

The Ideal Academic Environment for Teaching Business Communication

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Introduction

As an academic discipline, business communication and the people who teach it add value to a student's education by preparing students to meet the demands of oral and written communication in the workplace, to be of value to the organizations that hire them, and to communicate effectively while they are still undergraduates. Though business communication courses are among the most important students encounter in their academic careers, for several reasons business communication instructors frequently find themselves defending their work and proving their value to other faculty, their department chairs, deans, provosts, and other decision makers:

- Business communication courses are taught in various academic departments.
- The business communication curriculum varies among schools, unlike the curriculum in other business disciplines (e.g., accounting), where national organizations have curricular expectations for undergraduate programs.
- Business communication, as an academic discipline or field, does not offer doctoral programs.
- Accrediting bodies such as the AACSB do not necessarily recognize business communication faculty or their research.

These reasons present challenges, surely, but they also present opportunities for business communication instructors to advocate that our value lies in our uniqueness. Therefore, the Academic Environment Committee sees this position paper as a first step in addressing these challenges so that business communication as a discipline and the people who teach it can be better understood and valued within academia.

The purpose of this position/white paper, then, is twofold:

1. To contribute to the development of the identity of business communication as an academic discipline and its place in academia.
2. To advocate for business communication instructors regarding their status and the status of business communication within the academy.

The audiences for this paper are business communication instructors who want a resource for articulating what they do and who they are and deans, administrators, department chairs, and other decision makers who impact instructors' work.

Definition of Business Communication

Business communication is transactional, problem-solving communication that involves creating and disseminating work-related messages through appropriate channels, while being sensitive to the needs of the audience, the context and culture in which the message is conveyed, and the impression that the audience has on the sender (Bell & Muir, 2014; Rentz & Lentz, 2018).

Value of Business Communication to Business & Academia

Unlike many oral and written communication courses in academia, business communication occupies a unique space in both the classroom and the workplace. As such, unlike many other written oral and written communication courses, business communication courses (and the instructors who teach them) provide value that is really only found in business, technical, and profession communication departments and programs.

Value to Business

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) *Job Outlook 2017* (2016), written and oral communication skills ranked in the top five skills employers say they look for in job candidates. The other skills in the top five include leadership, team skills, and problem-solving skills—all of which are taught in business communication courses.

Simply knowing we teach skills employers want, though, is not as powerful as being able to argue that these skills significantly impact an organization's bottom line. Traditionally, these skills are referred to as "soft" skills that are thus distinguished from "hard" skills. The problem with this distinction is that the "soft" skills are frequently removed from association with a company's profits or financial health. In fact, in one study, when MBA students were asked why they wrote poorly in the workplace, a frequent defense was that writing was not seen as central to the organization's bottom line or that employees would not be held accountable for their poor work (Lentz, 2013).

At the same time, another study reports that 45% of 430 companies surveyed by the Society for Human Resource Management and AARP were implementing some sort of remedial grammar training for their workers to improve their accuracy and professionalism (Schellenbarger, 2012). Another study concluded that small- and medium-sized businesses were losing over \$500,000 per year (Siemens Communication, 2008). And UpWrite Press (2012) provides a cost calculator showing a hypothetical company with 1,000 employees could lose as much as \$1.5 million annually due to poorly written emails.

Thus, even though business communication is perhaps currently seen as a soft skill that is nice if one can get it, the truth is that communication impacts a company's profits just as poor management or poor accounting practices would. Having a business communication program is a way colleges or universities can demonstrate to employers that they value communication and are committed to helping companies thrive.

Value to Academia

Given the communication needs of businesses, it makes sense that business schools would teach business communication as part of the undergraduate and graduate business curricula. Doing so connects students' work in their business courses to the communication skills they need to do this work (e.g., write an audit report to a client, communicate a change in policy, deliver a persuasive presentation).

Furthermore, business schools continually respond to the needs of businesses and other stakeholders. For example, accounting programs adapted their curricula to move from GAAP to IFRS reporting standards (e.g., Jackling, 2013). Marketing departments have offered analytics programs to respond to industry demand (e.g., Staton, 2016). If businesses are saying that they want employees with better communication skills, it appears that requiring business communication as part of the undergraduate curriculum could only add value to students' business degrees and to the businesses that hire these graduates. The NACE research cited above indicates that including the development of these skills in students' academic preparation would reflect positively on an institution and academic program and offer them points of distinction employers will value.

Faculty Qualifications

Business communication is taught in many settings, though according to a recent survey by Moshiri and Cardon (2014), 70% of business communication instructors teach in business schools. Other faculty and instructional staff may teach in departments such as English or communication departments. Regardless of where they teach, faculty and instructional staff will hold degrees in fields as diverse as medieval literature, and management, given that advanced degrees in business communication exist only at the master's level. The PhD in business communication (the gold standard for credentialing in academia) is simply not available.

Historically, we have tried to make the case for celebrating the diverse backgrounds and perspectives that faculty bring to our field, but the fact is that in academia credentials and credentialing matter to a discipline's status and legitimacy. If business communication is to have status and legitimacy in academia, we have to have standards regarding the preparation of faculty and staff in our field whether they teach in business schools or other academic departments. Specifically, these qualifications could include the following:

- A doctoral degree in a field such as rhetoric, technical communication, organizational communication, business education, or professional communication with a dissertation and research interest in business communication.
- A doctoral degree in a business field with a dissertation and research interest in business communication.
- A doctoral degree in a non-business field with a subsequent record of research, teaching, and scholarship or professional development in business communication. Simply having a doctoral degree is not sufficient for teaching business communication.
- A master's degree in business or a field such as rhetoric, business communication, technical communication, organizational communication, business education, or professional communication.
- Professional experience in business through which an individual establishes a record of successful communication and leadership.

What is important is to acknowledge that business communication (like academic English or speech) is its own discipline with its own rhetoric; students need business communication instructors with expertise in both communication and business and who understand the expectations for communication in today's workplace—not instructors with expertise only in business writing or speaking, generally.

Instructor Rank & Compensation

The gold standard in academia is the tenure-track position. Moshiri and Cardon (2014) report that 61% of business communication instructors have doctoral degrees, yet only about 41% of business communication instructors are in tenure or tenure-track positions.

Making the field attractive to teachers is complicated by many factors, (e.g., low salaries compared to those in other disciplines, lack of tenure-track positions). The salary table below shows how poorly business communication instructors' salaries compare to those of their counterparts, according to the *2016 AACSB Trends Report* ("Business school data guide," p. 28).

Faculty & Administrative Personnel

Average full-time salaries for existing faculty by rank and discipline – all members, in thousands of USD for selected disciplines (2015-16)

Discipline	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Instructors
Accounting	156.4	132.2	136.3	76.4
Business Communications	106.6	86.8	77.1	63.4
Business Education	112.6	72.5	62.2	68.1
Business Ethics	148.8	104.6	94.7	88.3
Business Law	126.2	99.9	91.0	70.8
CIS/MIS	144.8	118.6	107.6	73.1
e-Business	101.0	85.5	82.7	55.0
Economics	135.5	99.7	95.2	63.8
Entrepreneurship	153.6	116.3	103.3	83.0
Finance	180.0	137.4	140.9	87.1
Human Resource Management	126.5	101.8	88.4	65.1
Management	149.0	115.3	106.5	74.1
Marketing	156.9	119.8	115.0	72.6
Operations Management	156.8	125.5	116.5	80.8
Quantitative Methods	149.8	110.5	107.3	67.4
All Others	136.8	102.8	96.9	72.2

Source: AACSB International Salary Survey (2015-16)

Of course, simply presenting data to administrators does not result in a pay raise or more tenure-track lines. Occasionally external funding can support positions, but to be competitive for finite resources on our campuses, we need to document the rigor of our discipline both internally (e.g., research, teaching excellence, service to our institutions) and externally (e.g., showing how we prepare students to be professionals, getting employers to demand that schools prepare students to communicate in the workplace).

Documenting the rigor of our discipline will also lend support for why the field of business communication requires the same staffing and salary considerations as other academic disciplines:

- The positions allow instructors greater opportunity to emotionally and intellectually invest in a curriculum, program, and students.
- The positions afford instructors time, space, and resources to engage with business faculty about communication needs in business fields and promote communication skills across the business curriculum.
- The positions afford instructors time, space, and resources and to engage in research and professional development so they offer a current and relevant curriculum.
- The positions are an outward sign to students and employers of a school's commitment to the development of high-demand workplace skills.

Curriculum

Within higher education, business communication occupies a unique space with unclear disciplinary boundaries. In fact, many business communication instructors may be asked why a business communication curriculum is necessary if an institution already offers courses in composition or public speaking. The

argument for offering a business communication separate from and distinct from writing or speaking for academic purposes can be summarized as follows:

Business Writing & Speaking	Academic Writing & Speaking
The business communicator frequently defines what the task will be as he/she transacts business, responds to an audience's need, or solves a problem in the organization.	The student responds to a predefined, packaged prompt assigned by a teacher who has an idea of what he/she expects to read or hear.
A business communicator's purpose is to accomplish a task or motivate action. It is audience-centered communication.	The purpose of most academic communication is for the writer or speaker to demonstrate to the instructor mastery of the material and the language. It is communicator-centered speaking or writing.
Business communicators write or speak to a variety of primary and secondary audiences simultaneously.	Academic writers and speakers show what they know to one primary audience—the instructor.
Business communicators include only content that is relevant to an audience's ability to accomplish a task—again, reader-centered communication.	Academicians have the license to use whatever content they wish to develop their thesis—again, writer- or speaker-centered communication.
Business communicators follow genre-specific formatting conventions and can use bulleted lists, short paragraphs, and other formatting to make information scannable and visually accessible.	Students write or speak to instructors who want complex thoughts expressed in complex paragraphs or full speeches; instructors generally do not want thoughts expressed in bulleted points and headings.
Business communicators adhere to conventions for mechanics, grammar, punctuation, and style, which means that instructors must be masters of these conventions as well. These conventions are seen as a sign of one's membership in the business community and a sign of one's professional ethos.	Students have much freedom in choosing punctuation, grammar, and mechanics. Such conventions (e.g., the serial comma) that are critical in business writing are considered optional by many academic writers. Instructors of academic writing may or may not be masters of particular conventions, as these conventions are not necessarily seen as the mark of a good writer or speaker.

Standardizing the Business Communication Curriculum

As we know, the curricula for business communication classes vary widely. For example, some classes are taught with an emphasis on oral communication, though most seem to emphasize written communication and standard business communication genres such as memos, letters, and email (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014). Some courses are taught as one, three-credit course and are expected to cover both written and oral communication. Some business schools offer separate written and oral communication courses. Some instructors address social media; others do not. Some business programs require business communication coursework, while some schools do not offer business communication courses at all.

Such is not the case in other business disciplines or undergraduate business programs. For example, all undergraduate business students likely take courses in accounting and marketing. Likewise, within those courses, a common assumption is that students will learn the same content, regardless of the school or academic programs they attend. That is, students in a Principles of Marketing course will learn the four principles of marketing; students in Principles of Accounting will learn about income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements, regardless of the institution they attend. In accounting, for instance, the

standardization may be the outcome of schools preparing students to take the CPA exam. Other academic programs also prepare students to take national certification tests in fields such as operations management, sales, or human resources management.

Having a standardized curriculum for an introductory or sole business communication course may benefit instructors and students. Introductory or core courses in any discipline often define a business discipline and serve a unifying purpose for those who teach and those who learn. Having a unified curriculum with standardized goals and outcomes advocated by the ABC may strengthen business communication's reputation as a business discipline.

During the Academic Environment Committee's panel discussion at the 2015 Association for Business Communication conference, attendees expressed the following:

- Standardizing the curriculum is a good idea in terms of creating an identity and professional status for our field.
- Standardizing specific types of assignments may be less helpful than standardizing goals and objectives for a business communication course.
- Standardizing goals and objectives for assessment in a business communication class is important.
- Standardizing our curriculum via goals and objectives may require us to think about the function of a business communicator rather than or in addition to specific writing or speaking skills required in the workplace.
- The prevailing model for teaching business communication appears to be one, three-credit course, though some participants stated that their schools have recognized that this model is insufficient for teaching oral and written communication and have developed separate courses for each. Such appears to be consistent with Moshiri and Cardon (2014), who found that students get "extensive" coverage of business writing and only "some" coverage of oral communication.

Based on this feedback, we offer the following as objectives that a solid business communication curriculum might include. The assumption of these objectives is that the curriculum would require separate courses in written and oral communication to allow sufficient coverage of topics:

Objectives for both Written and Oral Communication Courses

1. Analyze and meet the needs of audiences.
2. Use critical thinking and problem-solving strategies.
3. Design professional-level documents and presentations.
4. Ensure clarity, conciseness, and precision.
5. Use principles of argument and persuasion.
6. Show sensitivity toward and awareness of diversity, including but not limited to diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social and economic class, ability/disability, age, and religion.
7. Demonstrate ethical behavior.
8. Use standard business grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and fundamental business writing techniques.

9. Research and discuss global differences in communication.

Objectives for Written Communication for Business

1. Compose business e-mails, memos, and letters for routine, bad-news, persuasive, and job campaign situations that meet the needs of the audience and context.
2. Write business reports, proposals, and executive summaries.
3. Adapt messages to existing and emerging technologies.
4. Select, prepare, and use visual support to enhance written documents.
5. Demonstrate a professional image when presenting business information in written documents.

Objectives for Oral Communication for Business

1. Communicate effectively and persuasively in meetings, round tables, discussion groups, project teams, and other formal and informal business settings.
2. Communicate effectively in individual, team, and other formal and informal presentations.
3. Select appropriate delivery methods and styles.
4. Select, prepare, and use visual support and technology to enhance and deliver presentations.
5. Demonstrate a professional image when presenting business information.
6. Use standard business grammar and vocabulary.
7. Demonstrate proper vocal and nonverbal communication.
8. Develop, ask, or answer questions while interviewing, being interviewed, or presenting information.

Locating the Business Communication Curriculum

Also at issue is the location of the business communication curriculum. Currently, 70% of business communication courses are taught in business schools (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014).

Whether business communication faculty are qualified to teach business communication is determined by their academic, research, and teaching expertise and interests, not by the academic department in which they work. Locating business communication within business schools offers ready opportunities for connecting students' work in their business courses to the work we do in our business communication courses and, conversely, allows for developing writing and speaking programming across the business disciplines; however, not being in a business school does not preclude business communication instructors in other schools from actively seeking these same opportunities.

Of course, teaching within a business school may provide frequent research, teaching, or other professional opportunities collaboration between business communication faculty and other business faculty. Again, not being in a business school does not mean that these collaborations are not available. Interacting with faculty in the business schools provides business communication instructors with opportunities to help students connect their business communication courses to their (the students') business fields.

Ideally, students would take a business communication courses early in their academic careers so that they could be alert to the roles communication plays in the different functional areas they will be learning about in their other courses. An additional course later in students' programs of study would enable them to

incorporate their business knowledge into business communication problem solving.. Provided business communication instructors work closely with faculty in other business disciplines, students would receive a well-rounded business communication curriculum both within business communication courses and throughout their academic careers.

Class Size

According to Moshiri and Cardon (2014), “approximately, 12.8% of business communication courses have 20 or fewer students, 36.5% have 20 to 24 students, 26.4% have 25 to 29 students, and 22.3% have 30 to 39 students” (p. 316-317).

Managing class size, as Horning (2007) says, is crucial for both students and instructors, as smaller classes enable both to engage in the cycle of instruction, practice, and feedback required for students to develop their skills. Because students and instructors engage in this same type of interaction in oral communication courses, the argument can be made that in these courses, too, small class sizes have the most benefit for students.

Assessment

Assessment is a critical piece of the learning process both at the institutional and curricular level. Models for efficient assessment vary, but a good model will be driven by the objectives of the business communication curriculum and consistent with an institution’s goals for the degrees it grants.

Assessment in business communication is twofold: by course or by program. In both cases, the elements of assessment are the same. A faculty-driven outcomes assessment process defines student learning goals and outcomes, maps such goals to curricula, identifies instruments and measurements to assess learning, collects and analyzes data, and uses the assessment information to continuously improve student learning (AACSB, 2013).

Assessment is based on measurable course or program objectives; objectives are based on behaviors or skills students must demonstrate upon completing a course or program. The objectives for written and oral business communication previously mentioned may be a good start for faculty who are developing or revising their assessment processes.

Accreditation agencies require direct and indirect measures to be implemented in assessing programs. In business communication, direct measures generally include course-embedded assignments and student demonstration techniques. Course-embedded assignments provide opportunity for both instructor review and student reflection, while demonstrations allow students to display their knowledge through testing or performance.

Research focusing on business communication course assessment and business communication goals within programmatic assessment is very limited. A study by Bayless and Wilson (2010) used course assignments to measure student performance of state-mandated communication objectives. Price (2013) implemented a teaching portfolio for use in preparing future business communication teachers and for gathering materials to illustrate student learning of course and programmatic goals. Carnes, Awang, and Smith (2015) considered the importance of writing-intensive courses, beyond the business communication course, to strengthen and assure positive student outcomes in writing related skills. Current research emphasizes the importance of assessment overall for systematic, continuous improvement of curricula.

AACSB Standards

Business communication instructors in business schools may find themselves having to meet their schools’ faculty requirements for AACSB classifications and subsequent accreditation standards. Because business

communication is taught by faculty with varied degrees and in varied departments, business schools are allowed not to include business communication in their various measures of performance (e.g., refereed journal articles related to the discipline, professional engagement, degree in a field related to the area of teaching).

Being counted or not being counted is a status issue for business communication programs housed in business schools. If a school values accreditation, it will, of course, devote its resource that provide the intellectual and professional capital required to sustain accreditation—tenure-track faculty lines, full-time positions, research grants, and travel support. These resources, in turn, reflect what a school values and which departments or programs have status.

If business communication faculty and staff want to compete for these resources, we, too, need to engage in the intellectual and professional life of our schools such that we contribute positively to our schools' AACSB standing. We want to be in a position where our schools proudly count our contributions as on par with those of our colleagues in other business disciplines. Knowing what these standards are and how business communication faculty can be counted is key to participating in the accreditation process.

While each school can set its faculty and instructor requirements for AACSB accreditation purposes, in general, to retain their AACSB accreditation status, business schools must demonstrate that their faculty “. . . demonstrate significant academic and professional engagement that sustains the intellectual capital necessary to support high-quality outcomes consistent with the school's mission and strategies” (AACSB Standard, 2016, “Eligibility procedures and accreditation standards”).

Toward this end, AACSB has identified four broad categories of faculty qualifications. The qualifications are based upon a combination of initial academic preparation and continuing engagement in the field. Each college or school of business is responsible for setting specific criteria consistent with their respective missions (e.g., research-intensive universities may set higher standards for research than teaching-focused institutions). Additionally, AACSB has set minimum standards for what percentage of faculty must meet different categories of faculty qualification.

Below, we provide guidance on how to evaluate business faculty credentials. Of course, the specific details must be identified consistent with each business school's mission. Here we summarize the four categories of faculty qualifications and provide a starting point for how business schools could classify business communication faculty.

Category 1: Scholarly Academics (SA)

SA faculty sustain currency and relevance through scholarship and related activities. SA status is granted to faculty members who earned their terminal doctorate degree in a field consistent and appropriate to their teaching assignment. Newly hired faculty who have earned a PhD in the past five years are automatically granted SA status if they have a doctorate in the field in which they teach.

Initial Academic Preparation:

SA faculty will have a PhD in a business communication related field, including but not limited to Organizational Communication, Professional Communication, Public Relations, Rhetoric and Composition, Strategic Communication, Technical Communication, or Business Education with an emphasis in business communication.

Currency and Relevance:

SA faculty will be actively engaged in scholarship of business communication. This may include a combination of publishing peer-reviewed research in business communication journals (see the list below), publishing research in business discipline journals (e.g., management, marketing), publishing evidence-based

scholarship of teaching and learning in pedagogical journals, and presenting competitively selected research at conferences (e.g., Academy of Management, Association for Business Communication).

Category 2: Practice Academics (PA)

PA faculty sustain currency and relevance through professional engagement, interaction, and relevant activities. PA status is applied to faculty members who augment their initial preparation as academic scholars with development and engagement activities that involve substantive linkages to practice, consulting, and other forms of professional engagement.

Initial Academic Preparation:

PA faculty will have a PhD in a business communication related field, including but not limited to rhetoric and composition, organizational communication, professional communication, public relations, strategic communication, technical communication, or business education with an emphasis in business communication.

Currency and Relevance:

PA faculty will be active in professional engagement and activity relating to business communication. This may include consulting and executive coaching in the business community (on speaking, writing, listening, interviewing, etc.), conducting communication audits for companies, serving on corporate or nonprofit boards, writing practice-based advice articles for local publications or a blog, taking a leadership role in local business communication organizations (e.g., International Association of Business Communicators), publishing trade books or textbooks, gaining and/or maintaining professional credentials (e.g., APR, PMI), and writing case studies.

Category 3: Scholarly Practitioners (SP)

SP faculty sustain currency and relevance through continued professional experience, engagement, or interaction and scholarship related to their professional background and experience. SP status is applied to practitioner faculty members who augment their experience with development and engagement activities involving substantive scholarly activities in their fields of teaching.

Initial Academic Preparation:

SP faculty will have an advanced degree (MA, MS) in a professional communication field (business communication, English, journalism, organizational communication, professional communication, public relations, rhetoric and composition, strategic communication, technical communication) or an MBA. They will also have initial professional preparation through significant professional experience in a business communication function (e.g., corporate communication, employee communication, public relations, social media).

Currency and Relevance:

SP faculty will be actively engaged in scholarship of business communication, mostly likely with a focus on pedagogy of business communication. This would include publishing scholarship of teaching and learning articles in pedagogical journals, publishing teaching innovations in pedagogical outlets, writing case studies, collaborating on research projects with colleagues, leading teaching workshops (on campus or for the discipline), publishing trade books or textbooks, and participating in scholarly conferences (e.g., Association for Business Communication).

Category 4: Instructional Practitioners (IP)

IP faculty sustain currency and relevance through continued professional experience and engagement related to their professional backgrounds and experience. IP status is granted to newly hired faculty members who join the faculty with significant and substantive professional experience.

Initial Academic Preparation:

IP faculty will have an advanced degree (MA, MS) in a professional communication field (business communication, English, journalism, organizational communication, professional communication, public relations, rhetoric and composition, strategic communication, technical communication) or an MBA. They also should have significant professional experience in a business communication function (e.g., corporate communication, public relations, employee communication).

Currency and Relevance:

IP faculty will be active in professional engagement and activity relating to business communication. In addition to or in lieu of the currency and relevance activities identified for PA faculty, this may include communication coaching within the campus community (e.g., working with student case study competition teams or entrepreneurship teams on presentational skills), coaching students in job skills (e.g., interviewing, resume writing), leading a Toastmasters chapter, attending professional development workshops (e.g., communication skills-based and teaching-based), and participating in scholarly conferences (e.g., Association for Business Communication).

Business Communication Journals

Several outlets are available for business communication faculty to publish their work that contributes to the body of knowledge for business communication or that contributes to the development of business communication pedagogy.

Research Journals

- International Journal of Business Communication (ABC)
- Management Communication Quarterly (SAGE)
- Journal of Business and Technical Communication (SAGE)
- Journal of Technical Writing & Communication (SAGE)
- Technical Communication Quarterly (STC)
- Written Communication (SAGE)
- IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication (IEEE)
- Journal of Applied Communication Research (NCA)

Pedagogical Research

- Business and Professional Communication Quarterly (ABC)
- Communication Education (NCA)
- College Composition and Communication (CCCC)
- Journal of Management Education (OBTS)

Pedagogical Activities

- Communication Teacher (NCA)
- Management Teaching Review (OBTS)

Strategies for Incorporating Business Communication in the Undergraduate and Graduate Business Curriculum

For students to successfully develop their written and oral communication skills, they must have opportunities to frequently practice and receive feedback on their skills. Students will not likely retain or

transfer all that they learn in their three- or four-credit business communication course or courses without the help of their faculty in other courses. To that end, successful business programs will see opportunities to help students connect their communication abilities to their professional success in a variety of ways:

- Course work in both written and oral communication that incorporates activities and concepts from the business disciplines in an instructor's college.
- Writing-across-the-business-disciplines programming that reinforces concepts from business communication courses throughout a student's undergraduate or graduate program.
- Written and oral communication as AACSB assessment goals.
- Written and oral communication assessment as part of students' internship evaluations.
- Written and oral communication assistance through communication centers or tutoring labs specifically designed to train business communication skills. Several examples exist at both large and small institutions:
 - University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
 - Iowa State
 - American University Kogod School of Business
 - University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler Business Communication Center
 - Tulane Freeman School of Business Writing Center
- Business communication advisory boards comprising members of the business community who can provide feedback regarding workplace communication needs.

Conclusion

In summary, an ideal academic environment for the discipline of business communication and those who teach it will be one in which colleges and universities

- recognize that business communication is a legitimate business discipline, along with management, marketing, accounting, finance, information systems, and others that are traditionally recognized as business disciplines.
- allocate resources to staff business communication positions with permanent, tenured faculty or long-term academic staff, just as they allocate resources for other business disciplines.
- expect that business students' communication skills will be assessed and reinforced across the undergraduate business curriculum in all business disciplines.
- require that business communication faculty in business schools meet the same standards for AACSB accreditation as faculty in other business disciplines.
- require that business communication faculty in communication, English, and other non-business disciplines have training in the teaching of business communication and/or can demonstrate professional engagement in the field.

Likewise, the creation of an ideal academic environment requires that business communication faculty

- offer a current, relevant curriculum that provides students with the communication skills they need to enter the workforce.
- remain current in their knowledge of business communication through research or other

professional development activities.

- remain competitive with faculty in other business disciplines in terms of credentials, academic degrees, assessment requirements, and expectations for AACSB accreditation standards (for business communication faculty in business schools).
- champion the development of students' communication skills across the business curriculum and/or throughout their course of study.
- advocate for the status of business communication as an academic discipline deserving of the same respect as other profession-related disciplines.

Given our emphasis on student success and our role in preparing students for the workplace, the field of business communication and business communication instructors must be well-positioned to do their work and have the resources to do it. Information such as that provided in this paper should provide material for business communication instructors to use to advocate for themselves, their students, and our discipline as they engage with chairs, deans, and other administrators whose decisions directly impact their work and ours.

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