



8-2015

# Proposal for a Business Communication Collateral within the HCB Management Department

Sara C. Moncier

*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*, [smoncier@vols.utk.edu](mailto:smoncier@vols.utk.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_chanhonoproj](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj)

 Part of the [Business and Corporate Communications Commons](#), and the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Moncier, Sara C., "Proposal for a Business Communication Collateral within the HCB Management Department" (2015). *University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects*.

[https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_chanhonoproj/1893](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1893)

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Tennessee Honors Program at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact [trace@utk.edu](mailto:trace@utk.edu).

Proposal for a Business Communication Collateral within the HCB  
Management Department

Sara Moncier

August 3, 2015

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

## **INTRODUCTION**

High-quality written communication is more than just following grammar rules and organizing paragraphs; writing is an art, and students must practice their communication skills to become good writers, not just learn the rules. Courses should go beyond the writing basics; students need to know how to effectively form an argument or write persuasively. Business students need strong communication skills to make good impressions on customers and suppliers, as well as generally be more persuasive and effective when communicating with others.

This proposal recommends that the Haslam College of Business (HCB) Management department offer a business communication collateral; this paper discusses the need for a communication program within HCB, the current communication programs in UT and peer schools, and the logistics involved with a communication collateral. A few peer schools offer similar programs, but a dedicated communication collateral could be an asset to the department, and the entire college, that differentiates it from most of its peers. A business communication collateral available to all majors could attract more potential employers to the college and make the college more unique.

## **BACKGROUND RESEARCH**

Many researchers in the business world and in academia have found that college graduates are not writing effectively, and there is room for improvement. The next two sections describe the business perspective and the academic perspective of students' communication skills, and the third section details two different methods for teaching writing courses.

### **Business Perspectives**

Writing is an integral part of business, but many recent graduates lose credibility because they cannot use correct grammar. A survey of businesses revealed that “80 percent believe that their employees' biggest problem is written communication. Think about it. The first impression most people get of your business comes from a written message, either on a piece of paper or on a computer screen” (Price, 2007). Businesses are taking risks by employing graduates with poor communication skills because these employees can jeopardize the company's reputation (Price, 2007).

One particular *New York Times* article gets to the core of this issue: “‘It's not that companies want to hire Tolstoy,' said Susan Traiman, a director at the Business Roundtable, an association of leading chief executives whose corporations were surveyed in the study. ‘But they need people who can write clearly, and many employees and applicants fall short of that standard’ ” (Dillon, 2004). Excellent business communication helps employees effectively and efficiently convey information, whereas inadequate communication can lead to confusion and wasted time.

According to a *Wall Street Journal* article, some employers feel that MBA students can waste too much time explaining their analytical methods, instead of better explaining the end result or the implications of the research (Middleton, 2011). Graduate students also “tend to ramble, use

pretentious vocabulary or pen too-casual emails. These students are quite knowledgeable about their field of study, but without better communication skills, this knowledge cannot be shared with customers or managers effectively (Middleton, 2011). Many recent MBA graduates do not understand the balance between explaining background information and getting to the point, and many recent graduates struggle to address their audience efficiently because they either explain much more than is necessary or do not use complete sentences at all (Middleton, 2011). These weaknesses prevent the client from easily grasping the information, even if the employees are making knowledgeable and valid statements.

Another recent *Wall Street Journal* article also reported that 90% of employers believe that recent college graduates have “poorly prepared” critical thinking, communication, and problem solving skills, despite colleges’ efforts to improve students’ communication skills (Belkin, 2015). Writing skills can be applied in any discipline, and this article explains that even through the changing technology, businesses still rely on their employees to have good communication skills.

### **Academic Perspectives**

No matter their major, all business students could benefit from effective communication skills; an article co-authored by HCB accounting professor Lauren Cunningham studied the readability of auditing letters to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and her team found that clear communication from the accounting department can save companies both time and money (Cassell, Cunningham, & Lisic, 2015). Clear writing reduces the SEC’s response time and can eliminate the need for follow-up questions. Even accounting professionals, in their highly technical field, can benefit from clear writing; the accountants in her study could all write reports, but those accountants who created more readable reports were able to send more effective messages.

Many other academic researchers are also studying effective business writing. Dr. Lorelei Ortiz, Chair of the department of Management of St. Edward’s University, said “Graduates [who] think that it is sufficient to get their ideas down on paper without worrying too much about how articulately they express themselves may find their employers are disappointed with their inability to write brief updates, proposals and reports or even draft a simple well-structured email” (Ortiz, 2013). This is a strong message, but countless articles and employers continue to say the same thing: students are not writing effectively, despite what they think of their own skills.

A core problem for students entering the workforce is that they might know how to write well, and they might have scored high grades in business writing classes, but most students have to actively *work* to write each message clearly and concisely (Lentz, 2013). In other words once students know they are no longer being graded on the writing itself, they lose their incentive to write strategically. In a study, the majority of surveyed MBA students said that their bosses do not incentivize good communication (Lentz, 2013). The students feel that their work product, not the writing, is rewarded, and they do not feel like there is any punishment for bad writing. Since deadlines and goals are urgent and offer tangible punishment and reward, most of the surveyed

students said as long as the message is delivered, there is no incentive to strategically craft an email. In this environment described by her participants, employees do not have time to write multiple drafts of an email and edit their messages: “The reality is that employees must write quickly. It is important that they write well enough that their writing needs minimal revision and proofreading. Good writing (not poor writing or sloppy writing) must become their habit” (Lentz, 2013). “Knowing how” to write effectively will not be enough for students; they must be trained to create concise, clear messages without sacrificing much time. Training students to *instinctively* write well could be the answer, allowing them to create high-quality messages quickly at work (Lentz, 2013). If this theory is true, students need much more practice writing effectively; they must instinctively analyze their audience and get to the point without sacrificing valuable time.

### **Communication Course Teaching Styles**

There are two main ways that academics suggest structuring business communication courses. One method uses a “template-based” approach, and the second suggests a more heuristic method.

#### *Template-Based Method*

With the template-based approach, students know the general format and structure for different types of business communication; if students can notice patterns between positive, negative, or persuasive messages, they can use these patterns to quickly write effective messages in the workplace (Schultz, 2013). This type of learning can be easier to remember after graduation, since the patterns are relatively straightforward. For example, in negative communication, writers typically avoid using active voice because that clearly blames someone, usually the writer or the reader. For example, there is a distinct tone difference between the following two sentences: “You did not submit the application on time” versus “The application was not submitted on time.” The passive voice of the second sentence avoids blaming the reader for the late application. There are many patterns in business communication, and writers who can quickly recall these patterns can create effective messages by using general templates in their writing (Schultz, 2013). This method can help students write faster, since they already know a general layout for the message.

#### *Heuristic-Based Method*

On the other hand, heuristic techniques avoid a “fill-in-the-blank” approach, encouraging students to adapt each message for a specific situation. This method involves much more critical thinking to determine how to address the situation best (Hicks, James & Melton, 2013). The “template” method of teaching would be easier to remember after graduation, but the students’ audiences would respond much better to personalized messages.

Heuristic teaching should be practiced with many scenario-based prompts, requiring students to think critically to fit the writing to the audience (Hicks et al., 2013). This teaching method encourages students to think past a “bad news” or “good news”

template—they should create a message that fits the situation by analyzing the entire scenario. In their article, Hicks and her colleagues provide the following example:

For example, a young teen boy applied for a credit card and is declined. The credit card company has to explain to the boy that his application was declined because he is a minor, but they will let his parents co-sign on a card with him to create an account. This letter to the boy could be perceived as negative, since the original application is being declined, but the credit card company needs to also use a positive tone, avoid sounding too formal, and use simple business terms to fully explain the situation to the parents in a way they can understand. A writer cannot rely solely on a predetermined template, but must analyze the situation and adapt the message to include all these nuances.

When using a heuristic method, students should analyze the value of different formatting, tone, and intent in order to modify the message for each situation. The heuristic method also keeps students from “mastering” communication; even the best writers can always improve, and the template method might lead to overly-confident writing students (Hicks et al., 2013).

There are advantages to both methods, and professors can use both methods in a single course. Short, daily self-assessed writing exercises can encourage students to quickly adapt their writing to different audiences intuitively (Laurence, 2013), and the professor can also explain some patterns for students to use in writing. When students practice heuristic business writing techniques, they can gain more experience writing quickly; this would allow them to write effective messages with less need for revision. There are many academic articles supporting both options, and it is generally up to the individual instructor. Both methods will help students become more comfortable integrating their communication skills into a business environment because both methods try to help students recall the classroom lessons after graduation.

## **CURRENT PRACTICES**

Employers continue to seek graduates who can write well, and universities are generally trying to modify their existing programs, rather than creating new programs that specifically address this need. In both HBC and its peer schools, there continues to be a need for a dedicated business communication program that colleges are not fulfilling.

### **Peer and Aspirational Schools**

Eight universities, both peer and aspirational, were studied for this proposal; these universities are on both the Chancellor’s Top 25 list and the HCB’s list of top business programs. These universities are Arizona State University, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Ohio State University, University of Florida, University of Indiana, University of South Carolina, University of Texas at Austin, and University of Virginia. All information about these programs was gathered from the programs’ websites.

Of these eight universities in HCB and UTK's list of peer and aspirational schools, four of them are currently in line with HCB's requirement—one required business writing course offered through another college. These universities, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Texas at Austin, University of Indiana, and University of Florida, do not have in-house writing courses, and instead require students to take a written communications course in a different college of the university. Like HCB students, the students of these business colleges are taking general professional writing courses without integrated business aspects.

Two of the peer and aspirational universities, the Ohio State University and Arizona State University, offer programs for communication-focused secondary areas of study outside of their business college. Ohio State requires all students to earn a specialization (composed of three courses) in addition to its general business major; one specialization option, titled "Special Area," lets students create a personalized program from courses throughout the university, as long as the specialization is arguably business-related. Ohio State business students can use this freedom to create their own communication specialization from courses outside the college of business. Arizona State University's Hugh Downs School of Human Communication offers a minor in communication, consisting of six courses. Neither of these options is offered in-house, so they are not taught with a business focus.

Only two of the eight peer and aspirational universities offer in-house communication courses and programs within their business colleges, but even those programs were not specifically for written communication. The University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce requires students to take three courses to earn a concentration, and its management department has multiple writing-focused courses that are available for that concentration (COMM 4640 Advanced Managerial Communication, COMM 4641 Public Speaking and Persuasion, COMM 4642 Business Communication for the Digital Age, and COMM 4670 Decision Making & Negotiation). South Carolina offers a minor in leadership that focuses on critical thinking and audience analysis, but it is specifically focused on oral communication instead of written. This leadership minor is not housed in a specific college of the university; the minor offers a very long list of courses to choose from throughout the entire university, including communications courses within the Moore School of Business.

### **Haslam College of Business**

Like some of its peer schools, HCB requires students to take two basic introductory English courses and one course in technical or business writing, all of which are offered through the English Department, inside the College of Arts and Sciences. The two introductory courses are required during a student's freshmen year, and the technical writing course is generally taken in the sophomore or junior year. This information is found in the HCB catalog.

Since all three of these classes are offered outside of HCB, these classes are not designed specifically for a business environment, and business students are taking these classes with

engineers, agricultural majors, and many other non-business students. The required upper-level writing course (students can choose either English 255 Public Writing or English 295 Business and Technical Writing) covers a wide range of topics to reach the range of majors, and class projects often do not build specifically on students' business knowledge and vocabulary.

HCB students currently have the option to earn a technical communication minor through the English department, but, like the required communication courses, the minor is not tailored specifically for business majors. As noted in the English department catalog, the technical writing program offers courses in rhetoric, graphic design, and editing, but these are not as directly relevant for a business major; courses specifically on negotiations and rhetoric, persuasion, or conflict resolution, as well as writing reports and business plans, could be much more useful for business students.

Including the technical communication minor into students' schedules can also be an issue; business students must take 6 courses for this minor in addition to three courses of a business collateral within the HCB. Often, this is not a feasible option for students who are trying to graduate in four years or who are trying to maintain HOPE scholarship requirements.

### **Survey of HCB Students**

During this second summer 2015 term, a survey was sent to HCB juniors and seniors, asking them 10 questions about their writing experience and their opinions of business communication in HCB. The full list of questions is included in Appendix A. This survey was created through SurveyMonkey and approved by the Institutional Review Board.

In total, 71 students completed the survey, giving a 4% response rate. During the summer semester, many students are not on campus and do not check their email consistently, so even though their response rate is low, there were respondents from every major except Public Administration. The survey results are included in Appendix B.

Forty-three percent of students surveyed said they would be interested in additional business communication courses if they were offered within HCB, and 29% of students considered additional business courses to be highly valuable. One supply chain major said, "I think a business communication class would be very beneficial. I am doing a 6-month internship, and I feel the area that I feel the least confident in is my communication and professional skills. This is definitely something that UT should adapt into their Business Administration program."

Forty-one percent of surveyed students said that they would be interested in earning a business communication collateral if it were offered, and another 15 percent of students were unsure.

One student double-majoring in accounting and marketing explained why she supported a business communication collateral: "As a senior, I sincerely wish this were an option for me as



an underclassman! I considered picking up a minor in English (technical writing) in order to improve my business communication skills. The only reason I chose not to is I wanted to graduate on-time for scholarship purposes. Had I realized earlier the importance of having these skills in the business world, I would have definitely made the change to my major.”

Another student, majoring in supply chain management, said, “In the evolving world of business that this generation of college graduates faces, communication is becoming an increasingly important skill for employees to have. A collateral in Business Communication would provide an advantage to UT students, making it easier for them to be hired and perform jobs successfully.”

In this survey, almost 60% of upper-class respondents said they feel moderately prepared or well prepared for writing in their field, despite employers’ continued complaints about their employees’ communication skills. HCB students’ writing skills are only analyzed and critiqued in one semester of their junior year (in either English 255 or 295), and those skills are not fully critiqued and improved again in their college career. As Ortiz explained, when students cannot instinctively create quality writing, they require more drafts and revision when they write on the job (2013). Ortiz would argue that although these students are scoring passing grades on their written class assignments, they could still benefit from additional practice and critique.

The survey also showed that some students are simply not interested in taking additional business courses or earning a business communications collateral. One supply chain management student who did not support a business communication collateral said,

Speaking with my current, former, and potential employers, they have all wanted skills that are more technical rather than conceptual. While a business communications collateral would be beneficial to the writing skills of certain students, it would not be beneficial to most positions in the business world.

It is true that some majors could see more direct benefits from a writing collateral because some careers simply involve more day-to-day communication. As Dr. Cunningham’s accounting-focused article showed, however, good writing skills are useful in even the most technical fields. Twenty-six percent of surveyed students did not think that this proposed collateral would be useful in their field; these students are not interested in improving their written communication skills. Just as some business students are not interested in supply chain management or in statistics after taking the basic supply chain or statistics course, some students are satisfied with knowing basic grammar and how to use Microsoft Word. Over half the student respondents, though, were interested in studying business communication as a collateral, and these students see the post-graduation benefits of good communication skills.

## **HCB BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COLLATERAL OPTIONS**

An in-house business communication collateral should be a hybrid of peer programs, and HCB has an opportunity to stand out among its peers as a college that is addressing employers’ needs.

As companies and employers continue to criticize graduates' communication, UTK could offer a formal communication program for students to become more effective writers in the workplace.

### **Rationale**

In the survey discussed above, one respondent who is double-majoring in business analytics and HR management felt the college is missing an opportunity to tailor this course for business students:

I think a business writing course offered through the Haslam College of Business would be beneficial, even aside from a collateral (i.e. in place of ENGL 255 or 295). Taking a business focused writing course outside of the business school wasn't necessarily beneficial to my future career. If a more tailored course for business students was available through our college, more students would benefit from the skill sets acquired in the course and be able to better communicate in the professional and corporate world.

If business communication courses were offered in-house, the courses could integrate marketing or human resource management topics into the assignments. For example, instead of just studying general "bad news" communication, instructors could tie "bad news" messages to HR topics, which would emphasize the importance of analyzing audiences and would give students tangible examples to study. This tailored approach can help students transfer in-class lessons to their careers after graduation because the classes discussed specific situations and ways to use the communication skills (Hicks et al., 2013).

If the HCB begins offering in-house communications courses, though, it needs to ensure that the courses are giving students adequate feedback. HCB requires many upper-level classes to include writing assignments, but these assignments are generally pass/fail or are only graded on content. For example, based on this student's experience as an accounting major, a memo-style writing assignment is required in almost every course upper-level accounting course, but these assignments are not graded on strategic writing style or audience-focus. Instead, these memos are evaluated solely on the included information and basic grammar. As Ortiz suggested in her article, though, students must practice their writing skills *and* receive meaningful feedback in order to practice writing more effectively. In this student's experience, the current grading system for most HCB writing assignments does not include the detailed critique that Ortiz recommends, and as she warns, this can reduce the students' incentive to adjust their tone and vocabulary for their audience, thus reducing the usefulness of the assignment in the first place (2013).

By offering an in-house communication collateral, students can save credit hours by not having to choose an additional collateral requirement on top of a technical communication specialty, as is currently required. This could be a deciding factor for students considering a technical communication collateral through the English department because the students could lose their HOPE scholarship by enrolling in too many courses or simply because they are trying to

graduate within four years. If a communication collateral was offered within HCB, however, students would not need to select two supplementary programs in addition to their major.

### **Course Recommendations**

Many peer universities currently offer courses that teach valuable communication skills, and two units within UTK, the College of Information and Communication and the English department, also teach communication-focused courses, although not specifically geared toward business students. Generally, most of these communication programs include courses with similar or reoccurring topics, such as negotiation, persuasion, and general group communication.

The other programs' communication courses were sorted by subject (e.g. negotiations, persuasion, etc.) and then the best and most relevant qualities from those groups of courses were included in the proposed HCB business communication courses. The following five recommended courses combine valuable business communication lessons from other programs' courses, and together, they provide a cohesive collection of valuable writing skills for the business world.

- **Managerial and Professional Communication**

Both the College of Information and Communication at UTK and the University of Virginia offer similar courses. This course would provide students with the communication skills to manage diverse business audiences by reviewing basic principles of communication within businesses and with the public, investors, and employees. This course would emphasize how students can transfer their communication skills into the workforce. Topics could include media relations, communication ethics, and crisis communications, and activities should include group problem solving and case studies.

Currently-offered similar courses are:

- UTK College of Information and Communication: CMST 240—Business and Professional Communication
- University of Virginia: COMM 4640—Advanced Managerial Communication

- **Negotiation, Conflict, and Communication**

Arizona State University, University of Virginia, University of South Carolina, and UTK's College of Information and Communication all offer courses that discuss negotiation and conflict resolution; this course can give students tools to prevent and manage disagreements within their careers. With a business focus, this course can give business students multiple strategies of communication for managing conflicts and conducting negotiations, and communication would be emphasized as a significant factor in the development, management, and resolution of conflict at the interpersonal, small group, organizational, or societal levels.

Currently-offered similar courses are:

- UTK College of Information and Communication: CMST 270—Argumentation and Debate
- UTK College of Information and Communication: CMST 420—Communication and Conflict
- University of South Carolina: MGMT 401—Negotiation and Conflict in the Workplace
- University of Virginia COMM 4670—Decision Making & Negotiation/Organizational Change and Development
- Arizona State University: COM 312—Communication, Conflict, and Negotiation

- **Business Communication Strategies for Digital-Age Professionals**

With globalization impacting nearly every aspect of business, many new communication issues have emerged. This course will help students use business communication methods in the modern workplace; possible topics include effective communicating with international coworkers and clients and communicating effectively using technology (Twitter, Email, Instant Messaging, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). Students can be unsure how to manage communication methods within their jobs; technology like instant messaging can be difficult for students because they can struggle to balance professionalism and brevity. After graduation, students could work with international customers and suppliers who are not fluent in English.

Currently-offered similar course is:

- University of Virginia: COMM 4642—Business Communication for the Digital Age/Communication Strategies for Business Professionals

- **Managing Teams in the Workplace/Group Communication**

University of South Carolina and UTK College of Information Communication both offer courses in team management, and HCB students can benefit from a course that focuses on communication within business teams. Students will discuss how to facilitate effective teamwork through communication and how to create, motivate, and participate in effective team. Although management courses already discuss management techniques, this course would focus on the vocabulary, tone, and other communication methods that help manage teams in the workplace.

Currently- offered similar courses are:

- UTK College of Information and Communication: CMST 330—Group Communication
- University of South Carolina: MGMT 402—Managing Teams in the Workplace
- University of South Carolina: SPCH 331—Organizational Communication

- **Rhetoric & Persuasion**

University of South Carolina and UTK College of Information and Communication offer similar courses that discuss persuasion; persuasion and rhetoric are not traditionally

included in business environments, but business professionals can use rhetoric and persuasive communication to effectively communicate with customers, suppliers, and employees. Students in this course will learn strategies for structuring and delivering persuasive material for a variety of audiences and the methods that contribute to effective and ineffective persuasion. The course integrates classical rhetorical elements, audience analysis, and message organization with a business focus, and the course can discuss how to implement rhetoric and persuasion into everyday business communication.

Currently-offered similar courses are:

- UTK College of Information and Communication: CMST 310—Persuasion
- University of South Carolina: SPCH 380—Persuasive Communication
- University of South Carolina: SPCH 387—Introduction to Rhetoric
- University of Virginia: COMM 4641—Public Speaking and Persuasion

### **Course Scheduling**

Each semester, the management department could offer one or two of these recommended courses. Since students only need to take three courses to earn a collateral, a student would have enough time to choose the collateral before starting the junior year and complete the three different courses before graduation.

HCB's Information Management department offers IM courses this way; there are a total of five IM courses for students to take, and the department usually offers two courses each semester for students to take for the collateral. Generally, the department offers the same two IM courses each spring and the same two IM courses each fall, giving students some predictability when making their schedules.

A communication collateral could be organized this way, too, and the department could avoid wasting resources. Courses A and B could be offered in the fall, courses C and D could be offered in the spring, and then course E could be offered in alternate years as a replacement for any of the other four courses. Students can complete the program by taking three different courses over three consecutive semesters, and the department could avoid offering more courses than necessary.

### **Instructor Options**

If the Management department only needs to provide two courses each semester, both courses in each semester could both be taught by a single part-time instructor. The instructors could be management lecturers, professional editors, or English Ph.D. graduates with rhetoric or technical communication backgrounds.

## **CONCLUSION**

Business professionals and academic researchers continue to criticize students' communication skills, and there is a need for more business communications courses within business colleges.

Since no peer institutions are offering this specific kind of program, HCB has the potential to be a pioneer in this market. A business communications collateral could attract more employers to the college, making this program a potential asset to the college, as well as the entire university.

The department could provide this collateral to students by offering two classes each semester, and all classes could be taught by a single part-time instructor. The benefits of this program have the potential to greatly outweigh its costs, and the collateral could bring more attention to the college, even if not all students participate.

### Works Consulted

- Arizona State University Academic Catalog. (2015). Retrieved August 3, 2015.  
<https://catalog.asu.edu/>
- Bealing, W. (2014). "Integrating Writing Assignments into an Historically Non-Writing Intensive Course." *Business Education & Accreditation*, 6(1), 55-62. Retrieved July 15, 2015, from Business Source Complete [EBSCO].
- Belkin, D. (2015, January 16). "Test Finds College Graduates Lack Skills for White-Collar Jobs." *The Wall Street Journal Online*. Retrieved June 30, 2015.
- Cassell, C., Cunningham, L., & Lisic, L. (2015, April 1). "The Consequences of Writing Not So Readable Responses to SEC Comment Letters." Retrieved July 15, 2015.  
<http://securitieseditor.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/readability-of-comment-letters.pdf>
- Dillon, S. (2004, December 7). "What Corporate America Cannot Build: A Sentence." *The New York Times*, p. 23. Retrieved June 30, 2015.
- Hicks, N., Smart, K. L., & Melton, J. (2013). "Using Problem-Based Scenarios to Teach Writing." *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(1), 72-81.  
doi:10.1177/1080569912466256
- Indiana University Kelley School of Business Undergraduate Programs. (2015). Retrieved on August 3, 2015. <http://kelley.iu.edu/Ugrad/Academics/Curriculum/page39062.html>
- Kassens, A. L. (2014). "Tweeting Your Way to Improved #Writing, #Reflection, and #Community." *Journal of Economic Education*, 45(2), 101-109.  
doi:10.1080/00220485.2014.889937
- Lawrence, H. (2013). "Personal, Reflective Writing: A Pedagogical Strategy for Teaching Business Students to Write." *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(2), 192-206.  
doi:10.1177/1080569913478155
- Lentz, P. (2013). "MBA Students' Workplace Writing: Implications for Business Writing Pedagogy and Workplace Practice." *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(4), 474-490.  
doi:10.1177/1080569913507479
- Middleton, D. (2011, March 3). "Students Struggle For Words: Business Schools Put More Emphasis on Writing Amid Employer Complaints." *The Wall Street Journal Online*. Retrieved June 30, 2015.
- Nolop, B. (2013, October 14). "Why Aren't Companies Getting Graduates With the Skills They Need? Our College Graduates Can't Write." *The Wall Street Journal Online*. Retrieved June 30, 2015.
- The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015.  
<http://fisher.osu.edu/undergraduate/academics/specializations/special-area/>

- Ortiz, L. A. (2013). "A Heuristic Tool for Teaching Business Writing: Self-Assessment, Knowledge Transfer, and Writing Exercises." *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(2), 226-238. doi:10.1177/1080569912466438
- Price, H. T. (2007, May). "Poor Writing Skills Cost You Money." *South Carolina Business*. p. 34. Retrieved on June 15, 2015.
- Schultz, H. (2013). "A Hybrid Recursive Model for Teaching and Learning Business Writing." *Business Communication Quarterly*, 76(1), 82-104. doi:10.1177/1080569912466255
- The University of Tennessee Department of English Course Descriptions. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. <http://english.utk.edu/course-descriptions/>
- The University of Tennessee Haslam College of Business: Pre-Business Core. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. <http://undergrad.bus.utk.edu/curriculum/pre-bus-core.asp>
- The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Undergraduate Academics. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. <https://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/BBA/Academics>
- University of Florida Warrington College of Business: Heavener School of Business Undergraduate Academic Programs. (2015). Retrieved on August 2, 2015. <http://warrington.ufl.edu/undergraduate/academics/>
- University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler Business School Curriculum Overview. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. <http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/programs/undergraduate-business/curriculum>
- University of South Carolina Academic Bulletins. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. [http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview\\_program.php?catoid=36&poid=5328&returnto=4241](http://bulletin.sc.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=36&poid=5328&returnto=4241)
- University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce: Management Concentration Academic Program. (2015). Retrieved August 2, 2015. <https://www.commerce.virginia.edu/undergrad/management/academic-program>



## Appendix A: Survey Introduction and List of Survey Questions

This anonymous survey is to gather information from students in the Haslam College of Business at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, about their opinions on business communications. If you are not in the Haslam College of Business, please do not complete this survey.

The Haslam College of Business currently offers many collaterals for students to choose from, covering a wide range of business fields. It does not, however, offer its own courses, or a collateral, in business communications.

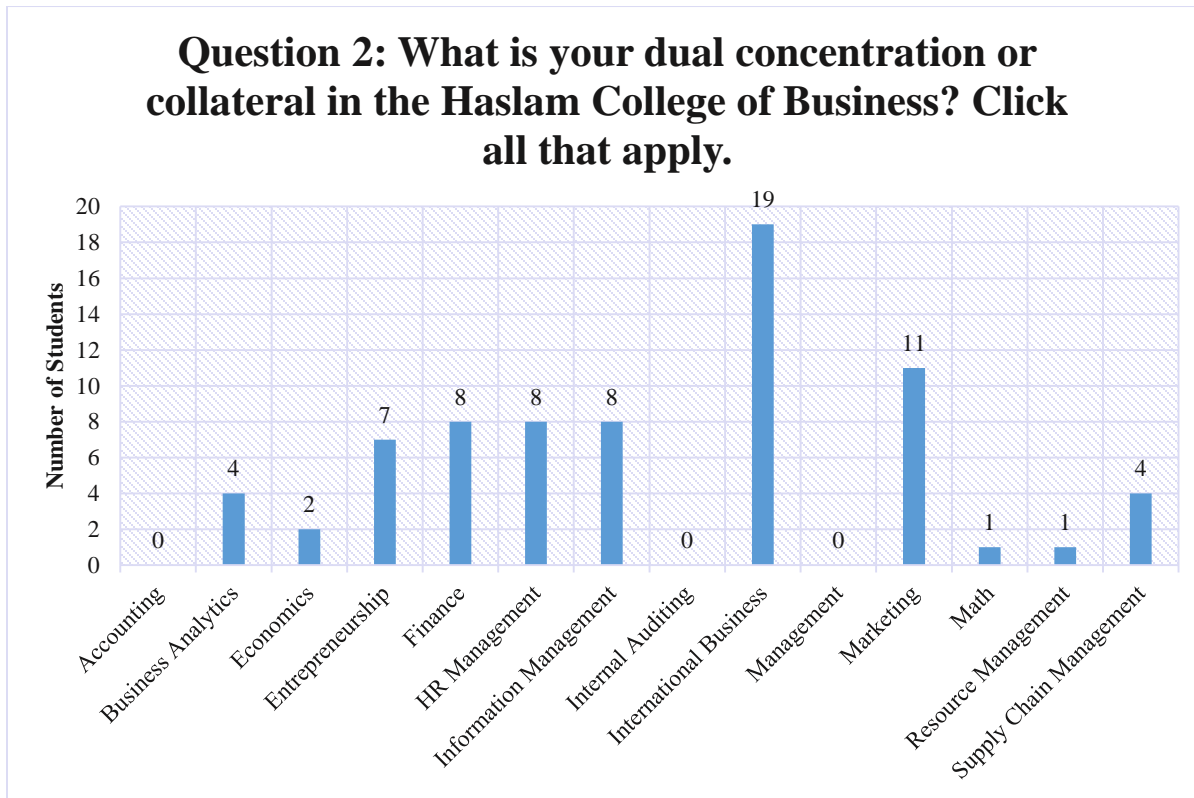
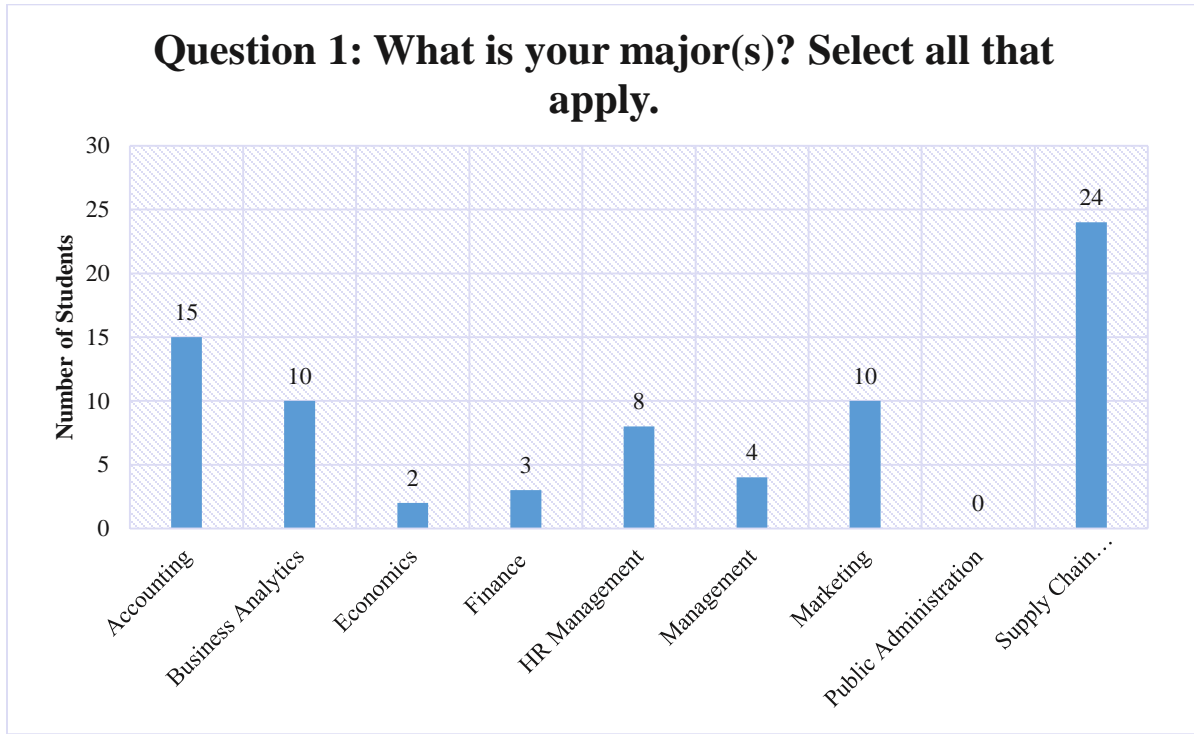
This survey of 10 questions should take no more than 5 minutes and will gauge student opinions and interest in business communication classes.

I appreciate your participation.

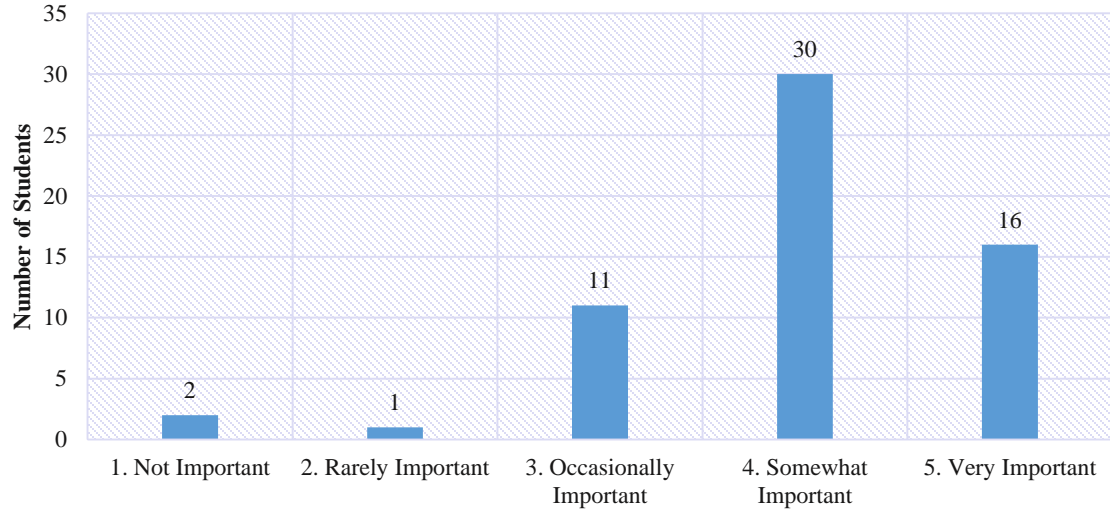
1. What is your major(s)? Click all that apply.
  - a. Accounting
  - b. Business Analytics
  - c. Economics
  - d. Finance
  - e. HR Management
  - f. Management
  - g. Marketing
  - h. Public Administration
  - i. Supply Chain Management
  
2. What is your dual concentration or collateral in the Haslam College of Business? Click all that apply.
  - a. Accounting
  - b. Business Analytics
  - c. Economics
  - d. Entrepreneurship
  - e. Finance
  - f. HR Management
  - g. Information Management
  - h. Internal Auditing
  - i. International Business
  - j. Management
  - k. Marketing
  - l. Math
  - m. Resource Management
  - n. Supply Chain Management

3. On a scale of 1 to 5 (With 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), how important are writing skills in your field?
4. How many writing classes at the 200 level or above have you taken?
  - a. 1
  - b. 2
  - c. 3
  - d. 4
  - e. 5+
5. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not prepared at all and 5 being well prepared), how prepared do you feel for writing in your field after taking these classes.
6. Would you take additional business communication courses if they were offered within the college of business?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
7. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least valuable and 5 being highly valuable), how valuable would additional business communications courses be to you?
8. If it were offered, would you be interested in taking a business communications collateral (3 courses) through the college of business?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Unsure
9. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the least valuable and 5 being highly valuable), how valuable would a business communications collateral be to you?
10. If you have any additional comments about business communications classes you have taken or would like to see offered, please type them below.

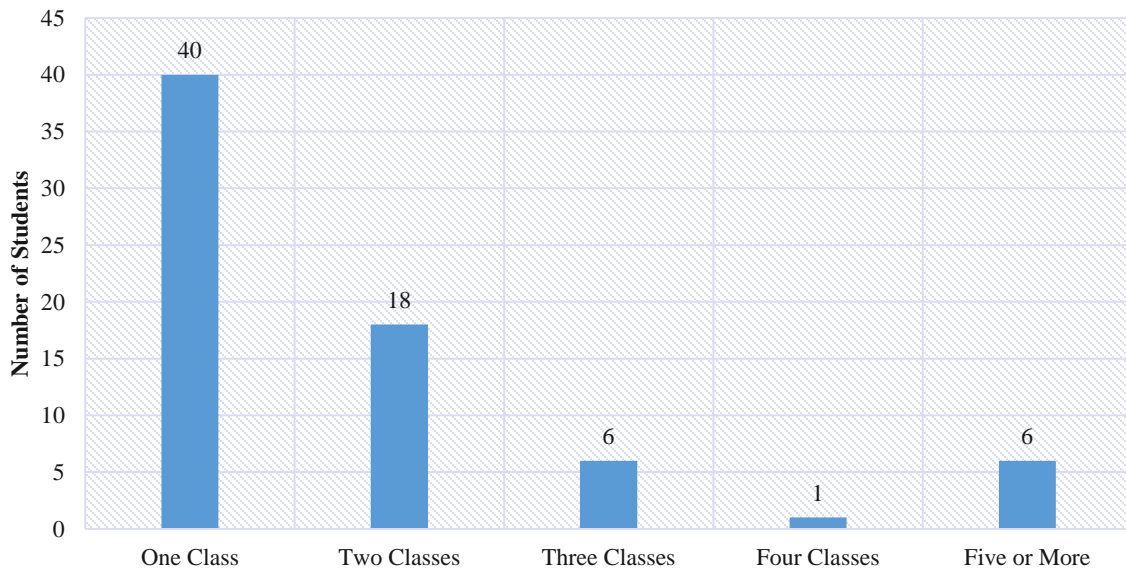
**Appendix B: List of Survey Results by Question**



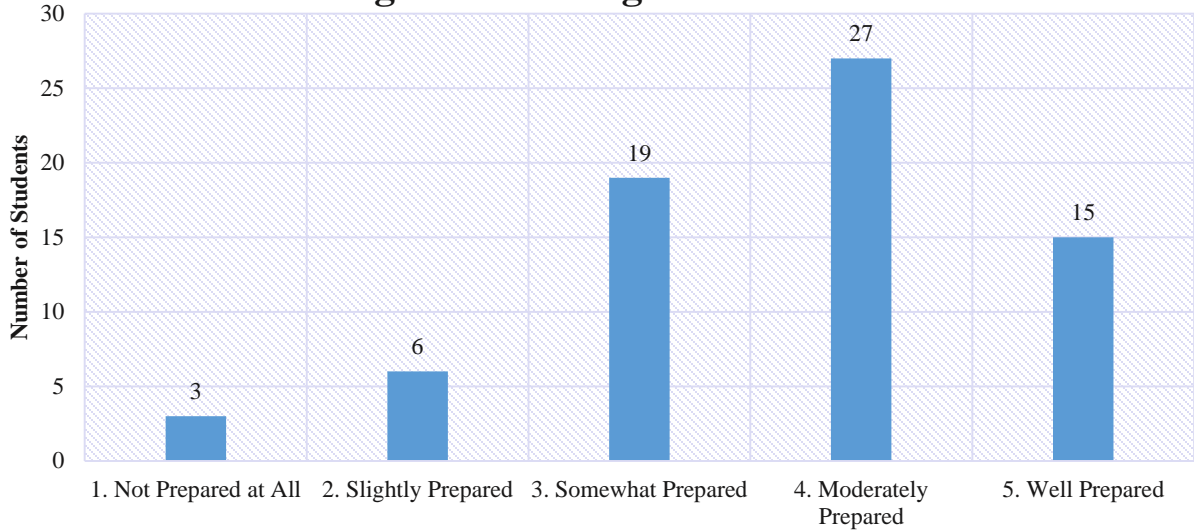
**Question 3: On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest), how important are writing skills in your field?**



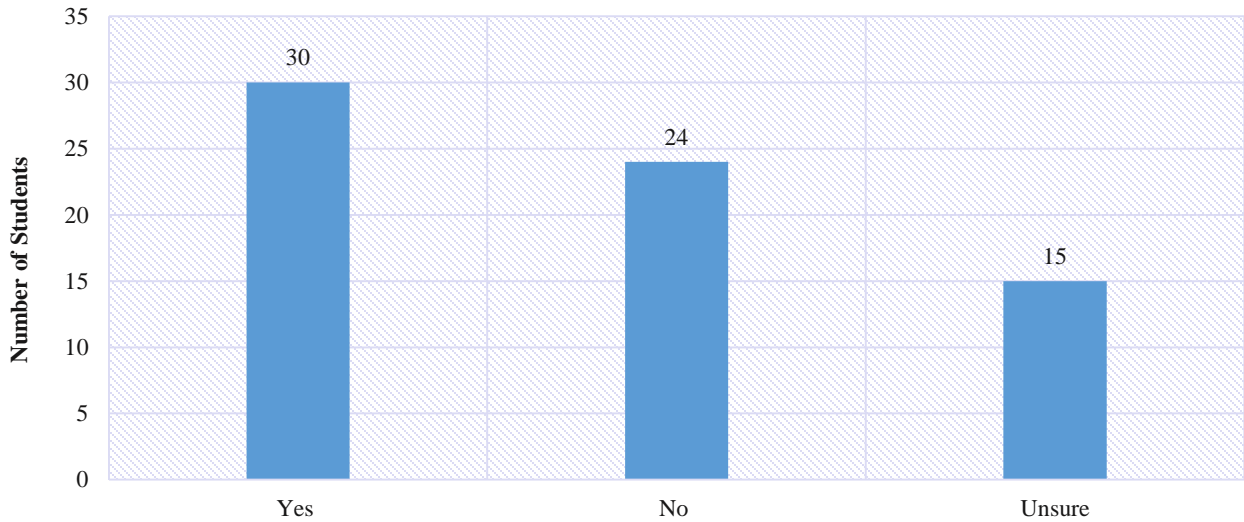
**Question 4: How many writing classes at the 200 level or above have you taken?**



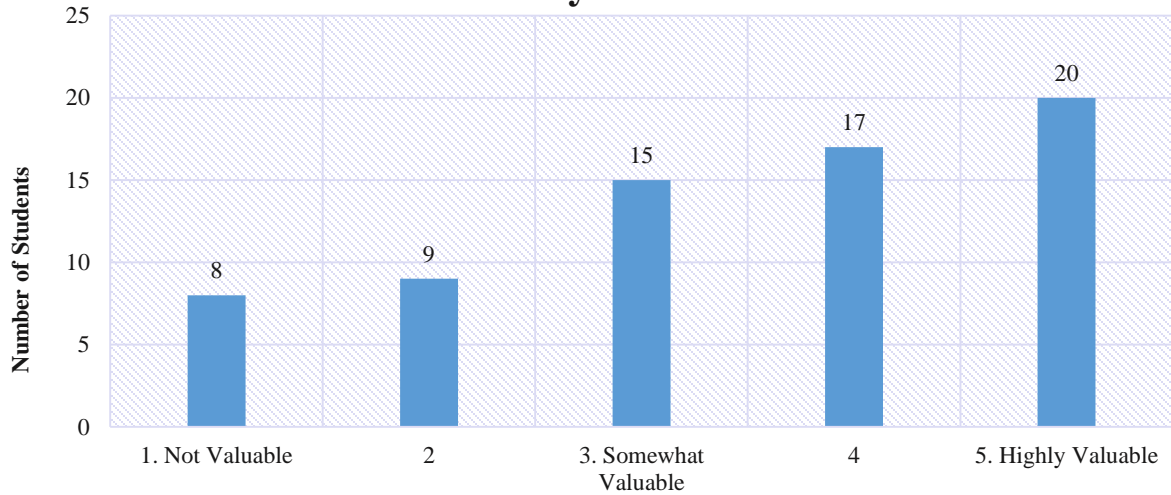
**Question 5: On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not prepared at all and 5 being well prepared), how prepared do you feel for writing in your field after taking these writing classes?**



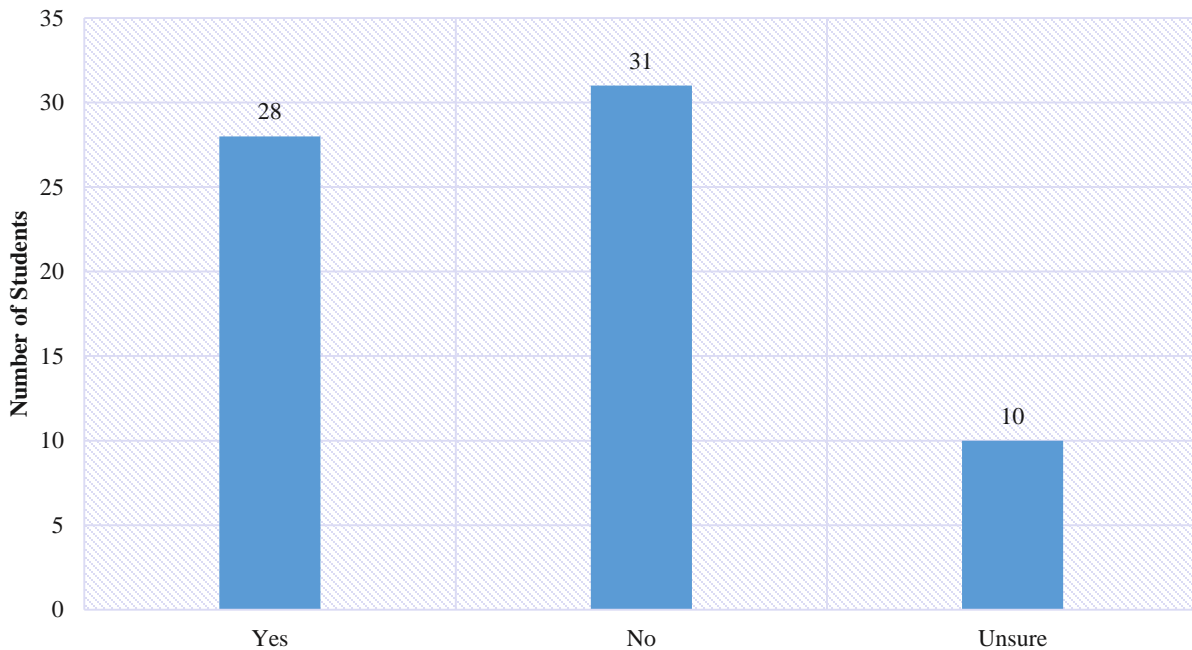
**Question 6: Would you take additional business communication courses (written or oral communication) if they were offered within the College of Business?**



**Question 7: On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not valuable and 5 being highly valuable), how valuable would additional business communication courses be to you?**



**Question 8: If it were offered, would you be interested in earning a business communication collateral (3 courses) through the College of Business?**



**Question 9: On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not valuable and 5 being highly valuable), how valuable would a business communications collateral be to you?**

