

Appendix G: Support Letters
(See separate File: Appendix G Support letters)

MEMORANDUM

February 17, 2009

To: Shea Howell, Chair
 Department of Communication
 and Journalism

From: Susan E. Hawkins, Chair
 Department of English

Re: Proposed M.A. in Communication

This memo is written in support of the new MA proposed by the Department of Communication and Journalism. This new program offers a three-track Masters, including Media Studies and Critical Cultural Communication Studies. These two areas in particular share a congruence with literary and cinema studies. In fact, the English Department's new B.A. in Cinema Studies includes two courses—COM 385 and COM 387—as possible elective courses in the Interdisciplinary category of the major.

Furthermore, I can also foresee cinema majors finding tremendous value in, and contributing in interesting and informed ways to, the pursuit of graduate work in Media Studies. This strikes me as particularly the case once the Cinema Studies digital film production track is up and running.

The new MA in Communication will provide Oakland students with greater options and opportunities at the graduate level. Such a Masters will expose students to a variety of theoretically sophisticated frameworks for approaching media, cultural studies, and communication. This can only be a good thing for our students and for the academic community at Oakland.



Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences

Rochester, Michigan 48309-4483
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November 30, 2008

To: Members of the Graduate Committee

From: Karen A.J. Miller, Chair, Department of History *KAM*

I have been asked to comment on the proposal for the M.A. degree in Communication that is being considered for approval. I am supportive of this program. I believe it is well conceived and can be executed effectively by the department. Once in place, it will improve the intellectual climate of the university and enrich the graduate education program.

This is a program with a clearly delineated structure for students. The existence of core courses will help to generate a group dynamic as cohorts travel through the program. At the same time, the requirement for specialization in one of the three subfields will enable students to focus their attention on a specific area of communication studies and develop a reasonable expertise. This structure should help retention and encourage students to complete the degree in a deliberate fashion.

The three areas of specialization—critical cultural communication, interpersonal communication, and media studies—reflect the research strengths of the department's full time faculty. Students will certainly benefit from the opportunity to work with these scholars, but the environment created by an MA program should benefit the department in other ways. Their presence will facilitate faculty publication more than an undergraduate-only program. The synergy created by the presence of graduate students should generate a more exciting research setting that will benefit the entire department.

The creation of an MA program in Communication should also affect graduate students in other humanities and social sciences disciplines. The presence of specialists in communication theory will stimulate thinking in other departments and hopefully facilitate a broader exchange of ideas. If Oakland University is going to improve its efforts in graduate education, we need to have a larger graduate student community in these core areas of the liberal arts.

I am happy that this MA program is designed to equally benefit those who wish to pursue a PhD program as well as those who seek a terminal MA. The presence of those who realistically have the capability to go into advanced graduate work will provide a much better atmosphere for intellectual development. All students in the program will benefit from their presence. Ultimately, Oakland's reputation as a nationally known graduate institution will rest on our ability, not to generate technocrats, but to produce scholars.

I am confident that this program is well conceived and will be implemented so as to strengthen the academic environment of the university.

If you have any questions, I would be happy to try to address them.



Department of Linguistics

Rochester, Michigan 48309-4401
(248) 370-2175 Fax: (248) 370-3144

December 1, 2008

Prof. Sharon Howell
Department of Communication and Journalism
317 Wilson Hall

Dear Prof. Howell,

The Linguistics Department strongly supports the proposed Master of Arts in Communication. The program will provide students with a sound foundation in communication studies and methodology, as well as allow the students to examine one area of communication in greater detail. The three tracks, critical cultural communication, interpersonal communication, and media studies are all areas of great interest and areas to which students can make a contribution. The proposed program has a clearly defined curriculum that will prepare students for careers in communications or prepare students for more advanced degrees in the field.

Language and communication are at the core of the human experience. Given the ease with which we communicate and the subconscious natures of the behavior, it is easy to underestimate the inextricable link between language, communication, and social identity. The study of communication reveals these links to provide a better understanding of human interaction in sociological, cultural, and psychological contexts. The proposed Master of Arts in Communication will give the students an excellent opportunity to explore the various facets of these complex links.

I have no doubt that this program will be successful. There is a natural curiosity in communication and I believe this will attract students with various academic interests. Graduates from this program will be employed in numerous industries from teaching to business and media, and the curriculum of the MA in Communication will ensure that the students will receive the training they require to meet any challenge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Sam Rosenthal'.

Sam Rosenthal
Associate Professor and Chair


To: Committees on Curriculum and New Programs
From: Paul Kubicek, Chair, Political Science
Re: Proposal for MA in Communication

I have read the draft proposal for an MA in Communication. I find the proposal ambitious and exciting. I think that the fields of study are intellectually stimulating, and I would think that the creation of such a program would strengthen both the Communications and Journalism Department and the intellectual life of the campus as a whole. As political scientists, we would be interested in particular in the development of programs on media studies and cross-cultural communication, and we would hope that the existence of this program would lead to events (e.g. lectures, symposia, research projects) that would engage students and raise the profile of our university. I am particularly impressed by the high admission standards that the program seeks to establish. I think it is critical that we not only develop more graduate programs but that we ensure that the ones we put forward are of the highest quality. My impression is that the department has strengths in all the areas listed, so that we could move on this without major investment in faculty resources. I cannot speak to the marketability of such a program, but it seems to me that people are coming back for additional degrees and that a degree in Communications can be useful in a number of settings (e.g. media, education, public relations, etc.). I therefore give this proposal my endorsement.

Paul Kubicek

MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

TO: Shea Howell, Chair
Communication and Journalism

FROM: Albert J. Meehan, Chair 
Sociology and Anthropology

RE: Support for the Master of Arts in Communication

DATE: February 17, 2009

The Department of Sociology and Anthropology is very pleased to support the proposed Master of Arts in Communication to be offered by your department. Our disciplines have long shared intellectual and research interests that intersect in the area of interpersonal communication, critical cultural studies and mass media. At Oakland University, our departments have cross listed courses together and members of our faculty have developed mutual research interests that continue the interdisciplinary focus that has long thrived in the College of Arts and Sciences, owing in part to your concerted efforts. It is in this spirit that we offer our full and unequivocal support for your program—an idea whose time has arrived in a department that has worked hard to position itself to offer a high quality graduate program.

Based upon the data in your proposal, it is clear that students desire a Master of Arts degree in Communication and that your department is in a unique position to serve those students. Speaking not only as Chair, but as someone who has served on the CAP and FRPC, I have been impressed by the caliber of your faculty hires which have increased the research focus and national visibility of your program. Graduate students will greatly benefit from the research expertise of the faculty you have put together. The program's focus on critical, cultural communication studies will also make it distinctive and be a definite draw for students. I am particularly impressed by the program's commitment to train students in both quantitative and qualitative methods. This will not only expose students to cutting edge theorizing and methodology in the field, but also provide a rigorous Master of Arts for those students who continue on to the Ph.D.

I congratulate you on putting together a well conceived curriculum and wish you luck. I think students will be banging down the doors to get in!



Department of Rhetoric, Communication & Journalism
College of Arts and Sciences

Rochester, Michigan 48309-4492
(248) 370-4120

To: Sharon Howell, Chair
Department of Communication & Journalism

From: Marshall Kitchens, Chair
Department of Writing and Rhetoric

RE: Master of Arts Degree in Communication.

Date: November 25, 2008

After reviewing the materials provided for us by the department of communication and journalism, we are happy to endorse this program.

The theoretical basis is clear and focused and the courses provide a solid foundation in the field. We think it is compatible with many of the ideas and issues developed within our program and would be a natural choice for our students interested in pursuing a master's degree.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Marshall Kitchens', followed by a horizontal line.

Marshall Kitchens

Chair, Department of Writing and Rhetoric