

Statistics Requirement for Communication Majors

Most undergraduate communication majors at the College of Charleston already complete a statistics course. Beginning Fall 2008, all communication majors will do so if they have not yet completed a required upper-division course.

As background, all communication majors, in all concentrations, must take COMM 301, Communication Research Methods, to fulfill communication major requirements, as has been the case since 2005.

As announced during the 2007 Fall Semester and the 2008 Spring Semester to all declared communication majors at that time, the department has received permission from the College of Charleston to change the prerequisites for COMM 301. COMM 301 now has the following prerequisites, beginning Fall 2008:

- COMM 210 with a grade of C- or better;
- MATH 104, Basic Statistics, or MATH 250, Statistical Methods I, with a grade of C- or better;
- Junior or senior standing.

As previously was the case, students also have to have a declared major at the College of Charleston in order to take COMM 301. Undecided majors are not eligible to take this course.

“These new prerequisites are intended to bring the communication major in line with the standards of many other leading communication programs,” said Brian McGee, chair of the Department of Communication. “For example, Stanford and several other outstanding institutions require a statistics course to prepare their communication majors for study of research methods. A basic knowledge of statistics is required to understand many real-world communication problems.”

Prior to this change, about 80% of communication majors already were completing MATH 104 or MATH 250 with a grade of C- or better. The great majority of communication majors also complete COMM 210 with a C- or better.

With the new statistics prerequisite, COMM 301 professors are able to avoid repeating material with which most students are familiar. The COMM 301 course has been redesigned to provide more content and reduce repetition.

“Employers today expect communication professionals to understand qualitative and quantitative research and, in some cases, to design basic research projects,” said McGee. “In the future, there will be no way to succeed as a communication graduate if you do not meet basic standards for mathematical literacy. Effective speaking and writing competencies are crucial, but those competencies aren’t enough by themselves.”

Even if diagnosed with a quantitative or mathematical learning disability, all communication majors will

be required to meet the MATH 104 or MATH 250 requirement. The SNAP office and the Center for Student Learning can provide support for students with such disabilities.

Any currently enrolled undergraduate student is welcome to declare the communication major. Communication majors should know that passing COMM 210 and MATH 104 or MATH 250 with grades of C- or better will be required in order to enroll for COMM 301, beginning with the 2008 Fall Semester.