March 19, 2001

To: Associate Dean Gorham and WVU Curriculum Committees
From: Melanie Booth-Butterfield; Chair, Communication Studies
Re: Senior Seminar in Communication Course Proposal

The addition of Senior Seminar in Communication is crucial to our Capstone Sequence, therefore, I would like to extend and clarify some of the material in the Comm 403 course proposal. It must be emphasized that Comm 403: Senior Seminar in Communication Studies is but one part of the Capstone Sequence which will be required of all Communication majors. The other segment is the Professional Field Experience to be graded pass/fail.

We have conducted background research with 35 comparable research universities to guide our expectations. What we have found is that this proposed course sequence is both cutting-edge and unique among research-oriented universities. The concept is similar to a graduate seminar in which the students discuss and are guided about what they are to do out of graduate seminar in which the students discuss and are guided about what they are to do out of class, rather than extensive teaching of new content by the professor. The expectation is that these are seniors who have taken the majority of their Comm hours and are now ready to put it all together in a coherent framework. Points of emphasis will be synthesis and application of concepts students have encountered throughout their major courses. In other words, there is an expectation that Communication majors can take diverse concepts and integrate them, to bring them to bear on specific applied problems or issues.

Readings may include review pieces from Communication journals, career-oriented publications from our national organization, pertinent articles from the Chronicle of Higher Education, and books such as the updated edition of “What Color is Your Parachute”. Both written and oral communication will be outgrowths of the class assignments. However, we do not want to specify details too minutely. This course should be flexible to students with diverse career goals, similar to the manner in which our major is adaptable for diverse goals.

I will be happy to answer any questions or discuss clarification of this course proposal. Since I am on sabbatical this semester, the best way to reach me is via email (mbooth@wvu.edu). I thank you for your time and consideration.

Learning Objectives for Communication Studies Senior Seminar: Comm 403 (Part of the Capstone Sequence)

Students will:

1. Understand the interrelationship of diverse concepts studied in Communication Studies.
2. Be able to apply multiple communication concepts to a single issue or problem.
3. Develop a plan for their search for employment which includes (a) goal assessment (b) building a portfolio of achievements, and (c) refining their resume and job-seeking skills.
4. Secure a field experience appropriate to their career goals.
5. Assess their own program of study and any remaining academic preparation needs.
6. Discuss outcomes of interviews conducted with alumni and network of professionals in the field as they pertain to content areas of Communication and current curriculum.

7. Understand how this major can be adapted to multiple communication-related situations (whether job-related, graduate school, or relationally-oriented).

8. Participate in the Undergraduate Communication Conference at which they will present the outcomes of their field experience. (Note that this is a part of the Capstone sequence which will necessarily be completed subsequent to the professional field experience.)