

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Board of Regents  
**From:** Board Office  
**Subject:** Proposed B. A. (Major and Minor) in Communication Studies  
**Date:** January 31, 2000

**Recommended Action:**

Approve the proposed B.A. (Major and Minor) in Communications Studies at Iowa State University. The proposed program should be submitted to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post High School Education.

**Executive Summary:**

Iowa State University is proposing to formalize the existing emphasis in communication studies into the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Communication Studies (major and minor programs). Communication Studies were introduced in the Speech curriculum at ISU over fifteen years ago. As new courses were developed during the past ten years, existing courses were revamped as a reflection of changes in the discipline. Communication Studies evolved as additional emphasis within the Speech Communication Department, focusing on the more interpersonal and organizational elements of human communication. This was in contrast to the more traditional Speech curriculum that emphasized public speaking, rhetorical analysis, persuasion, public address and argumentation debate.

This proposed program was reviewed by the Board Office and the Interinstitutional Committee on Educational Coordination and is recommended for approval.

After having created a successful emphasis under the umbrella of the Speech Communication degree, Iowa State University now seeks to provide a sense of identity for the program by establishing a specific degree in Communication Studies. The existing program elements have apparently been successful in attracting students, with steady increases each year. The faculty, the students and the other essential elements of a program are already in place. A degree in Communication Studies is thought to enhance student interest in the program and improve the marketability and career opportunities for graduates.

Since the faculty, facilities, and supply budget already exist in support of the Communication Studies emphasis that is currently being offered, no additional expenses are anticipated outside of normal annual budget adjustments.

In actuality this request is not a proposal for a brand new program. Instead, this request is to formalize what already exists as an emphasis under the Speech Communication Program. The course requirements for this emphasis serve as the basis for this proposed formalization as a separate degree program. There were 115 students enrolled in this emphasis in the Fall of 1998. The faculty, most of the courses and other resources are already in place. The program meets all of the Board's criteria.

While similar programs exist at the University of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa and several independent colleges and universities, there is both a sufficient demand for the program and differences in programs to justify its formalization. A clarification on this potential duplication at UNI and ISU was provided by the University, which suggests that these programs are sufficiently different from the one being proposed.

Attached are the responses provided by the University to the Regent program approval questions.

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Robert J. Barak

Approved:

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Frank J. Stork