

# NEW DEGREE PROGRAM APPLICATION

## 1. Degree Program Title and Overview

*What is the specific title of the proposed degree program as it would be listed in the IBHE Program Inventory? The name should be what typically is used for similar programs nationally. Provide a **short** description of the program, including highlights of the program objectives and the careers, occupations, or further educational opportunities for which the program will prepare graduates.*

- Degree Program Title: Sports Communication, B.A., B.S.
- List in IBHE's Program Inventory: Yes
- Short Program Description: The Sports Communication program builds students' knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes in the ideation, planning, implementation, and evaluation of ethical and effective communication efforts specifically meant for sports and athletics organizations. The breadth and depth of sports includes all types, from professional, intercollegiate, and e-sports teams to equipment manufacturers, community programs, and venues for digital and physical action. Students will gain a robust foundation of theory and practice to understand why and how effective communication in the context of sports/athletics has a great impact on society, including issues such as identity and culture as it relates to race/gender/sexuality, DEIA, nationalism, commercial inequity, civic engagement, critiques of capitalism, hyper-masculinity, and others. An additional feature of the proposed program is an optional "Professional Mentorship Program" that would pair interested students with a sports communication professional during their enrollment in the program. This broad-based program, then, prepares students for the variety of careers as a sports communication professional, such as sports brand manager, sports promotion (public relations or advertising), broadcasting, sports/athletics event planner, sports agent, blogger, and many others.

## 2. Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code

*Recommend the University's preferred six-digit CIP code for this program.*

- CIP Code: 90.0906

## 3. Enrollment and Degree Projections for the First and Fifth Years of the Program

*In the Excel table below, summarize enrollment and degrees conferred projections for the program for the first and the fifth years of operation. If possible, indicate the number of full-time and part-time students to be enrolled each fall term in the notes section. If it is not possible to provide fall enrollments or fall enrollments are not applicable to this program, please indicate so and give a short explanation. The degree projections should encompass the fiscal year as reported to the IBHE.*

The University's goal in the first year is to enroll 45 of the 953 visitors that searched for a degree in sports. Note that these data undergird enrollment estimates for *new* students. This would correlate to a 2.5 to 3 percent conversion rate which is achievable. A good digital strategy along with adding sports management to all marketing materials should allow for increases in website searches, visits to campus, and applications for the program. Within a 5-year period, a conservative estimate would be to have a program of up to 180 *new* students enrolled in our program. Digital advertising will be placed in areas with high populations of underserved students. The proper financial aid packaging strategy to support each student will also be offered. Annual degrees awarded is based on ISU's most-recent graduation rate of 67.3%.

Among students already enrolled in the School of Communication's other majors, we know there to be some interest in sports communication among them to a level of (conservatively) approximately 8% of the School's 15-year average annual undergraduate enrollment of (i.e., 68 of 856 students). This interest would translate into a probable commensurate level of changes in majors to sports communication from the School's other majors as the major gains notoriety. The table below, then, shows students new to the sports communication program (SCP) *plus* in-School transfers to the new program, assuming the level of interest in SCP among students in the School's other majors results in transfers to SCP (conservatively estimated at the rate of an additional 2 percentage points or 17 students per year) in the program's first years until enrollment levels stabilize.

| <b>STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND DEGREE PROJECTIONS<br/>FOR THE PROPOSED PROGRAM</b> |            |   |
|---|------------|---|
|   | Year One   | 5th Year<br>(or when fully implemented) |
| Number of Program Majors (Fall Headcount)                                     | <b>113</b> | <b>251</b>                              |
| Annual Full-time-equivalent Majors (Fiscal Year)                              | <b>113</b> | <b>251</b>                              |
| Annual Number of Degrees Awarded  | 0          | <b>169</b>                              |

Add here any relevant notes (e.g., Students are to be enrolled in a cohort; all students will be enrolled part-time; etc.)

As the table shows, we expect the number of new students enrolling in the School of Communication (new and in-School transfers) to expand significantly, as the Sections 4 and 6 support. Given the explanation in the paragraph that precedes the table, the enrollment estimates for each line for year one and for year five show (new students) + (changed major) = (total estimated enrollment).

As the table shows, we expect the number of new students enrolling in the School of Communication (new and in-School transfers) to expand significantly, as the Sections 4 and 6 support. Given the preceding explanation about enrollment estimates, details for each line of the above table for year one and for year five are as follows:

|                                   | <b>Year one*</b>  | <b>Year five*</b>                                    |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--|
| Number of majors:                 | 45+68= <b>113</b> | 175+76= <b>251</b>                                   |
| Annual FTE majors (FY):           | 45+68= <b>113</b> | 175+76= <b>251</b>                                   |
| Annual number of degrees awarded: | <b>0</b>          | <b>169</b> (using ISU's avg. grad. Rate against 251) |

\* Formula used in columns: (new students) + (changed major) = (total estimate)

While we now have a minimum of faculty who can lead courses for this major program as proposed and launch the program successfully, we fully expect to need additional faculty focused on sports/athletics communication who also would develop new courses and refine/improve the program's curriculum. In fact, if the newer sports-comm. programs at competing institutions are any indications, rapid growth of our proposed program should meet or exceed enrollment projections very soon after offering it.

#### **4. Background**

Briefly describe the historical and institutional context of the program's development. Include a short summary of any existing program(s) upon which this program will be built and of any existing administrative unit(s) and programs(s) that will share resources with this program. (Note: Student and occupational demand for the program is addressed in #6 below.)

Sports garners an enormous amount of attention in our culture in the United States. The business of "major league" professional sports in the United States (e.g., auto racing, baseball, basketball, bowling, boxing, football, golf, hockey, jai alai, motorcycle racing, rodeo, skiing, soccer, tennis, wrestling), according to two *IBIS World* industry reports by Ristoff (2021, report 71121a) and by Daly (2021, report 71121b), is forecasted to bring in \$57.9 billion in by 2026. This result includes minor league professional and semiprofessional sports portion of the industry, which are usually training grounds for athletes who want to get into the major leagues and tend to garner great community support at very local levels. Importantly, add national collegiate sports, and the annual industry revenue nearly doubles. With so much money on the line in the overall business of spectator sports in America, effective sports/athletics communication as well as image management (and repair, when necessary) is absolutely essential.

Capitalizing on this level of socio-economic importance of sport, research specifically on the growth of sports communication programs in higher education shows definitively that the demand for sports communication is very much on the rise and that those higher-ed institutions that provide requisite resources for those programs sooner than later shall benefit and grow greatly (Hull, Choi, & Kian, 2019; <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695819835044>). Competing institutions' programs, especially those in other states, have been successful with a great many students

from Illinois. Data from ISU Admissions' "major search" page (in Oct. 2021) shows 286 unique events for sport or sports management within the last year. Additionally, for the same period of time, the key terms of "sport" or "sports" adds another 667 unique searches. ISU is, in effect, missing out on a very significant area of student demand but, fortunately, has the resources (from the School of Communication to Milner Library to the School of Kinesiology & Recreation) to begin to meet that demand for a sports communication program and, most important, grow with demand with additional resources.

## 5. Mission

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(1): A) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with the mission of the college or university; B) The objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are consistent with what the unit title implies.*

*Briefly describe how this program will support the University's mission, focus, and /or current priorities. Demonstrate the program's consistency with and centrality to that mission.*

The proposed Sports Communication program would be offered and managed within Illinois State University's School of Communication. Moreover, the proposed program would be the only one of its kind among the public state institutions of higher education, as Section 7 shows. The School's vision is "to obtain and maintain national recognition as one of the foremost centers of communication study in the discipline." Consistent with and complementary to ISU's objectives stated in its current strategic plan, *Educate •Connect •Elevate*, the School pursues the following objectives that support its vision: (1) enact academic excellence; (2) revitalize operational practices, physical infrastructure, and technology for continued academic excellence; (3) expand financial support for greater academic excellence; and (4) promote the School to constituents strategically.

The program in sports communication is designed to capitalize on an enormous opportunity to attract students to ISU and its School of Communication (see Sections 4 and 6). Broadly speaking, the program would educate students in the principles and practices in sports/athletics communication that would prepare them for a career as sports-communication professionals of any capacity. More particularly, the program would feature courses specifically in sports communication in multiple areas (e.g., mass media, public relations, digital channels) while also building students' knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes in the ideation, planning, implementation, and evaluation of ethical and effective communication efforts for sports and athletics organizations. Particularly, the program would cover, for example, identity and culture as it relates to race/gender/sexuality, DEIA, nationalism, commercial inequity, civic engagement, critiques of capitalism, hyper-masculinity, and others. The breadth and depth of sports includes all types, from professional and e-sports teams, to community programs and semi-professional leagues, to equipment manufacturers and venues for digital and physical action. This program's design, with a favorable number of required credit hours compared to other major programs and a respectable number of elective credit hours, allows students to learn foundational principles and practices while also giving them great flexibility in exploring other dimensions of sports/athletics communication that most interest them and leads to their degree. This program's objective, then, is to engender great appreciation and competence about the role of sports in society and, most important, prepare students with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes to be successful sports communication professionals, wherever that takes them.

## 6. Need for the Program and Future Employment and Additional Educational Opportunities for Graduates

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically justified based on the educational priorities and needs of the citizens of Illinois.*

*Explain how the program will meet the needs of regional and state employers, including any state agencies, industries, research centers, or other educational institutions that expressly encouraged the program's development. (If letters of support are available, include them in the appendix as an Adobe Acrobat (pdf) document.)*

*Discuss projected future employment and or additional educational opportunities for graduates of this program. Compare estimated demand with the estimated supply of graduates from this program and existing similar*

*programs in the state. Where appropriate, provide documentation by citing data from such sources as employer surveys, current labor market analyses, and future workforce projections. (Whenever possible, use state and national labor data, such as that from the Illinois Department of Employment Security at <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/default.aspx> and/or the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics at <http://www.bls.gov/>).*

The proposed Sports Communication program, as it falls within the CIP code given above, fits directly into the USBLS's category of "Entertainment and Sports Occupations." As the USBLS reports in its *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, "Overall employment in entertainment and sports occupations is projected to grow 13 percent from 2021 to 2031, much faster than the average for all occupations; this increase is expected to result in about 95,500 new jobs over the decade. In addition to new jobs from growth, opportunities arise from the need to replace workers who leave their occupations permanently. About 106,200 openings each year, on average, are projected to come from growth and replacement needs." More specifically, in the subcategories of "Entertainers and performers, sports and related workers, all other (27-2099)" and "Media and communication workers, all other (27-3099)," projected employment growth by 2031 is 34.1% and 40.6%, respectively.

Within the state of Illinois, the Sports Communication program falls within the IDES occupational category of "27-0000 Arts/Design/Entertainment, Sports/Media Occs," whose projected employment growth is 7.99% by 2030. On an industry basis, the projected annual compound growth rate for "711000 Performing Arts, Sports & Related Ind." is 5.82%. More specifically, there are two pertinent subcategories of occupations that apply:

- "27-2000 Entertainers, Performers, and Sports Workers," which includes several pertinent occupations, has projected employment growth of 14.83% by 2030. Of particular note in this subcategory is the very applicable occupation category of "27-2090 Misc. Entertain/Perform/Sport Workers" that is projected to grow by 34.62% by 2030.
- "27-3000 Media & Communication Workers," which includes most of the very applicable occupations, has a projected growth of 5.74%. It is noteworthy that, in this subcategory, the applicable occupation category of "27-3031 Public Relations Specialists" is projected to grow 10.28%.

This projected growth in these occupations signals a growing and lasting demand for competent entry-level (or better) higher-ed graduates from programs in sports communication. These data support (a) our observations from prospective students' numerous (and growing) inquiries about a communication program focused on sports and (b) alumni anecdotes and reported trends in pertinent sport-related industries. The projected growth of occupations and the industry bodes well for Illinois higher-education graduates of sports communication programs, but there are very few in Illinois of the 68 institutions in the nation that offer such a program (see [mymajors.com](http://mymajors.com); also see [niche.com](http://niche.com)). The opportunity for ISU to offer a new program in Sports Communication is both very timely and greatly needed.

#### Sources:

- USBLS (for "Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations" subcategories of "Entertainers and performers, sports and related workers, all other" and "Media and communication workers, all other": <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/about/data-for-occupations-not-covered-in-detail.htm#Arts,%20design,%20entertainment,%20sports,%20and%20media%20occupations>);
- IDES (for "Long-term Occupational Projections 2020-2030" and "Long-term Industry Projections 2020-2030": <https://ides.illinois.gov/resources/labor-market-information/employment-projections.html>)

## 7. Comparable Programs in Illinois

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(6): B The unit of instruction, research or public service meets a need that is not currently met by existing institutions and units of instruction, research or public service.*

*Identify similar programs and sponsoring institutions in the state, at both public and private colleges and universities. Compare the proposed program with these programs, and discuss its potential impact upon them.*

*For additional information about similar programs, check the Degree Program Inventory on the IBHE website ([https://www.ibhe.org/ProgInv\\_Prog.aspx](https://www.ibhe.org/ProgInv_Prog.aspx)) and review the Notice of Intent website for programs being planned (<https://legacy2.ibhe.org/ODA/tracking/NOI/NOISearch.asp>).*

The proposed sports communication program compares favorably with similar programs in Illinois, particularly the ones offering baccalaureate degrees. Very important, this proposed program would be the only one of its kind among public state institutions of higher education in Illinois. Given the analysis of the industry in Section 6 and enrollment projections in Section 3, the proposed program fills an area of great and even increasing need for a growing industry. No other higher-ed institution has filed an intent to propose a similar program.

| Institution                               | Key Characteristics  | Comparison to Proposed Program  |
|---|--|---|
| Bradley University (Peoria)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year program leads to B.A.</li> <li>• 42 credit hours required               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 hours of required courses (12 are focused on sport comm.)</li> <li>• 15 hours of elective COM courses and non-COM courses</li> </ul> </li> <li>• May include writing/production experience with student media</li> </ul>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year program leads to B.A./B.S.</li> <li>• 42 credit hours (200- and 300-level courses) in major required:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 hours of required courses (9 hours focused in sport comm.)</li> <li>• 15 hours of senior-level elective courses (9 hours must be at the 300 level)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one internship for credit (maximum of 6 hours may count toward graduation; only 3 hours will count toward the 300-level requirement)</li> <li>• Students may choose to participate in a professional mentorship program that pairs them with a sports communication professional to learn the business.</li> </ul> |
| DePaul University (Chicago)               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year program leads to B.A.</li> <li>• Can lead to a MS degree</li> <li>• 32 credit hours required               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 hours in core sports comm. courses</li> <li>• 3 concentrations (journalism, promotion &amp; publicity, &amp; society)</li> <li>• 16 hours in chosen concentration</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |   |
| Illinois Media School (Lombard & Chicago) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No focused program in sports communication.</li> <li>• Programs focus on production, on broadcasting, and on marketing/sales.</li> </ul>  |   |
| University of St. Francis (Joliet)        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers only an undergraduate certificate in sport comm.</li> <li>• Has a program in recreation &amp; sport management leading to B.A.</li> </ul>  |   |
| Wabash Valley College (Mt. Carmel)        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No focused program in sports communication.</li> <li>• Has a program in sport marketing &amp; media--60 credit hours req. for B.A.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 hours in broadcasting/media</li> <li>• 12 hours in sports topics</li> <li>• 12 hours electives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |   |

### 8. A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth

*IBHE is charged to develop a strategic plan to address the present and future aims and needs and requirements of higher education in Illinois (110 ILCS 205/6) (from Ch. 144, par. 186) Sec. 6).*

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(6): A) The unit of instruction, research or public service is educationally and economically justified based on the educational priorities and needs of the citizens of Illinois*

*Respond to the following questions about how the proposed program will support the three goals of A **Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth** Strategic Plan.*

- *Equity: Close the equity gaps for students who have historically been left behind*
- *Sustainability: Build a stronger financial future for individuals and institutions*
- *Growth: Increase talent and innovation to drive economic growth*

### **Equity**

1. Describe institutional-level plans to close equity gaps in access, progression, completion, and attainment and the implications for the proposed program. More specifically, provide institutional-level plans for attracting, recruiting, retaining, and completing a diverse group of students including working adults, students of color, transfer and low-income students. Explain how progress will be monitored. [See Equity Strategy #2]
2. Describe program and institution-based high-impact practices and wrap-around student support services ensuring equitable access and success for students enrolled in the proposed program. [See Equity Strategy #1]
3. Explain institutional strategies being implemented to increase and retain faculty, staff, and administrators of color and the implications for the proposed program. Explain how progress will be monitored. [See Equity Strategy #3]

### **Sustainability**

4. Describe strategies and initiatives the institution plans to implement that makes the proposed program and college more generally affordable for students and their families, including those who have been historically underserved. [See Sustainability Strategy #1]
5. Provide tuition cost analysis for comparable programs and institutions in Illinois.

### **Growth**

6. Provide a supply and demand analysis for the proposed program that, at minimum, does the following:
  - a) Provides evidence of student interest in the proposed program including any strategies to incentivize students to stay in Illinois. [See Growth Strategy #3]
  - b) Identifies and provides evidence of a high-quality credential with viability for future careers. [See Growth Strategy #3]
7. Explain how the program engaged with business and industry in its development and how it will spur the state's economy by leveraging partnerships with local, regional, and state industry, business leaders and employers. [See Growth Strategy #3]
8. Describe how the proposed program will expand access and opportunities for students regarding high-impact practices including research opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, career pathways, and other field experiences. [See Growth Strategy #6]
9. Explain how the proposed program will expand its models of teaching and learning, research, and/or public service and outreach that provide opportunity for students to succeed in the work of the future. [See Growth Strategy #6]
10. Beyond workforce need, describe how the program broadly addresses societal needs (e.g., cultural or liberal arts contribution, lifelong learning of Illinois residents, or civic participation).

(For more information about each of the three goals of the **A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth** Strategic Plan, go to the IBHE website: <https://ibhestrategicplan.ibhe.org/>).

The sports communication program would follow all guidelines that are stipulated by Illinois State University. These guidelines [equity](#), [sustainability](#), and [growth](#) are articulated and available online at ISU's website, and all are tied to Illinois State's strategic plan, [Educate •Connect •Elevate](#). ISU has a highly active focus on student success through its [Enrollment Management and Academic Services](#) unit, which builds upon the highly successful programs and services available through ISU's [University College](#) that enables students to take good advantage of their higher education experiences in and out of the classroom. The sports communication program (SCP), being part of the School of Communication (COM) at ISU, would benefit from all resources for attracting, enrolling, retaining, and graduating students, especially those from underrepresented groups. The School of Communication has shared its commitment to [antiracism](#) and involvement in [civic engagement](#).

In terms of industry-academic interaction, the School's [professional practice \("internship"\) program](#) is especially strong and successful, as nearly 75% of all COM students have at least one internship and nearly 45% have two or more internships by the time they graduate. This successfulness comes from the consistent and constant advocacy for such pre-professional experience for all COM students while recognizing that some students just may not be able

to partake of this opportunity because of their personal life situations. In addition to the internship opportunities, many classes involve full-time professionals to be guest speakers and, if possible, clients for students to work with in assignments that apply content from the class in which they are enrolled and other classes building up to it. The optional “Professional Mentorship Program” would pair interested students with a sports communication professional so the students can learn the business from an “insider.” Among these professionals in the sport-communication industry, many are ISU alumni from COM who, along with being critical to improving the program, can be important connections for students to begin their careers.

Students motivated to explore a subject from a specific class or the program in general can ask faculty for guidance on a project of their own or express interest in working on a faculty member’s own research project. Many COM faculty have published or presented research they coauthored with students, and many students have done the same for their own projects for which COM faculty guided them.

The analysis in **Sections 3-6** bear out the foreseeable future and the brightness for the proposed program’s future as a valuable and valued liberal arts contributor to society because of the high-quality graduates from the sports communication program.

## 9. Program Description and Requirements

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(b)(1): [applicable only to new units of instruction]: A) The caliber and content to the curriculum assure that the objectives of the unit of instruction will be achieved: B) The breadth and depth of the curriculum are consistent with what the title of the unit of instruction implies: C) The admission and graduation requirements for the unit of instruction are consistent with the stated objectives of the unit of instruction.*

*1050.30(b)(3): Appropriate steps shall be taken to assure that professional accreditation needed for licensure or entry into a profession as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction is maintained or will be granted in a reasonable period of time.*

*1050.50(a)(2)(C) Requirement for Programs in which State Licensure is Required for Employment in the Field: In the case of a program in which State licensure is required for employment in the field, a program can be found to be in good standing if the institution is able to provide evidence that program graduates are eligible to take the appropriate licensure examination and pass rates are maintained as specified in the objectives of the unit of instruction. If there is no such evidence, the institution shall report the program as flagged for review.*

### a. Admission Requirements

*Provide a brief narrative description of the minimum admission requirements for this program. Where relevant, include information about licensure requirements, student background checks, GRE and TOEFL scores, and admission requirements for transfer students.*

The requirements to be admitted into any major in the School of Communication, including this new one in sports communication, are slightly different, depending on whether a student is first time in college (FTIC) or a transfer from another institution or within ISU. Here’s a general breakdown of the admission requirements:

- New FTIC students (incoming freshmen): no specific requirements. As long as they qualify for admission at ISU, they can be directly admitted to any COM major
- New Transfer students (incoming from community colleges or other 4-year universities): minimum 2.5 transfer GPA required. If a transfer student has at least a 2.5 GPA at their previous school, they can be directly admitted to any COM major.
- Internal major transfers (current ISU students switching majors): minimum 2.0 ISU GPA required to apply. As long as an ISU student is in good academic standing, they can apply to any COM major. Depending on the pool of applicants, a student with a 2.0 GPA may or may not be admitted, but they can be considered for admission to any COM major based on evaluation criteria when reviewing applicants.

The University’s goal in the first year is to enroll 25 of the 953 visitors that searched for a degree in sports. This would correlate to a 2.5 to 3 percent conversion rate which is achievable. A good digital strategy along with adding

sports management to all marketing materials should allow for increases in website searches, visits to campus, and applications for the program. Within a 5-year period, a conservative estimate would be to have a program of 150 to 175 students enrolled in our program. Digital advertising will be placed in areas with high populations of underserved students. The proper financial aid packaging strategy to support each student will also be offered.

## **b. Program Description**

*Provide a description of the proposed program and its curriculum, including a list of the required core course and short (“catalog”) descriptions of each one. (This list should identify all courses newly development for the program. The learning objectives on which the curriculum is based are discussed in Section 10.)*

*This section also should discuss:*

- 1) The unique qualities of the program*
- 2) Its delivery methods (face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc.)*
- 3) Its curriculum’s alignment with national standards (if applicable)*

The sports communication program in builds students’ knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes in the ideation, planning, implementation, and evaluation of ethical and effective communication efforts specifically meant for sports and athletics organizations. The breadth and depth of sports includes all types, from professional and e-sports teams to community and semi-professional programs to equipment manufacturers and venues for digital and physical action. No matter the educational delivery method, students will gain a robust foundation of theory and practice to understand why and how effective communication in the context of sports/athletics has a great impact on society, including especially issues such as identity and culture as it relates to race/gender/sexuality, DEIA, nationalism, commercial inequity, civic engagement, critiques of capitalism, hyper-masculinity, and others. An additional feature of the proposed program is a “Professional Mentorship Program” that would pair students interested participating in it with a sports communication professional during their enrollment in the program, with the objectives being (at least) becoming aware of possible career paths, duties and responsibilities of sports communication professionals, connections between academic study and possible career path, activities and organizations that promote professional sports communication, and habits and savviness of successful sports communication professionals. This broad-based program, then, prepares students for the variety of careers as a sports communication professional, such as sports brand manager, sports promotion (public relations or advertising), broadcasting, sports agent, blogger, and many others.

## **c. Graduation Requirements**

*Provide a brief narrative description of all graduation requirements, including, but not limited to, credit hour requirements, and, where relevant, requirements for internship, practicum, or clinical. ~~For a graduate program, summarize information about the requirements for completion of a thesis or dissertation, including the thesis committees, and the final defense of the thesis or dissertation. If a thesis or dissertation is not required in a graduate program, explain how the functional equivalent is achieved.~~*

A minimum of 120 credit hours are required to graduate from Illinois State University. For the Sports Communication major, the graduation requirements are that a student must earn 42 credit hours in courses at the 200- and 300-level. Of those courses, 27 hours are required courses in the major and 15 hours are senior-level elective courses (9 hours must be at the 300 level). Students may complete at least one internship for credit (maximum of 6 hours may count toward graduation; only 3 hours will count toward the 300-level requirement).

## **d. Specialized Accreditation**

*Describe the institution’s plan for seeking specialized accreditation for this program. Indicate if there is no specialized accreditation for this program or if it is not applicable.*

There is no specialized accreditation for sports communication. The closest accreditation is for a program in sport management by the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA), which considers the full range of sport management subjects in higher education. We would not seek COSMA's accreditation.

### **e. Licensure or Certification for Graduates of the Program**

*If this program prepares graduates for entry into a career or profession that is regulated by the State of Illinois, describe how it is aligned with or meets licensure, certification, and/or entitlement requirements.*

There are no requirements for licensure or certification of graduates from a sports communication program.

## **10. Plan to Assess and Improve Student Learning**

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(b)(1)(D) Provision is made for guidance and counseling of students, evaluations of student performance, continuous monitoring of progress of students toward their degree objectives and appropriate academic record keeping.*

*a. List the program's student learning objectives. Each objective should identify what students are expected to know and/or be able to do upon completing this program.*

*b. Describe how, when, and where these learning objectives will be assessed. Your description should demonstrate that the assessment will:*

- *be systematic (that is, occur at different points throughout the program, including course-by-course and end-of-program);*
- *include multiple, discipline-appropriate measures of student learning;*
- *emphasize direct measures (e.g., assessments of learning via capstone courses, internships, portfolios, recitals, exhibits, theses, dissertations; standardized, locally-developed, comprehensive, or professional licensure and certificate exams; and so on); and*
- *include indirect assessments from key stakeholders such as current students, alumni, employers, graduate schools, etc. These may include job placement/career advancement/graduate school acceptance rates of graduates, graduate/employer satisfaction survey results etc.*

*c. Identify faculty expectations for students' achievement of each of the stated student learning objectives. What score, rating, or level of expertise will signify that students have met each objective? Provide rating rubrics as necessary.*

*d. Explain the process that will be implemented to ensure that assessment results are used to improve student learning.*

See Attachment 1, "Sports Communication Program (SCP) Assessment Plan."

## **11. Plan to Evaluate and Improve the Program**

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(2): The design, conduct, and evaluation of the unit of instruction, research or public service are under the direct and continuous control of the sponsoring institution's established processes for academic planning and quality maintenance.*

*1050.50(a)(1) Three years after approval of a new program, the institution shall provide a program progress report to the Board as part of the institution's annual report. The third year progress report shall describe the institution's performance in meeting program objectives and show where any improvements are necessary. The placement of a program in voluntary temporary suspension will not negate the requirement of submitting a third year progress report.*

*Describe the program's evaluation plan.\**

*This plan should identify the methods of program evaluation (e.g., faculty, self study, curriculum committee review, external review, feedback from key stakeholders such as current students, alumni, employers, and/or staff at residency/internship/practicum sites) as well as its key elements (e.g., curriculum, teaching, research, public services, diversity, quality, cost effectiveness, employer demand, etc., as is relevant to the program), and the goals that will be set for each one. It also should illustrate the existence of regular review and feedback processes to ensure that results of the evaluation will be used to improve the curriculum, instruction, and the overall quality of the program.*

*Your discussion may include (but is not limited to) the following items:*

- *Faculty/student collaboration in research, community service, or other projects;*
- *Faculty productivity (in research, scholarship, creative activities, instruction, and public service);*
- *Student engagement in integrative learning activities (internships, practica, service learning, study abroad, etc.);*
- *External funding such as research grants and contracts;*
- *Support of one or more of the goals of The Illinois Public Agenda;*
- *Results of student learning assessment;*
- *Employer, alumni, and other satisfaction survey results;*
- *Percent of students involved in faculty research or other faculty led projects;*
- *Percent of graduate students in the program presenting or publishing papers;*
- *Pass rate of graduates on the end-of-program, comprehensive, standardized, and/or certification/licensure examinations;*
- *Retention, graduation, and time-to-degree completion rates; and*
- *Job placement, career advancement, and/or graduate school acceptance rates.*

*\* This plan may be based on the institution's process for the submission of a progress report to the IBHE at the end of the 3rd year of operation and the program's participation in the IBHE's 8-year program review process or the program's specialized accreditation review process.*

Instrumental in the plan to evaluate and improve the proposed program is the assessment plan presented in Attachment 1. This assessment plan would be administered annually, with semesterly data collection for analysis about student learning and course/program effectiveness. In addition, the program would engage in an institution-required self-study on the same interval of time in which the School of Communication and its programs undergo "Program Review." On a frequent basis, faculty in the sports communication program would note, discuss, and systematically address opportunities to improve the program and individual courses in ways that can better meet the demands of the industry. These discussions would invite alumni who are professional sport communicators for their feedback and counsel. Additionally, sports communication professionals, who serve as mentors or internship supervisors, would provide us with feedback about students' knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes gained through the CSP. Because of the expected growth of the program after its launch, at least two new full-time and tenure-track faculty *who specialize in sports communication* will be needed. Contact with alumni and professionals in the sports communication business would yield additional useful information for program improvements. All data about enrollment, retention, time to degree, graduation, and job placement also would be obtained as a normal course of data collection about the program. Annual data about faculty scholarly contributions, including those completed with students, also would be collected as a matter of the School's normal annual reporting.

## **12. Budget Narrative**

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(5): A) The financial commitments to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are sufficient to ensure that the faculty and staff and support services necessary to offer the unit of instruction, research or public service can be acquired and maintained; B) Projections of revenues necessary to support the unit of instruction, research or public service are based on supportable estimates of state appropriations, local tax support, student tuition and fees, private gifts, and/or governmental grants and contracts.*

## Budget Rationale

*Provide financial data that document the university's capacity to implement and sustain the proposed program and describe the program's sources of funding.*

*a. Is the unit's (Department, College, School) current budget adequate to support the program when fully implemented? If new resources are to be provided to the unit to support the program, what will be the source(s) of these funds? Is the program requesting new state funds? (During recent years, no new funds have been available from the state (IBHE) to support new degree programs).*

*b. Will current faculty be adequate to provide instruction for the new program or will additional faculty need to be hired? If additional hires will be made, please elaborate.*

*c. Will current staff be adequate to implement and maintain the new program or will additional staff be hired? Will current advising staff be adequate to provide student support and advisement, including job placement and or admission to advanced studies? If additional hired will be made, please elaborate.*

*d. Are the unit's current facilities adequate to support the program when fully implemented? Will there need to be facility renovation or new construction to house the program? (Refer to Section #13.1).*

*e. Are library resources adequate to support the program when fully implemented? (Refer to Section #13.2)*

*f. Are any sources of funding temporary (e.g., grant funding)? If so, how will the program be sustained once these funds are exhausted?*

*~~g. If this is a graduate program, please discuss the intended use of graduate tuition waivers. If the program is dependent on the availability of waivers, how will the unit compensate for lost tuition revenue?~~*

*Complete the budget table below.*

Illinois State University's School of Communication's current operating budget (i.e., contractual, commodities, equipment, etc.) is adequate to support the program when implemented for the first year because it will use already existing resources. Given the analyses in the preceding sections, the new program will raise enrollment in classes by the amounts of students eligible to enroll in classes required in the major and not pose undue hardships on resources. We do not anticipate the enrollments to be so great in the first year or two that multiple sections of foundational classes would be needed (see Section 3). With raising demand and enrollment in the program in subsequent years (at least by the fifth year), we anticipate needing to hire new up to two new, full-time, tenure-track faculty *who are specialists in sports communication* to meet that demand and curriculum improvements that would include major-specific, higher-level courses.

To initiate the program, current School staff also will be able to manage the classes and support/advise students enrolled in the program. Additionally, current facilities are sufficient for the creation and launch of the program; however, when hiring new faculty, we will need to renovate space in the School's domain for up to two faculty offices. Library resources (see Section 13) are adequate (if not abundant) for the implementation of this new major program, and new resources would be identified as the program undergoes any necessary improvement. The new program can benefit from resources from the School's existing programs and those of the School of Kinesiology and Recreation. Funding for the proposed program can be supplemented by ISU Foundation funds that are open for the School's use in general ways and those marked for innovation in the School. The following table presents cost estimates for the program at start up and at the fifth year.

| ESTIMATED COST OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM |  |                     |            |                                      |
|--|--|---------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|
|  | Category                                   | Unit of Measurement | Year One   | 5th Year (or when fully implemented) |
| 1                                      | Personnel                                  | \$                  | \$0        | \$158,000                            |
| 2                                      | Faculty                                    | FTE                 | 0          | 2.0                                  |
| 3                                      | Other Personnel Costs                      | \$                  | \$0        | \$30,000                             |
| 4                                      | Supplies, Services, Equipment              | \$                  | \$0        | \$8,000                              |
| 5                                      | Facility Costs (e.g., rental, maintenance) | \$                  | \$0        | \$55,000                             |
| 6                                      | Other Costs (itemized):                    | \$                  | \$0        | \$0                                  |
|  | <b>Total</b>                               | <b>\$</b>           | <b>\$0</b> | <b>\$243,000</b>                     |

Notes: [Explain any unique attribute(s) in this budget table.]

The following assumptions underlie the data presented in the table:

- Line 1: Salary for one new, full-time, tenure-track faculty member is assumed to be \$79,000. Anticipate up to two new hires by the fifth year, and they would be specialists in sports communication.
- Line 3: Start-up cost of \$15,000 per new faculty member, based on those COM hired in 2022.
- Line 4: By the fifth year new faculty will need computers, software, and other equipment, based on those COM hired in 2022. Travel funds and start-up funds are not included.
- Line 5: New offices created in COM-controlled space for up to two new faculty hired by the fifth year, based on costs for similar office renovations in 2019. This cost will be covered by the School and/or College. There is no expectation that the funds will come from the Provost Office.

Hiring new faculty would be a function of the estimated growth in enrollment in and graduation. Generally speaking, given COM's typical enrollment cap of 25 to 30 students per undergraduate class, any given faculty member on a 3-3 teaching load works with approximately 75 to 90 students each semester or 150 to 180 students each year. Applying the enrollment estimates given above, we estimate that, beginning by the end of the second year, six new sections of several required courses each semester would be needed and result in 150 additional students per semester (300 each year). So the point at which new faculty would need to be hired would be with the enrollment of approximately 100 to 125 students, which would be suitable as a new hire receives a one-class time reassignment during the first year. New faculty would be full-time and on the tenure-track.

### 13. Facilities and Equipment

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.3(a)(4): A) Facilities, equipment and instructional resources (e.g., laboratory supplies and equipment, instructional materials, computational equipment) necessary to support high quality academic work in the unit of instruction, research or public service are available and maintained; B) Clinical sites necessary to meet the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service; C) Library holdings and acquisitions, owned or contracted for by the institution, that are necessary to support high quality instruction and scholarship in the unit of instruction, research and public service, are conveniently available and accessible, and can be maintained.*

*a. Describe the facilities and equipment that are available, or that will be available, to develop and maintain high quality in this program. Summarize information about buildings, classrooms, office space, laboratories and equipment, and other instructional technologies for the program.*

*b. Summarize information about library resources for the program, including a list of key textbooks, a list of key text and electronic journals that will support this program, and a short summary of general library resources of the University that will be used by the program's faculty, students, and staff.*

**The School of Communication**, which has been recognized by the Central States Communication Association in 2014 for having the top undergraduate program in the region, occupies the entire fourth (top) floor of Fell Hall (on

the west side of ISU's quad) for all its full-time faculty, most of its nontenure-track instructors, and all doctoral students. Additional offices for graduate teaching assistants and the nontenure-track faculty and staff tied to the radio and video programs are located in the basement of Fell Hall, where their facilities are located. Additionally, the School controls or has primary access to all classrooms, seminar rooms, and labs in Fell Hall located in the basement, first floor and second floor. The equipment and technical capabilities for classrooms and labs are listed as follows:

1. Classrooms—Each classroom is outfitted with the same or similar equipment and capabilities as other ISU classrooms. In Fell Hall, the classrooms have ceiling-mounted projectors for display of digital material from the instructor workstation. Mobile instructor workstations are outfitted with Dell desktop computers loaded with Office 365 suite, Adobe Creative Suite, web browsers, and other university-supplied software. The workstations also have AMX touchscreens to control classroom presentation stations, and all classroom technology is maintained by the university's Learning Spaces and Audio/Visual Technologies Office. The workstations also have connectors for other devices so their content can be shown on screen to everyone in the classroom. There are also plain whiteboards for writing notes about lecture and discussion during class and a smart whiteboard for digital recording and reproduction of written notes.
2. Computer Labs Designed for General, Overt Instruction—Each of these labs is equipped with the Adobe Creative Cloud suite of digital design software, Microsoft Office, SPSS, and iMac labs provide additional Final Cut Pro, Motion, and Compressor software for video editing.
  - Fell 052: a 20-seat iMac lab, sometimes referred to as "the Visual Studio"
  - Fell 102: a 23-seat iMac lab with storage for the following:
    - 40 DSLR cameras and lenses for photography courses
    - 23 Black Magic Speed Editors
  - Fell 108: a 30-seat Windows lab
3. Specialty Computer Labs
  - Fell 275A: The Social Media Analytics Command Center (SMACC):
    - 20 mobile desks
    - 6 seat conference table
    - 6 Roku screens for news streaming
    - 2 90-inch panel screens for presentation
    - 1 75-inch touchscreen for presentation
    - 1 2X2 video wall for conferencing
    - 2 2X1 mobile touchscreen carts
    - Annual subscription to Talkwalker social listening software
  - Fell 280: The Communication Innovation Center (CIC):
    - 25-seat hybrid classroom / computer lab
    - 30 Windows-based laptops
    - 8 iMac workstations
    - 2 iMac Pro studios with Tangent Wave 2 video editing panels
    - iMac workstations are connected to a 50TB streaming media server that provides access to student projects at 10GB speeds
    - 5 Panasonic AG-UX180 camcorders are available for student checkout
    - 5 Canon Rebel T6i DSLR cameras are available for student checkout
4. Future Lab Space (In Development for Fiscal Year 2023)
  - Fell 277: Podcasting Studio:
    - Audio recording and editing software
    - Digital mixer
    - 3 microphones
    - Computer station
    - 3 seats
  - Fell 034: Research Studio:
    - 3-4 studio rooms with observation room for experimental studies.
    - Conference table and recording equipment for focus groups

In addition to these facilities, the School of Communication has dedicated facilities for student-run video/television news and programming, a online news organization, a student-run radio station, and a NPR affiliate radio station. The School's very close relationship with ISU Athletics also offers facilities for students interested in sports

communication and broadcasting. Finally, the university's library has considerable resources to support student learning and faculty research and instruction.

We anticipate, with the hiring of sports communication specialists and having to offer new sections of existing courses and, potentially, sections of new courses, we will need three to four new fully-equipped learning spaces in Fell Hall. Appropriate/Available space in Fell Hall may well be repurposed and redesigned for teaching and learning in the sports communication program as well as COM's other programs. We would work with CAS leadership about acquiring new learning spaces with requisite technology. Costs for these spaces, then, are not reflected in this proposal. Funds for any renovation could be requested through the typical AEF cycle.

**TV-10** is ISU's television and streaming video news station that has a broadcast studio set up for live, digital HD productions. We have professional-level switcher, audio board, character generator, master control, and 3 studio cameras with mounted teleprompters. For field gear, we have 3 sets of JVC 700 series cameras and 7 sets of JVC 100 series cameras, along with tripods, microphones, lights and batteries for each. We edit on FinalCut Pro X. We use Inception scripting software. Editing and scripting are networked on 15-plus Apple workstations.

**The Vidette**, a part of the School of Communication, is Illinois State University's award-winning, student-run, online news organization. The Vidette serves as a practical lab extension for primarily journalism, but also other majors, in the SOC. Students have the opportunity to earn internship credit through COM 398 and students on staff must be enrolled in at least one of a selection of COM courses covering journalism, photography, broadcasting or mass media. In addition, The Vidette features approximately 12 paid editor positions, including two sports editors. All reporters have the opportunity to gain sports journalism experience covering an NCAA Division I athletics program. The Vidette will share its newly-renovated building with WGLT. The co-location will allow Vidette reporters the opportunity to mentor under WGLT staff. Vidette staffers have access to computer, photo, video and audio equipment, along with the most up-to-date software to create multimedia reports for videtteonline.com. The Vidette also will have access to the new WGLT broadcast facilities for podcast production.

**WGLT**, Illinois State University's NPR Network radio station and a part of the School of Communication, is co-located with ISU's student newspaper (*The Vidette*, which is also part of the School). The building featured brand new broadcasting facilities, offering students an opportunity to work with industry standard equipment. WGLT offers competitive (and competitively paid) internships in journalism, social media, photography, audio production, marketing, and fundraising, plus students get the chance by mentored by the station's award-winning professional news staff.

**WZND** is internationally recognized as the best faculty-advised, student-run college radio station by the Broadcast Education Association three out of the last five years. WZND provides students with a practical laboratory for study in this major to practice their craft, and it has received over \$100,000 in technology upgrades over the course of the last five years, including new state-of-the-art audio consoles, microphones, radio automation software, remote broadcast equipment, and sports announcing headsets. Students in this major interested in broadcasting games live have ample opportunity. WZND broadcasts 75-plus sporting events every year as the flagship station for Redbird Volleyball, Baseball, and Softball, as well as giving students the opportunity to broadcast Redbird Football and Basketball. Students interested in producing sports media content will have access to five production studio environments and a host of media assets from Universal Production Music, Benztown Branding, and SoundSnap.

**ISU Athletics** works with ESPN to cover ISU sports teams, which are Division I, and the sports are principally football, basketball, volleyball, softball, and baseball. To this end, ISU Athletics has state-of-the-art facilities, equipment, and technology. It has two control rooms located in CEFCU Arena for all live sport broadcasts. Each control room has a TD (technical director) board and Mira video servers for replays during broadcast that utilizes an XpressionGo system for our broadcast graphic package. We have video-production products for live broadcasts from Newtek, Ross, Behringer, and JVC. We have a small fleet of cameras and fiber-optic lines running between the control rooms and all the venues from which we broadcast. Those fiber lines feed into a Black Magic ATEM Converter that will allow us to send and receive video and audio focused on venues from which we broadcast.

**Milner Library** houses over 1.6 million volumes and has a current annual materials budget allocation of approximately \$4 million. Additionally, Milner Library is part of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), which grants the Illinois State University community access to additional materials

from 129 libraries across Illinois. In support of a sports communication major, Milner Library provides access to a variety of resources:

- Databases including Communication Source, SPORTDiscus, IBIS World, ProQuest One Business, Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Nexis Uni. Milner Library presently provides access to 304 databases.
- Journals including *Case Studies in Sport Management*, *Journal of Sports Media*, *Sports Marketing*, *Sport Management Review*, *Journal of Sport Management*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *Communication Research*, *Communication Studies*, *Communication Theory*, *New Media and Society*, *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, and *Public Relations Review*. Additional key journals for the School of Communication are listed [here](#).
- Texts including *Defining Sports Communication* (Billings), *Strategic Sports Communication* (Pedersen), and *Sports and identity: new agendas in communication* (Brummett & Ishak, eds.). Milner Library owns 77 titles with the Library of Congress subject term “Mass media and sports”; six with “Communication in sports,” 206 with “Sports administration” and 214 with “Communication Studies.”

Milner Library provides a dedicated subject librarian for every major. The Communication Librarian will support the sports communication program by providing dedicated research assistance for students, faculty, and staff, instructional services, and collection development supporting curricular and research needs. Additionally, the librarian may create digital learning objects for use by the department, including library guides, videos, handouts, modules, or other materials as requested by School of Communication faculty. The library also provides [printing](#), [individual](#) and [collaborative](#) workstations, [loanable technology](#) including digital cameras and microphones, a [Ready Record Studio](#), and [general reference services](#) for all members of the Illinois State University community.

## 14. Faculty and Staff

*Illinois Administrative Code: 1050.30(a)(3): A) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff ensure that the objectives of the unit of instruction, research or public service are met; B) The academic preparation and experience of faculty and staff, as evidenced by level of degrees held, professional experience in the field of study and demonstrated knowledge of the field, ensure that they are able to fulfill their academic responsibilities; C) The involvement of faculty in the unit of instruction, research or public service is sufficient to cover the various fields of knowledge encompassed by the unit, to sustain scholarship appropriate to the unit, and to assure curricular continuity and consistency in student evaluation; D) Support personnel, including but not limited to counselors, administrators, clinical supervisors, and technical staff, which are directly assigned to the unit of instruction, research or public service, have the educational background and experience necessary to carry out their assigned responsibilities.*

*a. Describe the personnel resources available to develop and maintain a high-quality program, including faculty, (full- and part-time, current and new), staff (full- and part-time, current and new), and the administrative structure that will be in place to oversee the program. Also include a description of faculty qualifications, the faculty evaluation and reward structure, and student support services that will be provided by faculty and staff.*

*b. Summarize the major accomplishments of each key faculty member, including research/scholarship, publications, grant awards, honors and awards, etc. Include an abbreviated curriculum vitae or a short description.*

In general, for tenured/tenure-track (T/TT) faculty working in ISU’s School of Communication, they are expected to hold a doctorate in communication or a field related to their area of specialty, and they are expected to have a record of excellence in their teaching, scholarship or creative works, and service to the university and academia that intersects with their field of specialization. Additional preferred expectations for T/TT faculty are to have had significant professional experience in their field of expertise that would complement their teaching, scholarship/creative work, and service. Because of the anticipated growth of the program after its first year, we expect to need to hire at least two new, full-time, tenure-track faculty who are *specialists in sports communication*, as the core faculty at the program’s outset need such faculty to serve students over the longer term. Nontenure-track (NTT) faculty are expected to hold at least a master’s degree in communication or a field related to their area of teaching, and they may have had relevant professional experience and additional industry credentials that would

complement their teaching. For the SCP, faculty in it would be expected to possess sufficient expertise in sports communication that would qualify them, along with the general expectations for T/TT or NTT positions, to lead courses in the subject and perform work expected of them for continued appointment in their role in the School and at ISU.

The proposed sports communication program (SCP) would be a new major program in ISU's School of Communication, and as such it would be structured simply as the School's four other programs are, with a "program coordinator" who works collaboratively with faculty and manages all matters of semesterly class offerings and teaching assignments; recruitment, enrollment, and retention, curriculum design; program assessment; technology and facilities needs; and other matters as needed for student learning and program effectiveness. The program coordinator would work closely with the School's director and associate director, academic advisors, the School's business manager, and the School's office clerk.

All faculty of any order may seek and benefit from professional development opportunities provided by ISU's Center for Integrated Professional Development. ISU's Human Resources Department also offers resources for employee help in various ways that pertain to their employment. Performance evaluations of full-time, tenure/tenure-track faculty are completed on an annual basis according to the School's and the University's current and approved standards for appointment, salary, promotion, and tenure (ASPT), which are available online and provided to faculty. Performance evaluations for nontenure-track (NTT) faculty (full and part time) also are completed on an annual basis for those determined by ISU Human Resources and under relevant provisions of the labor contract that pertains to NTT personnel covered by it.

Students are supported in the School of Communication with a highly effective Academic Advising Group, all of whom hold master's degrees in communication and teach in the School, and nearly all of them have earned awards for their work. Several registered student organizations specifically in the School also offer students opportunities to extend their learning beyond their classes and engage with their peers to grow in their knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. The university also offers the Julia N. Visor Center, which is part of ISU's University College, to help students who are struggling in classes, particularly general education classes and foundational subjects of writing and mathematics. Plus, the Center for Integrated Professional Development offers students information and resources for student life, wellness, technology help, academic advising, tutoring, and the library.

The core faculty for the SCP in its *first year* would comprise nine faculty—four T/TTs and five NTTs. Among the T/TTs, all have important experience in sports communication, but none are specialists whose primary experience, research, and teaching is in sports communication. With the anticipated growth in the program, we anticipate needing to hire at least two full-time, tenure-track faculty who are *specialists in sports communication*. The following list identifies the current core SCP faculty for the launch of the program and summarizes their career highlights:

- **Dr. Joseph Blaney, professor & proposed SPC program coordinator**—Joseph Blaney (Ph.D., University of Missouri) has taught communication at University of Missouri, Northwest Missouri State University, and Illinois State University since 1995. A widely published scholar, he has eight authored/edited scholarly books, over 30 peer reviewed articles/chapters, and several awards for broadcasting content. Blaney's sports reporting experience includes coverage of the Chicago White Sox, Chicago Cubs, Kansas City Royals, multiple minor league hockey teams, and most extensively, high school football. His coverage of the 2008 Illinois High School Association State Football Playoff Series won the Broadcast Education Association's "Best of Competition" award. As the SCP coordinator, Dr. Blaney would not receive reassigned time from teaching one class per semester (paid from unit funds) until the program has more than 100 enrolled students.
- **Dr. Phil Chidester, associate professor**—Phil Chidester (Ph.D., University of Kansas, 2004) is an associate professor in the School of Communication at Illinois State University. Before entering into a career in academia, Phil worked for several years as a reporter and staff writer at a regional newspaper in south-central Utah, where his responsibilities as a reporter and staff writer included covering 15 area high schools and an NCAA Division I university. He has also been active in various roles in sports media production, including service as a color commentator for television broadcasts of local high school football and boys' basketball games, as a public address announcer for college gymnastics and women's basketball contests, and as a script writer for the opening ceremonies of the Utah Summer Games. In his work at ISU, Phil has often turned both his instructional and research efforts toward an exploration of sport, and

particularly of sport culture in the US. His publications have focused on the push to re-establish college and professional athletes as cultural heroes in the wake of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks in the US; on the public's response to the retirement of the University of Illinois' beloved mascot; and on the effects of the NCAA's policies and operations on the experience of fans. He has also presented a number of papers at regional and national conferences dealing with sports apologia and the mythology of sport. Finally, Phil has designed and taught a seminar in the School of Communication's master's program on communication and sport, exploring the complex intersection of industry, media and culture within the world of sport.

- **Dr. K. Megan Hopper, associate professor**—Megan Hopper (Ph.D., University of Missouri) is an associate professor and coordinator of the Journalism program in the School of Communication at Illinois State University. She is also the chair of the School of Communication's Anti-Racism, Social Justice, and Coalition-Building Committee. She has published articles in multiple scholarly journals including *Communication Research*, *Communication Education*, *Journal of Media Practice*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Communication Teacher*, *Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies*, and *Journal of Media Literacy Education* and has authored several chapters contained within books on college media outlets, journalism, and media literacy. She has also served as both a co-editor of and author of chapters contained within two books in press: *One size does not fit all: Undressing the performance of bodies in popular culture* and *Getting the best from the digital world: Media literacy across the lifespan*. Megan also authored a collected media ethics anthology textbook titled *Ethical problems in mass media*.
- **Dr. Lance Lippert, professor**—Lance Lippert (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University), Professor in the School of Communication at Illinois State University, previously worked in broadcast television and radio for over a decade doing sports and news. Primarily in sports, Lance did play-by-play as well as television sports reporting and anchoring. He also created, produced, and sold sports programming during that time. Previously as college faculty at Fort Hays State University in Kansas, Lance taught radio and television courses as well as served as the faculty advisor for the college radio station, which included sports broadcasting. While at Illinois State University, he developed and implemented the first voice and performance class for news and sportscasters. Currently, Lance still coaches sportscasters. He also does voice work as well as public address work for the Illinois State University Athletics Department and the Illinois High School Association.
- **Ms. Kelly Lambert, instructional assistant professor**—Kelly Lambert holds a master's degree in communication from ISU and has professional live sports production experience gained over 15 years. She has experience in many crew positions, including director, producer, technical director, graphics, replay, and camera operator.
- **Mr. Thomas Lamonica, instructional assistant professor & director of field experiences and internships**—Tom Lamonica holds a master's degree in educational administration from Illinois State University and a bachelor's degree in news and editorials from the University of Missouri. During 31 years practicing strategic sports communication at the college level, followed by more than 16 years teaching public relations and sports communication, I have inspired and motivated students to pursue their passion. A priority has been connecting students with professionals in their areas of interest by bringing professionals to campus, taking students to meet professionals off-campus, and assisting students in completing more than 5,000 internships for credit in the ISU SoC since 2008. Along the way, I gained sports journalism experience as a print reporter and editor, as well as broadcast experience doing live sports events as a play-by-play announcer, analyst, sideline reporter, production assistant, and in-studio program host. Besides designing and teaching the initial class (COM 259 – Strategic Sports Communication) of the ISU Sports Communication program, my current work in sports includes consulting, and assisting the Missouri Valley Conference and NCAA in operations and media support, professional development and content production.
- **Ms. Laura Trendle Polus, instructional assistant professor**—Laura Trendle Polus (B.S. and M.S. in mass communication from ISU) is the Director of TV-10 News, guiding students in producing live newscasts and specialty shows, including a weekly sports recap show. She has received both the University and the College's Outstanding Teacher Awards. She has been selected twice to participate in the US Embassy's Media Education Program, travelling to the country of Georgia to work with journalism educators there. Before teaching, she was a newscast producer in Peoria and in Milwaukee, where she was selected to coordinate her station's coverage of the Green Bay Packers football team in key games. In Milwaukee, she won a regional Emmy and other state and national awards for her role in the station's coverage of the Jeffrey Dahmer serial killings.

- **Mr. Steven Suess, director of convergent radio broadcasting**—Steve Suess, who holds a M.S. in communication from Illinois State University, has a slew of experience in both teaching and performing in sports broadcasting. As the Faculty Advisor for WZND Radio, Suess oversees more than 80 student radio sports broadcasts annually, including Redbird Football, Volleyball, Baseball, Softball, and Men's and Women's Basketball. Suess's wide resume of freelance work in sports broadcasting includes play-by-play announcing on Fox Sports Ohio, WJBC Radio in Bloomington, and Iron Spirt Pro Wrestling. Suess also reports weekly on high school football for WMBD-TV in Peoria and is the former host of *The Odds Couple*, a weekly sports betting program on Cities 92.9 Radio in Normal.
- **Mr. Michael Williams, lecturer & communications director of ISU Athletics**—With over 17 years working in the sports communication field, Mike Williams currently serves as the Assistant Athletics Director for Communications at Illinois State University. He earned his bachelor's degree in public relations from Illinois State in 2004 and his master's degree in sport management also from ISU in 2007. After working as a student assistant, graduate assistant and the associate director of communications at ISU, Williams assumed his athletics leadership role in July of 2012 and recently finished his 14<sup>th</sup> season promoting the Illinois State football program. In his role as Assistant Athletics Director for Communications, Williams oversees a staff that coordinates Illinois State's publicity, promotion and information support efforts for all of Illinois State's 19 sports. In addition to being a member of the department's senior staff and external teams, Williams works directly with the ISU School of Communication on its partnership with athletics to develop broadcasters, producers and staff for Illinois State athletics broadcasts show on ESPN+ as part of the Missouri Valley Conference television package. He currently serves as Vice Chairperson of the College Sports Communicators (formerly CoSIDA) Advocacy Committee and was honored as the 2016 Bud Nangle Award recipient by the organization. Williams and his colleagues were also recognized as the 2018-19 and 2019-20 Missouri Valley Conference Sports Information Staff of the Year for their efforts in promoting Redbird Athletics and the league.

## 15. Program Information

This information will be provided by IBHE staff.

## 16. Staff Conclusion

This information will be provided by IBHE staff.

## 17. Resolution

This information will be provided by IBHE staff.

# Sport Communication Program (CSP) Assessment Plan

This assessment plan presents a systematic approach to be employed *annually* to assess the program’s effectiveness in developing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes of students enrolled in the sports communication program (CSP); preparing graduates for careers in the sport communication field, discovering gaps in curriculum content based on current practice and future trends in the sport communication field (industry and academe); and garnering guidance from alumni about opportunities for continuous improvement in the CSP curriculum and associated opportunities.

## Program Objectives

This program is student-centered, and the seven program objectives are focused on the principal matters for *student success in their learning* during their enrollment in the program and, particularly, while embarking on their careers in sport communication. The following table, based on a template from ISU’s University Assessment Services, succinctly shows how the program’s objectives shall be measured, in what ways, and for whom.

| <b>Program Objectives for Student Success</b><br>(expectations of students’ knowledge & abilities)  | <b>Data Source(s)</b><br>(assignments, records, secondary datasets, etc.) | <b>Direct or Indirect Data Source(s)</b> | <b>Data Collection</b><br>(what method for data collection) | <b>Data Analysis Strategy</b><br>(how the data will be made sensible) | <b>Data Results Application</b> (where results will be discussed and how will they be used) | <b>Primary Decision-maker(s) &amp; Stakeholders</b> |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Students will integrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes across the communication discipline in the context of sport communication.               | Assignments<br>Class participation  | Direct                                   | Assignments<br>Class observations                           | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 2. Students will be able to scrutinize and explain sport industry’s importance and relevance in society.  | Assignments<br>Class participation  | Direct                                   | Assignments<br>Class observations                           | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 3. Students will be able to create, develop, produce, and evaluate ethical, high-quality discourse in and for various media that are germane to sport contexts. | Assignments   | Direct                                   | Assignments   | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 4. Students will collaborate with each other to develop excellent work.   | Assignments<br>Class participation  | Direct                                   | Peer reviews  | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 5. Students will be able to competently evaluate the ethics and effectiveness of communication in sport contexts and prescribe reasonable improvements.         | Assignments<br>Class participation  | Direct                                   | Assignments<br>Class observations                           | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 6. Students will understand and appreciate diversity and its importance in the sport industry and society.  | Assignments<br>Class participation  | Direct                                   | Assignments<br>Class observations                           | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |
| 7. Students will acquire sensibilities and abilities to learn continuously and develop professionally in the sport industry.                                    | Class participation<br>Attitude   | Direct                                   | Class observations  | Comments<br>Grades  | CSP faculty<br>Program review   | Students<br>CSP faculty<br>COM Chair                |



## Assessment Map

The total minimum number of required credit hours in the major is 42. The following table shows where *required courses* in the sport communication program primarily target its program objectives. The courses can target the objectives on a secondary basis, which further enables the program to achieve its objectives.

| Required Courses (27 cr. hrs.)                    | Obj. 1 | Obj. 2 | Obj. 3 | Obj. 4 | Obj. 5 | Obj. 6 | Obj. 7 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| COM 111 Introduction to Communication theories    | X      |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| COM 160 Introduction to Mass Media                | X      |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| COM 161 Convergent Media Writing                  | X      |        | X      | X      |        |        |        |
| COM 178 Introduction to Public Relations          | X      |        |        |        |        |        |        |
| COM 259 Strategic Communication in Sports         |        | X      | X      | X      |        | X      | X      |
| COM 297 Communication Research Methods            |        |        | X      | X      | X      |        |        |
| COM 341 Media, Society, & Sport                   |        | X      | X      | X      | X      | X      | X      |
| COM 367 Ethical Problems in Mass Media            | X      |        |        | X      | X      |        |        |
| KNR 354 Contemporary Issues in the Sport Industry |        | X      |        | X      | X      | X      | X      |

### Additional requirements for the program

- Take five additional senior-level COM elective courses (15 credit hours).
- At least three elective courses (9 credit hours) must be at the 300-level. Please consult your academic advisor
- Students are strongly encouraged to complete at least one internship for credit.
- A maximum of 6 hours of COM 398aXX may count as major electives.
- Only 3 hours of COM 398aXX will count toward the 300-level course requirement.
- Students may enroll in another major or a minor in the School of Communication.

### ISU Graduation Requirements

These are general requirements for all students. Students may apply for and receive two bachelor's degrees at the same time. Refer to the Academic Policies and Practices section of the catalog for details.

- 120 minimum total credit hours
- A minimum of 42 of the 120 total hours must be senior college hours (200-300 level courses)
- AMALI requirement (certain courses in General Education and/or major may fulfill the AMALI requirement)
- Students completing a Bachelor of Science degree must complete a B.S. -- Science, Math, & Technology degree requirement (beyond the General Education requirements) Students completing a Bachelor of Arts degree must complete a B.A. -- foreign language degree requirement: LAN/FRE/GER/SPA/ITA/JPN/POR 115 (or equivalent) Some majors complete other types of degrees that do not include additional graduation requirements. For example, the Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S. in Ed.) or the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.).



## Data Collection Strategies

| Data collection strategy or strategies   | Advantages  | Disadvantages  |
|--|---|--|
| Artifacts of students' work in required courses.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct evidence of student learning and performance</li> <li>• Observations in class and out of class of students' learning, attitudes, and behaviors</li> <li>• Criteria applied for each assignment to evaluate student mastery of course content and expectations</li> <li>• Over time, the collection of student work makes up a significant dataset for long-term analysis for individual courses and the curriculum</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laborious work to evaluate each student's assignments</li> <li>• Need to maintain continuous data collection and maintenance in a central repository</li> </ul>   |
| Exit survey of graduating students about experience in the sport communication program, collected through Qualtrics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can reach a large number of people</li> <li>• Provides faster responses</li> <li>• Can anonymize responses</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to knowledge generated by survey questions</li> </ul>   |
| Interviews and/or focus groups with COM alumni in sport communication about CSP curriculum and industry trends.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hearing direct voices from staff</li> <li>• Contextual</li> <li>• Staff may appreciate the opportunity to have their voices directly heard</li> <li>• Opportunity to hear unexpected findings</li> <li>• Can follow up with more questions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time and energy</li> <li>• Finding a trained facilitator</li> <li>• Some charts and graphs</li> <li>• Difficult to disaggregate by groups</li> <li>• Staff may be reluctant to speak out</li> <li>• Time spent analyzing the results</li> </ul> |
| Surveys of CSP alumni about how well the program prepared them for their careers.                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can reach a large number of people</li> <li>• Provides faster responses</li> <li>• Can anonymize responses</li> <li>• Can obtain new ideas or insights</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited to knowledge generated by survey questions</li> </ul>   |

## Data Analysis Strategies

| Data collection strategy or strategies   | Analysis   |
|--|--|
| Artifacts of students' work in required courses.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thematic analysis of comments on assignments, noting most-prominent ones</li> <li>• Quantitative calculations of central tendencies in grades</li> </ul>                    |
| Exit survey of students about experience in the sport communication program, collected through Qualtrics.      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis: Frequencies, correlations, group comparisons, and other inferential statistics</li> <li>• Presentation: Tables, charts and graphs in Excel or Power BI</li> </ul> |
| Interviews and/or focus group with COM alumni in sport communication about CSP curriculum and industry trends. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcribe audio recordings</li> <li>• Use NVIVO for analysis</li> </ul>  |
| Surveys of program alumni about how well the program prepared them for their careers.                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis: Frequencies, correlations, group comparisons, and other inferential statistics</li> <li>• Presentation: Tables, charts and graphs in Excel or Power BI</li> </ul> |



## CSP Assessment Rubric for Required Courses

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This rubric is used for each required course in the CSP. For a particular class, (1) assemble all students' graded work for each assignment, then (2) *holistically assess* the assignment to determine the degree to which there is evidence of student learning that fulfills any of the CSP's learning objectives. To judge whether a criterion does not apply, use compare the assignment itself to the CSP's Assessment Plan's "Assessment Map."

Course Number & Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

| Program Learning Objective  | Evidence of Learning<br><i>(circle one)</i> |      |      |      |        |
|---|---|------|------|------|--------|
| 1. Students will integrate knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes across the communication discipline in the context of sport communication.               | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 2. Students will be able to scrutinize and explain sport industry's importance and relevance in society.  | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 3. Students will be able to evaluate, create, develop, and produce ethical, high-quality discourse in and for various media that are germane to sport contexts. | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 4. Students will collaborate with each other to develop excellent work.   | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 5. Students will be able to competently evaluate the ethics and effectiveness of communication in sport contexts and prescribe reasonable improvements.         | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 6. Students will understand and appreciate diversity and its importance in the sport industry and society.  | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |
| 7. Students will acquire sensibilities and abilities to learn continuously and develop professionally in the sport industry.                                    | Not Apply                                   | None | Weak | Good | Strong |

**Rationale for ratings against the program's learning objectives:**

**From:** [Beggs, Brent](#)  
**To:** [Smudde, Pete](#)  
**Cc:** [Hunt, Stephen](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Drafted new COM program in sports comm.  
**Date:** Monday, August 29, 2022 3:59:55 PM

---

Pete,

Thanks for sending this my way. This looks like an interesting program and one that could definitely generate some interest.

KNR does not have any objections to the program. Your focus on the communication aspects of sport is something that we really don't get into.

At this time, we really only have one undergraduate course with a true sport focus. That course is KNR 354 – Contemporary Issues in the Sport Industry. I think it would probably be a good addition to your program and one that we could likely support.

Between us - I'll give you a heads up that we are working on a potential name change to our undergraduate recreation program which could result in the word "sport" being included in the title of a few more classes. I'll likely have a better idea about the direction on this later in the year (late fall/early spring semester).

Our sport management grad program is strong and we are working to add to it this year. I know we've had several comm students go through the program. That would be a different conversation for us, but one that we would be happy to have at some point.

Thanks for reaching out. Let me know if you have questions about the KNR 354 class or any other courses in KNR.

Thanks.

-Brent

**Brent Beggs, Ph.D.**

Professor and Director  
School of Kinesiology and Recreation  
Illinois State University  
Campus Box 5120  
250H McCormick Hall  
Normal, IL 61790-5120  
Phone: 309.438.8661  
Web: <http://www.kinrec.ilstu.edu>

---

**From:** Smudde, Pete <[psmudde@ilstu.edu](mailto:psmudde@ilstu.edu)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 16, 2022 11:07 AM  
**To:** Beggs, Brent <babeggs@ilstu.edu>  
**Cc:** Hunt, Stephen <skhunt2@ilstu.edu>  
**Subject:** Drafted new COM program in sports comm.

Hello, Brent!

We in the School of Communication have discerned that we need and ought to offer a new *undergraduate* program focused on sports communication. To this end, we drafted a program proposal but have not yet submitted it into the formal review process. The draft proposal is attached for your review.

We have not submitted the draft proposal because some things need to be worked out. One of those things is finding out from you (1) whether there may be any objections about us offering this program, and (2) assuming there are no objections, whether there are any courses in your programs that may be appropriate for us to add to the draft proposal that would help in the major.

At this point our *draft proposal is still in process* and solely anchored in the School of Communication. We can discuss whether a joint, interdisciplinary program would be wise and doable for this proposal or a later, new one. A separate interdisciplinary graduate program in sports communication may be appropriate with sports management.

Perhaps we can meet sometime soon and talk about this proposal. Many thanks for your consideration and help!

Peace,

*Pete*

*Looking forward to and praying for better days but  
not without taking care today and each day with  
kindness, patience, and love.*

~~~~~  
Peter M. Smudde, Ph.D., APR, Obl.OSB  
Professor & Associate Director, School of Communication  
Illinois State University  
449 Fell Hall  
Normal, IL 61790-4480 USA  
Office: (309) 438-7339

**View**

Review

Status

|                |                                              |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|
| March 17, 2023 | Approved by Academic Senate<br>March 6, 2013 |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------|

## Financial Implication Form

### Illinois State University Request for New Program Approval

**Purpose:** Proposed new undergraduate and graduate programs (degrees, sequences, minors, and certificates) must include information concerning how the program will be financially supported to proceed through the curricular process.

**Procedure:** This completed form is to be approved by the Department/School Curriculum Committee chair, department chair/school director, college dean, and Provost prior to submission of the proposal to the College Curriculum Committee.

**Definition:** A "program" can be a degree, a sequence within a degree, a minor, or a certificate. This form is to be used for both undergraduate and graduate programs.

|                                     |                                                       |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Division *</b><br>VP and Provost | <b>College/Unit *</b><br>College of Arts and Sciences | <b>Department/School</b><br>School of Communication |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|

Department/School (if not listed above)

|                                          |                                              |                                              |                                                             |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Primary Contact ULID *</b><br>skhunt2 | <b>Primary Contact First Name</b><br>Stephen | <b>Primary Contact Last Name</b><br>Hunt     | <b>Primary Contact Email Address</b><br>skhunt2@ilstu.edu   |
| <b>Secondary Contact ULID</b><br>psmudde | <b>Secondary Contact First Name</b><br>Pete  | <b>Secondary Contact Last Name</b><br>Smudde | <b>Secondary Contact Email Address</b><br>psmudde@ilstu.edu |

**Proposed New Program \***

If the proposed program is a sequence, please indicate the full degree it is housed within, for example *Generic Basket Weaving Sequence in Home Décor, BA*

Major in Sports Communication, B.A., B.S.  
**Brief Description of the Proposed Program \***

The program in sports communication is designed to capitalize on an enormous opportunity to attract students to ISU and its School of Communication. Broadly speaking, the program would educate students in the principles and practices in sports/athletics communication. More particularly, the program would feature courses specifically in sports communication in multiple areas (e.g., mass media, public relations, digital channels) while also building students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the ideation, planning, production, and evaluation of communication efforts for sports and athletics organizations. The breadth and depth of sports includes all types, from semi-professional and e-sports teams to equipment manufacturers and venues for digital and physical action. This program's objective, then, is to engender great appreciation about the role of sports in society and, most importantly, prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in a career in sports communication wherever that takes them.

Research specifically on the growth of sports communication (CIP code 09.0906 Sports Communication) in higher education shows definitively that the demand for sports communication is very much on the rise and that those higher-ed institutions that provide requisite resources for those programs sooner than later shall benefit and grow greatly (Hull, Choi, & Kian, 2019; <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077695819835044>). Data from ISU Admissions' "major search" page (in Oct. 2021) shows 286 unique events for sport or sports management within the last year. Additionally, for the same period of time, the key terms of "sport" or "sports" adds another 667 unique searches. More importantly, competing institutions offering successful sports communication degrees are attracting students away from ISU. Examples of competing schools include Ashland, Ball State, Bradley, Butler, Campbell, Clemson, Columbia College (Chicago), Marist, and Quinnipiac. Additionally, from our professional contacts in higher education, we know of examples of other successes, such as the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa (the sizes of their respective student populations notwithstanding) that each has been tremendously successful with their newer sports communication programs (with some 200 students each) and, very importantly, have done so with a great many students from Illinois.

NOTE: See the completed IBHE program application.(attached).

**Is this a Teacher Education program? \***

No

**Is this a graduate program? \***

No

## Enrollments

Summarize enrollment and degrees conferred projections for the program for the first- and fifth-years of operation. If possible, indicate the number of full-time and part-time students to be enrolled each fall term in the notes section. If it is not possible to provide fall enrollments or fall enrollments are not applicable to this program, please indicate so and give a short explanation.

## Student Enrollment and Degree Projections for the Proposed Program

|                                                      |     |                                                                                |     |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fall Headcount of Program Majors/Minors (1st year) * | 113 | Fall Headcount of Program Majors/Minors (5th year or when fully implemented) * | 251 |
| Annual FTE Program Majors/Minors (1st year) *        | 113 | Annual FTE Program Majors/Minors (5th year or when fully implemented) *        | 251 |
| Annual Degrees Awarded (1st year) *                  | 0   | Annual Degrees Awarded (5th year or when fully implemented) *                  | 169 |

### Relevant Notes for Enrollment \*

(Students are to be enrolled in a cohort; all students will be enrolled part-time, etc.)

The University’s goal in the first year is to enroll 45 of the 953 visitors that searched for a degree in sports. Note that these data undergird enrollment estimates for *new* students. This would correlate to a 2.4 to 3 percent conversion rate which is achievable. A good digital strategy along with adding sports management to all marketing materials should allow for increases in website searches, visits to campus, and applications for the program. Within a 5-year period, a conservative estimate would be to have a program of up to 180 *new* students enrolled in our program. Digital advertising will be placed in areas with high populations of underserved students. The proper financial aid packaging strategy to support each student will also be offered. Annual degrees awarded is based on ISU’s most-recent graduation rate of 67.3%.

Among students already enrolled in the School of Communication’s other majors, we know there to be some interest in sports communication among them to a level of (conservatively) approximately 8% of the School’s 15-year average annual undergraduate enrollment of (i.e., 68 of 856 students). This interest would translate into a probable commensurate level of changes in majors to sports communication from the School’s other majors as the major gains notoriety. The table below, then, shows students new to the sports communication program (SCP) *plus* in-School transfers to the new program, assuming the level of interest in SCP among students in the School’s other majors results in transfers to SCP (conservatively estimated at the rate of an additional 2 percentage points or 17 students per year) in the program’s first years until enrollment levels stabilize.

As the table shows, we expect the number of new students enrolling in the School of Communication (new and in-School transfers) to expand significantly, as the Sections 4 and 6 support. Given the preceding explanation about enrollment estimates, details for each line of the above table for year one and for year five are as follows:

**Year one \* Year five \***

Number of majors: 45+68=113 180+76=251

Annual FTE majors (FY): $45+68=113$  $175+76=251$

Annual number of degrees awarded:**0169**(using ISU's avg. grad. rate against FTE majors)

\* **Formula used in columns:**(new students) + (changed major) = (total estimate)

## Budget Rationale

Estimated Costs of the Proposed Program - **For all sections below, only NEW resources not currently available to the program.**

### Operating Expenses

Including but not limited to: Contractual, Commodities, Equipment, etc.

Is the unit's (College, Department, School) current operating budget (contractual, commodities, equipment, etc.) adequate to support the program when fully implemented? \*

No

Please explain. \*

Responses like "NA" or "None" are acceptable.

The \$8000 for operating expenses is an estimate for the total cost for acquiring necessary technologies for each of the two new faculty members (at \$4000 each) by the fifth year of the program. The amount is based directly on the costs COM incurred for each of the three new faculty it hired in 2022. Travel funds and start-up funds are not included.

In the first year, one faculty member, Dr. Joe Blaney, has the experience and expertise to lead the program, including his professional background in radio broadcasting. He would be the program's coordinator. As the SCP coordinator, Dr. Blaney would not receive reassigned time from teaching one class per semester (paid from unit funds) until the program has more than 100 enrolled students. Other COM faculty (T/TT and NTT) with relevant academic and professional experience and sufficient to launch the program are Phil Chidester, Lance Lippert, Megan Hopper, Kelly Lambert, Tom Lamonica, Lora Trendle-Polus, and Steve Suess. Among the T/TTs, all have important experience in sports communication, but none are specialists whose primary experience, research, and teaching is in sports communication. Our present curriculum of courses, including three specifically focused on sports and communication, are suited to work in this new major program. Most important, content in the courses that are not specific to sports can allow for students to fulfill assignments through exploration of sports communication.

If new resources are to be provided to the unit to support the program, what will be the source(s) of these funds? \*

Possibly contributions from COM alumni who work in the sports industry, especially in sport communication.

Operating Expenses (1st year) \*

\$0.00

Operating Expenses (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

\$8,000.00

## Personnel

What impact will the new program have on faculty assignments in the department? \*

While we now have a minimum of faculty who can lead courses for this major program as proposed and launch the program successfully, we fully expect to need additional faculty focused on sports/athletics communication who also would develop new courses and refine/improve the program's curriculum. In fact, if the newer sports-comm. programs at competing institutions are any indications, rapid growth of our proposed program should meet or exceed enrollment projections very soon after offering it. However, without any full-time, tenure-track faculty who specialize in sport communication, such faculty will have to be hired as the program grows and new courses are needed to be more specific to the major.

Will current faculty be adequate to provide instruction for the new program? \*

No

Will additional faculty need to be hired, either for the proposed program or for courses faculty of the new program would otherwise have taught? \*

Yes

Please indicate whether new faculty members will be full-time or part-time faculty, tenure track or non-tenure track faculty. \*

Hiring new faculty would be a function of the estimated growth in enrollment. Generally speaking, given COM's typical enrollment cap of 25 to 30 students per undergraduate class, any given faculty member on a 3-3 teaching load works with approximately 75 to 90 students each semester or 150 to 180 students each year. Applying the enrollment estimates given above, we estimate that, beginning by the end of the second year, six new sections of several required courses each semester would be needed and result in 150 additional students per semester (300 each year). So the point at which one new faculty member would need to be hired would be with the enrollment of approximately 100 to 125 students, which would be suitable as a new hire receives a one-class time reassignment during the first year. New faculty would be full-time and on the tenure-track.

Will current staff be adequate to implement and maintain the new program? \*

Yes

Please explain. \*

Responses like "NA" or "None" are acceptable.

As we launch and maintain the new program, our staff of advisers and other staff will be sufficient.

Will current advising staff be adequate to provide student support and advisement, including job placement and or admission to advanced studies? \*

Yes

Will additional staff be hired? \*

No

Please elaborate. \*

Responses like "NA" or "None" are acceptable.

As we launch and maintain the new program, our staff of advisers and other staff will be sufficient.

Faculty FTE (1st year) \*

0

Faculty FTE (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

2

Faculty Salary Dollar(s) (1st year) \*

\$0.00

Faculty Salary Dollar(s) (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

\$158,000.00

Other Personnel Costs (1st year) \*

\$0.00

Other Personnel Costs (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

\$0.00

## Facilities

Including but not limited to rental, maintenance, etc.

Are the unit's current facilities adequate to support the program when fully implemented? \*

No

### Will there need to be facility renovation or new construction to house the program? \*

COM would need new offices created from COM space for faculty teaching in the program. The estimated cost for creating two offices for two new faculty members is \$55,000, which is based on similar office renovations incurred in 2019. This cost will be covered by the School and/or College. There is no expectation that the funds will come from the Provost Office.

### For a new degree program describe in detail the facilities and equipment available to maintain high quality in this program including buildings, classrooms, office space, laboratories, equipment and other instructional technologies for the program. \*

We anticipate, with the hiring of sports communication specialists and having to offer new sections of existing courses and, potentially, sections of new courses, we will need three to four new fully-equipped learning spaces in Fell Hall. Appropriate/Available space in Fell Hall may well be repurposed and redesigned for teaching and learning in the sports communication program as well as COM's other programs. We would work with CAS leadership about acquiring new learning spaces with requisite technology. Costs for these spaces, then, are not reflected in this proposal. Funds for any renovation could be requested through the typical AEF cycle.

### Are library resources adequate to support the program when fully implemented? Please elaborate. \*

Milner Library houses over 1.6 million volumes and has a current annual materials budget allocation of approximately \$4 million. Additionally, Milner Library is part of the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), which grants the Illinois State University community access to additional materials from 129 libraries across Illinois. In support of a sport communication major, Milner Library provides access to a variety of resources:

- Databases including Communication Source, SPORTDiscus, IBIS World, ProQuest One Business, Business Source Complete, Academic Search Complete, and Nexis Uni. Milner Library presently provides access to 304 databases.
- Journals including Case Studies in Sport Management, Journal of Sports Media, Sports Marketing, Sport Management Review, Journal of Sport Management, Journal of Sport and Social Issues, Communication Research, Communication Studies, Communication Theory, New Media and Society, Journal of Applied Communication Research, and Public Relations Review. Additional key journals for the School of Communication are listed here.
- Texts including Defining Sport Communication (Billings), Strategic Sport Communication (Pedersen), and Sports and identity: new agendas in communication (Brummett & Ishak, eds.). Milner Library owns 77 titles with the Library of Congress subject term "Mass media and sports"; six with "Communication in sports," 206 with "Sports administration" and 214 with "Communication Studies."

Milner Library provides a dedicated subject librarian for every major. The Communication Librarian will support the sport communication program by providing dedicated research assistance for students, faculty, and staff, instructional services, and collection development supporting curricular and research needs. Additionally, the librarian may create digital learning objects for use by the department, including library guides, videos, handouts, modules, or other materials as requested by School of Communication faculty. The library also provides printing,

individual and collaborative workstations, loanable technology including digital cameras and microphones, a Ready Record Studio, and general reference services for all members of the Illinois State University community.

Facilities Costs (1st year) \*

\$0.00

Facilities Costs (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

\$55,000.00

### Other Costs

Are there any additional costs not addressed above? \*

Yes

Please explain. \*

Responses like "NA" or "None" are acceptable.

We anticipate additional costs for faculty start-up funds for two new faculty. See the table below.

Are any sources of funding temporary (e.g., grant funding)? \*

No

How will the program be sustained once these funds are exhausted? \*

Ongoing strategic planning and budgeting will be our instrumental process for sustaining the program's funding, including seeking help from ISU Development.

If this is a graduate program, discuss the intended use of graduate assistantships and where the funding for assistantships would come from. \*

N/A

### Itemized Costs

| Description                                                                                    | Cost (1st year) | Cost (5th year or when fully implemented) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Start-up costs for two new faculty members (based on such costs for new faculty hired in 2022) | \$0.00          | \$30,000.00                               |

### Total Costs

Please subtotal the Operating, Personnel, Facilities, and Other Costs.

Total Cost (1st Year) \*

\$0.00

Total Cost (5th year or when fully implemented) \*

\$243,000.00

Notes

Other Attachment/Documentation

No file attached

### For Workflow Purposes Only

The following data will be used to route the submitted form to the proper individuals in the workflow. If you see issues with the names in the route steps below, contact the Workflow Support Team (workflowsupport@ilstu.edu) for assistance.

Primary Contact ULID (HCM Link) \*

skhunt2

Secondary Contact ULID (HCM Link)

psmudde

D/S Curr-Comm Chair ULID (HCM Link)

D/S Curr-Comm Chair Name (Kuali Link)

D/S Chair ULID (HCM Link)

D/S Chair Name (Kuali Link)

College/Dean ULID (HCM Link)

College/Dean Name (Kuali Link)

College Curr-Comm Chair ULID (HCM Link)

College Curr-Comm Chair Name (Kuali Link)

University Curr-Comm Chair ULID (HCM Link)

University Curr-Comm Name (Kuali Link)

## Actions

Close

Withdraw

Duplicate and Edit