

## ACTION ITEM #13

### Replacement of Existing Bachelor's Degree (Erica Weintraub Austin)

May 6, 2016

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

SUBJECT: Replacement of Bachelor's Degree

PROPOSED: That the Board of Regents replace the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication with three new Bachelor of Arts Degrees

SUBMITTED BY: Erica Weintraub Austin, Interim Co-Provost

SUPPORTING  
INFORMATION:

The Murrow College of Communication proposes to replace its Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication with the following new degrees:

- Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Society (Pullman)
- Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Media Production (Pullman)
- Bachelor of Arts in Strategic Communication (Pullman, Everett, Vancouver, and the Global Campus)

There are 5 reasons why the Murrow College of Communication is proposing to replace the current single communication degree into 3 separate degrees.

1. *Differentiation between degrees:* The three proposed degrees (which are identical to the current three Majors) share only 13 credits, including college pre-requisites, a one credit orientation course and six credits of college core courses. Thus, each proposed degree contains an additional 24-30 credits unique to each degree.
2. *Accreditation:* The College intends to pursue accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). Dividing the communication degree into three separate degrees will improve its ability to achieve accreditation by seeking accreditation for only Strategic Communication and Journalism and Media Production. Communication and Society falls outside the parameters of ACEJMC as an accrediting body.
3. *Industry demand:* the current degree designation of "communication" is generally applied to programs that offer a

theoretically focused approach to the field of communication and its impact on society. The fact that the students' areas of specialization is not reflected on their degree is an impediment on the job market as employers are looking for students with expertise in areas of specialization such as Journalism & Media Production and Strategic Communication.

4. *Evolution of a new college:* Restructuring of the degree is part of the evolution of the Murrow College, which transitioned from school within the College of Liberal Arts to a stand-alone college in 2008. The new degree structure reflects the restructuring of the curriculum in 2011. Enrollment has nearly doubled since Murrow became a college. Given the number of students at the time of transition, a division into three separate degrees did not make sense. With the current AAFTE, that is now practical and logical.
5. *Programmatic and Budget Considerations:* The Murrow College intends to split into 3 separate departments to house the degree programs. Currently, the college has "Sequence Leads" in each of the 3 sequences (Majors) that will be elevated to degree programs. The three Sequence Leads will become the three Chairs of the departments in which the degree programs will be housed. Given this change in name only to the existing structure, there are no changes in numbers of faculty, student enrollment, budget structures, or course/curriculum changes. Accompanying administrative support is also anticipated to be minimal.

It is anticipated that designation of degree specialization will be a benefit to students on the job market. In addition, students will benefit from being able to minor in, or double major, in differentiated but related degrees.

At a meeting on February 2, 2016, the Academic Affairs Committee approved the proposal to replace the Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication with the three degrees denoted above with an effective date of fall 2016. The proposal has support from the Provost, Budget Committee, and Catalog Subcommittee. This recommendation was passed by the Faculty Senate on February 25, 2016.