

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

**BHE** BHE 20-29

**BOARD DATE:** June 23, 2020

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**APPROVAL OF LETTER OF INTENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DARTMOUTH TO AWARD THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION AND  
AUTHORIZATION FOR FAST TRACK REVIEW**

**MOVED:** The Board of Higher Education (BHE) has evaluated the Letter of Intent of the **University of Massachusetts Dartmouth** to award **the Bachelor of Arts in Communication** and has determined that the proposal aligns with BHE criteria. Accordingly, the BHE authorizes the Commissioner to review the program and to make a final determination on degree granting authority pursuant to the Fast Track review protocol.

**VOTED:** Motion adopted by BHE 6/23/2020.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Section 9(b); AAC 18-40

Contact: Winifred M. Hagan, Ed.D., Senior Associate Commissioner for Strategic Planning and Public Program Approval

**BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**June 2020**  
**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**  
**Letter of Intent**  
**Bachelor of Arts in Communication**

**DEGREE TITLE ABSTRACT ON INTENT AND MISSION OF PROGRAM**

The intent of the proposed BA in Communication is to offer students at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (UMD) an opportunity to merge communication theory and practice, developing important skills and experiences that will support their learning. Students will be expected to apply communication concepts and theories to real world problems within one or more communication industries. The coursework and professional opportunities offered by the proposed program major are planned to be responsive to a diverse student population and provide broad experiences that develop intellectual and professional growth as well as social mobility.

UMD holds that the mission of the proposed communication major is to provide opportunities for students interested in liberal arts, humanities, language, and culture to learn theoretical and analytical approaches within these disciplines in addition to the specific, marketable tools they are also expected to acquire. The proposed program is expected to recruit and retain an undergraduate student population, many of whom will be first-generation to college, and who historically select majors based on passion and opportunity. UMD plans that the proposed BA in Communication will provide a clear pathway into career opportunities and professional development.

After review by the Chief Academic Officer at UMD, the proposed program has obtained all necessary governance approvals and was approved by the University of Massachusetts' Board of Trustees on January 15, 2020. The LOI was circulated on April 21, 2020. No comments were received.

**A. ALIGNMENT WITH MASSACHUSETTS GOALS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

*Address Gaps in Opportunity and Achievement in Alignment with Campus-Wide Goals*

UMD anticipates that because it is an institution serving many traditionally underserved student populations, the coursework and professional opportunities offered by the proposed major are designed to provide experiences that develop students' intellectual growth, professional

development, and social mobility. UMD reports that it currently ranks in the top 15% nationally<sup>1</sup> and ranks 84th by U.S. News and World Report for students' social mobility. This measure demonstrates how UMD is working with students to impact and improve students' lives. The BA in Communication is planned to be part of the Department of English and Communication and is designed to underscore and strengthen UMD's commitment to support student social mobility.

A major characteristic of the UMD institutional mission is inclusion. Drawing from the local region, UMD's population of low-income students is 31%; students of color make up 35% of the student population, and 66% are first-generation college students. The Department of English and Communication is committed to serve this demographic and the effort to develop the proposed communication degree is deemed a significant way to make manifest this commitment and continue its' advancement.

#### *Program or Department Supports to Ensure Student Retention and Completion*

UMD plans to utilize departmental advising programs and protocols targeted at retention and support. UMD noted that the department assigns small numbers of students to a specific full-time faculty advisor. Further support includes a departmental advising coordinator for consistency of guidance to individual students. Multiple advising pathways have been developed for advisors to assist students in choosing their classes and follow their progress through completion.

#### *Alliances and Partnerships with PK-12, Other IHE's, Community Employers*

The curriculum in communication, rhetoric, writing, and literature directly aligns with Subject Matter Knowledge areas required by the Commonwealth in English and Language Arts (see p.11, Appendix A). Further, UMD expects that students will be positioned to continue as English and Language Arts instructors, including potentially pursuing such a path through the University's MA in Teaching (MAT) program.

Once implemented, UMD plans that the proposed degree program will develop articulation agreements that include Quincy College, Cape Cod Community College, and Bristol Community College. UMD accepts General Education and foundational courses that are currently aligned with MassTransfer, and expects that once BHE approval is obtained, direct and comprehensive conversations about the transfer pathway for the public community colleges, as well as other independent institutions will ensue.

UMD anticipates continued engagement with the broader community, which currently includes: Partnership with The Public's Radio (the National Public Radio station affiliate serving the South Coast and Rhode Island) including a "Journalism Alliance" that engages UMass Dartmouth

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<sup>1</sup> CollegeNET (2019). 2019 Social Mobility Index. Retrieved November 26, 2019  
<https://www.socialmobilityindex.org/>

students through semester-long internships, including opportunities at its new downtown New Bedford bureau, a graduate assistantship in business and technical communications at station headquarters, a service-learning collaboration on the undergraduate and graduate levels involving social media, public relations, news journalism, feature story writing, and multimodal writing, a series of events on campus each year covering politics, communication, and community issues like fishing and transportation, and class visits to the station's facilities to observe operations. It is expected that these partnerships and alliances will further develop and grow once BHE approval is obtained.

The UMD Advisory Board for the Master's in Professional Writing & Communication graduate program is expected to also serve as the advisory for the proposed B.A. in Communication. The advisory members represent a range of employment sectors including non-profit, industry, business, university, and governmental agencies and they provide connections to the employer community. In 2018, this group completed a survey about current and projected skills and competencies needed by communication professionals, which informed the design of the program. The Advisory Board has engaged in student mentoring activities as well.

Specific examples of internships undertaken at industries, businesses, and universities by students reflect significant learning experiences in a range of communication areas that will be available to students in the proposed program. UMD provided detailed information regarding student successes in the English and Communication Department. Standing agreements include internships with *The Public's Radio* (formerly Rhode Island Public Radio/RIPR), for two interns at a time. In 2019, a student worked on production of a segment for the radio show *MOSAIC*, regarding the compelling story of the Refugee Dream Center in Providence RI. In spring 2020, another student internship at *Hasbro* resulted in the offer of a job. The same happened for another student intern at *OPTUM*, a health care service group, and still another student intern at *Nye Lubricant Labs*. UMD reports that there have also been several interns at *Akamai Technologies*, a cybersecurity and cloud service company, who have also found professional positions. The Department's alumni network is helpful in providing internship opportunities, including offers from the Director of Biomedical Communication at Brown Medical School, who oversees all print and web communications for the Division of Biology and Medicine and is editor of the School's alumni magazine. UMD expects these relationships to employers will yield new opportunities for students in the proposed program.

#### *Relationship to MassHire Regional Blueprints*

Based on multiple published sources including the Bureau of Labor Statistics<sup>2</sup>, and on data from UMD alumni records and advisory inputs, UMD found demand for students trained and qualified in communication to be significant. Professionals in communication are reported by UMD to

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/home.htm>. Retrieved 5/18/2020

work in a range of sectors. The regional blueprint for the southeast region<sup>3</sup> identified workforce trends for several industries that employ professional communicators. For example, from 2013–2016, the following increases in employment were cited<sup>4</sup>: Professional and technical services (+ 7.9%), Educational Services (+ 2.7 %), Finance and Insurance (7%), Public Administration (+ 8.7%), Health Care and Social Assistance (+ 20.8%), and Arts (+ 46.1 %).

UMD reports that employers for professionals in communication also include areas that are not indexed in the regional blueprint, including governmental agencies, business, professional, labor, political, and similar organizations, self-employed, and grantmaking, civic, nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations represent an important area of employment for many in professional communication as well. In Massachusetts, the nonprofit sector accounts for 18% of jobs and this sector has seen growth in both employment and wages.

### *Duplication*

Universities of Massachusetts Boston and Lowell, and Bridgewater State University have communication programs with foci in media studies, public relations, philosophy and critical thinking, and journalism. It is anticipated that the proposed UMD program may contain some overlapping content as required to provide a well-rounded communication curriculum.

It is planned that several factors will distinguish the UMD program from others in the region, in particular the 4+1 option leading to completion of the department's Master's in Professional Writing and Communication graduate program. Strong technical communication and usability studies components of the proposed program are reported to be unique to the region and responsive to a significant regional demand in the technology sector. UMD underscored the connectedness between English and Communication faculty, as one that provides a grounding in written communication and writing studies for students. As well, the UMD Multiliteracy and Communication Center<sup>5</sup> (MCC)'s mission, to help students grow as independent and confident communicators on the written page and across a variety of current and emerging platforms and technologies, will be brought to bear on student success. The MCC offers tutoring experiences for students.

Additionally, UMD's Journalism Alliance partnership with The Public's Radio (NPR), was established in 2017 and creates undergraduate and graduate internship opportunities for UMD students.

### *Innovative Approaches to Teaching and Learning*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://masshiregbwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Southeast-Region-Labor-Market-Blueprint-Final.pdf>. Retrieved Spring 2020

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15

<sup>5</sup> *University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's tutoring center located in the Department of English and Communication*

The proposed BA in Communication offers significant digital and experiential approaches to students' education that address contemporary contexts. The proposed degree is planned to feature curriculum that emphasizes multimodal and visual communication, rhetoric, and composing. Connecting contemporary trends in digital communication and writing with education and professionalization opportunities, the courses in the program are designed to enable students to develop the necessary skills in composing and critically engaging texts for an ever-increasingly digitally mediated world. The proposed BA in Communication is expected to offer experiential learning and professionalization opportunities, paired with students' coursework. Students will learn and gain knowledge through supervised internship experience in various communication-oriented roles and industries.

## **B. ALIGNMENT WITH CAMPUS STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION**

### *Priority Rationale and Support of Strategic Plan and Overall Mission of Institution*

The proposed BA in Communication is planned to advance the mission of UMD, matches the need for communication professionals within the region and beyond, and can be executed using mostly existing resources. The proposed program aligns with the UMD mission by enriching the regional citizenry and preparing students for jobs and professional life after graduation. The need for communication professionals who can communicate with and about science, data, and technology has been recently amplified, and those who can work in diverse organizations, assessing and solving problems, as well as enact knowledge and skills in a full range of digital and media venues fits hand-in-glove with UMD's plans for the future. The direct effects will involve providing more students with a recognized opportunity to meet regional and state needs, with a focus on career-readiness that will be built into the curricular design.

### *Overall Goals, Learning Objectives, Outcomes Evaluation (see Form B Appendices)*

The proposed program is expected to teach 21st Century written, oral, and visual communication knowledge and skill sets, which are grounded in rhetorical theory<sup>6</sup> and critically engaged with diverse social, environmental, and technological perspectives.

Upon completing the degree, it is intended that students will be able to create written texts using appropriate supporting materials and theories in communication and rhetoric; communicate ideas orally within multiple contexts; use information design principles to produce texts appropriate for an audience, purpose, and context; summarize and apply key concepts in communication and rhetorical theory; evaluate the historical and/or cultural contexts of communication practices and describe their ethical, social, or environmental implications; evaluate messages from a variety of media and technologies using methodologies in communication and rhetoric.

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<sup>6</sup> *Rhetorical theory* is the body of thought about human symbol use. *Rhetoric* comes into being, then, when a rhetor observes or creates an exigence and offers discourse designed to bring the interests of the audience to bear on it. Retrieved 5/18/2020 [edge.sagepub.com/system/files.pdf](http://edge.sagepub.com/system/files.pdf)

## C. ALIGNMENT WITH OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES OF INSTITUTION

*Enrollment Projections (see Form C Appendices)*

UMD's estimate of enrollments for the program's first year is 28-37 students (transfer and new) based on current, prospective student stated interest. After a full cycle to recruit it is anticipated that a regular full-time student enrollment in the program of about 120 students. No significant impact on other programs is anticipated.

*Resources and Financial Statement of Estimated Net Impact on Institution (see Form D Appendices)*

Once approved by BHE, UMD expects the degree program to be offered with existing faculty and a small number of part-time lecturers. Faculty hires are dependent on meeting enrollment goals for the degree. UMD anticipates a strategic hire for one full-time lecturer and one additional tenure-track faculty. The Department of English & Communication does not plan for any new administrative or oversight resources.

The disciplinary connection between communication and digital authoring/production tools may require some additional resources to maintain hardware and software tools. New courses in the proposed major are expected to underscore growth in technology-focused curriculum. UMD recognizes that this technology will eventually be necessary to create an environment conducive to student learning. By providing students training and experience with industry-standard systems and software platforms, UMD expects they will be prepared with the skill sets and technical knowledge required for career success.

### STAFF REVIEW AND VALIDATION

Staff thoroughly reviewed the **LOI** proposing full degree granting authority for the **Bachelor of Arts in Communication** submitted by the **University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**. Staff validate that the LOI includes all data required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. Staff recommendation is for BHE authorization for the Commissioner to review the program pursuant to the Fast Track review protocol.

**Form A: Curriculum**

<b>Required (Core) Courses in the Major (Total # courses required = 4)</b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credit Hours</i>
ENL 257	Introduction to Rhetorical Studies	3
ENL 2XX	Ethics in Communication	3
ENL 2XX	Digital and Media Literacy	3
ENL 270	Speech Communication	3
<b>Subtotal Required (Core) Credits in the Major</b>		<b>12</b>
<b>Other Required Courses in Related Subject Areas (# Total courses require =5)</b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	
<b>Any department 1C course: 1 course</b>		
ENL 262	Intro to Journalism	3
ENL 264	Communicating in the Sciences	3
ENL 265	Business Communication	3
ENL 266	Technical Communication	3
ENL 2XX	Introduction to Strategic Communication	3
<b>Subtotal Required department 1C Credits</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Any theory course from the following list: 1 course</b>		
ENL 355	Advanced Rhetoric	3
ENL 356	Language & Culture	3
ENL 357	Special Topics in Rhetorical Studies	3
ENL 358	Theories of Visual Communication	3
<b>Subtotal Required department theory Credits</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Any 2 300- level cultural, contextual, and literary courses: 2 courses</b>		
ENL 300	Survey of British Literature I	3
ENL 302	Survey of British Literature II	3
ENL 303	Survey of American Literature I	3
ENL 304	Survey of American Literature II	3
ENL 305	Medieval Literature	3
ENL 307	The English Renaissance	3
ENL 308	The Enlightenment	3
ENL 309	Romantic Age	3

ENL 310	Victorian Age	3
<i>Course Number</i>	<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>
ENL 311	Colonial American Lit	3
ENL 315	American Renaissance	3
ENL 316	The 19 <sup>th</sup> Century American Novel	3
ENL 317	19 <sup>th</sup> Century American Poetry	3
ENL 318	Chaucer	3
ENL 319	Shakespeare	3
ENL 320	Major Author	3
ENL 321	Golden Age of Drama	3
ENL 323	Postcolonial Theory & Criticism	3
ENL 326	Studies in Modern Irish Literature & Culture I	3
ENL 328	Survey of African American Literature I	3
ENL 329	Survey of African American Literature II	3
ENL 331	Postcolonial Literature	3
ENL 333	Modern British Poetry	3
ENL 334	The Victorian Novel	3
ENL 335	20 <sup>th</sup> Century American Fiction	3
ENL 336	20 <sup>th</sup> Century American Fiction—1945-Present	3
ENL 337	20 <sup>th</sup> Century American Poetry	3
ENL 338	Modern Drama	3
ENL 339	American Drama	3
ENL 340	Literature & Psychology	3
ENL 345	Literary Theory	3
ENL 373	World Cinema I: Origins to New Wave	3
ENL 374	World Cinema II: New Wave to the Present	3
ENL 375	Modern and Contemporary British Fiction	3
ENL 385	Topics in Multicultural Literature	3
ENL 390	Topics in Literary Studies	3
<b>Subtotal Cultural, Contextual, and Literary studies Credits</b>		<b>6</b>
<b>Capstone requirement (1 course)</b>		
ENL 4XX	<b>Capstone in Communication</b>	3
<b>Subtotal Capstone Credits</b>		<b>3</b>

<b>Elective Courses (Total # courses required =4)</b>		
<i>Course Number</i>	Course Title	Credits
ENL 341	Copywriting	3
ENL 350	Report and Proposal Writing	3
ENL 351	Comedy Writing	3
ENL 352	Public Relations Writing	3
ENL 353	Sports Writing	3
ENL 354	Usability Studies	3
ENL 359	Tutoring Writing	3
ENL 360	Creative Nonfiction	3
ENL 361	Techniques in Critical Writing and Communication	3
ENL 362	Writing Reviews	3
ENL 363	Topics in Journalism	3
ENL 364	Feature Story and Article Writing	3
ENL 367	Multimodal Writing: Theory and Practice	3
ENL 368	Internet Communication and Culture	3
ENL 369	Document Design	3
ENL 370	Women, Writing, and the Media	3
ENL 372	Writing about Popular Culture	3
ENL 376	Digital Filmmaking	3
ENL 377	Special Topics in Film and Video	3
ENL 378	Screenwriting	3
ENL 380	Magazine Writing	3
ENL 3XX	Environmental Communication	3
ENL3XX	Special Topics in Communication	3
	<b>Sub Total Elective Credits</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Distribution of General Education Requirements</b>		# of Gen Ed Credits
Attach List of General Education Offerings (Course Numbers, Titles, and Credits)		
Arts and Humanities, including Literature and Foreign Languages		27
Mathematics and the Natural and Physical Sciences		12
Social Sciences		12
<b>Sub Total General Education Credits</b>		<b>51</b>

<b>Curriculum Summary</b>	
Total number of courses required for the degree	40
Total credit hours required for degree	120
<b>Prerequisite, Concentration or Other Requirements:</b>	

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education required and elective courses which correspond with ELA Subject Matter Knowledge guidelines:

English SMKs	Corresponding courses in proposed B.A. in Communication (R)-required; (E)-elective satisfying a category requirement) All ENL courses
(a) Literature	Courses from the Cultural, contextual, and literary requirement (6 credits)
1. American literature	303, 304, 311, 315, 320, 328, 329, 335, 336, 337, 339 (E)
2. World literature including British	300, 302, 305, 307, 308, 309, 310, 318, 319, 321, 323, 326, 333, 373, 375 (E)
3. Characteristics of different literary genre	258 (R); 316, 317, 321, 333, 335, 336, 337, 338, 390 (E)
4. Various schools of literary criticism	258 (R) 259, 345 (E)
(b) Language	
1. History and structure of the English language	356, 361(E)
2. Knowledge of the rules and conventions of standard written and spoken English	Any US 1C course (R); 361: Topic Style
(c) Rhetoric and composition	
1. Principles of classical rhetoric	257 (R)
2. Modern and contemporary theories of rhetoric	257 (R); 355, 357, 358 (R)
3. Similarities and differences between oral and written communication	257, 270 (R)
(d) Reading theory, research, and practice at the middle and high school level	355, 356, 357, 358 (E)

SMKs taken from: **Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines** Updated September 2019  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

**Form B: LOI Goals and Objectives**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Measurable Objective</b>	<b>Strategy for Achievement</b>	<b>Timetable</b>
Build a sustainable degree program	Increase enrollment by 10% per year Attract high-quality applicants Attract diverse student population Recruit students from community colleges	Work with marketing and admissions offices Recruit at fairs, open houses Promote programs on social media Promote existing relationships and opportunities such as The Public's Radio, Dart, etc.	2020–2025
Enhance curriculum	Develop program-related organizations and activities Develop new course offerings Expand PR writing and mass-comm courses Expand digital and technical courses	Establishing a competitive debate team/program Develop regularly taught courses in environmental, global, social, business, and mass communications Hire additional faculty to fill needs Update computer labs	2020/then ongoing
Gain regional and national exposure	Increase faculty and students active in national organizations Faculty and students more active in grant seeking Faculty mentor students in regional/national competitions	Start student chapters of professional organizations Participate in local and regional professional activities and competitions Seek grants for funded research development	2020/then ongoing
Graduates obtain relevant jobs or graduate school admission	Increase number of students placed in jobs and graduate programs Increase internship opportunities and relationships with businesses.	Develop career advising strategies Work with alumni Host campus events tailored to attract business partners	Annual and ongoing
Explore partnership opportunities, interdisciplinary minors	Increase minor opportunities for students Identify partnership possibilities on campus	Begin dialogue with potential partners such as Visual Media Arts, Business, Computer Science	2020–2024

**Form C: LOI Program Enrollment**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
New Full-Time	25	30	30	30	30
Transfers New	12	15	20	20	20
Continuing Full-Time		25	50	76	91
New Part-Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Continuing Part-Time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>141</b>

**Form D: LOI Program Budget**

<b>One Time/ Start Up Costs</b>	<b>Cost Categories</b>	<b>Annual Expenses</b>				
		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
	Full Time Faculty (Salary & Fringe (37.91%))		1 new FTL* (\$78,600)	ongoing FTL (\$80,172 )	ongoing FTL (\$81,177)  1 new TT* (\$103,400 )	ongoing FTL (\$83,410)  ongoing TT (\$105,468 )
X	Part Time/Adjunct Faculty (Salary & Fringe)	4 PTL sections (\$6,000 each)	0	0	0	0
	Staff	0	0	0	0	0
	General Administrative Costs (break down by category- i.e. accreditation, credentialing, etc.)	General operating funds: \$500	GOF: \$1,000	GOF: \$1,000	GOF: \$1,000	GOF: \$1,000
	Instructional Materials, Library Acquisitions	0	0	0	0	0
	Facilities/Space/Equipment (existing computer lab facilities will require ongoing update)	\$2000	\$1000	\$1000	\$1000	\$1000
	Field & Clinical Resources	0	0	0	0	0
	Marketing	\$3,500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
	Other (Specify) None	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$30,000	\$81,100	\$82,672	\$187,077	\$191,378

\* The new faculty hires are dependent on student enrollment. Their courses will service both the new degree and other college majors.

## Revenue Projections

<b>One Time/Star t-Up Support</b>		<b>Annual Income</b>				
		<b>Revenue Sources</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
	Grants					
	Tuition (see budget narrative for details)	\$571,068	\$1,107,409	\$1,625,618	\$2,094,250	\$2,402,154
	Fees (Tech \$350 + Student fees \$175)	\$19,425	\$36,750	\$52,631	\$66,150	\$74,025
	Departmental (\$426 Major Fees)	\$15,762	\$29,820	\$42,707	\$53,676	\$60,066
	Reallocated Funds					
	Other (specify)					
	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$606,255	\$1,173,979	\$1,720,956	\$2,214,076	\$2,536,245