



# Northeastern University

## Office of the Provost

### New Degree Proposal Routing Form

TITLE OF PROPOSED PROGRAM <b>BS Digital Communication &amp; Media</b>	
THIS PROGRAM WILL BE DELIVERED <input type="radio"/> ON CAMPUS <input checked="" type="radio"/> ONLINE <input type="radio"/> HYBRID	
DEPARTMENT(S) AND COLLEGE(S) <b>College of Professional Studies</b>	
(LEAD DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE IF APPROPRIATE)	DATE PREPARED: <b>01/23/2018</b>
NAME OF PRIMARY ACADEMIC CONTACT(S), CAMPUS ADDRESS, E-MAIL, AND PHONE NUMBER <b>Mike Jackson, 20BV, m.jackson@northeastern.edu x6630</b>	

### Preliminary Proposal - Authorization to Proceed with Planning

College Dean(s) – Please sign indicating that preliminary proposal has been discussed with Provost.

DATE PROPOSAL RECEIVED <b>12/4/18</b>	RECOMMENDATION(S) AND DATE <i>approved 12/4/18</i>
SIGNATURE OF COLLEGE DEAN(S) <i>[Signature]</i>	

### Formal Program Proposal

College Deans(s) – Please sign indicating that approval has been obtained from all appropriate committees and offices within your college.

DATE PROPOSAL RECEIVED BY COLLEGE(S) COMMITTEE <b>01/23/2018</b>	DATE SUPPORTING OR NON-SUPPORTING MEMO FORWARDED TO PROVOST Department(s) Vote and Date: <i>n/a</i> College(s) Vote and Date: <i>approve 1/23/18</i>
SIGNATURE OF COLLEGE DEAN(S) <i>[Signature]</i>	

### Vice Provost for Budget, Planning, and Administration

DATE PROPOSAL RECEIVED:	FINAL REVIEW AND DATE <b>3/9/18</b>
SIGNATURE OF VICE PROVOST <i>[Signature]</i>	

### Vice Provost for Undergraduate or for Graduate Education (as appropriate)

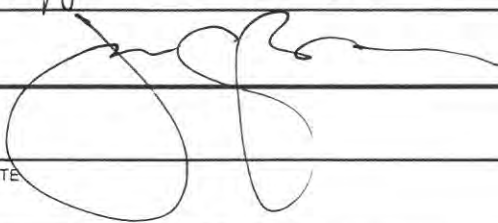
DATE PROPOSAL RECEIVED <b>2/6/18</b>	DATE REFERRED TO GRADUATE COUNCIL OR UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE (AS APPROPRIATE) <b>2/14/18</b>
ACTION TAKEN, DATE, AND VOTE: <i>Approved by UOCC 2/14/18 vote: 15-0-1</i>	
SIGNATURE OF VICE PROVOST: <i>Kathleen S. Niemer</i>	



# Northeastern University

## Office of the Provost

### Provost

ACTION TAKEN AND DATE	Approved 3.29.18
SIGNATURE OF PROVOST	

### Faculty Senate

ACTION TAKEN, DATE, AND VOTE	
SIGNATURE OF CHAIR	

### President

ACTION TAKEN AND DATE	
SIGNATURE OF PRESIDENT	

### Board of Trustees

ACTION TAKEN AND DATE	
SIGNATURE, SECRETARY OF BOARD	

Approval of new graduate or undergraduate programs by the Board of Trustees will be communicated to the College(s) and the Registrar by the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies or the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, respectively.



## **Proposal for BS in Digital Communication and Media (to replace BS in Professional Communication)**

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This proposal was developed by a cross-functional domain team, including: (titles need to be inserted)

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- Dr. Kemi Jona, Associate Dean, CPS
- Cynthia Baron, Lead Faculty, Digital Media, CPS
- Erin Smith, Assistant Vice President, Online Experiential Learning, Professional Advancement Network
- Duane Lefevre, Lecturer, CPS and DMSB
- Dr Carl Zangerl, Faculty Director, Communication Portfolio, CPS
- Gretchen Ulrich, Senior Director, Online Experiential Learning, Professional Advancement Network
- Marina Brauch, Director, Market Analysis, Professional Advancement Network

## **Proposal Summary**

The College of Professional Studies is proposing a revision of the existing BS degree in Professional Communication. The proposal involves a name change in the degree, as well as modifications of the curriculum. Upon approval of the new curriculum, the BS in Professional Communication will be suspended as a degree program. Students currently enrolled in the BS in Professional Communication will have the option to complete the degree or transition to the BS in Digital Communication & Media.

The curriculum of the new BS in Digital Communication and Media is based on viewing the communication discipline from a domain perspective. We have defined a curriculum domain as a way to organize the Professional Advancement Network's (PAN) expanding portfolio of expertise, practice areas, and programming into thematic clusters with common missions, competencies, skillsets, and/or application contexts.

During Q2, 2017, an interdisciplinary, cross-functional team used this methodology to define the scope of the Communication Domain, identify market demand for graduates with communication-related degrees, and design a revised undergraduate curriculum. Based on trends in the communication field and the skills and knowledge expected by employers, the team examined the intersection of the Communication Domain with other domains, including Analytics, Project Management, Marketing, and Leadership. This overlapping of domains was also evident in the range of skills required by employers of entry-level communication professionals.

This domain work formed the basis of the proposed bachelor's degree curriculum – the rationale is discussed more fully in Section 9.

## **Program Mission**

The BS in Digital Communications and Media addresses the demand for entry-level and early career professionals in a digital communication environment. Digital, mobile, and social media are now integral to the communication strategies of businesses, nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Employers seek to hire communication specialists with a wide range of competencies and skills relating to the rapidly-evolving technologies of the 21st century.

## **Program Objectives**

Graduates of the BS in Digital Communication and Media will be able to:

- Craft effective written and/or visual messages to inform and persuade a wide range of stakeholders and audiences.
- Conduct stakeholder research and assess the effectiveness of digital communication channels.
- Think strategically and creatively to solve problems and adapt to new technologies.
- Work on agile, cross-functional teams to support the achievement of organizational objectives.

## **Contributions to Northeastern 2025**

These proposed program changes exemplify Northeastern University's longstanding reputation for curricular innovation and experiential education. The focus on emerging developments and next generation learning reflects the Professional Advancement Network's mission to develop innovative educational models that are

considered to be “best in class” and accessible for working adults, as well as students with little professional experience.

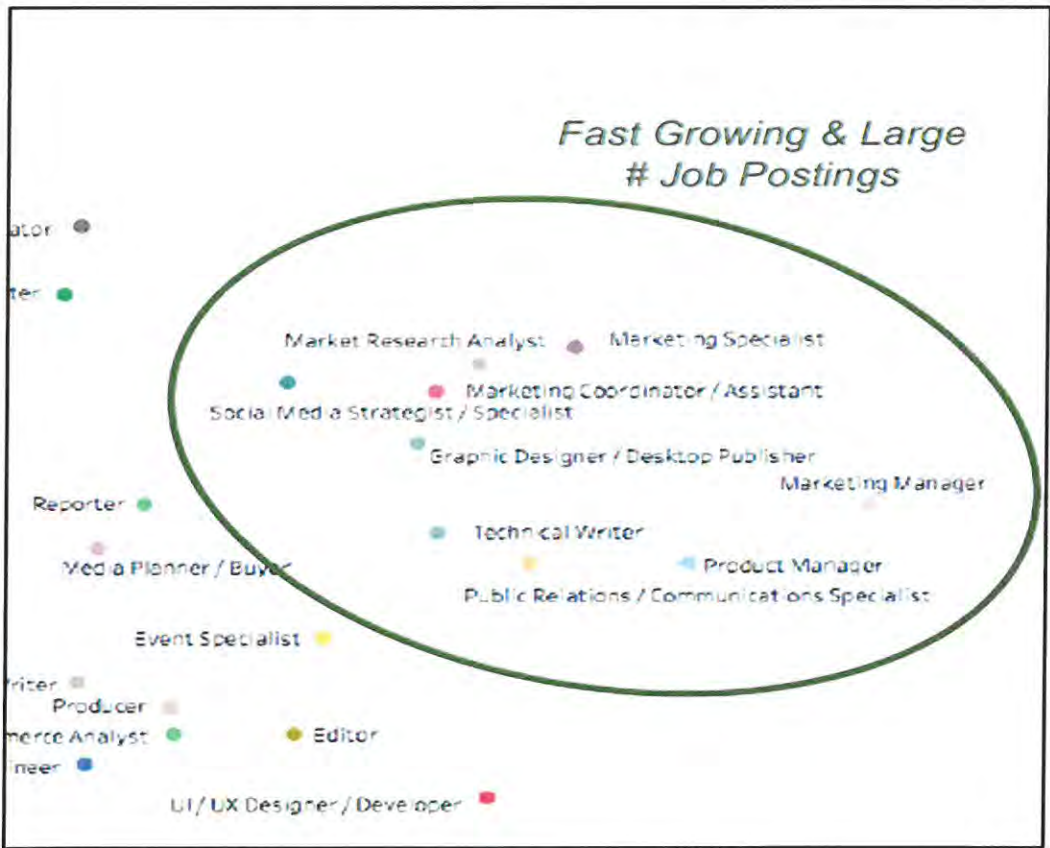
The new BS in Digital Communication and Media is a product of a new domain approach to curriculum development that we believe will strategically accelerate PAN’s ability to realize the vision for Northeastern 2025.

### Profile of Target Student Population and Market Demand

As with other CPS undergraduate programs, the BS in Digital Communication and Media is designed for primarily for working professionals who seek to complete their bachelor’s degree. The program is designed to meet the needs of a wide range of students: early career communication and media professionals, career changers, and undergraduate students interested in a career in the field of digital communication and media. Initially, the degree will be offered only online.

Market research underscores the need for a communication bachelor’s degree that focuses on digital skills. For example, Burning Glass data on job postings seeking candidates with bachelor’s level credentials showed that positions relating to graphic design, communication specialist, social media specialist, digital marketing, and marketing communication roles are both fast-growing and large in number (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1 – High Demand Communication-Related Jobs**



Another Burning Glass analysis reports that “Four in 10 marketing job openings now call for digital marketing skills, and the number of postings calling for digital skills has nearly doubled in the last five years. There were 174,141 postings calling for digital marketing skills in 2016, or 39% of the 443,440 marketing openings overall. Both categories have grown significantly since 2011, but digital grew 30% faster than overall marketing postings” (burningglass technologies, August 24, 2017).

## Unique Aspects of the Learning Experience

The revised curriculum will enhance the student learning experience in the following ways:

- **Leading-edge Skills:** The proposed curriculum supplements core organizational and interpersonal communication skills with a range of digital communication and media skills that are in demand in the marketplace.
- **Experiential Learning:** The opportunity to apply knowledge and skills in authentic experiential projects and scenarios is embedded throughout the curriculum.
- **Virtual PR Firm Experience:** A unique feature of the curriculum is the opportunity for students to work individually and in teams as ‘employees’ of a virtual public relations organization, conducting audience research, crafting and curating digital content, and overseeing the design and implementation of public relations campaigns.
- **PlusOne Tracks:** Students will be able to take advantage of PlusOne bridges into three master’s programs: Corporate and Organizational Communication, Digital Media, and Technical Communication. These bridges into master’s programs will enlarge the pool of potential students by making the degrees more affordable and also by creating a clear linkage between the bachelor’s and graduate curricula.

While there are hundreds of undergraduate communication programs in the United States, only a handful focus on digital communication, and none of them provide the depth of experiential learning that will be offered in the proposed BS in Digital Communication and Media.

## Assessment Plan

To ensure academic quality and integrity, Northeastern has instituted an Academic Quality Assurance (AQA) process managed by the Office of Academic Quality Assurance. The AQA team facilitates the implementation of Annual Program Evaluation, a systematic and standardized process to assist in the mapping, tracking, analyzing, and reporting of student learning outcomes at the program level. Annual Academic Program Reports provide program faculty with current data for decision-making and planning, reinforcement of best practices, and also assist with systematic data collection for program evaluation and accreditation processes. The Annual Academic Program Report is completed by the assigned lead faculty in consultation with other relevant faculty and includes the following stages for each degree program:

- Review and update program mission, student learning outcomes, and program objectives, as needed
- Review and revise course mapping, direct and indirect assessments tied to the learning outcomes, and S.M.A.R.T goals tied to the defined learning outcomes and program objectives
- Submit assessment results: a comparative analysis and narrative on:

Student success data (S Series data on retention, graduation rates, course completions, licensure and/or job placement rates) in relation to defined goals, previous reporting cycles, and any internal or external benchmarks

- Data related to direct assessment of the program’s Student Learning Outcomes in terms of goals, and internal or external benchmarks
- Past progressive refinement plans and/or what changes have been made to the program as a result of using this data/evidence

Approval and implementation of each program’s Progressive Refinement Plan is reviewed and assessed by the Deans and AQA unit. The annual review process for each program is tracked and stored in a single repository that is protected against loss of data and is accessible for accreditation purposes.

## Resource Requirements

The development of the proposed curriculum will take place during the first 9 months of 2018, drawing primarily from FY18 budgets, including release time for faculty and allocation of resources from the Online Experiential Learning team, as well as marketing resources. Depending on current subject matter expertise and availability, external subject matter experts may be contracted to develop curriculum and/or the challenge-based coursework for the virtual PR firm.

## Proposed Curriculum Map

### Curriculum Design Considerations

The proposed curriculum has five major components:

1. General Foundation Courses
2. Digital Communication and Media Foundation Courses, including an Experiential Capstone Course
3. Major Required Courses/Virtual PR Firm
4. Major Elective Courses
5. Open Elective Courses

While the **General Foundation** component is unchanged, the revised BS degree introduces major changes in the other four components of the curriculum.

**Digital Communication and Media Foundation Courses:** In developing the curriculum, a major design consideration focused on the communication-related skills associated with specific job titles, such as marketing specialist, marketing manager, communication specialist, etc.

**Figure 2 – Skill Sets Preferred by Employers**

Communication Occupation Skill Sets (March 1, 2016-February 28, 2017)	Marketing Manager	
	Undergraduate	Graduate
<b>Job Postings</b>	<b>77,174</b>	<b>38,167</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	Communication Skills	Communication Skills
	Team Work/ Collaboration	Team Work/ Collaboration
	Creativity	Creativity
	Writing	Writing
	Planning	Planning
	Research	Research
	Organizational Skills	Presentation Skills
	Presentation Skills	Problem Solving
	Problem Solving	<b>Analytical Skills</b>
	<b>Detail-Oriented</b>	Organizational Skills
<b>Specialized</b>	Budgeting	Project Management
	Project Management	Market Strategy
	Marketing	Product Management
	Market Strategy	Product Marketing
	<b>Marketing Management</b>	Budgeting
	Social Media	Marketing
	<b>Microsoft Excel</b>	<b>Product Development</b>
	Product Marketing	<b>Market Research</b>
	Product Management	<b>Business Planning</b>
	<b>Microsoft Powerpoint</b>	Social Media

As Figure 2 shows, the 'Baseline' skills sought by employers include interpersonal communication skills, writing, planning, research, and organizational skills. The proposed curriculum incorporates the 'baseline' skills (component #2) that communication students must acquire in their foundational learning experience. These skill clusters include the following competencies:



**Major Required Courses/Virtual PR Firm:** As part of the major required courses, students will participate in a virtual PR firm. The purpose of the Virtual PR Firm concept is to enable students, working individually and in teams, to apply knowledge and skills to real-world assignments by simulating an organization designing and implementing digital public relations campaigns to a wide range of external stakeholders.

Students must complete four foundation courses before assuming a role in the Virtual PR Firm (see entire curriculum below). Three of these courses focus on skills (ART 2100, ART 2200, ENG 3260) and one is an introduction to the practice of public relations – these courses prepare students for effective



participation in the Virtual PR Firm.

ART 2100	Foundation in Visual Communication
ART 2200	Fundamentals of Computer Graphics & Desktop Publishing
ENG 3260	Writing to Inform & Persuade
CMN 3320	Public Relations Basics & Practice

As ‘employees’ of the Virtual PR Firm, students take the following two courses in sequence in the course of one semester:

MKT 2200	Researching Consumer Behavior 7.5 weeks
TCC 3450	Content Creation and Channel Selection for Digital Media Tactics 7.5 weeks

These courses map to stages in the design and implementation of a digital public relations campaign: conducting research on the target audience, creating the campaign’s messaging (written and visual), and selecting digital channels for delivering the messages. Students will apply knowledge and skills gained in the preparatory courses to specific assignments as part of a communication team working on the campaign from start to finish.

In conjunction with, or after completing the first two, sequenced Virtual PR Firm courses, students will take the remaining major elective courses before enrolling in CMN 3400. The rationale is that by learning more specialized content in the concentration courses, students will bring a richer understanding of digital communication to this stage in the learning process. In this 15-week course, students will mentor students in the Virtual PR Firm courses and apply project management and evaluation skills to the communication tactics employed as part of the digital public relations campaign.

CMN 3400            Managing Communication Projects

**Major Elective Courses:** Students in the program will select 10 of the more specialized data management, digital communication and media courses – see below – with the flexibility to select courses that support their specific career objectives.

**Proposed Curriculum (120 SH)**

<b>General Foundation Courses (27 SH)</b>		
ENG 1105	College Writing 1	3
ENG 1106	Lab for ENG 1105	1
ENG 1107	College Writing 2	3
ENG 1108	Lab for ENG 1107	1
ENG 3107	Writing for the Professions–Business & SS	3
ENG 3108	Lab for ENG 3107	1
ITC 2016	End User Data Analysis Tools	3

MTH 1100	College Algebra	3
MTH 2310	Statistics for the Behavioral & Social Sciences	3
SI Core	Understanding Societies & Institutions	3
PHL 2120	Ethical Issues in Communication	3
<b>Communication Foundation Courses (27 SH)</b>		
MGT 1100	Introduction to Business	3
MKT 2100	Principles of Marketing	3
ART 2100	Foundation in Visual Communication Fundamentals of Comp. Graphics & Desktop	3
ART 2200	Publishing	3
ENG 3260	Writing to Inform and Persuade	3
CMN 1100	Organizational Communication	3
CMN 2310	Professional Speaking	3
CMN 3350	Intercultural Communication	3
CMN 3220	Public Relations Basics & Practice	3
<b>Major Required Courses (27 SH)</b>		
MKT 2220	Consumer Behavior	3
TCC 3450	Writing for the Web	3
CMN 3400	Advanced Organizational Communication	6
TCC 3200	Digital & Social Communication Technologies	3
ITC 3400	Web Design & Multimedia	3
ART 4100	Graphic Communication 1	3
CMN 3250	Mediated Communications & Media Relations	3
CMN 3330	Digital Communication & Organizations	3
<b>Major Electives 15 SH)</b>		
TCC 3050	Technical Software Writing	3
TCC 3220	Technical Promotional Writing	3
ART 2000	Typography	3
CMN 3360	Crisis Communication	3
ITC 2000	Principles of Systems Analysis & Design	3
ITC 2100	Introduction to Programming Java	
ITC 2400	Web & Mobile Development	3
ITC 2300	Database Management Systems	3
ITC 3150	Database Websites with PHP/MySQL	3
<b>Capstone Course (3 SH)</b>		
CMN 4850	Senior Seminar in Professional Communication	3
<b>Open Electives (21 SH)</b>		
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>120</b>