

Summary of the students' perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Communication Studies program

Below are areas that at least two people mentioned as a key strength or a weakness of the program in a final one-on-one interview with the department head. Thirty students were interviewed (Spring 2015).

Strengths (The students were simply asked to identify any key strengths they saw in the program)

Twenty-three students highlighted the professors as a primary strength of the program.

- *Fourteen* of these focused primarily on the helpful, caring nature of the professors. These students noted that they felt the professors knew them personally and that they felt comfortable talking to their professors.
- *Eight* focused primarily on the teaching or content expertise of the professors, that the classes were well organized and engaging.
- *One* person focused on how well the professors worked together and got along with each other.

Eleven students discussed the applicable nature of the material taught. They focused on how the material could be applied to a wide range of situations and relationships.

Seven students highlighted the sense of community and relationships with other students.

Six students noted that the major had improved their skill-set in terms of being able to communicate effectively in various situations.

Five students commented on how they learned to think about and see the world in new ways.

Five students commented on how nice it was to have small classes (fyi: Most classes are capped at 25).

Five students noted in a positive way how they appreciated being challenged in their coursework and the high expectations that existed in the program.

Two mentioned the wide variety of courses offered.

Weaknesses (When asked what the weaknesses of the program were, about half the students initially said, “nothing” or that “it was good as it is.” When pressed to think of a way the program could be improved most came up with something.)

Seventeen students expressed that getting into classes was difficult and that they often had to be on a waitlist even as a senior and sometimes could not take classes they wanted.

Six students noted that the department needed to hire more faculty members.

Four students wanted a greater range of courses.

Three students wanted more guidance on career paths.

Three students expressed a need for a graduate program.

Two students questioned the role of globalization/media courses in the CMST curriculum.