with the Center for International and Cultural Education and the Diversity Center have helped us to forge connections with a broader range of students, develop a curriculum with more sensitivity to diversity, and expose our students to experiential learning opportunities with an intercultural dimension. We have received excellent support from these programs and look forward to continued collaboration with them.

We have begun to establish deeper ties to the Community Service Center, and the vision and drive of its staff has brought new civic engagement opportunities to our students and faculty. This is an exciting development, and we hope the CSC continues to receive the support it needs to so that these initiatives will be fully realized.

Other offices, such as the Advising Center, Counseling Center, Center for Vocational Reflection, and Alumni Relations, have been supportive and responsive to our needs. With the support of the CVR and Alumni Relations, we have hosted a successful annual alumni-student retreat. We have

begun a partnership with Alumni Relations in providing more regularized alumni mentoring opportunities for current students. We regularly work with the Career Center to support student internships, and we look forward to further development of those relationships.

The department benefits from strong instructional and research collaboration from the Folke Bernadotte Library and its staff. The library faculty and staff provide exceptional student and faculty instructional and research training and support as well as journal, book and database resources; however, monetary and staffing limitations restrict the ability of the library to fully support our program, our work with students, and our own professional research. We look forward to our continued close and collaborative working relationship with the library faculty and staff and anticipate the acquisition of additional financial support and staffing for the library to sustain our program goals.

The department shares an interest in the Digital Art Classroom with the Art and Art History and Theatre and Dance Departments and looks forward to continued collaboration with these departments in creating useful instructional space in the new academic building. With the ever-increasing integration of technology into human communication processes, we depend heavily on the services of GTS and Media Services to enable our teaching and research across the discipline. Unfortunately, the resources of these offices are rarely sufficient to meet our needs, and our teaching, research, and creative work has suffered accordingly. Faculty have taken on tasks ordinarily assigned to GTS, classes have been disrupted because of failing technology, and we have been forced to scale back on some improvements necessary to keep up with advances in our field.

Our faculty is active in seeking funding opportunities for development purposes, whether teaching or research. The Provost's Office and the Kendall Center have been solid contributors to these efforts, particularly in facilitating conference attendance, research and course development grants, and summer workshops. These resources are not, however, designed to supply the level of support we need for our serious research, creative work, and curriculum initiatives. This should be the place of the Office of Institutional Advancement, but it has proven to be a much less potent resource. Though often cooperative in consultation and brainstorming, there has been little support or follow-through on funding initiatives.

A similar circumstance exists with Marketing and Communication. As our program has developed several noteworthy features, including a nationally-ranked Forensics Program and a significant innovation in our basic course curriculum, we have looked to Marketing and Communication for help in getting the word out about these unique accomplishments at Gustavus. With persistence and by our own efforts, we have managed to generate a small amount of national attention; however, this model is not sustainable, and we would benefit from additional support for this office.

## **Section 2      Strategic Review**

### **2.1      Strategic issues**

Communication Studies is in the midst of a ten year review that includes a self study, an invited review by current students and alumni, and an external review. The review process as well as ongoing conversations provides the information base from which we draw the following analysis.

**Strengths (internal)**

The curriculum is securely grounded in the liberal arts tradition. It utilizes qualitative research methodologies that cohere well with honing students' communication and critical thinking skills. These abilities are highly valued, as we regularly hear from alumni and employers.

Students work closely with and receive much attention from faculty. The department's reputation for teaching remains a cornerstone. Our faculty is—first and foremost—teachers. Two department members have received the Swenson-Bunn teaching award.

Our innovative curriculum and major have been sharpened and improved in recent years. Creation of the *Public Discourse* course, a major shift in our curriculum, has created a significant opportunity for students to pursue civic engagement opportunities in the community. The curricular focus upon research, practice, and theory has enabled students to succeed, particularly in our Level III courses and in graduate school. Colleagues at other institutions and at recent regional and national conferences have remarked favorably upon the innovative design and implementation of *Public Discourse*. Efforts to utilize Podcasting as an instructional tool in this course further testifies to the department's pedagogical innovation focused upon student achievement.

Study abroad and internship opportunities are fore grounded in the Communication Studies curriculum. Through study abroad programs—many of which are personally led by department faculty—our students experience communication as a culturally-situated and diverse practice. Department faculty have offered courses globally, including in India, Thailand, Fiji, Vietnam, New Zealand, South Africa, England, Ireland, and the Netherlands. Professor English's creation of a re-entry course for Gustavus Adolphus students returning from studying abroad reflects our department's commitment to innovative, student-directed curriculum and our significant participation in the college's International Education program.

Internships enable our students to acquire practical skills directly related to the knowledge and theory they gain in our courses. For example, in media/journalism-related internships, our majors gain access to state-of-the-art technology and practitioner mentorship that round out their undergraduate education and positions them well for post-graduate employment.

The department engages in routine planning conversations, including in retreat settings and in department meetings. These conversations also occur on an informal basis in the department. The expectation is that department members contribute equally and have an equal voice in these conversations. Decision-making regarding department mission, policy, and other 'strategic' matters is through communal engagement. Management of every-day departmental affairs is centralized in the role of the department chair.

The department has good morale among students and faculty. Warm, collegial relationships mark student-student, student-faculty, and faculty-faculty interactions.

The department has undertaken efforts to communicate with alumni and other external audiences. The departmental alumni newsletter, available in print and on-line, is an excellent publication that we share with alumni and current and prospective students.

Alumni are committed and highly involved in the department and its students. We have a strong alumni network that is especially useful for placing current students in internships and for establishing mentoring relationships.

Faculty are widely active on campus, supporting student and faculty groups, projects, and events. These include representation on Faculty Senate, Budget Committee, Compensation Subcommittee, IIAC, GAC TV, International Education, Media Board, Sexual Assault Education Team, FTS Advisory Board, Diversity Representatives for academic searches, Lecture Series, Faculty Development, GWS, and more. Department faculty have served as Assistant Dean, Associate Dean, Academic Dean, and Faculty Senate Chair. The department supports the Pre-Law Program. Internally, faculty work closely with students to facilitate the student-centered Communication Studies Club, the Lambda Pi Eta honors society for communication studies majors, and the American Red Cross Blood Drive held each semester.

#### **Weaknesses (internal)/Challenges (external)**

The composition of faculty within the department remains mixed and, to a degree, uncertain. Currently, the department has eight teaching positions. Of the five tenured faculty associated with the department, one teaches only in the fall (Terry Morrow, who serves in the legislature in the spring) and one is an academic dean (Mariangela Maguire). We have one assistant professor (Martin Lang); considerable flux has occurred in the other tenure-track position, in which we have completed a search this fall. We have two instructors, one of whom serves as the director of the college's forensics program.

In recent years, the department has experienced difficulty in filling a tenure-track position. The first successful applicant left after one year to move back to Nebraska to be close to family. The second hiree decided to return home after her first year. When combined with regular sabbatical leaves and the factors stated above, the department has had considerable flux in terms of faculty. Remaining tenured and tenure-track faculty absorb advising, honors thesis, and departmental responsibilities. Recurring changes in personnel make curricular and other strategic goal setting difficult to implement.

This composition has implications for advising. The high major-to-faculty ratio results in significant advising loads (and does not account for advising responsibilities associated with teaching a First Term Seminar).

This composition, when considered in light of the considerable campus involvement that department faculty have undertaken, raises concerns related to over-commitment to committees, projects, and more. Specifically, teaching, advising and campus commitments and obligations

have been prioritized over research and scholarship, resulting in a reduced record of research and scholarship that might otherwise be realized if campus involvement were reduced and additional faculty lines were to help with the workload.

Department chair responsibilities continue to be significant. Constant change in faculty personnel requires mentoring and management. A relatively large major brings with it regular student meetings to address individual needs.

Budgetary weaknesses continue as the department attempts to serve many students on limited and stagnant funding. Computer hardware, software, and cameras for our media courses are in constant need of repair and updating.

Funding for student research remains inadequate. Our students regularly present their scholarship at conferences in Minnesota and elsewhere. We are generally unable to offer financial support from within the department.

The departmental alumni newsletter is largely a creation of individual faculty efforts and is dependent upon faculty time for its continuation.

### **Opportunities (External)**

The Department of Communication Studies is well positioned to make the most of the external opportunities before it, especially if resource, time, and other weaknesses and challenges are addressed.

Student-related opportunities are the most important to the department and its faculty. Expansion of student and student-faculty research and scholarship can readily occur. Given time to work with individual and groups of students, department faculty are prepared to build upon the department's record of facilitating student presentations and publications. Faculty have worked with students to present their work at local and regional conferences. We could return to assisting students on national and international-level presentations with sufficient resources and time. Similarly, our work with students on honors thesis and similar projects offers an opportunity to increase our students' publication record. Student work on documentary and Public Discourse projects represents an emerging path that students excitedly embrace. Again, with additional resources, the department could help students present this work on a larger scale, enhancing graduate school prospects for interested majors.

Departmental graduates have been successful in the top doctoral programs, creating a reputation for our department and providing an opportunity for us to extend it. Increased resources for student scholarship and to mentor students would enhance the number of graduates who pursue post-graduate study and enhance our reputation.

Faculty in the department have demonstrated considerable campus, professional and civic leadership and participation. Members' service on innumerable committees, as faculty and academic leaders, on professional organization boards, and elsewhere illustrates our enactment of the civic engagement that we encourage among our students. These commitments, not

surprisingly, come at a cost. For our department to continue this service and to build upon it for the benefit of students, the college, and the faculty, we will need to possess the resources needed to take advantage of these opportunities.

The department's record of heavy investment in International Education reflects our commitment to facilitating our students' study of communication in diverse contexts. Moreover, it reflects our appreciation of the global nature of communication that will undoubtedly impact our students' professional, civic, and personal lives. Faculty have offered Interim Experience and semester-long courses around the world. Department faculty have also served the International Education department as advisors, committee members, and instructors.

The department would welcome an opportunity to build upon its expertise and experience in International Education. Course development in other areas of the world requires forming relationships, visiting sites, and more. A related opportunity rests in creating virtual experiences with students, faculty and others across the globe through use of video conferencing and related technologies. Third, we could create domestic courses that introduce students to diverse cultures within the United States and that teach about the role of communication in our history and contemporary society. For example, we have talked about courses that chart the Civil Rights movement through the South, study the history of American public discourse in Boston, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, examine political discourse in Washington, D.C., and more.

The department recognizes opportunities in an expanded College presence in the Twin Cities. The department has good contacts and relationships with alumni in the Twin Cities; these have been strengthened through the department's creation of a departmental newsletter. A facility in the Twin Cities would provide the department with exciting opportunities to offer courses, special events, and certificate-type programs for alumni and others. Examples might include nonprofit leadership programs, discussions of political communication, lectures on contemporary communication-related stories, and much more. In addition, the department would be able to use a site for expansion of its strong internship programming. Mentor relationships could increase as our alumni and current students would have a facility for meetings and gatherings.

The department excitedly looks forward to a new academic building. Our current facilities do not meet student or faculty needs, as has been described in building-project meetings over the past few years. The opportunities related to a classroom with sufficient digital media technology are one aspect of this opportunity. Second, creative and inviting communal space will encourage student-student and student-faculty interaction.

The department has discussed for some time its desire to offer weekend, summer, and travel seminars to those in the region, alumni, and friends of Gustavus. We remain excited about this opportunity, and it is reflected in goals 5 and 6 of this plan. Our strategic initiatives for these goals support the mission of the college and have the potential to generate revenue.

## **2.2 Barriers**

Despite the six-course teaching load, the overall workload for departmental faculty members remains high. In essence, the composition of the department and the staffing challenges outlined



above have created unique barriers to the department's ability to conduct long-range planning, to staff the department's commitments to FTS, General Education, and interdisciplinary programs, and to implement curricular innovations in a sustained manner. Mindful of the importance of contributions made by departmental faculty on assignment to the Provost's Office or the State Legislature, the absence of two and often three tenured faculty members a year during the last decade has required the remaining members to absorb a relatively larger share of the department's workload. Although term hires have sometimes replaced the courses that have been lost, tenured or tenure-track faculty have assumed responsibility for departmental planning and decision making, curriculum development, internship supervision, graduate school preparation and mentoring, the department's major with honors option, as well as for a variety of routine departmental service-related tasks. Increased student advising responsibilities have also fallen upon remaining tenured or tenure-track faculty members. These factors, combined with heavy departmental participation in college-wide committee service and governance have strained the department's ability to maintain the sort of high quality relationships with students that it prizes and have made it difficult for faculty members to meaningfully participate in scholarly research.

In addition to general college-wide resource constraints, lack of departmental resources in several key areas pose serious difficulties. Chief among these are a lack of funding for appropriate instructional technologies, video cameras, audio recording and computing equipment, software, and video laboratory space. The absence of a technology life-cycle replacement and maintenance fund hinders the department's ability to integrate key technologies into its curriculum and undercuts long range planning. Put simply, the department cannot maintain a credible media studies program without these resources.

The department's general budget for such mundane items as printing and reproduction is inadequate to meet the demands of the students it serves. Inadequate funding for professional faculty travel and student research conference presentations requires the department to limit precisely those opportunities that the college is attempting to amplify.

Finally, to fully realize its strategic goals and objectives, the department requires administrative cooperation and support that is sufficient, consistent and well coordinated. The department is well positioned to play an enlarged role in helping the college meet its overall strategic initiatives as well as objectives in Admission, Institutional Advancement, International Education, Marketing and Communication, and Alumni Relations. In fact, in many of these areas, departmental faculty members are the most salient contact points for potential audiences. Our nationally renowned forensics program could serve as an important recruiting vehicle for attracting minority students and for increasing the geographical reach and impact of the college's admissions activities. We have strong relationships with departmental alumni and have developed noteworthy communication materials to reach them. Our students often produce feature-length films, videos, speeches and audio podcasts, and engage in research and service activities that could be highlighted for potential students and parents.

Unfortunately, to work effectively, these activities require a much clearer delineation of roles, expectations, objectives, and tactics than presently exists. The department would welcome a conversation with representatives from Admission, Institutional Advancement, Marketing and Communication, Technology Services, Institutional Research, Summer Programs, and Alumni

Relations to determine the most productive ways that we could contribute to the College's success in these areas. Our present ad hoc approach is unlikely to succeed.

### **Section 3 Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations**

#### **Goal 1: Fortify Communication Studies as a strong department grounded in a liberal arts Communication Studies experience to better prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through expanded course and research opportunities.**

The college's mission statement and the strategic plan call us to educate students for leadership and service. The department's mission statement reflects this goal, and the department is situated to provide full and rich student experience that prepares students for leadership and service, lifelong learning, and lives as engaged citizens. In order to fully achieve this mission, we need additional personnel to allow us time to research, mentor students, and provide a full slate of courses for the college and department.

Strategic Initiative 1.1: Expand opportunities for student, student-faculty, and faculty research

Tactic: Secure increased funding for student, student-faculty, and faculty research, including travel, conference fees, equipment, library resources, and stipends.

Tactic: Through additional faculty lines, provide time for faculty research and for faculty to work with students

Strategic Initiative 1.2: Increase the number of students the department sends to graduate school by increasing the quality of the student experience and providing students opportunities to explore their skills and interests in graduate school

Tactic: Reduce advising loads through additional faculty lines

Tactic: Increase faculty time to work with students on research and mentor students effectively through additional faculty lines

Tactic: Identify and mentor students with interest in graduate school earlier and more intentionally

Tactic: Organize formal discussions and programs on graduate school

Strategic Initiative 1.3: Restore departmental contributions to General Education and First Term Seminar and continue contributions to Education and Health Education majors

Tactic: Secure additional faculty lines to provide additional courses

Strategic Initiative 1.4: Secure additional tenure-track faculty positions to ensure continued quality teaching, advising, research, and service to the college and to accomplish strategic initiatives 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3.

Tactic: Secure two additional communication studies tenure-track positions to support advancements in the field, reduce advising loads, and increase opportunities for student and faculty research

Tactic: Secure an assistant director of forensics to provide instructional support for foundational courses in the major and coaching, travel, and administrative support for the forensics program.

Tactic: Secure a communication scholar in residence in intercultural or diverse contexts to support regional ties to diverse communities and to support student learning in diverse communication contexts

Tactic: Secure endowed chairs to support departmental emphases in civic engagement, social justice, leadership development, and legal/political studies

**Goal 2: Become a model undergraduate liberal arts communication studies department by developing civic engagement, social justice, and leadership development emphases that prepare students for their lives as engaged citizens.**

The mission of the college is to prepare students for lives of leadership and service, which is highlighted as a goal in the college's strategic plan. The department's mission statement reflects our commitments to civic engagement, social justice, and leadership. We wish to more fully integrate these commitments in our curriculum to more fully prepare students for their lives as engaged citizens.

Strategic Initiative 2.1: Continue and enhance current departmental curriculum in civic engagement, social justice, and leadership development

Tactic: Intentionally tie department, curriculum, and specific courses to leadership development—e.g. Public Discourse, Small Group Communication, and Organizational Communication

Strategic Initiative 2.2: Develop a nonprofit leadership program in the department

Tactic: Design curriculum with linked career explorations and summer internships

Tactic: Use partnerships with nonprofit organizations and diverse area communities to support student experiences within courses and internships

Tactic: Create a weekend/summer certificate program in nonprofit leadership

Strategic Initiative 2.3: Promote and support civic engagement, social justice, and leadership development initiatives in the department and on campus

Tactic: Secure departmental endowed chairs in Communication and Civic Engagement, Social Justice and Communication, and Nonprofit Leadership

Strategic Initiative 2.4: Form a working group with Communication Studies departments in the region to gather and share information, discuss developments in the field, and explore mutual opportunities

Tactic: Contact the University of Minnesota Communication Studies Department to convene an annual gathering of area Communication Studies departments

**Goal 3: Stabilize and enhance programming in media literacy and new technologies to prepare students to effectively and ethically create and critique communication in a high tech world.**

Our commitment to liberal arts education grounds our approach to technology as instructional support and as course content. We are committed to preparing students to be reflective and critical consumers and practitioners of technology. In an increasingly more technological and visual world, such instruction is central to preparing students for lives as engaged citizens. To provide this instruction to students, the department requires personnel to support new technologies, faculty training and support, and new facilities. Students would be further benefited by the creation of a visual studies program.

Strategic Initiative 3.1: Create Visual Studies interdisciplinary minor with Art, English, and Theatre/Dance

Tactic: Secure shared positions in visual studies and additional positions in Communication Studies and other departments to support the program

Strategic Initiative 3.2: Provide students the technology education required for critically engaging new communication technologies and for their careers and lives as engaged citizens

Tactic: Secure tenure track positions in New Media and Computer Mediated Interpersonal Communication

Strategic Initiative 3.3: Acquire department specific technology and training to support faculty and students

Tactic: Technology with portability (including laptops) to support research (archival, communities), teaching (travel courses and classroom presentations) and professional presentations.

Tactic: Support for workshops/training in new technologies

Tactic: Provide digital television access in the classrooms/departmental area

Strategic Initiative 3.4: Continue to work with the Provost's Office to ensure Digital Arts Classroom, camera equipment, and new technology needs of the campus are met (this includes endowing the Digital Arts Classroom and camera equipment, an area coordinator/lab supervisor, and hiring the Instructional Media position).

**Goal 4: Enhance strength in international and intercultural communication to better prepare students for their lives beyond Gustavus and provide curricular support for a more diverse student body**

Projections of an increasingly diverse regional community and Gustavus student body call us to more fully activate our commitments to international and intercultural perspectives. To prepare students for leadership and citizenship in a more diverse society and to offer opportunities for diverse students, we wish to enhance and develop regional relationships and study abroad opportunities as sites for student learning.

Strategic Initiative 4.1: Develop partnerships with area Native American, Chicano/Latino, Hmong, and Somali communities

Tactic: Secure a rotating endowed scholar in residence in the department to support departmental partnerships with these communities

Strategic Initiative 4.2: Secure professional development funds to study communication in context, including support for international research, workshops, and conferences

Strategic Initiative 4.3: Develop and maintain departmental Interim Experience and semester study abroad opportunities for students

Tactic: Study the feasibility of short duration course-embedded domestic and international experiences

**Goal 5: Position the department as a communication resource for the region to support departmental principles of civic engagement and social justice and provide opportunities for student experiences.**

The department's commitments to civic engagement and social justice as well as the college's commitments to leadership, service, and community call us to use our expertise to connect with and serve Gustavus's regional community. Developing programming for the regional community will provide an opportunity for the department and the college to live out their missions, situate Gustavus as a regional resource, build goodwill, and possibly generate revenue.

Strategic Initiative 5.1: Create a summer teaching workshop for high school communication/speech teachers

Strategic Initiative 5.2: Provide video and technology training for rural high school students

Tactic: Develop and train a student intern

Tactic: Secure grant to support the program

Strategic Initiative 5.3: Establish a high school summer leadership institute with scholarships for diverse students

Strategic Initiative 5.4: Develop advocacy training in media relations, strategic communication, and video for non-profit/government/corporate groups (e.g. school boards, agricultural groups, and nonprofits)

Strategic Initiative 5.5: Initiate regional Immigration Conference as a resource for rural communities

**Goal 6: Develop outreach programs for alumni and friends of the college to offer lifelong learning opportunities in communication.**

The mission of the college and the college's strategic plan emphasize lifelong learning as an important outcome of a Gustavus education. The department desires to use its expertise to provide opportunities for alumni and friends of Gustavus to explore communication in different contexts. Weekend, summer, and travel seminars and travel seminars support the mission of the college, build goodwill, and generate revenue.

Strategic Initiative 6.1: Design weekend and summer workshops in leadership development, crisis communication, media relations, nonprofit leadership, and other communication related areas

Strategic Initiative 6.2: Design and lead communication workshops/seminars in domestic and international contexts

**Section 4      Assessment**

**Goal 1: Fortify Communication Studies as a strong department grounded in a liberal arts Communication Studies experience to better prepare students to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through expanded course and research opportunities.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 1, we will continue our yearly assessment of majors and alumni. Upon receiving increased personnel to support our

efforts, tracking survey responses over time will indicate whether we have improved the educational experience that we provide students. Tracking career path and graduate school acceptance will allow us to assess whether more students go to graduate school. Faculty and student research, presentations, and publications will also be tracked to provide quantitative and qualitative measures.

**Goal 2: Become a model undergraduate liberal arts communication studies department by developing civic engagement, social justice, and leadership development emphases that prepare students for their lives as engaged citizens.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 2, we will have had the time and the resources to develop existing courses and new curriculum in nonprofit leadership. Upon receiving such support and developing our curriculum, creating a nonprofit leadership program, and enhancing our work with community partners, our continued assessment of majors and alumni will be important assessment resources. Tracking responses over time will indicate whether students are more prepared for lives as engaged citizens. Tracking career paths will provide information on whether more of our students enter the nonprofit sector, and alumni and employer surveys will demonstrate whether students were well prepared for their lives beyond Gustavus.

The department will also collect student course projects that demonstrate significant civic engagement, track internships to determine the numbers and types of placements, and collect resumes of graduating seniors to track types of experiences (internships, study abroad, leadership positions, and involvement in activities) during their time at Gustavus. Community partnerships will be assessed via survey and tracked to measure involvement and satisfaction of students, faculty, and community members.

Additionally, the department will apply for the Rex Mix Award for the outstanding undergraduate Communication Studies department from the National Communication Association. The application process along with periodic review of undergraduate liberal arts communication studies programs will provide a reference point for our strength as a department.

**Goal 3: Stabilize and enhance programming in media literacy and new technologies to prepare students to effectively and ethically create and critique communication in a high tech world.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 3, we will have a functioning digital arts classroom, two positions in the department to support curriculum in the area, a successful visual studies program (demonstrated via student and alumni feedback), and monetary and technical support for faculty (demonstrated by increased financial resources and faculty survey about support). Continued student and alumni surveys will also provide important assessment data. Further, employers of students in media

internships will be surveyed to determine whether our students were prepared for their internship placements.

**Goal 4: Enhance strength in international and intercultural communication to better prepare students for their lives beyond Gustavus and provide curricular support for a more diverse student body**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 4, we will have an endowed scholar in residence, funding to support faculty endeavors, and continued and enhanced Interim Experience and semester-long study abroad programs. With those in place, our continued evaluation of students and alumni will determine the department's effectiveness in helping students explore and learn about diverse communities in the region and the world. Further, instruments, such as the Intercultural Developmental Inventory (IDI) and Intercultural Conflict Inventory (ICI), will be used to assess whether students have become more aware and open to diverse communities. Further, we will more closely track student study abroad experiences and projects, maintain a file of student work related to intercultural or international projects, and track alumni who work in international and culturally-diverse contexts. Finally, professional external reviewers will be used to evaluate our education practices in international and intercultural communication.

**Goal 5: Position the department as a communication resource for the region to support departmental principles of civic engagement and social justice and provide opportunities for student experiences**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 5, we will have developed successful programs to support the region and the college will be seen as a regional communication resource. The programs will be assessed through immediate evaluation and later follow up evaluations. The college may want to assess the standing of the college in the region. The department will also track internships in the region and collect media coverage of students and the department as active advocates in the region.

**Goal 6: Develop outreach programs for alumni and friends of the college to offer lifelong learning opportunities in communication**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 6, we will have developed successful programs to support lifelong learning. The programs will be assessed with an immediate evaluation and later follow up evaluations. Prior to initiation of these outreach programs, the department will survey alumni to determine which programs are in the most demand.



**The Communication Studies Strategic Plan approved by the undersigned tenured, tenure-track, and continuing faculty members of the Department of Communication Studies, May 2009.**

Leila Brammer, Associate Professor/Chair

Patricia English, Associate Professor

Kris Kracht, Instructor/Director of Forensics

Martin Lang, Assistant Professor

Terrence Morrow, Associate Professor

Phil Voight, Associate Professor

# **FORENSICS PROGRAM**

## **Strategic Plan**

**May 1, 2009**

### **Section 1 Description of the Forensics Program**

#### **1.3.1 Mission, vision, and goals**

The forensics program has a director of forensics and a part-time (3 hours per week) assistant coach that is not a member of the Gustavus faculty. On average, the forensics program has twenty students. Over six years, the program has grown exponentially from five competitors in 2002 to 21 competitors in 2008, attracting students from virtually every major on campus.

The program reflects the mission of the college in its solid grounding in the liberal arts and its commitment to civic engagement, social justice, and leadership. In the next decade, the program seeks to fortify its strong foundation in liberal arts and solidify opportunities for more students, more championships, and more national recognition. We are committed to making Gustavus Forensics the paradigm for competitive forensics.

#### **Mission**

The Gustavus Forensics program is a comprehensive, co-curricular forensics program that competes in eleven American Forensics Association individual events, as well as in National Parliamentary Debate Association Parliamentary Debate. Our program is grounded in the Three Crowns of our program: Education, Competition and Leadership. We believe in the liberal arts tradition of forensics, and we also whole-heartedly believe that forensics training is one of the best ways to develop a student's advocacy, research, critical thinking, higher-level analytical, rhetorical analysis, and performance skills. Firmly grounded within the liberal arts tradition, forensics is what one graduate termed "a college education in a nutshell."

Forensics is also interdisciplinary. Students learn to see problems and solutions from a variety of perspectives. A single topic, for example, might involve research that spans a number of disciplines. In addition, students learn to approach questions of fact, of value and policy from the framework that is appropriate to each type of question.

#### **Vision**

When the Forensics program is functioning perfectly, it has sufficient resources in terms of budget and staff to compete at an elite level. Moreover, with adequate time and resources, coaches can more regularly meet with forensics students in a relaxed conversation fulfilling the educational mission of the program and fostering greater mentoring. Faculty can fulfill commitments of campus service, service to professional organizations, and enact the civic engagement expected of the program's students.

With adequate time and resources, the director can dedicate the necessary time to recruiting prospective students, to cultivating and developing relationships with prospective donors, to building and maintaining relationships with the high school forensics community, and to

developing innovative programs that fulfill the College's commitment to becoming a regional service hub.

In order to achieve this vision, the Forensics program has set the following three goals:

Goal 1: Maintain and enhance the quality academic experience offered by the Gustavus Forensics Program in order to provide students with a solid liberal arts experience, leadership development opportunities, and prepare them for graduate school.

Goal 2: Elevate the national prominence of the program in order to provide an enhanced academic experience and to recruit high quality students to the college and the program.

Goal 3: Position the program as a forensics training resource for the region.

#### **1.4 Programs**

N/A

#### **1.5 Support relationships**

The forensics program has developed strong relationships with the offices across campus that are critical to the growth and visibility of the program; many of these have proven productive and vital as we work toward developing a sustainable nationally ranked program.

The Admission Office has been central to our increased recruiting efforts. Our recruiting paradigm has changed significantly from targeting students once they reach campus to a more active approach of targeting students early in the recruiting process. The office has been slow in adapting to this change in recruiting philosophy. The Admission Office has graciously provided financial and staff support for the Gustavus Summer Speech Institute. They have dedicated time during Scholarship Days for an informational session, and Mark Anderson played a vital role in our securing forensics scholarships for prospective students. Though often cooperative, Admission must recognize that the forensics program is a deciding factor for prospective students and one that all Admission counselors should be promoting vigorously.

With the support of Alumni Relations, we developed the Gustavus Friends of Forensics, a network of alumni, parents, and friends who are committed to making Gustavus Forensics the paradigm for competitive forensics, and hosted the first Friends of Forensics Reunion. Alumni Relations also provided financial assistance in launching the annual Nationals Preparation Weekend, designed to increase student-alumni mentoring. We have begun a partnership with Alumni Relations in hopes of developing stronger communication between our program and alumni.

The Provost's Office has been a solid contributor to these efforts, particularly in providing additional funding for national tournaments. These resources are not, however, designed to supply the level of support we need for long-term sustainability. This should be the place of the Office of Institutional Advancement, but it has proven to be a much less potent resource. Though

often cooperative in consultation and brainstorming, there has been little support or follow-through on funding initiatives. In recent months, we have made progress in this area, and we are confident that a plan is in place to provide necessary budget relief.

A similar circumstance exists with Marketing and Communication. As our program has developed several noteworthy features, including a nationally ranked Forensics Program, multiple All-Americans, national finalists, and the development of the Gustavus Summer Speech Institute, we have looked to Marketing and Communication for help in getting the word out about these unique accomplishments at Gustavus. With persistence and by our own efforts, we have managed to generate a small amount of national attention; however, this model is not sustainable, and we would benefit from additional support from this office.

With support of Dining Services, we have been able to attract prestigious collegiate and high school forensics tournaments, a boon for the college in recruiting and funding. Moreover, in conjunction with Summer Programs, they have played an essential role in the development of the summer speech institute.

## **Section 2 Strategic Review**

### **2.1 Strategic issues**

Communication Studies is in the midst of a ten year review that includes a self study, an invited review by current students and alumni, and an external review. The forensics program will be conducting a parallel review. The review process as well as ongoing conversations provide the information base from which we draw the following analysis.

#### **Strengths (internal)**

The Forensics program has grown exponentially since 2002, from five students in 2002 to a consistent average of 20-25 students. Our program is comprised of students majoring in virtually every discipline offered at Gustavus. Program growth has resulted in a parallel growth in the number of students consistently traveling. A larger program generates more opportunities for local, regional, and national recognition. Being nationally ranked is especially impressive considering we are one of 14 schools to be ranked in consecutive years and only one of two private liberal arts colleges.

Since 2002, our program has attained several first time accomplishments in our program's storied history.

- Placing 20<sup>th</sup> at the 2008 and 2007 American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournaments
- 2008 Minnesota Collegiate Forensics Association State Champions

- Three American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament All-Americans
- Two Pi Kappa Delta All-Americans
- Out round participants at the 2008 and 2007 American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournaments
- Qualified for the Interstate Oratorical Association National Contest four consecutive years, including two semifinalists and one finalist
- Student representative on the Pi Kappa Delta National Council

The impetus for the Gustavus Adolphus College Summer Speech Institute has been and will continue to be recruiting. Minnesota has had a long storied tradition of producing nationally recognized competitors. Our vision is to make Gustavus the center for forensics training and competition in the region, a regional hub for community service. If a Minnesota student wants to stay in state and compete in college, we want Gustavus to be the focal point. Recruiting dictates virtually every decision we make from curricular development to institute gifts. We intentionally expose students to the campus: dorms, academic spaces, library, campus center, arboretum and other significant campus locations. As one student put it, "I am coming to the institute for a one week recruiting visit."

The best recruiting strategy we have developed is the GAC-SSI Banquet. We invite each student's parents, high school coach(es), Admission Office staff, and influential college administrators. In addition to showing the slideshow, we invite a keynote speaker to address the audience. We have been fortunate to secure Larry Schnoor and Gustavus Adolphus College President, Jack Ohle. We conclude the evening with the awards ceremony. Last summer, 200 hundred guests attended the 2008 GAC-SSI Banquet. I make sure to greet each guest as they exit the banquet hall. This is an opportunity to strike a chord with the parents. Post institute evaluations reflect that students find the banquet to be the highlight of the week, and we typically receive several e-mails from parents communicating a similar message.

We have been successful recruiting students from GAC-SSI. We estimate we should be able to secure commitments from 10% of the students who attended the institute. Considering Gustavus' cost reduces our prospective pool, we are ecstatic about being able to recruit 10% of attendees. Half of our freshmen class attended a speech institute. The summer speech institute has enabled our program to attract and recruit a higher caliber forensics competitor and has given our program a foot in the door. Our post institute evaluations tell us that the institute increased interest in Gustavus and collegiate forensics. Because of the programs national recognition and the success of the summer speech institute, we have been able to attract exceptional students from the Midwest and are starting to develop a more national recruiting base.

GAC-SSI is the sufficient cause for our developing stronger relationships with the high school coaching community. The high school community is open to fostering mutually beneficial

relationships. GAC-SSI is the sole reason the Minnesota State High School League approached us to host the state speech tournament, attracting 625 competitors to our campus. GAC-SSI put the Gustavus Forensics program on the state map.

While we spend a great deal of time traveling and competing, we have managed to develop a presence within the Gustavus and St. Peter communities. Our community service includes, collecting food for the St. Peter Area Food Shelf, raising money for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, volunteering time at The Kitchen serving a free meal to those in need, selling brownies to raise money for The Kitchen, adopting a two mile stretch of highway near LeCenter, MN, coaching the local Robotics Team, and volunteer forensics coaching at St. Peter and Mankato Loyola High Schools.

The Director of Forensics is actively involved in regional and national forensics organizations.

- Governor, Pi Kappa Delta Province of the Northern Lights (Present)
- American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament Staff (Present)
- Valley Forensics League Executive Committee (Present)
- Mid America Forensics League Executive Committee (Present)
- Minnesota Collegiate Forensics Association Executive Committee (Present)
- AFA District Four Committee

Because the program has a solo director, we rely heavily on a peer-coaching model. This paradigm creates a shared construction of the art being produced and forces the student to make strategic choices about theory, technique, content, and organization. Furthermore, it forces a student to constantly evaluate his/her communication choices, and it has enabled the program to develop students that are especially well equipped to help others become stronger oral communicators, better critical thinkers, and more involved citizens. We send students to graduate school with a coaching philosophy that is pedagogically sound. Several forensics students have been accepted to graduate school, medical school, and law school.

The program has undertaken efforts to communicate with alumni and other external audiences. The forensics newsletter, available on-line, and our web presence are effective mediums we utilize to share our successes with alumni and prospective students.

A small number of alumni are committed and highly involved in the program. We have cultivated a strong alumni network since 2002 that is especially useful for additional coaching opportunities, judging regional tournaments, and for establishing mentoring relationships.

The College's excellent facilities and catering services combined with the program's strong reputation have enabled the program to be chosen to host several prestigious collegiate and high school forensics tournaments. These events showcase the college, attract prospective students, and generate revenue for the college.

### **Weaknesses (internal)/Challenges (external)**

The forensics program operates under a sole staff model to serve twenty-one students, forcing the director of forensics to play the role of coach, recruiter, fundraiser, mentor, publicist/promoter, bus driver, trip coordinator, tournament director, financial secretary, and advocate. Because of these responsibilities combined with teaching two classes per semester and directing the summer speech and coaching institutes, the program is not sustainable under the current model. We have the smallest coaching staff in the state and region. Moreover, we were the only program to place in the top 20 at the 2008 American Forensics Association National Individual Events Tournament with a one person coaching staff.

Our program's growth has brought much success while straining its director. It has become exceedingly difficult to meet the practice needs of each student in order to compete at a high level with our current coaching staff of one. The program's growth has also limited the amount of time one can dedicate to each student, decreasing the educational experience for both the competitor and coach, and the overall competitiveness of the program.

Our successes have and will continue to strain our budget. Forensics participation has increased the number of students participating, the number of students traveling on a regular basis, and the events entered at each tournament. Of the 21 members on the team, we regularly travel twelve students per tournament. This translates to 40-45 entries per tournament, doubling our entry fees compared to previous years. The college's tournament fees budget is **\$7,028.00**, and we exhausted this budget line in early January. Moreover, traveling with more students has required additional transportation, hotel, and meal expenses. After talking with colleagues across the country, it has become evident that our cost per mile is exponentially higher. Traveling with more students and having students participating in more events will make funding the national tournaments problematic.

We are grateful for the budget increases we have received over the past four years, but those increases have not kept pace with the growing student participation, increasing number of tournament entry fees, and rising transportation and hotel expenses. This funding shortfall will necessitate a conversation about providing funding to meet these demands in order to ensure the long-term survival of the program.

We have been working with Institutional Advancement for the better part of five years in an attempt to establish an endowment. This process has been at a standstill and has not provided the budget relief we desperately need. Progress has been made in the previous months, and we hope the current plan will be fruitful.

Our \$2,000 National Forensics League Scholarship does not reflect the national prominence of our program. We have the third largest scholarship in the state of Minnesota. We continue to lose quality students to schools with larger forensics scholarships and overall larger financial aid packages. The College's decision to offer a \$4,000 per year scholarship to each Minnesota State High School League State Champion will help to bridge this gap. Our forensics peer institutions are not, for the most part, the same institutions Gustavus is competing against for prospective students. This creates a unique opportunity that Admission and Financial Aid have yet to fully recognize.

We have made tremendous strides with the Admission Office since 2002 and we are grateful for their support. More needs to be done to establish that Gustavus is becoming a school known for its forensics program and is a deciding factor for prospective students. Moreover, the program is beginning to attract students that otherwise would not have applied to Gustavus. GAC-SSI post evaluations support the above claims.

While the department fully supports the program, the support seems to be contingent upon the constellation of departmental faculty. While this concern is minimized based upon the current faculty composition, it is a concern for the future.

Because the program operates under a single coach model, the decision-making is centralized. While this creates a clear chain of command, it forces the director to make decisions related to the program without input from colleagues with a background in forensics. Furthermore, the director is the program. Should the director leave, the continuity of the program and its vision would be in danger of being lost.

The collegiate forensics season spans the entire academic year traveling 80% of the weekends. The duration of the season has perpetuated the high burnout rate amongst coaches.

The national tournament qualification system is complex and forces the program to travel frequently in order to construct an entry that will enable the program to compete at a national level.

Collegiate forensics is moving towards a Saturday/Sunday tournament model forcing students to sacrifice social and study time. It also creates a seven-day workweek for the director where he/she rarely gets a break from student/professor contact. Forensics is time and labor intensive.

While the current state of the economy will negatively impact collegiate forensics, many colleges and universities are forgoing hosting tournaments due to facility charges. This could force our program to travel larger distances negatively impacting our transportation budget. When looking at ways to save money, we often travel late at night to avoid paying additional hotel expenses. It also forces students to drive ten passenger vehicles during the early am hours. This model has serious safety ramifications.

### **Opportunities (External)**

The Forensics program is well positioned to make the most of the external opportunities before it, especially if resource, time, and other weaknesses and challenges are addressed.

The College has the opportunity to elevate the national status of the program and the college. Given the staff and budgetary resources, the program is prepared to build upon the program's record of success. To do so fully, we must solidify opportunities for more students, more championships, and more national recognition. This will require traveling a more national schedule with more flying tournaments.



Continuing to build on our national success will broaden the college's recruiting base and attract more diverse students. To do this, we must take advantage of the junior college forensics circuits in California, Illinois, and Florida. Forensics is the hook that will attract prospective students to Gustavus that otherwise would have little to no knowledge of the college. Junior college students have a forensics and academic collegiate record of success. Furthermore, junior college students require a small financial commitment on the part of the College. It is a two-year financial aid commitment vs. the traditional four-year commitment. We also have the opportunity to expand our summer speech institute offering, which would directly influence recruiting and bolster our reputation as a regional leader in forensics training.

The department excitedly looks forward to a new academic building. Our current facilities do not meet student or faculty needs, as has been described in building-project meetings over the past few years. Inviting, communal space will encourage student-student and student-faculty interaction enhancing team cohesion.

The department's record of heavy investment in International Education reflects our commitment to facilitating our students' study of communication in diverse contexts. Moreover, it reflects our appreciation of the global nature of communication that will undoubtedly impact our students' professional, civic, and personal lives. The program would welcome an opportunity to build upon the college's International Education opportunities. For example, students could travel to India or China to teach advocacy and presentation skills. Course development in other areas of the world requires forming relationships, visiting sites, and more.

Student-related opportunities are the most important to the department and its faculty. We have not been able to facilitate faculty or student research projects with a forensics focus. Expansion of student and student-faculty research and scholarship can readily occur. Again, with additional resources, the program could help students present this work on a local, regional, and national scale, enhancing graduate school prospects for interested students.

## **2.2 Barriers**

To maximize the opportunities outline above and to elevate the program, the college needs to hire an Assistant Director of Forensics. Our program runs the risk of moving in a downward trajectory or becoming stagnant without the addition of this position. In order to create a sustainable nationally ranked program, it will take a campus-wide commitment and a coordinated plan amongst offices central to the program's success. This includes Admission, Institutional Advancement, Alumni Relations, Summer Programs, College Relations, Provost's Office, and the President's Office.

To fully realize its strategic goals and objectives, the program requires administrative cooperation and support that is sufficient, consistent and well coordinated. The program is well positioned to play an enlarged role in helping the College meet its overall strategic objectives in Admissions, Advancement, International Education, Marketing and Communication, and Alumni Relations. Our nationally renowned forensics program could serve as an important recruiting vehicle for attracting minority students and for increasing the geographical reach and impact of the College's admissions activities. We have strong relationships with program alumni and have

developed noteworthy communication materials to reach them. Our students produce a nationally caliber product that could be highlighted for potential students, parents, and donors.

Unfortunately, to work effectively, these activities require a much clearer delineation of roles, expectations, objectives, and tactics than presently exists. The program would welcome a conversation with representatives from Admissions, Advancement, Marketing and Communication, Summer Programs, and Alumni Relations to determine the most productive ways to contribute to the College's success in these areas. Our present ad hoc approach is unlikely to succeed.

### **Section 3 Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations**

#### **Goal 1: Maintain and enhance the quality academic experience offered by the Gustavus Forensics Program in order to provide students with a solid liberal arts experience, leadership development opportunities, and prepare them for graduate school.**

Forensics is an academic endeavor, and the emphasis of the Gustavus Forensics Program on providing an academic experience that is interdisciplinary and prepares students for leadership and graduate study supports the College's mission and strategic plan. Competitive participation throughout the season and in national tournaments provides students with a distinct liberal arts experience. Maintaining and enhancing the program's solid academic experience will require resources.

Strategic Initiative 1.1: Provide students with a consistent high quality and sufficient quantity of coaching and mentoring.

Tactic: Secure an assistant director of forensics to provide coaching, travel, and administrative support for the forensics program.

Strategic Initiative 1.2: Sustain and enhance regional and national travel schedule that guarantees quality competition and superior learning experiences.

Tactic: Secure an assistant director of forensics to provide coaching, travel, and administrative support for the forensics program.

Tactic: Work with Institutional Advancement and the Provost's Office to secure resources for tournament travel.

Strategic Initiative 1.3: Expand opportunities for student, student-faculty, and faculty research

Tactic: Secure increased funding for research and conference presentations.

Tactic: Through an additional faculty line (assistant director of forensics), provide time for faculty research and for faculty to work with students.

**Goal 2: Elevate the national prominence of the program in order to provide an enhanced academic experience and to recruit high quality students to the college and the program.**

For individual students, competitive participation at top regional and national tournaments provides students with a superb academic experience and a pathway to graduate study in forensics at quality programs. The Program's continued success at national tournaments creates a national reputation and a strong recruiting base for the program and for the college to attract talented and potentially diverse students.

Strategic Initiative 2.1: Secure resources to enhance the ability of the program to compete on a national level.

Tactic: Secure an assistant director of forensics to provide coaching, travel, and administrative support for the forensics program and free the director to devote time to resource developing, recruiting, and relationship building within the forensics community.

Tactic: Work with Institutional Advancement to establish an endowment to provide sufficient budget relief enabling our program to travel a more nationally competitive schedule.

Tactic: Increase scholarship budget to reflect a program of national caliber.

Tactic: Maintain our current program size of 20-25 competitors.

Strategic Initiative 2.2: Boost recruiting efforts by enhancing current and developing new programs and initiatives.

Tactic: Expand the Gustavus Summer Speech Institute by offering multiple institutes attracting more prospective students and fostering stronger relationships with prospective students at an early age.

Tactic: Work with the Alumni Office to identify alumni that wish to be actively involved with the program and build stronger relationships with program alumni. This will include developing the Gustavus Forensics Hall of Fame and hosting alumni reunions.

Strategic Initiative 2.3: Develop relationships with forensics entities, which support the Summer Speech Institute and recruiting efforts in general.

Tactic: Continue to host the Minnesota State High School League State Speech Tournament and offer each state champion a significant forensics scholarship.

Tactic: Attend the National Forensics League High School National Tournament to recruit prospective students and to elevate our programs national visibility.

Tactic: Attend the National Phi Rho Pi Community College Tournament

**Goal 3: Position the program as a forensics training resource for the region.**

The emphasis of the Gustavus Forensics Program on serving the regional and national forensics community reflects the mission of the college and provides opportunities in line with the College's Strategic Plan. The successful Summer Speech Institute and the upcoming Coach's Institute support the College's Strategic Plan and positions the program to develop further programming and to further strengthen its relationship with the forensics community. This relationship and resources to reach out to diverse students assist in successful recruiting of high quality students to the program and to the College.

Strategic Initiative 3.1: Secure resources necessary to build a quality support program for regional forensics.

Tactic: Secure an assistant director of forensics to provide coaching, travel, and administrative support for the forensics program and allow time to the director to devote to program development and relationship building within the forensics community.

Strategic Initiative 3.2: Enhance and develop programming to support the regional forensics community.

Tactic: Develop the Gustavus Summer Coaching Institute for high school speech coaches.

Tactic: Expand the Gustavus Summer Speech Institute by offering multiple institutes attracting more prospective students.

Tactic: Work with Institutional Advancement and the Diversity Center to secure institute tuition scholarships to attract more underprivileged students.

Strategic Initiative 3.3: Develop relationships with the forensics community to provide a foundation for programming.

Tactic: Continue to build relationships with the Minnesota high school community and expand relationships with the high school communities in the region by attending state and regional high school conventions. By casting a broader net, we will be able to recruit talented faculty to work the institute and expand our recruiting base.

Tactic: Attend the National Forensics League High School National Tournament to recruit prospective students and to elevate the national visibility of the program and College.

#### **Section 4      Assessment**

##### **Goal 1: Maintain and enhance the quality academic experience offered by the Gustavus Forensics Program in order to provide students with a solid liberal arts experience, leadership development opportunities, and prepare them for graduate school.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 1, we will have an assistant director of forensics who will allow for more and better coaching and mentoring, a travel schedule that accentuates educational opportunities, and a vibrant student and faculty research program. Once we have an assistant director in place, the educational experience of students can be assessed by their performance in courses and in tournaments. Student surveys and reflection sessions focused on their academic experiences will provide useful data. Student, student-faculty, and faculty research will be recorded and tracked.

##### **Goal 2: Elevate the national prominence of the program in order to provide an enhanced academic experience and to recruit high quality students to the college and the program.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 2, the program will have established national reputation. The academic experience will be assessed through measuring student performance in their courses and at tournaments. Student surveys and reflection sessions focused on their academic experience in forensics will provide useful data. The program's recruiting efforts will be tracked as to how many students the program draws to Gustavus (including those who do not participate in the program). The recruiting data will include where students are from, their ACT scores, and other relevant information. Additionally, the academic and forensic performance and the involvement of these students will be tracked during their four years at Gustavus. Alumni surveys will provide longitudinal data.

##### **Goal 3: Position the program as a forensics training resource for the region.**

In order to demonstrate that we have achieved Goal 3, the program will have enhanced offerings for the regional forensics community. The Summer Speech Institute will continue to be assessed with student evaluations and surveys regarding student interest in Gustavus. Recruiting efforts related to the Institute will continue to be tracked and measured. The Coach's Institute will be assessed through participant evaluations. Experienced high school coaches will also be asked to evaluate the workshop. As much as possible, program and College recruits who come as a result of participating coaches will be recorded and tracked. Once resources are made available to attend high school and junior college national tournaments, the associated recruiting efforts will also be tracked. The academic and forensic performance and the involvement of students

recruited via these endeavors will be tracked during their four years at Gustavus. Alumni surveys will provide longitudinal data.

**The Forensics Program Strategic Plan approved by the undersigned tenured, tenure-track, and continuing faculty members of the Department of Communication Studies, May 2009.**

Leila Brammer, Associate Professor/Chair

Patricia English, Associate Professor

Kris Kracht, Instructor/Director of Forensics

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