A Proposal to Change the Name of the Department of Telecommunication to Media Production, Management, and Technology

1. A description of the proposed change, the rationale for the change, any budgetary implications, and its possible impacts on faculty and students.

The Department of Telecommunication is proposing a change in its name to ***Department of Media Production, Management, and Technology***. This proposal reflects changes in the meaning of "Telecommunication" in our professional environment, leading to confusion among students, potential students, employers recruiting our students and graduates.

In the mid- to late-1970s, what was then the Department of Broadcasting changed its name to Telecommunication. This reflected changes in our profession/industries as cable television and satellite-to-home services joined traditional radio and television. Several universities, such as Michigan State University, and Ohio University made the same change (in addition to "Broadcasting," departments were commonly referred to as "Radio-Television," some combination including both names, sometimes including "Film" in the title.

In the early to mid-1990s "Telecommunication," began to increasingly be applied to the telephone sector, especially wireless services. As applied to our academic unit, the term was increasingly misunderstood by those outside of the discipline. One of our alumni, who graduated in the 1980s contacted us to complain about the current name, because he was being overlooked on Linked-In for jobs in the television industry because recruiters did not realize the meaning of his "Telecommunication" degree. We occasionally receive inquiries from students outside the University who are seeking an Engineering-related Telecommunication graduate degree. Less seriously, but equally indicative, our department office regularly receives calls from around the University to report problems with their telephone systems.

There is no consistent name applied to departments in our discipline. Most such departments are usually housed in colleges of "Liberal Arts and Sciences," or in colleges of "Communication." In general, while there may be differences in overall curriculum, the name of a Department of History, a Department of Biology, or a Department of Journalism can be generally understood to mean a well-defined, specific academic focus. Attached is an appendix showing the names of departments similar to ours in the Florida SUS, AAU public institutions, and the institutional members of the Broadcast Education Association. There is no consistency, little similarity, and a wide variety of names. This is mirrored in our professional environment. Major entities include The National Broadcasting Association, National Association of Television Program Executives, the National Cable and Telecommunication Association, and so on. The Federal Communications Commission unit that oversees radio, television, cable, and satellites is the Media Bureau.

The variety of department names around the country also reflects the variety of department foci. Reflecting our size and resources, we offer more in-depth preparation in certain specialized areas than most others, and more variety. Similar to most such departments, we offer a specialization in program creation (in our case, Digital Film and Video Production). Unlike many, if not most, we offer a Media and Society track which prepares students for a digital and multinational/multicultural environment. We are one of a handful of departments to offer a Management and Strategy track; Michigan State, Indiana, Ohio, and Georgia are most notable.

Our programs emphasize professional development and skills. Many departments which include the term "Studies," in their name have a focus or track devoted to an understanding of media effects, criticism, or other non-skills topics.

Given the lack of consistency among department names, and the variety of structures and specializations, we believe "Media Production, Management, and Technology" best reflects who we are, what we do, and will provide clarity to potential students, faculty members, employers, and the university community.

We believe "Media" is clear in its meaning, and encompasses the range of instruction and scholarship we carry out. We focus on the creation, distribution, management, and use of video, audio, digital film, and interactive/immersive content.

Our Digital Film and Video Production students and faculty create fiction and non-fiction content. Our alumni are the crew members, directors, producers, writers, and "show-runners" for network and syndicated television programs, and work in live sports, such as ESPN.

Students and faculty in our Management and Strategy track explore audience research and analytics, economic theory, and approaches to the management of television and radio stations, cable systems, and emerging platforms and the law and regulation of media.

Our Media and Society track combines technologies for message creation for digital and social media with an appreciation of the historical and policy environment of media in a global society.

In sum, the name "Telecommunication" no longer is an accurate description of our teaching and scholarship. "Media Production, Management, and Technology" encompasses the different approaches we apply to the media world in which we live.

Budgetary impact. While it is not possible to give a complete picture of the budgetary impact at this time, expenses would be expected to include signage in and around Weimer Hall, stationery (letterhead and business cards) web pages managed by the College and such University sites as those managed by the Registrar, the University Directory and other information sources. One unknown might be with PeopleSoft systems. For example, there are currently accounts which include "Telecommunication" in their title. We are unable to predict how difficult it will be to make changes to reflect the new department name. However, these systems are used by a small number of staff and administrators who would understand if the names remained "Telecommunication" for a short time.

Impact on faculty and students. We can foresee no negative impacts on faculty or students. As stated, above, we believe the name changes will benefit students by making their academic specialty more clear to potential employers, or when applying to graduate programs.

Similarly, as reflected in the faculty's desire to change the department's name, and the subsequent vote in favor of Media Production, Management and Technology, we do not believe the change will have negative consequences.

2. A tally of the vote of faculty in the affected unit(s)

   The department faculty voted 14-4 to propose Media Production, Management, and Technology. Those opposed favored a shorter name. The proposal has also been approved unanimously by votes of the College Senate, the College Curriculum committee, and the full College faculty.

3. A description of the input received from appropriate Academic Unit faculty governing bodies (i.e., college faculty council, departmental committee, or external advisory board).

   As noted, above, there is no standard or common name for departments such as ours. Department faculty discussed possible names during several faculty meetings in 2018-19 (informal discussions had been taking place for several years). We also devoted a session with our department Advisory Council in Fall 2018 (the council consists of twenty professionals).

   After the department vote, we discussed our decision with the Dean and Executive Associate Dean. At their urging we discussed the issue with the chairs of other departments in the College and with the College Curriculum and Teaching Committee and the College Senate. All expressed support for our proposal.

4. A statement of support from the appropriate Dean or Director, Vice President, and Provost: Uploaded to approval system